AO 120 (Rev. 08/10)

TO:	REPORT ON THE FILING OR DETERMINATION OF AN ACTION REGARDING A PATENT OR TRADEMARK
Mail Stop 8 Director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office P.O. Box 1450 Alexandria, VA 22313-1450	

In Compliance with 35 U.S.C. § 290 and/or 15 U.S.C. § 1116 you are hereby advised that a court action has been filed in the U.S. District Court District of Delaware on the following

☐ Trademarks or ☑ Patents. (☐ the patent action involves 35 U.S.C. § 292.):

DOCKET NO.	DATE FILED	U.S. DISTRICT COURT
	5/2/2017	District of Delaware

PLAINTIFF	DEFENDANT
DDR Holdings, LLC	TicketNetwork, Inc.

	PATENT OR TRADEMARK NO.	DATE OF PATENT OR TRADEMARK	HOLDER OF PATENT OR TRADEMARK
1	US 7,818,399 B1	10/19/2010	DDR Holdings, LLC
2	US 8,515,825 B1	8/20/2013	DDR Holdings, LLC
3	US 9,043,228 B1	5/26/2015	DDR Holdings, LLC
4	US 9,639,876 B1	5/2/2017	DDR Holdings, LLC
5			

In the above—entitled case, the following patent(s)/ trademark(s) have been included:

DATE INCLUDED	INCLUDED BY ☐ Amendment ☐ Answer ☐ Cross Bill ☐ Other Pleading	
PATENT OR TRADEMARK NO.	DATE OF PATENT OR TRADEMARK	HOLDER OF PATENT OR TRADEMARK
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In the above—entitled case, the following decision has been rendered or judgement issued:

DECISION/JUDGEMENT

CLERK	(BY) DEPUTY CLERK	DATE

Copy 1—Upon initiation of action, mail this copy to Director **Copy 3—Upon termination of action, mail this copy to Director**
Copy 2—Upon filing document adding patent(s), mail this copy to Director **Copy 4—Case file copy**

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☐ Trademarks or ☑ Patents. (☐ the patent action involves 35 U.S.C. § 292.):

DOCKET NO.	DATE FILED	U.S. DISTRICT COURT
	5/2/2017	District of Delaware

PLAINTIFF	DEFENDANT
DDR Holdings, LLC	Travel Holdings, Inc. and Tourico Holidays, Inc.

	PATENT OR TRADEMARK NO.	DATE OF PATENT OR TRADEMARK	HOLDER OF PATENT OR TRADEMARK
1	US 7,818,399 B1	10/19/2010	DDR Holdings, LLC
2	US 8,515,825 B1	8/20/2013	DDR Holdings, LLC
3	US 9,043,228 B1	5/26/2015	DDR Holdings, LLC
4	US 9,639,876 B1	5/2/2017	DDR Holdings, LLC
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Copy 2—Upon filing document adding patent(s), mail this copy to Director Copy 4—Case file copy

The United States Patent and Trademark Office
PATENT TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

A petition has been filed in Patent Number 9,043,228, Application Number 13/970,515 on 5/3/2018.

The Case Number is IPR2018-01009.

To view the documents filed in this petition, go to http://www.uspto.gov/ip/boards/bpai/prps.jsp and click on the Direct Link.

Click on Search for a proceeding / Browse the proceedings and enter the Patent Number or the Trial or Case Number and select the Search button.

Questions regarding this notice should be directed to the Patent Trial and Appeal Board at 571-272-7822.

The United States Patent and Trademark Office
PATENT TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

A petition has been filed in Patent Number 9,043,228, Application Number 13/970,515 on 5/2/2018.

The Case Number is IPR2018-01012.

To view the documents filed in this petition, go to http://www.uspto.gov/ip/boards/bpai/prps.jsp and click on the Direct Link.

Click on Search for a proceeding / Browse the proceedings and enter the Patent Number or the Trial or Case Number and select the Search button.

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☐ Trademarks or ☑ Patents. (☐ the patent action involves 35 U.S.C. § 292.):

DOCKET NO.	DATE FILED	U.S. DISTRICT COURT
	5/2/2017	District of Delaware

PLAINTIFF	DEFENDANT
DDR Holdings, LLC	Priceline.com LLC

	PATENT OR TRADEMARK NO.	DATE OF PATENT OR TRADEMARK	HOLDER OF PATENT OR TRADEMARK
1	US 7,818,399 B1	10/19/2010	DDR Holdings, LLC
2	US 8,515,825 B1	8/20/2013	DDR Holdings, LLC
3	US 9,043,228 B1	5/26/2015	DDR Holdings, LLC
4	US 9,639,876 B1	5/2/2017	DDR Holdings, LLC
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☐ Trademarks or ☑ Patents. (☐ the patent action involves 35 U.S.C. § 292.):

DOCKET NO.	DATE FILED	U.S. DISTRICT COURT
	5/2/2017	District of Delaware

PLAINTIFF	DEFENDANT
DDR Holdings, LLC	Shopify Inc.

	PATENT OR TRADEMARK NO.	DATE OF PATENT OR TRADEMARK	HOLDER OF PATENT OR TRADEMARK
1	US 8,515,825 B1	8/20/2013	DDR Holdings, LLC
2	US 9,043,228 B1	5/26/2015	DDR Holdings, LLC
3	US 9,639,876 B1	5/2/2017	DDR Holdings, LLC
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DDR Holdings, LLC	Travel Holdings, Inc. and Tourico Holidays, Inc.

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☐ Trademarks or ☑ Patents. (☐ the patent action involves 35 U.S.C. § 292.):

DOCKET NO.	DATE FILED	U.S. DISTRICT COURT
	5/2/2017	District of Delaware

PLAINTIFF	DEFENDANT
DDR Holdings, LLC	Booking.com B.V.

	PATENT OR TRADEMARK NO.	DATE OF PATENT OR TRADEMARK	HOLDER OF PATENT OR TRADEMARK
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UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

PATENT NO.	: 9,043,228 B1
APPLICATION NO.	: 13/970515
DATED	: May 26, 2015
INVENTOR(S)	: D. Delano Ross, Jr. et al.

It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent is hereby corrected as shown below:

Page 4, under item (56), column 2, line 23: before "Sabre" insert -- Ng; "Looking For New Electronic Products to Help Manage Your Business? --

Signed and Sealed this
Twenty-third Day of February, 2016

Michelle K. Lee

Michelle K. Lee
Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant	:	Ross, D. Delano, Jr., et al.	Patent No	:	9,043,228
Serial No.	:	13/970,515	Examiner	:	Garg, Yogesh C.
Filing Date	:	08/19/2013	Conf. No.	:	2289
Title	:	Specially programmed computer server serving pages offering commercial opportunities for merchants through coordinated offsite marketing			

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Filed via EFS-Web – June 29, 2015

REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

Dear Sir:

Enclosed is a proposed Certificate of Correction correcting an error made in the printing of the "References Cited" section of this patent.

The change arises from a missing line of text that was not included in the printing of a reference [see attachments to Office Action dated 10/11/13, the References cited by Applicant and considered by Examiner at page 11 (reference 230).

Because the error for which this Certificate of Correction is sought is due to a mistake on the part of the Office, no fee is due (35 U.S.C. 254). Please forward the Certificate to assignee's attorney at the address below.

Respectfully submitted,

DDR HOLDINGS, LLC.

by its attorney

Dated: June 29, 2015

/Louis J. Hoffman/
Louis J. Hoffman
Reg. No. 38,918

LOUIS J. HOFFMAN, P.C.
14301 North 87th Street, Suite 312
Scottsdale, Arizona 85260
(480) 948-3295

PTO/SB/44 (09-07)
Approved for use through 08/31/2013. OMB 0651-0033
U.S. Patent and Trademark Office; U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.
(Also Form PTO-1050)

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

PATENT NO. : 9,043,228 B1

APPLICATION NO.: 13/970,515

ISSUE DATE : May 26, 2015

INVENTOR(S) : D. Delano Ross, Jr., et al.

It is certified that an error appears or errors appear in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent is hereby corrected as shown below:

Page 4, column 2, line 23: before "Sabre" insert -- Ng; "Looking For New Electronic Products to Help Manage Your Business? --

MAILING ADDRESS OF SENDER (Please do not use customer number below):

Louis J. Hoffman, P.C.
14301 North 87th Street, Suite 312
Scottsdale, Arizona 85260

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.322, 1.323, and 1.324. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 1.0 hour to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. **SEND TO: Attention Certificate of Corrections Branch, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**

If you need assistance in completing the form, call 1-800-PTO-9199 and select option 2.

Electronic Acknowledgement Receipt

EFS ID:	22777039
Application Number:	13970515
International Application Number:	
Confirmation Number:	2289
Title of Invention:	A specially programmed computer server serving pages offering commercial opportunities for merchants through coordinated offsite marketing
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	D. Delano Ross
Customer Number:	26362
Filer:	Louis J. Hoffman/Donald Hertz
Filer Authorized By:	Louis J. Hoffman
Attorney Docket Number:	23-CON4
Receipt Date:	29-JUN-2015
Filing Date:	19-AUG-2013
Time Stamp:	18:13:07
Application Type:	Utility under 35 USC 111(a)

Payment information:

Submitted with Payment	no

File Listing:

Document Number	Document Description	File Name	File Size(Bytes)/ Message Digest	Multi Part /.zip	Pages (if appl.)
1	Request for Certificate of Correction	15-06-29-DDR-CON4-Rqst_Cert_Correct.pdf	35796 43276105a018aecf1bf7281e7b60ae16dbc8c098	no	1

Warnings:	
Information:	

2	Request for Certificate of Correction	15-06-29-DDR_CON4-CertofCorr-9043228.pdf	98340 050ec28786e00878d42fb4fd7120ed522e173a3e	no	1

Warnings:	
Information:	
Total Files Size (in bytes):	134136

This Acknowledgement Receipt evidences receipt on the noted date by the USPTO of the indicated documents, characterized by the applicant, and including page counts, where applicable. It serves as evidence of receipt similar to a Post Card, as described in MPEP 503.

New Applications Under 35 U.S.C. 111

If a new application is being filed and the application includes the necessary components for a filing date (see 37 CFR 1.53(b)-(d) and MPEP 506), a Filing Receipt (37 CFR 1.54) will be issued in due course and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the filing date of the application.

National Stage of an International Application under 35 U.S.C. 371

If a timely submission to enter the national stage of an international application is compliant with the conditions of 35 U.S.C. 371 and other applicable requirements a Form PCT/DO/EO/903 indicating acceptance of the application as a national stage submission under 35 U.S.C. 371 will be issued in addition to the Filing Receipt, in due course.

New International Application Filed with the USPTO as a Receiving Office

If a new international application is being filed and the international application includes the necessary components for an international filing date (see PCT Article 11 and MPEP 1810), a Notification of the International Application Number and of the International Filing Date (Form PCT/RO/105) will be issued in due course, subject to prescriptions concerning national security, and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the international filing date of the application.

To: Louis@valuablepatents.com,donald@valuablepatents.com,shaelyn@valuablepatents.com
From: PAIR_eOfficeAction@uspto.gov
Cc: PAIR_eOfficeAction@uspto.gov
Subject: Private PAIR Correspondence Notification for Customer Number 26362

May 07, 2015 05:27:08 AM

Dear PAIR Customer:

LOUIS J. HOFFMAN, P.C.
14301 North 87th Street, Suite 312
Scottsdale, AZ 85260
UNITED STATES

The following USPTO patent application(s) associated with your Customer Number, 26362 , have new outgoing correspondence. This correspondence is now available for viewing in Private PAIR.

The official date of notification of the outgoing correspondence will be indicated on the form PTOL-90 accompanying the correspondence.

Disclaimer:
The list of documents shown below is provided as a courtesy and is not part of the official file wrapper. The content of the images shown in PAIR is the official record.

Application	Document	Mailroom Date	Attorney Docket No.
13970515	ISSUE.NTF	05/06/2015	23-CON4

To view your correspondence online or update your email addresses, please visit us anytime at https://sportal.uspto.gov/secure/myportal/privatepair.

If you have any questions, please email the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at EBC@uspto.gov with 'e-Office Action' on the subject line or call 1-866-217-9197 during the following hours:

Monday - Friday 6:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m.

Thank you for prompt attention to this notice,

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

PATENT APPLICATION INFORMATION RETRIEVAL SYSTEM

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	ISSUE DATE	PATENT NO.	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
13/970,515	05/26/2015	9043228	23-CON4	2289

26362 7590 05/06/2015

LOUIS J. HOFFMAN, P.C.
14301 North 87th Street, Suite 312
Scottsdale, AZ 85260

ISSUE NOTIFICATION

The projected patent number and issue date are specified above.

Determination of Patent Term Adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154 (b)
(application filed on or after May 29, 2000)

The Patent Term Adjustment is 0 day(s). Any patent to issue from the above-identified application will include an indication of the adjustment on the front page.

If a Continued Prosecution Application (CPA) was filed in the above-identified application, the filing date that determines Patent Term Adjustment is the filing date of the most recent CPA.

Applicant will be able to obtain more detailed information by accessing the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) WEB site (http://pair.uspto.gov).

Any questions regarding the Patent Term Extension or Adjustment determination should be directed to the Office of Patent Legal Administration at (571)-272-7702. Questions relating to issue and publication fee payments should be directed to the Application Assistance Unit (AAU) of the Office of Data Management (ODM) at (571)-272-4200.

APPLICANT(s) (Please see PAIR WEB site http://pair.uspto.gov for additional applicants):

DDR HOLDINGS, LLC, Dunwoody, GA, Assignee (with 37 CFR 1.172 Interest);
D. Delano Ross JR., Peachtree Corners, GA;
Daniel D. Ross, Dunwoody, GA;
Joseph R. Michaels, Hephzibah, GA;
William R. May, Atlanta, GA;
Richard A. Anderson, Powder Springs, GA;

The United States represents the largest, most dynamic marketplace in the world and is an unparalleled location for business investment, innovation, and commercialization of new technologies. The USA offers tremendous resources and advantages for those who invest and manufacture goods here. Through SelectUSA, our nation works to encourage and facilitate business investment. To learn more about why the USA is the best country in the world to develop technology, manufacture products, and grow your business, visit SelectUSA.gov.

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

Examiner Initials	Item	Document Number	Publication Date	Name of Patentee or Applicant	Filing Date (if appropriate)
	88	6629135	09/30/2003	Ross et al.	
	89	6763343	07/13/2004	Brooke et al.	
	90	7058597	06/06/2006	Ronning et al.	
	91	7337133	02/26/2008	Bezos et al.	
	92	7565308	07/21/2009	Bollay	
Change(s) applied	93	7930207	04/19/2011	Merriman et al.	
to document,	94	20020065772	05/30/2002	Saliba et al.	
/S.R.R/	95	20040042432	03/04/2004	Riazi et al.	
3/3/2015	96	20040117442	06/17/2004	Thielen	

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

Examiner Initials	Item	Country Code-Number	Publication Date	Name of Patentee	Translation Yes / No
	97	WO 99/46709	09/16/1999	Voorhees et al.	No

Examiner: /Yogesh Garg/ Date Considered: 10/03/2013

EXAMINER: Initial if reference considered whether or not citation is in conformance with MPEP 609. Draw line through citation if not in conformance *and* not considered. Include copy of this form with next communication to applicant.

ALL REFERENCES CONSIDERED EXCEPT WHERE LINED THROUGH. /Y.G./

PART B - FEE(S) TRANSMITTAL

Complete and send this form, together with applicable fee(s), to: Mail **Mail Stop ISSUE FEE**
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
or Fax (571)-273-2885

INSTRUCTIONS: This form should be used for transmitting the ISSUE FEE and PUBLICATION FEE (if required). Blocks 1 through 5 should be completed where appropriate. All further correspondence including the Patent, advance orders and notification of maintenance fees will be mailed to the current correspondence address as indicated unless corrected below or directed otherwise in Block 1, by (a) specifying a new correspondence address; and/or (b) indicating a separate "FEE ADDRESS" for maintenance fee notifications.

CURRENT CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS (Note: Use Block 1 for any change of address)

26362 7590 01/21/2015
LOUIS J. HOFFMAN, P.C.
14301 North 87th Street, Suite 312
Scottsdale, AZ 85260

Note: A certificate of mailing can only be used for domestic mailings of the Fee(s) Transmittal. This certificate cannot be used for any other accompanying papers. Each additional paper, such as an assignment or formal drawing, must have its own certificate of mailing or transmission.

Certificate of Mailing or Transmission

I hereby certify that this fee transmittal is being filed with the USPTO via the EFS-Web system on the date indicated below.

Donald L. Hertz	(Depositor's name)
/Donald L. Hertz/	(Signature)
04/20/2015	(Date)

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
13/970,515	08/19/2013	D. Delano Ross JR.	23-CON4	2289

TITLE OF INVENTION: A specially programmed computer server serving pages offering commercial opportunities for merchants through coordinated offsite marketing

APPLN. TYPE	ENTITY STATUS	ISSUE FEE DUE	PUBLICATION FEE DUE	PREV. PAID ISSUE FEE	TOTAL FEE(S) DUE	DATE DUE
nonprovisional	UNDISCOUNTED	$960	$0	$0	$960	04/21/2015

EXAMINER	ART UNIT	CLASS-SUBCLASS
GARG, YOGESH C	3625	705-026410

1. Change of correspondence address or indication of "Fee Address" (37 CFR 1.363).

☐ Change of correspondence address (or Change of Correspondence Address form PTO/SB/122) attached.

☐ "Fee Address" indication (or "Fee Address" Indication form PTO/SB/47; Rev 03-02 or more recent) attached. **Use of a Customer Number is required.**

2. For printing on the patent front page, list

(1) The names of up to 3 registered patent attorneys or agents OR, alternatively,

(2) The name of a single firm (having as a member a registered attorney or agent) and the names of up to 2 registered patent attorneys or agents. If no name is listed, no name will be printed.

1 Louis J. Hoffman
2
3

3. ASSIGNEE NAME AND RESIDENCE DATA TO BE PRINTED ON THE PATENT (print or type)

PLEASE NOTE: Unless an assignee is identified below, no assignee data will appear on the patent. If an assignee is identified below, the document has been filed for recordation as set forth in 37 CFR 3.11. Completion of this form is NOT a substitute for filing an assignment.

(A) NAME OF ASSIGNEE: DDR HOLDINGS, LLC

(B) RESIDENCE: (CITY and STATE OR COUNTRY): DUNWOODY, GA

Please check the appropriate assignee category or categories (will not be printed on the patent) : ☐ Individual ☑ Corporation or other private group entity ☐ Government

4a. The following fee(s) are submitted:

☑ Issue Fee
☑ Publication Fee (No small entity discount permitted)
☐ Advance Order - # of Copies _____

4b. Payment of Fee(s): **(Please first reapply any previously paid issue fee shown above)**

☐ A check is enclosed.
☑ Payment by credit card. (through EFS-Web system)
☐ The director is hereby authorized to charge the required fee(s), any deficiency, or credits any overpayment, to Deposit Account Number _____ (enclose an extra copy of this form).

5. **Change in Entity Status** (from status indicated above)

☐ Applicant certifying micro entity status. See 37 CFR 1.29
NOTE: Absent a valid certification of Micro Entity Status (see forms PTO/SB/15A and 15B), issue fee payment in the micro entity amount will not be accepted at the risk of application abandonment.

☐ Applicant asserting small entity status. See 37 CFR 1.27
NOTE: If the application was previously under micro entity status, checking this box will be taken to be a notification of loss of entitlement to micro entity status.

☐ Applicant changing to regular undiscounted fee status.
NOTE: Checking this box will be taken to be a notification of loss of entitlement to small or micro entity status, as applicable.

NOTE: This form must be signed in accordance with 37 CFR 1.31 and 1.33. See 37 CFR 1.4 for signature requirements and certifications.

Authorized Signature /Louis J. Hoffman/ Date 04/20/2015

Typed or printed name Louis J. Hoffman Registration No. 38918

Electronic Patent Application Fee Transmittal

Application Number:	13970515
Filing Date:	19-Aug-2013
Title of Invention:	A specially programmed computer server serving pages offering commercial opportunities for merchants through coordinated offsite marketing
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	D. Delano Ross
Filer:	Louis J. Hoffman/Donald Hertz
Attorney Docket Number:	23-CON4

Filed as Large Entity

Filing Fees for Utility under 35 USC 111(a)

Description	Fee Code	Quantity	Amount	Sub-Total in USD($)
Basic Filing:				
Pages:				
Claims:				
Miscellaneous-Filing:				
Petition:				
Patent-Appeals-and-Interference:				
Post-Allowance-and-Post-Issuance:				

Description	Fee Code	Quantity	Amount	Sub-Total in USD($)
Utility Appl Issue Fee	1501	1	960	960
Publ. Fee- Early, Voluntary, or Normal	1504	1	0	0
Extension-of-Time:				
Miscellaneous:				
		Total in USD ($)		**960**

Electronic Acknowledgement Receipt

EFS ID:	22109596
Application Number:	13970515
International Application Number:	
Confirmation Number:	2289
Title of Invention:	A specially programmed computer server serving pages offering commercial opportunities for merchants through coordinated offsite marketing
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	D. Delano Ross
Customer Number:	26362
Filer:	Louis J. Hoffman/Donald Hertz
Filer Authorized By:	Louis J. Hoffman
Attorney Docket Number:	23-CON4
Receipt Date:	20-APR-2015
Filing Date:	19-AUG-2013
Time Stamp:	15:11:22
Application Type:	Utility under 35 USC 111(a)

Payment information:

Submitted with Payment	yes
Payment Type	Credit Card
Payment was successfully received in RAM	$960
RAM confirmation Number	1737
Deposit Account	
Authorized User	

The Director of the USPTO is hereby authorized to charge indicated fees and credit any overpayment as follows:

File Listing:

Document Number	Document Description	File Name	File Size(Bytes)/ Message Digest	Multi Part /.zip	Pages (if appl.)
1	Issue Fee Payment (PTO-85B)	15-04-20-DDR-CON4-Issue_fee_pay.pdf	135023 01a2f6b26e0427dd34e71a64698ab9d77ab87d1a	no	1
Warnings:					
Information:					
2	Fee Worksheet (SB06)	fee-info.pdf	32167 3909372e9f43a427a4655ee8b6b38ec2b42c9efc	no	2
Warnings:					
Information:					
		Total Files Size (in bytes):	167190		

This Acknowledgement Receipt evidences receipt on the noted date by the USPTO of the indicated documents, characterized by the applicant, and including page counts, where applicable. It serves as evidence of receipt similar to a Post Card, as described in MPEP 503.

New Applications Under 35 U.S.C. 111
If a new application is being filed and the application includes the necessary components for a filing date (see 37 CFR 1.53(b)-(d) and MPEP 506), a Filing Receipt (37 CFR 1.54) will be issued in due course and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the filing date of the application.

National Stage of an International Application under 35 U.S.C. 371
If a timely submission to enter the national stage of an international application is compliant with the conditions of 35 U.S.C. 371 and other applicable requirements a Form PCT/DO/EO/903 indicating acceptance of the application as a national stage submission under 35 U.S.C. 371 will be issued in addition to the Filing Receipt, in due course.

New International Application Filed with the USPTO as a Receiving Office
If a new international application is being filed and the international application includes the necessary components for an international filing date (see PCT Article 11 and MPEP 1810), a Notification of the International Application Number and of the International Filing Date (Form PCT/RO/105) will be issued in due course, subject to prescriptions concerning national security, and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the international filing date of the application.

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

NOTICE OF ALLOWANCE AND FEE(S) DUE

26362 7590 01/21/2015

LOUIS J. HOFFMAN, P.C.
14301 North 87th Street, Suite 312
Scottsdale, AZ 85260

EXAMINER
GARG, YOGESH C

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3625	

DATE MAILED: 01/21/2015

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
13/970,515	08/19/2013	D. Delano Ross JR.	23-CON4	2289

TITLE OF INVENTION: A specially programmed computer server serving pages offering commercial opportunities for merchants through coordinated offsite marketing

APPLN. TYPE	ENTITY STATUS	ISSUE FEE DUE	PUBLICATION FEE DUE	PREV. PAID ISSUE FEE	TOTAL FEE(S) DUE	DATE DUE
nonprovisional	UNDISCOUNTED	$960	$0	$0	$960	04/21/2015

THE APPLICATION IDENTIFIED ABOVE HAS BEEN EXAMINED AND IS ALLOWED FOR ISSUANCE AS A PATENT. PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS CLOSED. THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWANCE IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS. THIS APPLICATION IS SUBJECT TO WITHDRAWAL FROM ISSUE AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE OFFICE OR UPON PETITION BY THE APPLICANT. SEE 37 CFR 1.313 AND MPEP 1308.

THE ISSUE FEE AND PUBLICATION FEE (IF REQUIRED) MUST BE PAID WITHIN THREE MONTHS FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS NOTICE OR THIS APPLICATION SHALL BE REGARDED AS ABANDONED. THIS STATUTORY PERIOD CANNOT BE EXTENDED. SEE 35 U.S.C. 151. THE ISSUE FEE DUE INDICATED ABOVE DOES NOT REFLECT A CREDIT FOR ANY PREVIOUSLY PAID ISSUE FEE IN THIS APPLICATION. IF AN ISSUE FEE HAS PREVIOUSLY BEEN PAID IN THIS APPLICATION (AS SHOWN ABOVE), THE RETURN OF PART B OF THIS FORM WILL BE CONSIDERED A REQUEST TO REAPPLY THE PREVIOUSLY PAID ISSUE FEE TOWARD THE ISSUE FEE NOW DUE.

HOW TO REPLY TO THIS NOTICE:

I. Review the ENTITY STATUS shown above. If the ENTITY STATUS is shown as SMALL or MICRO, verify whether entitlement to that entity status still applies.

If the ENTITY STATUS is the same as shown above, pay the TOTAL FEE(S) DUE shown above.

If the ENTITY STATUS is changed from that shown above, on PART B - FEE(S) TRANSMITTAL, complete section number 5 titled "Change in Entity Status (from status indicated above)".

For purposes of this notice, small entity fees are 1/2 the amount of undiscounted fees, and micro entity fees are 1/2 the amount of small entity fees.

II. PART B - FEE(S) TRANSMITTAL, or its equivalent, must be completed and returned to the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) with your ISSUE FEE and PUBLICATION FEE (if required). If you are charging the fee(s) to your deposit account, section "4b" of Part B - Fee(s) Transmittal should be completed and an extra copy of the form should be submitted. If an equivalent of Part B is filed, a request to reapply a previously paid issue fee must be clearly made, and delays in processing may occur due to the difficulty in recognizing the paper as an equivalent of Part B.

III. All communications regarding this application must give the application number. Please direct all communications prior to issuance to Mail Stop ISSUE FEE unless advised to the contrary.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: Utility patents issuing on applications filed on or after Dec. 12, 1980 may require payment of maintenance fees. It is patentee's responsibility to ensure timely payment of maintenance fees when due.

PART B - FEE(S) TRANSMITTAL

Complete and send this form, together with applicable fee(s), to: Mail **Mail Stop ISSUE FEE**
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
or Fax (571)-273-2885

INSTRUCTIONS: This form should be used for transmitting the ISSUE FEE and PUBLICATION FEE (if required). Blocks 1 through 5 should be completed where appropriate. All further correspondence including the Patent, advance orders and notification of maintenance fees will be mailed to the current correspondence address as indicated unless corrected below or directed otherwise in Block 1, by (a) specifying a new correspondence address; and/or (b) indicating a separate "FEE ADDRESS" for maintenance fee notifications.

CURRENT CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS (Note: Use Block 1 for any change of address)

26362 7590 01/21/2015
LOUIS J. HOFFMAN, P.C.
14301 North 87th Street, Suite 312
Scottsdale, AZ 85260

Note: A certificate of mailing can only be used for domestic mailings of the Fee(s) Transmittal. This certificate cannot be used for any other accompanying papers. Each additional paper, such as an assignment or formal drawing, must have its own certificate of mailing or transmission.

Certificate of Mailing or Transmission
I hereby certify that this Fee(s) Transmittal is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage for first class mail in an envelope addressed to the Mail Stop ISSUE FEE address above, or being facsimile transmitted to the USPTO (571) 273-2885, on the date indicated below.

(Depositor's name)
(Signature)
(Date)

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
13/970,515	08/19/2013	D. Delano Ross JR.	23-CON4	2289

TITLE OF INVENTION: A specially programmed computer server serving pages offering commercial opportunities for merchants through coordinated offsite marketing

APPLN. TYPE	ENTITY STATUS	ISSUE FEE DUE	PUBLICATION FEE DUE	PREV. PAID ISSUE FEE	TOTAL FEE(S) DUE	DATE DUE
nonprovisional	UNDISCOUNTED	$960	$0	$0	$960	04/21/2015

EXAMINER	ART UNIT	CLASS-SUBCLASS
GARG, YOGESH C	3625	705-026410

1. Change of correspondence address or indication of "Fee Address" (37 CFR 1.363).
- ❑ Change of correspondence address (or Change of Correspondence Address form PTO/SB/122) attached.
- ❑ "Fee Address" indication (or "Fee Address" Indication form PTO/SB/47; Rev 03-02 or more recent) attached. **Use of a Customer Number is required.**

2. For printing on the patent front page, list
(1) The names of up to 3 registered patent attorneys or agents OR, alternatively,
(2) The name of a single firm (having as a member a registered attorney or agent) and the names of up to 2 registered patent attorneys or agents. If no name is listed, no name will be printed.
1 _____
2 _____
3 _____

3. ASSIGNEE NAME AND RESIDENCE DATA TO BE PRINTED ON THE PATENT (print or type)

PLEASE NOTE: Unless an assignee is identified below, no assignee data will appear on the patent. If an assignee is identified below, the document has been filed for recordation as set forth in 37 CFR 3.11. Completion of this form is NOT a substitute for filing an assignment.

(A) NAME OF ASSIGNEE (B) RESIDENCE: (CITY and STATE OR COUNTRY)

Please check the appropriate assignee category or categories (will not be printed on the patent) : ❑ Individual ❑ Corporation or other private group entity ❑ Government

4a. The following fee(s) are submitted:
- ❑ Issue Fee
- ❑ Publication Fee (No small entity discount permitted)
- ❑ Advance Order - # of Copies _____

4b. Payment of Fee(s): **(Please first reapply any previously paid issue fee shown above)**
- ❑ A check is enclosed.
- ❑ Payment by credit card. Form PTO-2038 is attached.
- ❑ The director is hereby authorized to charge the required fee(s), any deficiency, or credits any overpayment, to Deposit Account Number _____ (enclose an extra copy of this form).

5. **Change in Entity Status** (from status indicated above)
- ❑ Applicant certifying micro entity status. See 37 CFR 1.29
  NOTE: Absent a valid certification of Micro Entity Status (see forms PTO/SB/15A and 15B), issue fee payment in the micro entity amount will not be accepted at the risk of application abandonment.
- ❑ Applicant asserting small entity status. See 37 CFR 1.27
  NOTE: If the application was previously under micro entity status, checking this box will be taken to be a notification of loss of entitlement to micro entity status.
- ❑ Applicant changing to regular undiscounted fee status.
  NOTE: Checking this box will be taken to be a notification of loss of entitlement to small or micro entity status, as applicable.

NOTE: This form must be signed in accordance with 37 CFR 1.31 and 1.33. See 37 CFR 1.4 for signature requirements and certifications.

Authorized Signature _____ Date _____

Typed or printed name _____ Registration No. _____

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
13/970,515	08/19/2013	D. Delano Ross JR.	23-CON4	2289

26362 7590 01/21/2015

LOUIS J. HOFFMAN, P.C.
14301 North 87th Street, Suite 312
Scottsdale, AZ 85260

EXAMINER	
GARG, YOGESH C	

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3625	

DATE MAILED: 01/21/2015

Determination of Patent Term Adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154 (b)
(Applications filed on or after May 29, 2000)

The Office has discontinued providing a Patent Term Adjustment (PTA) calculation with the Notice of Allowance.

Section 1(h)(2) of the AIA Technical Corrections Act amended 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(3)(B)(i) to eliminate the requirement that the Office provide a patent term adjustment determination with the notice of allowance. See Revisions to Patent Term Adjustment, 78 Fed. Reg. 19416, 19417 (Apr. 1, 2013). Therefore, the Office is no longer providing an initial patent term adjustment determination with the notice of allowance. The Office will continue to provide a patent term adjustment determination with the Issue Notification Letter that is mailed to applicant approximately three weeks prior to the issue date of the patent, and will include the patent term adjustment on the patent. Any request for reconsideration of the patent term adjustment determination (or reinstatement of patent term adjustment) should follow the process outlined in 37 CFR 1.705.

Any questions regarding the Patent Term Extension or Adjustment determination should be directed to the Office of Patent Legal Administration at (571)-272-7702. Questions relating to issue and publication fee payments should be directed to the Customer Service Center of the Office of Patent Publication at 1-(888)-786-0101 or (571)-272-4200.

OMB Clearance and PRA Burden Statement for PTOL-85 Part B

The Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995 requires Federal agencies to obtain Office of Management and Budget approval before requesting most types of information from the public. When OMB approves an agency request to collect information from the public, OMB (i) provides a valid OMB Control Number and expiration date for the agency to display on the instrument that will be used to collect the information and (ii) requires the agency to inform the public about the OMB Control Number's legal significance in accordance with 5 CFR 1320.5(b).

The information collected by PTOL-85 Part B is required by 37 CFR 1.311. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 12 minutes to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450. Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

Privacy Act Statement

The Privacy Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-579) requires that you be given certain information in connection with your submission of the attached form related to a patent application or patent. Accordingly, pursuant to the requirements of the Act, please be advised that: (1) the general authority for the collection of this information is 35 U.S.C. 2(b)(2); (2) furnishing of the information solicited is voluntary; and (3) the principal purpose for which the information is used by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office is to process and/or examine your submission related to a patent application or patent. If you do not furnish the requested information, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office may not be able to process and/or examine your submission, which may result in termination of proceedings or abandonment of the application or expiration of the patent.

The information provided by you in this form will be subject to the following routine uses:

1. The information on this form will be treated confidentially to the extent allowed under the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552) and the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C 552a). Records from this system of records may be disclosed to the Department of Justice to determine whether disclosure of these records is required by the Freedom of Information Act.
2. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, in the course of presenting evidence to a court, magistrate, or administrative tribunal, including disclosures to opposing counsel in the course of settlement negotiations.
3. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to a Member of Congress submitting a request involving an individual, to whom the record pertains, when the individual has requested assistance from the Member with respect to the subject matter of the record.
4. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to a contractor of the Agency having need for the information in order to perform a contract. Recipients of information shall be required to comply with the requirements of the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552a(m).
5. A record related to an International Application filed under the Patent Cooperation Treaty in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the International Bureau of the World Intellectual Property Organization, pursuant to the Patent Cooperation Treaty.
6. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to another federal agency for purposes of National Security review (35 U.S.C. 181) and for review pursuant to the Atomic Energy Act (42 U.S.C. 218(c)).
7. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the Administrator, General Services, or his/her designee, during an inspection of records conducted by GSA as part of that agency's responsibility to recommend improvements in records management practices and programs, under authority of 44 U.S.C. 2904 and 2906. Such disclosure shall be made in accordance with the GSA regulations governing inspection of records for this purpose, and any other relevant (i.e., GSA or Commerce) directive. Such disclosure shall not be used to make determinations about individuals.
8. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the public after either publication of the application pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 122(b) or issuance of a patent pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 151. Further, a record may be disclosed, subject to the limitations of 37 CFR 1.14, as a routine use, to the public if the record was filed in an application which became abandoned or in which the proceedings were terminated and which application is referenced by either a published application, an application open to public inspection or an issued patent.
9. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to a Federal, State, or local law enforcement agency, if the USPTO becomes aware of a violation or potential violation of law or regulation.

Notice of Allowability	Application No. 13/970,515	Applicant(s) ROSS ET AL.	
	Examiner YOGESH C. GARG	Art Unit 3625	AIA (First Inventor to File) Status No

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to *12/24/2014*.
   ☐ A declaration(s)/affidavit(s) under **37 CFR 1.130(b)** was/were filed on_____.
2. ☐ An election was made by the applicant in response to a restriction requirement set forth during the interview on _____; the restriction requirement and election have been incorporated into this action.
3. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are *71-86*. As a result of the allowed claim(s), you may be eligible to benefit from the **Patent Prosecution Highway** program at a participating intellectual property office for the corresponding application. For more information, please see http://www.uspto.gov/patents/init_events/pph/index.jsp or send an inquiry to PPHfeedback@uspto.gov .
4. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

   Certified copies:

   a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some *c) ☐ None of the:
   1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
   2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____ .
   3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

   * Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
   ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.

   Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☒ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date _____
3. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
4. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date _____ .
5. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
6. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
7. ☐ Other _____.

/YOGESH C GARG/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3625

The present application is being examined under the pre-AIA first to invent provisions.

Applicant's amendment filed 12/24/2014 is entered. Claims 71-72 are amended. New claims 70-86 are added. Claims 71-86 are pending for examination.

Information Disclosure Statement

1. The information disclosure statement (IDS) submitted on 12/5/2014 was filed after the mailing date of the Non-final office action on 9/26/2014. The submission is in compliance with the provisions of 37 CFR 1.97. Accordingly, the information disclosure statement is being considered by the examiner.

Terminal Disclaimer

2. The terminal disclaimer filed on 9/12/2014 disclaiming the terminal portion of any patent granted on this application which would extend beyond the expiration date of US Patents 8515825, 7818399, 6993572, and 6629135 has been reviewed and is accepted. The terminal disclaimer has been recorded.

Response to Arguments

3. Applicant's arguments, see Remarks, filed 12/24/2014, with respect to rejection of claims 71-79 have been fully considered and are persuasive. The rejection of claims 71-79 under 35 USC 101 has been withdrawn.

Examiner's Amendment

4. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

New claim 79 is a system claim and claims 80-86 depend from the system claim reciting as "method claims". Examiner interprets that this is a typographical error and they should have been recited as "system claims" depending from a system claim 79. Accordingly an Examiner's amendment is made below.

The application has been amended as follows:

80. (Currently amended) The ~~method~~ system of claim 79 further comprising the information storage, wherein the information storage is a device coupled to the computer server, and wherein the computer system is further programmed to serve a website of an outsource provider.

81. (Currently amended) The ~~method~~ system of claim 79 wherein at least some of the visually perceptible elements are each associated with respective of a plurality of URLs, each of which URLs also are present on at least some of the web pages of the host website, and which URLs point to respective web pages of the host website.

82. (Currently amended) The ~~method~~ system of claim 79 wherein the commerce object associated with the URL that has been activated comprises information defining

an electronic catalog having a multitude of products offered for sale by the merchant through a website of an outsource provider, and wherein the composite page contains one or more selectable URLs connecting a hierarchical set of additional web pages of the outsource provider website, each pertaining to a subset of the product offerings in the catalog.

83. (Currently amended) The ~~method~~ system of claim 82 further comprising, automatically with the computer system, (i) accepting search parameters inputted at the visitor computing device, (ii) using said parameters to search for specific products within the catalog, and (iii) serving the results for display on the visitor computing device.

84. (Currently amended) The ~~method~~ system of claim 83 wherein the search parameters are inputted through a browser running on the visitor computing device and wherein the results are displayed through the browser.

85. (Currently amended) The ~~method~~ system of claim 79 wherein the commerce object associated with the URL that has been activated comprises information defining a multitude of products of at least the merchant, and further comprising, automatically with the computer system, (i) accepting search parameters inputted at the visitor computing device, (ii) using said parameters to search for specific products within the plurality of products, and (iii) serving the results for display on the visitor computing device.

86. (Currently amended) The ~~method~~ system of claim 85 wherein the search parameters are inputted through a browser running on the visitor computing device and wherein the results are displayed through the browser.

5. Claims 71-86 are allowed.

6. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

Regarding claim 71, the prior art of record, alone or combined, neither teaches nor renders obvious a method of serving informational pages offering commercial opportunities, the method comprising, with a computer system serving displayable information of an outsource provider, steps as a whole, upon receiving over the Internet an electronic request generated by an Internet- accessible computing device of a visitor in response to selection of a uniform resource locator (URL) within a source web page that has been served to the visitor computing device when visiting a host website controlled by a third party to the owner of the computer system, wherein the URL correlates the source web page with at least one commerce object associated with a buying opportunity of a merchant that is a third party to the owner of the computer system, automatically serving to the visitor computing device a dynamically generated composite page containing instructions directing the visitor computing device to display: (i) information associated with the commerce object associated with the URL that has been activated, which commerce object includes at least one product available for sale through the computer system after activating the URL, and (ii) a plurality of visually perceptible elements visually corresponding to the source web page, wherein the visually perceptible elements comprise any of the following applicable

features: logos, colors, page layout, navigation systems, frames, and visually perceptible mouse-over effects, wherein the plurality of visually perceptible elements define an overall appearance of the composite page that, excluding the information associated with the commerce object, visually corresponds to the source web page, and wherein the instructions direct the visitor computing device to download data defining the visually perceptible elements from an information storage that is accessible to the visitor computing device through the Internet.

The reasons for allowance for dependent claims 72-78 are same as set forth for claim 71 above.

Regarding claim 79, its limitations are similar to the limitations of claim 71 and therefore claim 79 and its dependent claims 80-86 are allowed on the basis of same rationale as set forth for claim 71 above.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled “Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance.”

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to YOGESH C. GARG whose telephone number is (571)272-6756. The examiner can normally be reached on Increased Flex/Hoteling.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jeffrey A. Smith can be reached on 571-272-6763. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

YOGESH C GARG
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3625

/YOGESH C GARG/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3625

Search Notes	Application/Control No.	Applicant(s)/Patent Under Reexamination
	13970515	ROSS ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	YOGESH C GARG	3625

CPC- SEARCHED		
Symbol	Date	Examiner

CPC COMBINATION SETS - SEARCHED		
Symbol	Date	Examiner

US CLASSIFICATION SEARCHED			
Class	Subclass	Date	Examiner
705	26.1, 27.1	10/6/2013	YG
707	E17.117	10/6/2013	YG
709	218	10/6/2013	YG
715	207	10/6/2013	YG

SEARCH NOTES		
Search Notes	Date	Examiner
Keyword search on east database	10/6/2013	YG
Palm search for inventors' names	10/6/2013	YG
Reviewed Patents resukting from the parent applications	10/6/2013	YG
Revised Keyword search on east database	4/30/2014	YG
Backward and forward search of best cited references	4/30/2014	YG
Interference search	4/30/2014	YG
Pqdialog Search	4/30/2014	YG
Consulted panel 101. CLaims defiined Abstract per ALice ruling	9/17/2014	YG

INTERFERENCE SEARCH			
US Class/ CPC Symbol	US Subclass / CPC Group	Date	Examiner
705	26.1,26.7,27.1,14.19,14.27,14.39	4/30/2014	YG
709	218,245	4/30/2014	YG

INTERFERENCE SEARCH			
US Class/ CPC Symbol	**US Subclass / CPC Group**	**Date**	**Examiner**
715	205,207,234,781	4/30/2014	YG
707	E17.117	4/30/2014	YG

PTO/SB/08a (01-10)
Approved for use through 07/31/2012. OMB 0651-0031
U.S. Patent and Trademark Office; U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT

(Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)

Application Number	13970515
Filing Date	2013-08-19
First Named Inventor	D. Delano Ross Jr.
Art Unit	3625
Examiner Name	Garg, Yogesh C.
Attorney Docket Number	23-CON4

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Examiner Initials*	Cite No	Include name of the author (in CAPITAL LETTERS), title of the article (when appropriate), title of the item (book, magazine, journal, serial, symposium, catalog, etc), date, pages(s), volume-issue number(s), publisher, city and/or country where published.	T[5]

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT (Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)		
	Application Number	13970515
	Filing Date	2013-08-19
	First Named Inventor	D. Delano Ross Jr.
	Art Unit	3625
	Examiner Name	Garg, Yogesh C.
	Attorney Docket Number	23-CON4

/Y.G./	1	OPINION and JUDGMENT; DDR Holdings, LLC v. Hotels.com, L.P.; U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, Case Number 2013-1505; December 5, 2014.	☐

If you wish to add additional non-patent literature document citation information please click the Add button Add

EXAMINER SIGNATURE

Examiner Signature	/Yogesh Garg/	Date Considered	01/05/2015

*EXAMINER: Initial if reference considered, whether or not citation is in conformance with MPEP 609. Draw line through a citation if not in conformance and not considered. Include copy of this form with next communication to applicant.

[1] See Kind Codes of USPTO Patent Documents at www.USPTO.GOV or MPEP 901.04. [2] Enter office that issued the document, by the two-letter code (WIPO Standard ST.3). [3] For Japanese patent documents, the indication of the year of the reign of the Emperor must precede the serial number of the patent document. [4] Kind of document by the appropriate symbols as indicated on the document under WIPO Standard ST.16 if possible. [5] Applicant is to place a check mark here if English language translation is attached.

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT

(Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)

Application Number	13970515
Filing Date	2013-08-19
First Named Inventor	D. Delano Ross Jr.
Art Unit	3625
Examiner Name	Garg, Yogesh C.
Attorney Docket Number	23-CON4

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

Please see 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98 to make the appropriate selection(s):

☐ That each item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was first cited in any communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application not more than three months prior to the filing of the information disclosure statement. See 37 CFR 1.97(e)(1).

OR

☒ That no item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was cited in a communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application, and, to the knowledge of the person signing the certification after making reasonable inquiry, no item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was known to any individual designated in 37 CFR 1.56(c) more than three months prior to the filing of the information disclosure statement. See 37 CFR 1.97(e)(2).

☐ See attached certification statement.

☐ The fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17 (p) has been submitted herewith.

☐ A certification statement is not submitted herewith.

SIGNATURE

A signature of the applicant or representative is required in accordance with CFR 1.33, 10.18. Please see CFR 1.4(d) for the form of the signature.

Signature	/Louis J. Hoffman/	Date (YYYY-MM-DD)	2014-12-05
Name/Print	Louis J. Hoffman	Registration Number	38918

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 1 hour to complete, including gathering, preparing and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. **SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**

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2. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, in the course of presenting evidence to a court, magistrate, or administrative tribunal, including disclosures to opposing counsel in the course of settlement negotiations.

3. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to a Member of Congress submitting a request involving an individual, to whom the record pertains, when the individual has requested assistance from the Member with respect to the subject matter of the record.

4. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to a contractor of the Agency having need for the information in order to perform a contract. Recipients of information shall be required to comply with the requirements of the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552a(m).

5. A record related to an International Application filed under the Patent Cooperation Treaty in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the International Bureau of the World Intellectual Property Organization, pursuant to the Patent Cooperation Treaty.

6. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to another federal agency for purposes of National Security review (35 U.S.C. 181) and for review pursuant to the Atomic Energy Act (42 U.S.C. 218(c)).

7. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the Administrator, General Services, or his/her designee, during an inspection of records conducted by GSA as part of that agency's responsibility to recommend improvements in records management practices and programs, under authority of 44 U.S.C. 2904 and 2906. Such disclosure shall be made in accordance with the GSA regulations governing inspection of records for this purpose, and any other relevant (i.e., GSA or Commerce) directive. Such disclosure shall not be used to make determinations about individuals.

8. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the public after either publication of the application pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 122(b) or issuance of a patent pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 151. Further, a record may be disclosed, subject to the limitations of 37 CFR 1.14, as a routine use, to the public if the record was filed in an application which became abandoned or in which the proceedings were terminated and which application is referenced by either a published application, an application open to public inspections or an issued patent.

9. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to a Federal, State, or local law enforcement agency, if the USPTO becomes aware of a violation or potential violation of law or regulation.

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BIB DATA SHEET

CONFIRMATION NO. 2289

SERIAL NUMBER	FILING or 371(c) DATE RULE	CLASS	GROUP ART UNIT	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.
13/970,515	08/19/2013	705	3625	23-CON4

APPLICANTS

DDR HOLDINGS, LLC, Dunwoody, GA, Assignee (with 37 CFR 1.172 Interest);

INVENTORS

D. Delano Ross JR., Peachtree Corners, GA;
Daniel D. Ross, Dunwoody, GA;
Joseph R. Michaels, Hephzibah, GA;
William R. May, Atlanta, GA;
Richard A. Anderson, Powder Springs, GA;

**** CONTINUING DATA **********

This application is a CON of 12/906,979 10/18/2010 PAT 8515825
which is a CON of 11/343,464 01/30/2006 PAT 7818399
which is a CON of 10/461,997 06/11/2003 PAT 6993572
which is a CON of 09/398,268 09/17/1999 PAT 6629135
which claims benefit of 60/100,697 09/17/1998

**** FOREIGN APPLICATIONS **********

**** IF REQUIRED, FOREIGN FILING LICENSE GRANTED ****

09/06/2013

Foreign Priority claimed ☐ Yes ☑ No 35 USC 119(a-d) conditions met ☐ Yes ☐ No Verified and Acknowledged /YOGESH C GARG/ Examiner's Signature	☐ Met after Allowance Initials	STATE OR COUNTRY	SHEETS DRAWINGS	TOTAL CLAIMS	INDEPENDENT CLAIMS
		GA	24	1	1

ADDRESS

LOUIS J. HOFFMAN, P.C.
14301 North 87th Street, Suite 312
Scottsdale, AZ 85260
UNITED STATES

TITLE

A specially programmed computer server serving pages offering commercial opportunities for merchants through coordinated offsite marketing

FILING FEE RECEIVED		
1600	FEES: Authority has been given in Paper No._____ to charge/credit DEPOSIT ACCOUNT No._____ for following:	☐ All Fees ☐ 1.16 Fees (Filing) ☐ 1.17 Fees (Processing Ext. of time) ☐ 1.18 Fees (Issue) ☐ Other _____ ☐ Credit

Issue Classification	Application/Control No.	Applicant(s)/Patent Under Reexamination
	13970515	ROSS ET AL.
	Examiner	**Art Unit**
	YOGESH C GARG	3625

CPC						
Symbol					**Type**	**Version**
G06Q		30	/	0274	F	2013-01-01
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CPC Combination Sets							
Symbol					**Type**	**Set**	**Ranking**	**Version**
			/					
			/					

NONE		**Total Claims Allowed:**	
(Assistant Examiner)	(Date)	16	
/YOGESH C GARG/ Primary Examiner.Art Unit 3625	01/06/2015	O.G. Print Claim(s)	O.G. Print Figure
(Primary Examiner)	(Date)	71	22

Issue Classification	Application/Control No.	Applicant(s)/Patent Under Reexamination
	13970515	ROSS ET AL.
	Examiner	**Art Unit**
	YOGESH C GARG	3625

US ORIGINAL CLASSIFICATION		INTERNATIONAL CLASSIFICATION	
CLASS	SUBCLASS	CLAIMED	NON-CLAIMED
705	26.1	G 0 6 Q 30 / 00 (2012.01.01)	

CROSS REFERENCE(S)					
CLASS	SUBCLASS (ONE SUBCLASS PER BLOCK)				
705	26.7	27.1	14.19	14.27	14.39
707	E17.117				
709	218	245			
715	207	205	234	781	

NONE		Total Claims Allowed:	
(Assistant Examiner)	(Date)	16	
/YOGESH C GARG/ Primary Examiner.Art Unit 3625	01/06/2015	O.G. Print Claim(s)	O.G. Print Figure
(Primary Examiner)	(Date)	71	22

Issue Classification	Application/Control No.	Applicant(s)/Patent Under Reexamination
	13970515	ROSS ET AL.
	Examiner	**Art Unit**
	YOGESH C GARG	3625

☒ Claims renumbered in the same order as presented by applicant ☐ CPA ☒ T.D. ☐ R.1.47

Final	Original	Final	Original	Final	Original	Final	Original	Final	Original	Final	Original	Final	Original	Final	Original
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NONE		**Total Claims Allowed:**	
(Assistant Examiner)	(Date)	16	
/YOGESH C GARG/ Primary Examiner.Art Unit 3625	01/06/2015	O.G. Print Claim(s)	O.G. Print Figure
(Primary Examiner)	(Date)	71	22

To: Louis@valuablepatents.com,donald@valuablepatents.com,shaelyn@valuablepatents.com
From: PAIR_eOfficeAction@uspto.gov
Cc: PAIR_eOfficeAction@uspto.gov
Subject: Private PAIR Correspondence Notification for Customer Number 26362

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UNITED STATES

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Application	Document	Mailroom Date	Attorney Docket No.
13970515	NOA	01/21/2015	23-CON4
	1449	01/21/2015	23-CON4

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UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

PATENT APPLICATION INFORMATION RETRIEVAL SYSTEM

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Inventors	:	Ross, D. Delano Jr. et al.	Art Unit	:	3625
Serial No.	:	13/970,515	Examiner	:	Garg, Yogesh C.
Filing Date	:	08/19/2013	Conf. No.	:	2289
Title	:	A specially programmed computer server serving pages offering commercial opportunities for merchants through coordinated offsite marketing			

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Filed via EFS – December 24, 2014

RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION

Dear Sir:

In response to the Office Action dated September 26, 2014, assignee respectfully requests entry of the following amendments. Reexamination and reconsideration under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111, in view of the amendments and on the basis of the below remarks, is hereby respectfully requested.

- **Amendment to the Title** is found on page 2.
- **Amendments to the Claims** begin on page 3.
- **Remarks** (including interview report) begin on page 8.

No fees are due.

Amendments

IN THE TITLE:

Please amend the title as follows:

A ~~method of a~~ specially programmed computer server serving pages offering commercial opportunities for merchants through coordinated offsite marketing

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-70. (Canceled)

71. (Currently amended) A method of serving informational pages offering commercial opportunities, the method comprising, with a computer system serving displayable information of an outsource provider:

upon receiving over the Internet an electronic request generated by an Internet-accessible computing device of a visitor in response to selection of a uniform resource locator (URL) within a source web page that has been served to the visitor computing device when visiting a host website controlled by a third party to the owner of the computer system, wherein the URL correlates the source web page with at least one commerce object associated with a buying opportunity of a merchant that is a third party to the owner of the computer system,

automatically serving to the visitor computing device a dynamically generated composite page containing instructions directing the visitor computing device to display:

(i) information associated with the commerce object associated with the URL that has been activated, which commerce object includes at least one product available for sale through the computer system after activating the URL, and

(ii) a plurality of visually perceptible elements visually corresponding to the source web page,

wherein the visually perceptible elements comprise any of the following applicable features: logos, colors, page layout, navigation systems, frames, and~~/or~~ visually perceptible mouse-over effects,

wherein the plurality of visually perceptible elements define an overall appearance of the composite page that, excluding the information associated with the commerce object, visually corresponds to the source web page, and

wherein the instructions direct the visitor computing device to download data defining the visually perceptible elements from an information storage that is accessible to the visitor computing device through the Internet.

72. (Currently amended) The method of claim 71 wherein the information storage is a device coupled to the computer system, and wherein the computer system further ~~serving~~ serves a website of [[an]] the outsource provider.

73. (Previous presented) The method of claim 71 wherein at least some of the visually perceptible elements are each associated with respective of a plurality of URLs, each of which URLs also are present on at least some of the web pages of the host website, and which URLs point to respective web pages of the host website.

74. (Previous presented) The method of claim 71 wherein the commerce object associated with the URL that has been activated comprises information defining an electronic catalog having a multitude of products offered for sale by the merchant through a website of an outsource provider, and wherein the composite page contains one or more selectable URLs connecting a hierarchical set of additional web pages of the outsource provider website, each pertaining to a subset of the product offerings in the catalog.

75. (Previous presented) The method of claim 74 further comprising, automatically with the computer system, (i) accepting search parameters inputted at the visitor computing device, (ii) using said parameters to search for specific products within the catalog, and (iii) serving the results for display on the visitor computing device.

76. (Previous presented) The method of claim 75 wherein the search parameters are inputted through a browser running on the visitor computing device and wherein the results are displayed through the browser.

77. (Previous presented) The method of claim 71 wherein the commerce object associated with the URL that has been activated comprises information defining a

multitude of products of at least the merchant, and further comprising, automatically with the computer system, (i) accepting search parameters inputted at the visitor computing device, (ii) using said parameters to search for specific products within the plurality of products, and (iii) serving the results for display on the visitor computing device.

78. (Previous presented) The method of claim 77 wherein the search parameters are inputted through a browser running on the visitor computing device and wherein the results are displayed through the browser.

79. (New) A computer system of an outsource provider programmed to serve informational pages containing displayable information offering commercial opportunities comprising a computer server connected and programmed to:

upon receiving over the Internet an electronic request generated by an Internet-accessible computing device of a visitor in response to selection of a uniform resource locator (URL) within a source web page that has been served to the visitor computing device when visiting a host website controlled by a third party to the owner of the computer system, wherein the URL correlates the source web page with at least one commerce object associated with a buying opportunity of a merchant that is a third party to the owner of the computer system,

automatically serve to the visitor computing device a dynamically generated composite page containing instructions directing the visitor computing device to display:

(i) information associated with the commerce object associated with the URL that has been activated, which commerce object includes at least one product available for sale through the computer system after activating the URL, and

(ii) a plurality of visually perceptible elements visually corresponding to the source web page,

wherein the visually perceptible elements comprise any of the following applicable features: logos, colors, page layout, navigation systems, frames, and visually perceptible mouse-over effects,

wherein the plurality of visually perceptible elements define an overall appearance of the composite page that, excluding the information associated with the commerce object, visually corresponds to the source web page, and

wherein the instructions direct the visitor computing device to download data defining the visually perceptible elements from an information storage that is accessible to the visitor computing device through the Internet.

80. (New) The method of claim 79 further comprising the information storage, wherein the information storage is a device coupled to the computer server, and wherein the computer system is further programmed to serve a website of an outsource provider.

81. (New) The method of claim 79 wherein at least some of the visually perceptible elements are each associated with respective of a plurality of URLs, each of which URLs also are present on at least some of the web pages of the host website, and which URLs point to respective web pages of the host website.

82. (New) The method of claim 79 wherein the commerce object associated with the URL that has been activated comprises information defining an electronic catalog having a multitude of products offered for sale by the merchant through a website of an outsource provider, and wherein the composite page contains one or more selectable URLs connecting a hierarchical set of additional web pages of the outsource provider website, each pertaining to a subset of the product offerings in the catalog.

83. (New) The method of claim 82 further comprising, automatically with the computer system, (i) accepting search parameters inputted at the visitor computing device, (ii) using said parameters to search for specific products within the catalog, and (iii) serving the results for display on the visitor computing device.

84. (New) The method of claim 83 wherein the search parameters are inputted through a browser running on the visitor computing device and wherein the results are displayed through the browser.

85. (New) The method of claim 79 wherein the commerce object associated with the URL that has been activated comprises information defining a multitude of products of at least the merchant, and further comprising, automatically with the computer system, (i) accepting search parameters inputted at the visitor computing device, (ii) using said parameters to search for specific products within the plurality of products, and (iii) serving the results for display on the visitor computing device.

86. (New) The method of claim 85 wherein the search parameters are inputted through a browser running on the visitor computing device and wherein the results are displayed through the browser.

Remarks (including interview report)

Assignee has added apparatus (computer server) counterparts and amends the title so that it does not refer only to the method. Dependent claim 72 is amended for purpose of better consistency with its antecedents.

Assignee thanks the Examiner for the discussion in a brief interview held on December 12, 2014, in which the undersigned and the Examiner discussed the Federal Circuit decision, which assignee brought to the Office's attention through a Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement filed on December 5th. The Examiner indicated that assignee should reply to the outstanding Office Action but that the court decision seemed pertinent to allow examination to proceed. The Examiner asked the undersigned to explain in the written response how the currently requested claims are consonant with the court decision, and assignee does so in this paper.

In response to the undersigned's query, the Examiner also suggested clarifying the "and/or" wording in the portion of the claim referring to the "visually perceptible elements." The purpose of the change is to include in the claim language the concept assignee had argued in a previous Response to Office Action, namely that, "to test whether the 'overall appearance' of the 'composite page' does or does not 'visually correspond,'" a person making that determination "must consider any of those elements [logos, colors, page layout, navigation systems, frames, and visually perceptible mouse-over effects] that are present in a certain instance." An amendment saying "any of the following applicable features," which is in essence wording that the Examiner suggested in the phone call, is presented via this amendment. The amendment does not change the scope of the claim because it matches what assignee previously argued the claim meant.

Although assignee had hoped that the claims of this application could be allowed regardless of the outcome of the court case, now that the court case is available, it seems clear that the pending rejection is not warranted and no new rejection for prior art should be re-introduced, for the reasons discussed in the sections following.

1. **Section 101 – patentability**

What the court said: The court decision holds that the claims of the parent patent under consideration (the '399 Patent) "do not merely recite the performance of some business practice known from the pre-Internet world along with the requirement to perform it on the Internet. Instead, the claimed solution is necessarily rooted in computer technology in order to overcome a problem specifically arising in the realm of computer networks." The decision goes on to explain that the "claims address the problem of retaining website visitors that, if adhering to the routine, conventional functioning of Internet hyperlink protocol, would be instantly transported away from a host's website after 'clicking' on an advertisement and activating a hyperlink." The opinion further points out that the claims say that there are "stored visually perceptible elements," and that "on activation of this link" the outsource provider's web server "construct[s] and serve[s] to the visitor a new, hybrid web page that merges content associated with the products of the third-party merchant with the stored 'visually perceptible elements' from" the host. The opinion proceeds to distinguish the *Ultramercial* opinion by saying that DDR's claims "do not broadly and generically claim 'use of the Internet' to perform an abstract business practice (with insignificant added activity)." Rather, the "claims at issue here specify how interactions with the Internet are manipulated to yield a desired result – a result that overrides the routine and conventional sequence of events ordinarily triggered by the click of a hyperlink." Thus, "When the limitations of the '399 patent's asserted claims are taken together as an ordered combination, the claims recite an invention that is not merely the routine or conventional use of the Internet."

Also the decision held that the "claims include 'additional features' that ensure the claims are 'more than a drafting effort designed to monopolize the [abstract idea].' Alice, 134 S. Ct. at 2357." The claims do not "recite a commonplace business method aimed at processing business information, applying a known business process to the particular technological environment of the Internet, or creating or altering contractual relations using generic computer functions and conventional network operations."

Comparison to the pending claims: The court's comments above addressed the '399 Patent but apply equally well to the claims now pending. The pending claims likewise address the problem of retaining website visitors that would be lost through the usual approach, *i.e.*, as claim 71 says, "selection of a uniform resource locator (URL) within a source web page that has been served to the visitor computing device when visiting a host website." The pending claims likewise (again as claim 71 says) refer to "visually perceptible elements" that the "visitor computing device" is directed to retrieve "from an information storage that is accessible to the visitor computing device." The pending claims likewise cause construction and service to the visitor of a new, hybrid web page that merges content associated with the products of the third-party merchant with the visually perceptible elements related to the host. See claim 71, elements (i) and (ii), which define the combination. The pending claims likewise "do not broadly and generically claim 'use of the Internet' to perform an abstract business practice (with insignificant added activity)" but rather "specify how interactions with the Internet are manipulated to yield a desired result – a result that overrides the routine and conventional sequence of events ordinarily triggered by the click," and indeed the pending claims do so in greater detail than the claims of the '399 Patent.

Comparison to the Office Action: The Office Action premises the Section 101 rejection on the following statements, all of which clash with the court's opinion:

- The claims "are to methods primarily directed to the concept of supporting a commerce opportunity for managing selling or purchasing a commerce object thereby supporting a commercial activity which is a part of fundamental economic practice."
- "These claims are drawn to the abstract idea of managing and supporting a commerce opportunity for selling or purchasing a commerce object."
- "On their face, the claims are drawn to the concept of managing and supporting a commerce opportunity for selling or purchasing a commerce object."
- "[T]he concept of managing and supporting a commerce opportunity for selling or purchasing a commerce object is a fundamental economic practice long

prevalent in our system of commerce. The use of the concept of managing and supporting a commerce opportunity for selling or purchasing a commerce object is also a building block of the modern economy."

- "The relevant question is whether the claims here do more than simply instruct the practitioner to implement the abstract idea of managing and supporting a commerce opportunity for selling or purchasing a commerce object and related tasks on a generic computer. They do not."
- "[T]he function performed by the computer at each step of the process is purely conventional. Using a computer to receive a request associated with a commerce object initiated from a source web page from a user's computing device, based on the received request serving a dynamically generated composite page to the user's computing device to display information associated with the commerce object and plurality of elements corresponding to the source web page – are basic functions of a computer, which are well-understood, routine, conventional activities previously known to the industry and in any event no more than an extension of the abstract idea of managing and supporting a commerce opportunity for selling or purchasing a commerce object. In short, each step does no more than require a generic computer to perform generic computer functions."
- "Considered as an ordered combination, the method adds nothing that is not already present when the steps are considered separately. Viewed as a whole, the method claims simply recite the concept of managing and supporting a commerce opportunity for selling or purchasing a commerce object and related solutions as performed by a generic computer. The method claims do not, for example, purport to improve the functioning of the computer itself. Nor do they effect an improvement in any other technology or technical field. Instead, the claims at issue amount to nothing significantly more than an instruction to apply the abstract idea of managing and supporting a commerce opportunity for

selling or purchasing a commerce object and related solutions using some unspecified, generic computer."

With respect to the claims pending here, assignee respectfully requests that the Office explicitly make the following factual findings:

(1) The claims here are *not* directed *only* to a commercial concept (although they certainly, perhaps like most inventions, have commercial implications);

(2) The "abstract idea" identified by the Office Action (namely, "supporting a commerce opportunity for managing selling or purchasing a commerce object") is not a correct recitation of the "idea" to which the claims are directed;

(3) Even if "selling or purchasing a commerce object" *generally* qualifies as "a fundamental economic practice," what the claims here *actually* claim as a whole is not a "fundamental economic practice" or "well-understood, routine, conventional activities previously known to the industry";

(4) The claims here "do more than simply instruct the practitioner to implement the abstract idea of managing and supporting a commerce opportunity for selling or purchasing a commerce object";

(5) The claims here do not mention the Internet as merely an "environment of use" in a non-limiting preamble; and

(6) As the court decision says, the patent improves Internet-related technology; hence, the previous finding – that the claims here do not "purport to improve the functioning of the computer itself" or "effect an improvement in any other technology or technical field" – was incorrect and is withdrawn.

In addition, apparently the Office has the notion that a claim is abstract based on the mere facts that a particular claimed invention recites "tasks on a generic computer" and/or that the "function performed by the computer at each step of the process is purely conventional." Those views seem contrary to what the *Bilski* case, the *Alice* case, and now the *DDR Holdings* case, say.

Finally, although it is not covered by the opinion, assignee respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the statement in the Office Action that "there is no meaningful distinction between the independent and dependent claims." The dependent claims add significant added limitations that further remove the inventions claimed thereby from the realm of a "mere abstract idea." To support a rejection for Section 101, the Office bears the burden of showing, claim by claim, why the added limitations are conventional or generic, and that they fail to add the "something more" required by *Alice* (even in cases where the claims are "directed to" an abstract idea). The Office cannot meet that burden merely via a sweeping sentence saying that there is "no meaningful distinction," without any articulated reasoning. Clearly, each claim must be evaluated on its own, and the Office bears the burden of proof on this issue.

Assignee respectfully requests appropriate and specific findings of fact consistent with the court decision, and explicit withdrawal of certain statements in the Office Action inconsistent therewith.

Latest "Guidance" to Examiners: The Office issued on December 16, 2014, a new publication, called the "2014 Interim Guidance on Patent Subject Matter Eligibility" (hereinafter "Guidance"), setting forth the analysis examiners should use to examine applications for compliance with Section 101.

Guidance Step 1 inquires whether the claims are directed to, inter alia, a process or machine. The claims here are directed to a process (claim 71) or a computer system (claim 79), which is a machine. This step is clearly satisfied.

Guidance Step 2A (part 1 of the *Mayo* test) asks, "is the claim directed to … an abstract idea (judicially recognized exceptions)?" The Guidance clarifies that "the application of the overall analysis is based on claims *directed to* [an abstract idea] (defined as claims reciting the [abstract idea], i.e., set forth or described), rather than claims merely 'involving' an [abstract idea]." Guidance at fn. 2, *see also* fn. 9 ("An invention is not rendered ineligible for patent simply because it involves an abstract

concept."). Under this standard, it is not possible to identify any abstract idea to which the pending claims here are "directed," for claims 71 or 79 or their dependent claims.

The Office Action proposes, "These claims are drawn to the abstract idea of managing and supporting a commerce opportunity for selling or purchasing a commerce object." This assertion does not meet the requirements of the Guidance, because the attempted definition of an abstract idea seems to refer merely to the claims "involving" the stated abstract idea. Clearly the claims are not "*reciting*" that proposed abstract idea in the required sense of the proposed abstract idea being "set forth or described." Pending claim 71, for example, refers to a "*method of serving informational pages offering commercial opportunities*" as an exemplary purpose of the claim (in the preamble), and the method is specified as comprising: "*with a computer system … upon receiving over the Internet an electronic request generated by an Internet-accessible computing device of a visitor in response to selection of a uniform resource locator (URL) within a source web page that has been served to the visitor computing device …, automatically serving to the visitor computing device a dynamically generated composite page containing instructions directing the visitor computing device to display*" certain specified information. Nowhere does the claim "recite" – "i.e., set forth or describe" – an abstract idea of "managing and supporting a commerce opportunity for selling or purchasing a commerce object."

In discussing the *DDR Holdings* court case as to Step 2A, the Guidance acknowledges, "The court did not clearly indicate whether the claim was directed to one or more of these proposed abstract ideas." Accordingly, assignee does not believe that the Office has (or can) properly identify any abstract idea to which the pending claim is directed in the sense of "set forth or described." Step 2A seems satisfied.

Even if Step 2A is not satisfied because the Office meets its burden of proposing an abstract idea to which the claims are "directed" in the proper sense, a Section 101 rejection cannot be maintained if the claims satisfy Step 2B (part 2 of the *Mayo* test), which asks, "does the claim recite additional elements that amount to significantly more than the judicial exception?"

The Guidance instructs examiners: "Limitations that may be enough to qualify as 'significantly more' when recited in a claim with a judicial exception include: Improvements to another technology or technical field; Improvements to the functioning of the computer itself; [or] Applying the judicial exception with, or by use of, a particular machine."

In discussing the *DDR Holdings* court case, the Guidance acknowledges that the Court said that, "under any of these characterizations of the abstract idea, the '399 patent's claims satisfy Mayo/Alice step two." The Guidance continues: "In particular, the claim addresses the problem of retaining Web site visitors from being diverted from a host's Web site to an advertiser's Web site, for which 'the claimed solution is necessarily rooted in computer technology in order to overcome a problem specifically arising in the realm of computer networks.'"

Therefore, the court case demonstrates that the claims of the '399 Patent (a parent to this application) improves the functioning of the computer itself, or the functioning of another technology, namely the "realm of computer networks." The same is true for the pending claims, both claim 71 and claim 79 and their dependent claims.

Continuing to discuss the *DDR Holdings* court case, the Guidance says, "The claim includes additional elements including '1) stor[ing] "visually perceptible elements" corresponding to numerous host Web sites in a database, with each of the host Web sites displaying at least one link associated with a product or service of a third-party merchant, 2) on activation of this link by a Web site visitor, automatically identif[ying] the host, and 3) instruct[ing] an Internet web server of an "outsource provider" to construct and serve to the visitor a new, hybrid Web page that merges content associated with the products of the third-party merchant with the stored "visually perceptible elements" from the identified host Web site.'"

Those three "additional elements" or "something more" exist in the pending claims as follows: 1) "visually perceptible elements" are mentioned in part (ii) of

pending claim 71, and data about them being stored in a database is mentioned in the last "wherein" clause, which refers to "an information storage." 2) Although the pending claims do not include "automatically identifying a host" per se (hence these claims differ from the '399 Patent, which is appropriate), pending claim 71 says that the displayed "plurality of visually perceptible elements" in fact "visually correspond to the source web page," and of course the "source web page" is a "web page that has been served to the visitor computing device when visiting a host website." 3) Like the '399 Patent, the pending claims instruct the outsource provider computer to serve a "hybrid page" that is referred to in the pending claims as "a dynamically generated composite page." Thus, the features that the court recognized as "something more" are likewise present in the pending claims. And, even if only one feature were present that qualified as "something more," the Guidance specifies that such would suffice for patentability; it is not necessary that the pending claims contain exact analogs of all features in the '399 Patent that qualified as "something more." Here, there are more than one such added feature.

The Guidance continues to refer to the *DDR Holdings* court case by adding: "The court held that, unlike in Ultramercial, the claim does not generically recite 'use the Internet' to perform a business practice, but instead recites a specific way to automate the creation of a composite Web page by an outsource provider that incorporates elements from multiple sources in order to solve a problem faced by Web sites on the Internet. Therefore, the court held that the claim is patent eligible." Obviously, the same statement could be made about the pending claims.

The pending claims easily meet the latest standards of patentability under the *Alice* case and its successors, especially the *DDR Holdings* case, and the pending claims remain directed to patentable subject matter. The Office Action's Section 101 rejection must be withdrawn.

2. Section 112(2) – definiteness

The Office Action has previously withdrawn a rejection under Section 112(2). The court opinion likewise rejects an indefiniteness challenge to the same phrase "visually perceptible elements," used in the pending claims. This issue seems closed.

3. Section 102 – novelty

The Office Action contains no art rejections, and the Examiner recently considered, yet again, the collection of art related to the Digital River SSS system and declined to enter a rejection. The court opinion invalidates certain claims of one of the parent patents, however. In response, the Examiner requested in the interview that the undersigned explain in this response how the claims pending here would not be anticipated by Digital River SSS art applying reasoning parallel to the court decision.

The answer is easy: The court invalidated certain claims of the parent '572 Patent by concluding that they did not contain claim language requiring an "overall match" between the websites. The opinion says: "Both the district court and DDR introduced a limitation found neither in the '572 patent's claims nor the parties' stipulated construction. In particular, the district court introduced a requirement that the generated composite web page have an 'overall match' in appearance with the host website, beyond what is expressly recited by the claims. [Citations omitted] There is nothing, however, in the parties' stipulated construction of 'look and feel,' the claim language, or the specification that requires the generated composite web page to match the host website or to incorporate a specific number, proportion, or selection of the identified 'look and feel' elements on a host website. … There is no claim language requiring an 'overall match'…."

The above comments are *emphatically not* equally applicable to the pending claims. Claim 71 here, for example, contains the express limitation: "wherein the plurality of visually perceptible elements define an ***overall appearance*** of the composite page that, excluding the information associated with the commerce object, visually

corresponds to the source web page." [Emphasis added] Thus, the claim language here expressly *requires* overall appearance correspondence. (Please note that the phrase "overall match" was used in the trial in Texas as a shorthand reference to general correspondence of overall appearance – the district court did not rule that a precise "match" in the literal sense was required.)

Applicant's specification is not only replete with comments like the correspondence should be sufficient to "give the viewer of the page the impression that she is viewing pages served by the host" (page 4, lines 14-15), but also it clarifies that the "store front design" is developed on a page-by-page basis and forms a "shopping page [that] should retain the host's look and feel" and uses "the HTML text and images that comprise their look and feel" with the "shopping HTML context" embedded within (page 21, lines 8, 18-23). Likewise, page 27, line 12 and Fig. 19 refer to and show a "typical shopping page" thus developed: It is shown as an entire page. Page 38, lines 28-30 refer to a checkout page as being "still consistent in look and feel with the Host's referring website." There are others, but the above-quoted locations make it clear that the specification confirms that comparison of look can be done on a page-by-page basis.

Although, as the court decision says, the Digital River SSS system copied certain page elements, the jury found that the Digital River SSS system did not demonstrate correspondence of overall appearance. The district court confirmed that there was substantial evidence to support that conclusion. Importantly, the appeals court did not overturn that ruling: It simply said that correspondence of overall appearance was not required, thus the jury's finding was irrelevant in judging the claims of the '572 Patent. The jury's finding remains relevant to this patent application, though, which contains expressly the requirement of correspondence of overall appearance.

The opinion recognizes that Digital River had issued a variety of documents, which the Examiner has already seen, saying that its system allowed for "look and feel" use of host sites or suggesting to Digital River customers that their visitors would not

seem to leave the host site. The same could be said about Tobin, which is the primary prior art patent used during examination, because Tobin also used the term "look and feel" too but not in reference to overall appearance of a web page. None of Digital River's written documents, to assignee's knowledge and understanding, identified or taught the feature of correspondence of overall appearance of a page, as recited in the current claims.

Assignee discussed Tobin in a previous Response to Office Action and explained how that reference did not overcome the "loss of eyeballs" problem. The same is true with Digital River SSS, where visitors could fairly easily perceive a difference between the referring and Digital River sites, even for the website pairs referenced in the court decision. In this regard, the claimed invention provides a significant advance, not just a plain and straightforward difference, from the known prior art. Because the benefits of the claimed invention are so significant, the differences between the known prior art and the claimed invention cannot be lightly disregarded. Assignee respectfully requests confirmation that no art rejection will be reinstated.

In sum, assignee respectfully requests allowance. Please feel free to telephone the undersigned for any other reason if it would in any way advance prosecution of this application or if any further information is needed.

Respectfully submitted,
DDR HOLDINGS, LLC
by its attorney

Dated: December 24, 2014

/Louis J. Hoffman/
Louis J. Hoffman
Reg. No. 38,918

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Electronic Acknowledgement Receipt

EFS ID:	21064770
Application Number:	13970515
International Application Number:	
Confirmation Number:	2289
Title of Invention:	Methods of expanding commercial opportunities for internet websites through coordinated offsite marketing
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	D. Delano Ross
Customer Number:	26362
Filer:	Louis J. Hoffman/Donald Hertz
Filer Authorized By:	Louis J. Hoffman
Attorney Docket Number:	23-CON4
Receipt Date:	24-DEC-2014
Filing Date:	19-AUG-2013
Time Stamp:	16:49:52
Application Type:	Utility under 35 USC 111(a)

Payment information:

Submitted with Payment	no

File Listing:

Document Number	Document Description	File Name	File Size(Bytes)/ Message Digest	Multi Part /.zip	Pages (if appl.)
1	Amendment/Req. Reconsideration-After Non-Final Reject	14-12-24-DDR-CON4-RTOA-PostFedCir.pdf	211230 f273809207bb689e2f403a1af410e76a3d06b290	no	19

Warnings:	
Information:	

Total Files Size (in bytes):	211230

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If a new application is being filed and the application includes the necessary components for a filing date (see 37 CFR 1.53(b)-(d) and MPEP 506), a Filing Receipt (37 CFR 1.54) will be issued in due course and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the filing date of the application.

National Stage of an International Application under 35 U.S.C. 371
If a timely submission to enter the national stage of an international application is compliant with the conditions of 35 U.S.C. 371 and other applicable requirements a Form PCT/DO/EO/903 indicating acceptance of the application as a national stage submission under 35 U.S.C. 371 will be issued in addition to the Filing Receipt, in due course.

New International Application Filed with the USPTO as a Receiving Office
If a new international application is being filed and the international application includes the necessary components for an international filing date (see PCT Article 11 and MPEP 1810), a Notification of the International Application Number and of the International Filing Date (Form PCT/RO/105) will be issued in due course, subject to prescriptions concerning national security, and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the international filing date of the application.

PTO/SB/06 (09-11)
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PATENT APPLICATION FEE DETERMINATION RECORD Substitute for Form PTO-875	Application or Docket Number 13/970,515	Filing Date 08/19/2013	☐ To be Mailed

ENTITY: ☒ LARGE ☐ SMALL ☐ MICRO

APPLICATION AS FILED – PART I

FOR	(Column 1) NUMBER FILED	(Column 2) NUMBER EXTRA	RATE ($)	FEE ($)
☐ BASIC FEE (37 CFR 1.16(a), (b), or (c))	N/A	N/A	N/A	
☐ SEARCH FEE (37 CFR 1.16(k), (i), or (m))	N/A	N/A	N/A	
☐ EXAMINATION FEE (37 CFR 1.16(o), (p), or (q))	N/A	N/A	N/A	
TOTAL CLAIMS (37 CFR 1.16(i))	minus 20 =	*	X $ =	
INDEPENDENT CLAIMS (37 CFR 1.16(h))	minus 3 =	*	X $ =	
☐ APPLICATION SIZE FEE (37 CFR 1.16(s))	If the specification and drawings exceed 100 sheets of paper, the application size fee due is $310 ($155 for small entity) for each additional 50 sheets or fraction thereof. See 35 U.S.C. 41(a)(1)(G) and 37 CFR 1.16(s).			
☐ MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM PRESENT (37 CFR 1.16(j))				
* If the difference in column 1 is less than zero, enter "0" in column 2.			TOTAL	

APPLICATION AS AMENDED – PART II

AMENDMENT **12/24/2014**

	(Column 1) CLAIMS REMAINING AFTER AMENDMENT		(Column 2) HIGHEST NUMBER PREVIOUSLY PAID FOR	(Column 3) PRESENT EXTRA	RATE ($)	ADDITIONAL FEE ($)
Total (37 CFR 1.16(i))	* 16	Minus	** 20	= 0	X $80 =	0
Independent (37 CFR 1.16(h))	* 2	Minus	***3	= 0	X $420 =	0
☐ Application Size Fee (37 CFR 1.16(s))						
☐ FIRST PRESENTATION OF MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM (37 CFR 1.16(j))						
					TOTAL ADD'L FEE	0

AMENDMENT

	(Column 1) CLAIMS REMAINING AFTER AMENDMENT		(Column 2) HIGHEST NUMBER PREVIOUSLY PAID FOR	(Column 3) PRESENT EXTRA	RATE ($)	ADDITIONAL FEE ($)
Total (37 CFR 1.16(i))	*	Minus	**	=	X $ =	
Independent (37 CFR 1.16(h))	*	Minus	***	=	X $ =	
☐ Application Size Fee (37 CFR 1.16(s))						
☐ FIRST PRESENTATION OF MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM (37 CFR 1.16(j))						
					TOTAL ADD'L FEE	

* If the entry in column 1 is less than the entry in column 2, write "0" in column 3.
** If the "Highest Number Previously Paid For" IN THIS SPACE is less than 20, enter "20".
*** If the "Highest Number Previously Paid For" IN THIS SPACE is less than 3, enter "3".
The "Highest Number Previously Paid For" (Total or Independent) is the highest number found in the appropriate box in column 1.

LIE
/POLIN ANG/

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.16. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 12 minutes to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. **SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**
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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
13/970,515	08/19/2013	D. Delano Ross JR.	23-CON4	2289

26362 7590 12/23/2014

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EXAMINER	
GARG, YOGESH C	

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3625	

NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE
12/23/2014	ELECTRONIC

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

Louis@valuablepatents.com
donald@valuablepatents.com
shaelyn@valuablepatents.com

Applicant-Initiated Interview Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	13/970,515	ROSS ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	YOGESH C. GARG	3625	

All participants (applicant, applicant's representative, PTO personnel):

(1) *YOGESH C. GARG*. (3)_____.

(2) *LOUIS HOFFMAN*. (4)_____.

Date of Interview: *12 December 2014*.

Type: ☒ Telephonic ☐ Video Conference
☐ Personal [copy given to: ☐ applicant ☐ applicant's representative]

Exhibit shown or demonstration conducted: ☐ Yes ☐ No.
If Yes, brief description: _____.

Issues Discussed ☒101 ☐112 ☐102 ☐103 ☐Others
(For each of the checked box(es) above, please describe below the issue and detailed description of the discussion)

Claim(s) discussed: *71-78*.

Identification of prior art discussed: _____.

Substance of Interview
(For each issue discussed, provide a detailed description and indicate if agreement was reached. Some topics may include: identification or clarification of a reference or a portion thereof, claim interpretation, proposed amendments, arguments of any applied references etc...)

A telephone interview was conducted on 12/12/2014 with the Applicant's representative Mr. Louis Hoffman at his request. Gist of discussions is as follows:
Mr. Hoffman wanted to discuss the 101 in the Office action mailed 9/26/2014 in view of the recent Federal Circuit decision DDR Holdings v. N. L. Group, INC., WT, Holdings, INC. and Digital River. Since the court upheld the patentability of claims of the patent 7,818,399 in view of the Digital River prior art and as well as validated the patentability of the claims in view of Supreme Court Ruling Alice v. CLS bank. Accordingly, Mr. Hoffman was of the opinion that 101 rejection of claims 71-78 of the instant Application 13/970515 should be moot and withdrawn and these claims should be placed in condition for Allowance.
Examiner agreed to reconsider the rejection and suggested to file response to the Office action providing arguments and details that the claims 71-78 satisfy the 101 requirements in view of Alice v. CLS bank and they will be fully reconsidered.
.

Applicant recordation instructions: The formal written reply to the last Office action must include the substance of the interview. (See MPEP section 713.04). If a reply to the last Office action has already been filed, applicant is given a non-extendable period of the longer of one month or thirty days from this interview date, or the mailing date of this interview summary form, whichever is later, to file a statement of the substance of the interview

Examiner recordation instructions: Examiners must summarize the substance of any interview of record. A complete and proper recordation of the substance of an interview should include the items listed in MPEP 713.04 for complete and proper recordation including the identification of the general thrust of each argument or issue discussed, a general indication of any other pertinent matters discussed regarding patentability and the general results or outcome of the interview, to include an indication as to whether or not agreement was reached on the issues raised.

☐ Attachment

/YOGESH C GARG/ Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3625	

Summary of Record of Interview Requirements

Manual of Patent Examining Procedure (MPEP), Section 713.04, Substance of Interview Must be Made of Record
A complete written statement as to the substance of any face-to-face, video conference, or telephone interview with regard to an application must be made of record in the application whether or not an agreement with the examiner was reached at the interview.

Title 37 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 1.133 Interviews
Paragraph (b)

In every instance where reconsideration is requested in view of an interview with an examiner, a complete written statement of the reasons presented at the interview as warranting favorable action must be filed by the applicant. An interview does not remove the necessity for reply to Office action as specified in §§ 1.111, 1.135. (35 U.S.C. 132)

37 CFR §1.2 Business to be transacted in writing.
All business with the Patent or Trademark Office should be transacted in writing. The personal attendance of applicants or their attorneys or agents at the Patent and Trademark Office is unnecessary. The action of the Patent and Trademark Office will be based exclusively on the written record in the Office. No attention will be paid to any alleged oral promise, stipulation, or understanding in relation to which there is disagreement or doubt.

The action of the Patent and Trademark Office cannot be based exclusively on the written record in the Office if that record is itself incomplete through the failure to record the substance of interviews.

It is the responsibility of the applicant or the attorney or agent to make the substance of an interview of record in the application file, unless the examiner indicates he or she will do so. It is the examiner's responsibility to see that such a record is made and to correct material inaccuracies which bear directly on the question of patentability.

Examiners must complete an Interview Summary Form for each interview held where a matter of substance has been discussed during the interview by checking the appropriate boxes and filling in the blanks. Discussions regarding only procedural matters, directed solely to restriction requirements for which interview recordation is otherwise provided for in Section 812.01 of the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure, or pointing out typographical errors or unreadable script in Office actions or the like, are excluded from the interview recordation procedures below. Where the substance of an interview is completely recorded in an Examiners Amendment, no separate Interview Summary Record is required.

The Interview Summary Form shall be given an appropriate Paper No., placed in the right hand portion of the file, and listed on the "Contents" section of the file wrapper. In a personal interview, a duplicate of the Form is given to the applicant (or attorney or agent) at the conclusion of the interview. In the case of a telephone or video-conference interview, the copy is mailed to the applicant's correspondence address either with or prior to the next official communication. If additional correspondence from the examiner is not likely before an allowance or if other circumstances dictate, the Form should be mailed promptly after the interview rather than with the next official communication.

The Form provides for recordation of the following information:
- Application Number (Series Code and Serial Number)
- Name of applicant
- Name of examiner
- Date of interview
- Type of interview (telephonic, video-conference, or personal)
- Name of participant(s) (applicant, attorney or agent, examiner, other PTO personnel, etc.)
- An indication whether or not an exhibit was shown or a demonstration conducted
- An identification of the specific prior art discussed
- An indication whether an agreement was reached and if so, a description of the general nature of the agreement (may be by attachment of a copy of amendments or claims agreed as being allowable). Note: Agreement as to allowability is tentative and does not restrict further action by the examiner to the contrary.
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It is desirable that the examiner orally remind the applicant of his or her obligation to record the substance of the interview of each case. It should be noted, however, that the Interview Summary Form will not normally be considered a complete and proper recordation of the interview unless it includes, or is supplemented by the applicant or the examiner to include, all of the applicable items required below concerning the substance of the interview.

A complete and proper recordation of the substance of any interview should include at least the following applicable items:

1) A brief description of the nature of any exhibit shown or any demonstration conducted,
2) an identification of the claims discussed,
3) an identification of the specific prior art discussed,
4) an identification of the principal proposed amendments of a substantive nature discussed, unless these are already described on the Interview Summary Form completed by the Examiner,
5) a brief identification of the general thrust of the principal arguments presented to the examiner,
   (The identification of arguments need not be lengthy or elaborate. A verbatim or highly detailed description of the arguments is not required. The identification of the arguments is sufficient if the general nature or thrust of the principal arguments made to the examiner can be understood in the context of the application file. Of course, the applicant may desire to emphasize and fully describe those arguments which he or she feels were or might be persuasive to the examiner.)
6) a general indication of any other pertinent matters discussed, and
7) if appropriate, the general results or outcome of the interview unless already described in the Interview Summary Form completed by the examiner.

Examiners are expected to carefully review the applicant's record of the substance of an interview. If the record is not complete and accurate, the examiner will give the applicant an extendable one month time period to correct the record.

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If the claims are allowable for other reasons of record, the examiner should send a letter setting forth the examiner's version of the statement attributed to him or her. If the record is complete and accurate, the examiner should place the indication, "Interview Record OK" on the paper recording the substance of the interview along with the date and the examiner's initials.

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(Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)

Application Number	13970515
Filing Date	2013-08-19
First Named Inventor	D. Delano Ross Jr.
Art Unit	3625
Examiner Name	Garg, Yogesh C.
Attorney Docket Number	23-CON4

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INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT (Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)		
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	First Named Inventor	D. Delano Ross Jr.
	Art Unit	3625
	Examiner Name	Garg, Yogesh C.
	Attorney Docket Number	23-CON4

	1	OPINION and JUDGMENT; DDR Holdings, LLC v. Hotels.com, L.P.; U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, Case Number 2013-1505; December 5, 2014.	☐

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[1] See Kind Codes of USPTO Patent Documents at www.USPTO.GOV or MPEP 901.04. [2] Enter office that issued the document, by the two-letter code (WIPO Standard ST.3). [3] For Japanese patent documents, the indication of the year of the reign of the Emperor must precede the serial number of the patent document. [4] Kind of document by the appropriate symbols as indicated on the document under WIPO Standard ST.16 if possible. [5] Applicant is to place a check mark here if English language translation is attached.

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT (Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)		
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	Filing Date	2013-08-19
	First Named Inventor	D. Delano Ross Jr.
	Art Unit	3625
	Examiner Name	Garg, Yogesh C.
	Attorney Docket Number	23-CON4

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

Please see 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98 to make the appropriate selection(s):

☐ That each item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was first cited in any communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application not more than three months prior to the filing of the information disclosure statement. See 37 CFR 1.97(e)(1).

OR

☒ That no item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was cited in a communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application, and, to the knowledge of the person signing the certification after making reasonable inquiry, no item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was known to any individual designated in 37 CFR 1.56(c) more than three months prior to the filing of the information disclosure statement. See 37 CFR 1.97(e)(2).

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☐ The fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17 (p) has been submitted herewith.

☐ A certification statement is not submitted herewith.

SIGNATURE

A signature of the applicant or representative is required in accordance with CFR 1.33, 10.18. Please see CFR 1.4(d) for the form of the signature.

Signature	/Louis J. Hoffman/	Date (YYYY-MM-DD)	2014-12-05
Name/Print	Louis J. Hoffman	Registration Number	38918

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 1 hour to complete, including gathering, preparing and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. **SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**

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2. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, in the course of presenting evidence to a court, magistrate, or administrative tribunal, including disclosures to opposing counsel in the course of settlement negotiations.

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United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit

DDR HOLDINGS, LLC,
Plaintiff-Appellee,

v.

HOTELS.COM, L.P., CENDANT TRAVEL DISTRIBUTION SERVICES GROUP, INC., EXPEDIA, INC., TRAVELOCITY.COM, L.P., SITE59.COM, LLC, INTERNATIONAL CRUISE & EXCURSION GALLERY, INC., OURVACATIONSTORE, INC., INTERNETWORK PUBLISHING CORPORATION, AND ORBITZ WORLDWIDE, LLC,
Defendants,

AND

NATIONAL LEISURE GROUP, INC. AND WORLD TRAVEL HOLDINGS, INC.,
Defendants-Appellants,

AND

DIGITAL RIVER, INC.,
Defendant.

2013-1505

Appeal from the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Texas in No. 06-CV-0042, Judge J. Rodney Gilstrap.

Decided: December 5, 2014

LOUIS J. HOFFMAN, Hoffman Patent Firm, of Scottsdale, Arizona, argued for plaintiff-appellee. On the brief was IAN B. CROSBY, Susman Godfrey LLP, of Seattle, Washington.

NORMAN H. ZIVIN, Cooper & Dunham LLP, of New York, New York, argued for defendants-appellants, National Leisure Group, Inc., et al. With him on the brief was TONIA A. SAYOUR.

Before WALLACH, MAYER, and CHEN, *Circuit Judges*.

Opinion for the court filed by *Circuit Judge* CHEN. Dissenting opinion filed by *Circuit Judge* MAYER.

CHEN, *Circuit Judge*.

Defendants-Appellants National Leisure Group, Inc. and World Travel Holdings, Inc. (collectively, NLG) appeal from a final judgment of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Texas entered in favor of Plaintiff-Appellee DDR Holdings, LLC (DDR). Following trial, a jury found that NLG infringes the asserted claims of U.S. Patent Nos. 6,993,572 (the '572 patent) and 7,818,399 (the '399 patent). The jury also found the asserted claims of the '572 and '399 patents are not invalid. The district court denied NLG's renewed motion for judgment as a matter of law (JMOL) on, *inter alia*, noninfringement and invalidity of the asserted patents. The district court subsequently entered a final judgment

consistent with the jury's findings on infringement, validity, and damages, and awarded DDR pre- and post-judgment interest and costs. We affirm the district court's denial of NLG's motions for JMOL of noninfringement and invalidity of the '399 patent. Because we conclude that the '572 patent is anticipated as a matter of law, we reverse the district court's denial of JMOL on the validity of the '572 patent, and remand to the district court for further proceedings consistent with our decision.

I. BACKGROUND

DDR is the assignee of the '572 and '399 patents. The '572 and '399 patents are both continuations of U.S. Patent No. 6,629,135 (the '135 patent), which has a priority date of September 17, 1998. Each of these patents is directed to systems and methods of generating a composite web page that combines certain visual elements of a "host" website with content of a third-party merchant. For example, the generated composite web page may combine the logo, background color, and fonts of the host website with product information from the merchant. '135 patent, 12:46–50.

The common specification of the patents-in-suit explains that prior art systems allowed third-party merchants to "lure the [host website's] visitor traffic away" from the host website because visitors would be taken to the third-party merchant's website when they clicked on the merchant's advertisement on the host site. *Id.* at 2:26–30. The patents-in-suit disclose a system that provides a solution to this problem (for the host) by creating a new web page that permits a website visitor, in a sense, to be in two places at the same time. On activation of a hyperlink on a host website—such as an advertisement for a third-party merchant—instead of taking the visitor to the merchant's website, the system generates and directs the visitor to a composite web page that displays product information from the third-party mer-

chant, but retains the host website's "look and feel." *Id.* at 3:9–21. Thus, the host website can display a third-party merchant's products, but retain its visitor traffic by displaying this product information from within a generated web page that "gives the viewer of the page the impression that she is viewing pages served by the host" website. *Id.* at 2:56–63, 3:20–22.

Representative claim 13 of the '572 patent recites:

> 13. An e-commerce outsourcing system comprising:
>
> a) a data store including a look and feel description associated with a host web page having a link correlated with a commerce object; and
>
> b) a computer processor coupled to the data store and in communication through the Internet with the host web page and programmed, upon receiving an indication that the link has been activated by a visitor computer in Internet communication with the host web page, to serve a composite web page to the visitor computer wit[h] a look and feel based on the look and feel description in the data store and with content based on the commerce object associated wit[h] the link.

System claim 13 requires that the recited system provide the host website with a "link" that "correlate[s]" the host website with a "commerce object." The "commerce object" is the product or product catalog of the merchant. '135 patent, 3:7–13. After recognizing that a website visitor has activated the link, the system retrieves data from a "data store" that describes the "look and feel" of the host web page, which can include visual elements such as logos, colors, fonts, and page frames. *Id.* at 12:46–50. The claimed system then constructs a composite web page comprising a "look and feel" based on the look and

feel description in the data store along with content based on product information from the associated merchant's product catalog.

The '399 patent is directed to a similar system with a greater emphasis on a "scalable [computer] architecture" to serve "dynamically constructed [web] pages" associated with multiple host website and merchant pairs. '135 patent, 3:32–36. Representative claim 19 of the '399 patent recites:

> 19. A system useful in an outsource provider serving web pages offering commercial opportunities, the system comprising:
>
> (a) a computer store containing data, for each of a plurality of first web pages, defining a plurality of visually perceptible elements, which visually perceptible elements correspond to the plurality of first web pages;
>
> (i) wherein each of the first web pages belongs to one of a plurality of web page owners;
>
> (ii) wherein each of the first web pages displays at least one active link associated with a commerce object associated with a buying opportunity of a selected one of a plurality of merchants; and
>
> (iii) wherein the selected merchant, the outsource provider, and the owner of the first web page displaying the associated link are each third parties with respect to one other;
>
> (b) a computer server at the outsource provider, which computer server is coupled to the computer store and programmed to:
>
> (i) receive from the web browser of a computer user a signal indicating activation of one of

> the links displayed by one of the first web pages;
>
> (ii) automatically identify as the source page the one of the first web pages on which the link has been activated;
>
> (iii) in response to identification of the source page, automatically retrieve the stored data corresponding to the source page; and
>
> (iv) using the data retrieved, automatically generate and transmit to the web browser a second web page that displays: (A) information associated with the commerce object associated with the link that has been activated, and (B) the plurality of visually perceptible elements visually corresponding to the source page.

Similar to claim 13 of the '572 patent, system claim 19 of the '399 patent requires that a "data store" hold "visually perceptible elements" (or "'look and feel' elements") that "visually . . . correspond" to a host web page. The host web page must include a link associated with a "buying opportunity" with a merchant. Once a visitor activates this link, the claimed system generates and transmits to the website visitor's web browser a composite web page that includes product information of the merchant and the "look and feel" of the host website (i.e., "the plurality of visually perceptible elements visually corresponding to the [host web] page").

Claim 19 further requires that the data store must store "look and feel" descriptions for multiple hosts and that each link must be associated with a particular merchant's product catalog. Claim 19 also requires that the merchant, system operator, and host website be "third parties with respect to one another." When a website visitor activates a link associated with a merchant's

product catalog, the claimed system identifies the host web page and then transmits a composite web page using the proper "look and feel" elements of the host website in the data store and the product information from the associated merchant.

The '572 patent issued on January 31, 2006. On the same day, DDR filed suit against NLG, Digital River, Inc. (Digital River), and nine other defendants, asserting infringement of various claims of the '135 and '572 patents. NLG is a travel agency that sells cruises in partnership with travel-oriented websites and major cruise lines through the Internet. DDR's suit accused NLG of infringing the '135 and '572 patents by providing a system for cruise-oriented (host) websites that allows visitors to book cruises on major cruise lines (merchants). Joint Appendix (J.A.) 261. In particular, when a visitor on one of these cruise-oriented (host) websites clicks on an advertisement for a cruise, NLG's system generates and directs the visitor to a composite web page that incorporates "look and feel" elements from the host website and product information from the cruise line (merchant).

DDR's suit was stayed during the pendency of an *ex parte* reexamination of the '135 and '572 patents requested by DDR that was based on prior art identified by the defendants. Shortly after the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office confirmed the validity of the '135 and '572 patents and the stay was lifted, the '399 patent issued on October 19, 2010. DDR subsequently amended its complaint to assert infringement of this patent by several of the defendants, including NLG.

During *Markman* proceedings, the parties stipulated to a construction of several terms, including "look and feel," which appears in each of the asserted claims of the '572 patent, and "visually perceptible elements," which appears in each of the asserted claims of the '399 patent. J.A. 542. For "look and feel," the parties agreed to a

construction of: "A set of elements related to visual appearance and user interface conveying an overall appearance identifying a website; such elements include logos, colors, page layout, navigation systems, frames, 'mouse-over' effects, or others elements consistent through some or all of the website." *Id.* For "visually perceptible elements," the parties agreed to a construction of: "look and feel elements that can be seen." *Id.* The defendants, however, expressly reserved their rights to argue that both the "look and feel" and "visually perceptible elements" terms are indefinite, but offered the stipulated constructions "in the alternative." *Id.*

Between June 2012 and January 2013, DDR settled with all defendants except for NLG and Digital River. The case eventually proceeded to a jury trial in October 2012. At trial, DDR accused NLG and Digital River of direct and willful infringement of claims 13, 17, and 20 of the '572 patent, and accused NLG—but not Digital River—of direct and willful infringement of claims 1, 3, and 19 of the '399 patent. DDR also accused NLG and Digital River of inducing infringement of claim 17 of the '572 patent.

The jury found that NLG and Digital River directly infringed the asserted claims of the '572 patent and that NLG directly infringed the asserted claims of the '399 patent, but that NLG and Digital River's infringement was not willful. The jury found that NLG and Digital River did not induce infringement of claim 17 of the '572 patent. The jury also found that the asserted claims were not invalid. The jury determined DDR was entitled to $750,000 in damages from both NLG and Digital River for infringing DDR's patents.

At the conclusion of trial, NLG and Digital River renewed motions for JMOL pursuant to Rule 50(b) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure (FRCP) on several grounds. NLG contended the asserted claims of the '572

and '399 patents are invalid under 35 U.S.C. § 101 because the claims are directed to patent-ineligible subject matter and invalid under 35 U.S.C. § 112 ¶ 2[1] because the terms "look and feel" and "visually perceptible elements" are indefinite. NLG also contended that neither the jury's finding of infringement nor its award of damages was supported by substantial evidence. NLG also alleged the district court made several unfair and prejudicial evidentiary rulings.

Digital River contended that the asserted claims of the '572 patent are invalid as either anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102, obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103, or indefinite under 35 U.S.C. § 112 ¶ 2. Digital River also contended that the jury's finding of infringement was not supported by substantial evidence. Digital River moved for a new trial pursuant to FRCP 59.

The district court denied NLG and Digital River's motions for JMOL and Digital River's FRCP 59 motion for a new trial. Over the defendants' objections, the district court awarded DDR an additional $284,404 in prejudgment interest pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 284. The district court entered a final judgment in favor of DDR, and NLG and Digital River timely appealed. NLG and Digital River's appeals were consolidated and fully briefed. Prior to oral argument, DDR and Digital River settled, and we granted Digital River's motion to terminate its appeal. D.I. 65, 68. NLG's appeal continued. We have jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1295(a)(1).

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[1] Paragraph 2 of 35 U.S.C. § 112 was replaced with newly designated § 112(b) when § 4(c) of the America Invents Act (AIA), Pub. L. No. 112-29, took effect on September 16, 2012. Because the applications resulting in the patents at issue in this case were filed before that date, we will refer to the pre-AIA version of § 112.

II. DISCUSSION

Since the denial of a motion for JMOL is not patent law-specific, regional circuit law applies. The Fifth Circuit reviews the denial of a JMOL motion *de novo*. *See, e.g.*, *Harris Corp. v. Ericsson Inc.*, 417 F.3d 1241, 1248 (Fed. Cir. 2005). In the Fifth Circuit, JMOL is appropriate if "the facts and inferences point so strongly and overwhelmingly in favor of one party that the court concludes that reasonable jurors could not arrive at a contrary verdict." *Id.* The Court "must presume that the jury resolved all factual disputes in the [prevailing party's] favor." *Transocean Offshore Deepwater Drilling, Inc. v. Maersk Drilling USA, Inc.*, 699 F.3d 1340, 1347 (Fed. Cir. 2012) (applying Fifth Circuit law to the review of a district court's grant of JMOL).

A. Anticipation

We turn first to the district court's denial of Digital River's motion for JMOL of invalidity of the '572 patent based on 35 U.S.C. § 102(a). A patent claim is anticipated if a single prior art reference expressly or inherently discloses every limitation of the claim. *See, e.g.*, *Orion IP, LLC v. Hyundai Motor Am.*, 605 F.3d 967, 975 (Fed. Cir. 2010). Anticipation challenges under § 102 must focus only on the limitations actually recited in the claims. *See Constant v. Adv. Micro-Devices, Inc.*, 848 F.2d 1560, 1570–71 (Fed. Cir. 1988) (finding "limitations [] not found anywhere in the claims" to be irrelevant to an anticipation challenge). Whether a reference discloses a limitation is a question of fact, and a jury's findings on questions of fact are reviewed for substantial evidence. *See, e.g.*, *Dawn Equip. Co. v. Ky. Farms Inc.*, 140 F.3d 1009, 1014 (Fed. Cir. 1998). Invalidity by anticipation must be proven by clear and convincing evidence. *See Microsoft Corp. v. i4i L.P.*, 131 S. Ct. 2238, 2242 (2011).

On appeal, the parties only dispute whether Digital River's prior art Secure Sales System (SSS) satisfies the

"look and feel" limitation; DDR does not dispute that the SSS satisfies every other limitation of the '572 patent's asserted claims. NLG, which adopted Digital River's anticipation challenge to the '572 patent,[2] argues that no evidence supports the jury's finding that the SSS does not disclose the "look and feel" limitation, since it showed the jury multiple examples of composite web pages generated by the SSS with a "look and feel" based on a set of "look and feel" elements from the corresponding host website.

DDR contends that, as the district court determined, "it is up to the trier of fact to determine whether the combination of elements making up the overall appear-

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[2] Even though Digital River terminated its appeal prior to oral argument, it did not do so until after the parties had fully completed their briefing. In its own briefs, although only in footnotes, NLG incorporated by reference Digital River's arguments on anticipation. Appellant's Br. 43 n.23; Appellant's Reply Br. 9 n.5. In a consolidated case such as here, Rule 28(i) of the Federal Rules of Appellate Procedure (FRAP) permits "any party [to] adopt by reference a part of another's brief." *See, e.g.*, *Pozen Inc. v. Par Pharm. Inc.*, 696 F.3d 1151, 1159 n.3 (Fed. Cir. 2012); *Aventis Pharma Deutschland GmbH v. Lupin, Ltd.*, 499 F.3d 1293, 1294 n.1 (Fed. Cir. 2007). *Compare Microsoft Corp. v. DataTern, Inc.*, 755 F.3d 899, 910 (Fed. Cir. 2014) (co-parties in non-consolidated appeals cannot use incorporation pursuant to FRAP 28(i) to exceed word count limits prescribed by FRAP 32(a)(7)). DDR implicitly *concedes* that NLG has adequately adopted Digital River's anticipation defense as to the '572 patent, acknowledging that "[NLG] did not adopt Digital River's anticipation defense or seek to extend it to prove anticipation *of the '399 patent*, which has claims containing extra elements not found in the asserted claims of the '572 patent." Appellee's Br. 44 n.10 (emphasis added).

ance of a website has a similar 'look and feel' as compared to another website." *DDR Holdings, LLC v. Hotels.com, L.P.*, 954 F. Supp. 2d 509, 517 (E.D. Tex. 2013). DDR contends that the jury reviewed substantial evidence that Digital River's SSS did not replicate the host website's "look and feel" in terms of "overall appearance" and that the web pages generated by the SSS did not show "correspondence of overall appearance." In particular, DDR argues that the SSS did not satisfy this limitation since it did not replicate a sufficient number of "look and feel" elements from the host web page. Appellee's Br. 45–46.

We find that the record allows only one reasonable finding: clear and convincing evidence establishes that Digital River's prior art SSS anticipates the asserted claims of the '572 patent. The record lacks substantial evidence to support the jury's finding that the asserted claims of the '572 patent are not anticipated. Therefore, the district court erred by denying the defendants' motion for JMOL of invalidity of the '572 patent under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a).

Digital River's prior art SSS was operational and sold to its first customer by August 12, 1996. J.A. 6618–23. By August 1997, more than a year before the filing date of the provisional application for the '135 patent, Digital River's SSS had attracted its 500th customer. J.A. 6257. Digital River advertised its SSS as a system for generating web pages that allowed website visitors to "purchase and download the digital products of their choice," but still "retain[ed] the *look and feel* of [the host's] site." J.A. 6202 (emphasis added). The SSS was activated when visitors on a host's website clicked a "web site 'buy' button" hyperlink. J.A. 6320. Digital River's advertisements explained that "[w]hen [website visitor] customers want to purchase, they push the 'buy' button and are transferred immediately and transparently to the Digital River Central Commerce Server." J.A. 6202. This component of the SSS then generated and served composite web pages to

website visitors that incorporated "look and feel" elements of the host website and product information associated with the host website's "web store" in a manner that "replicate[d] the *look and feel* of the [host's] Web site." J.A. 6320 (emphasis added). These "look and feel" elements and this product information content were stored by Digital River in a data warehouse and retrieved for incorporation into the generated composite web page based on a correlation with the "buy" button hyperlink on the host website. *See id.* In this way, Digital River's SSS would allow "transaction[s to] take[] place in the selling environment [the host website had] created, surrounded by the *look and feel* of [the host website's] identity. . . . There [would be] no sensation [for a website visitor] of being suddenly hustled off to another location." J.A. 6123 (emphasis added).

During trial, a Digital River witness testified at length on how the SSS generated composite web pages with "look and feel" elements from host websites, and operated the SSS for the jury. Digital River also showed the jury several composite web pages generated by the SSS for host websites before the earliest priority date of the '572 patent, including a composite web page that incorporated several elements identified in DDR's patents or by DDR's expert at trial as "look and feel elements": the host website's logo, background color, and prominent circular icons. J.A. 8856–57 (composite web page), 7502 (host website); *see also* J.A. 8858–61 (composite web page incorporating host website logo, colors, fonts), 6122 (example web page from host website).

The parties' stipulated construction of "look and feel" requires the generated composite web page to include a set of elements from the host website, each of these elements being a "look and feel element" described in the specification that "convey[s] an overall appearance identifying a website." J.A. 542. Consistent with the specification, the stipulated construction defines these "look and

feel elements" that "convey an overall appearance identifying a website" to "include logos, colors, page layout, navigation systems, frames, 'mouse-over' effects, or other elements that are consistent through some or all of a Host's website." *Id.*; *see also* '572 patent, 14:11–14. Digital River's SSS clearly satisfies this limitation. For example, Digital River showed the jury a host website that included a stylized logo, a particular background color, and prominent circular icons. J.A. 7502. The SSS generated a prior art composite web page that incorporated each of these "look and feel" elements. J.A. 8856–57; *see also* J.A. 6172 (host website) and 6171 (SSS-generated prior art composite web page incorporating logo, navigational menu, and color "look and feel" elements). And as explained above, the SSS was consistently promoted and advertised as creating a composite web page that retained the "look and feel" of the host website. *E.g.*, J.A. 6123, 6202, 6320.

Both the district court and DDR introduced a limitation found neither in the '572 patent's claims nor the parties' stipulated construction. In particular, the district court introduced a requirement that the generated composite web page have an "overall match" in appearance with the host website, beyond what is expressly recited by the claims. *DDR Holdings*, 954 F. Supp. 2d at 517; *see also* Appellee's Br. 47. There is nothing, however, in the parties' stipulated construction of "look and feel," the claim language, or the specification that requires the generated composite web page to match the host website or to incorporate a specific number, proportion, or selection of the identified "look and feel" elements on a host website.

In order to satisfy this limitation, it is sufficient that "look and feel" elements identifying the host website are transferred to and displayed on the generated composite webpage. For example, independent claim 13 of the '572 patent merely requires that the generated composite web

page have a "look and feel based on the look and feel description in the data store and content based on the commerce object associated wit[h] the link." Independent claim 17 requires only that the generated composite web page have a "look and feel corresponding to the stored look and feel description" of the host website. There is no claim language requiring an "overall match" or a specific number of "look and feel" elements.

Further, the common specification explains that "[t]he look and feel is captured by selecting an example page [from] the host, retrieving the sample page from the host, identifying the look and feel elements from the sample page, and saving the identified look and feel elements." '572 patent, 14:7–10. Nothing in the common specification suggests that satisfaction of the "look and feel" limitation requires more than mechanically identifying "look and feel elements" from a web page on the host website, storing these elements in a data store, and using these stored "look and feel elements" to create the "look and feel" of the generated composite web page.

The jury's determination that the SSS does not anticipate claims 13, 17, and 20 of the '572 patent is not supported by substantial evidence. Therefore, the district court erred by denying the defendants' motion for JMOL of invalidity of the '572 patent under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a).[3]

B. Patent-eligible subject matter

NLG also contends that the district court erred by denying its motion for JMOL that the asserted claims of

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[3] Neither Digital River nor NLG ever argued that the '399 patent is invalid as anticipated by or obvious over prior art. We decline to speculate whether Digital River's prior art SSS, either alone or in combination with other prior art, invalidates the '399 patent under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 or 103.

the '572 and '399 patents are invalid under 35 U.S.C. § 101. Since the '572 patent is invalid as anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a), we focus on NLG's § 101 challenge to claims 1, 3, and 19 of the '399 patent. We conclude, as did the district court, that the asserted claims of the '399 patent clear the § 101 hurdle.

We review the district court's determination of patent eligibility under 35 U.S.C. § 101 *de novo*. *Dealertrack, Inc. v. Huber*, 674 F.3d 1315, 1333 (Fed. Cir. 2012). In *Mayo Collaborative Servs. v. Prometheus Labs., Inc.*, 132 S. Ct. 1289, 1294 (2012), the Supreme Court set forth an analytical framework under § 101 to distinguish patents that claim patent-ineligible laws of nature, natural phenomena, and abstract ideas—or add too little to such underlying ineligible subject matter—from those that claim patent-eligible applications of those concepts. First, given the nature of the invention in this case, we determine whether the claims at issue are directed to a patent-ineligible abstract idea. *Alice Corp. v. CLS Bank Int'l*, 134 S. Ct. 2347, 2355 (2014). If so, we then consider the elements of each claim—both individually and as an ordered combination—to determine whether the additional elements transform the nature of the claim into a patent-eligible application of that abstract idea. *Id.* This second step is the search for an "inventive concept," or some element or combination of elements sufficient to ensure that the claim in practice amounts to "significantly more" than a patent on an ineligible concept. *Id.*

Distinguishing between claims that recite a patent-eligible invention and claims that add too little to a patent-ineligible abstract concept can be difficult, as the line separating the two is not always clear. At one time, a computer-implemented invention was considered patent-eligible so long as it produced a "useful, concrete and tangible result." *State St. Bank & Trust Co. v. Signature Fin. Grp., Inc.*, 149 F.3d 1368, 1373 (Fed. Cir. 1998) (finding a machine that transformed data by a series of

mathematical calculations to a final share price to be patent-eligible); *see also In re Alappat*, 33 F.3d 1526, 1544 (Fed. Cir. 1994) (en banc). This understanding rested, in large part, on the view that such inventions crossed the eligibility threshold by virtue of being in the technological realm, the historical arena for patented inventions. *See, e.g.*, *In re Bilski*, 545 F.3d 943, 952, 954–56 (Fed. Cir. 2008) (en banc) (concluding that a patent-eligible process must either be "tied to a particular machine or apparatus" or transformed into a different state or thing, i.e., the "machine-or-transformation test").

While the Supreme Court in *Bilski v. Kappos* noted that the machine-or-transformation test is a "useful and important clue" for determining patent eligibility, 130 S. Ct. 3218, 3227 (2010), it is clear today that not all machine implementations are created equal. For example, in *Mayo*, the Supreme Court emphasized that satisfying the machine-or-transformation test, by itself, is not sufficient to render a claim patent-eligible, as not all transformations or machine implementations infuse an otherwise ineligible claim with an "inventive concept." *See* 132 S. Ct. at 1301 ("[S]imply implementing a mathematical principle on a physical machine, namely a computer, [i]s not a patentable application of that principle.") (describing *Gottschalk v. Benson*, 409 U.S. 63, 64 (1972)). And after *Alice*, there can remain no doubt: recitation of generic computer limitations does not make an otherwise ineligible claim patent-eligible. 134 S. Ct. at 2358. The bare fact that a computer exists in the physical rather than purely conceptual realm "is beside the point." *Id.*

Although the Supreme Court did not "delimit the precise contours of the 'abstract ideas' category" in resolving *Alice*, 134 S. Ct. at 2356–57, over the course of several cases the Court has provided some important principles. We know that mathematical algorithms, including those executed on a generic computer, are abstract ideas. *See Benson*, 409 U.S. at 64. We know that some fundamental

economic and conventional business practices are also abstract ideas. *See Bilski*, 130 S. Ct. at 3231 (finding the "fundamental economic practice" of hedging to be patent ineligible); *Alice*, 134 S. Ct. at 2356 (same for intermediated settlement).

In some instances, patent-ineligible abstract ideas are plainly identifiable and divisible from the generic computer limitations recited by the remainder of the claim. For example, the Supreme Court in *Alice* determined that the claims at issue "simply instruct[ed] the practitioner to implement the abstract idea of intermediated settlement on a generic computer." 134 S. Ct. at 2359. In *Ultramercial, Inc. v. Hulu, LLC*, ___ F.3d ___, 2014 WL 5904902, at *5 (Fed. Cir. Nov. 14, 2014), the claims merely recited the abstract idea of using advertising as a currency as applied to the particular technological environment of the Internet. In *buySAFE, Inc. v. Google, Inc.*, 765 F.3d 1350, 1355 (Fed. Cir. 2014), the claims recited no more than using a computer to send and receive information over a network in order to implement the abstract idea of creating a "transaction performance guaranty." In *Accenture Global Servs., GmbH v. Guidewire Software, Inc.*, 728 F.3d 1336, 1344–45 (Fed. Cir. 2013), the claims merely recited "generalized software components arranged to implement an abstract concept [of generating insurance-policy-related tasks based on rules to be completed upon the occurrence of an event] on a computer." And in *Bancorp Servs., L.L.C. v. Sun Life Assur. Co. of Canada (U.S.)*, 687 F.3d 1266, 1278 (Fed. Cir. 2012), the claims recited no more than the use of a computer "employed only for its most basic function, the performance of repetitive calculations," to implement the abstract idea of managing a stable-value protected life insurance policy. Under Supreme Court precedent, the above claims were recited too broadly and generically to be considered sufficiently specific and meaningful applications of their underlying abstract ideas. Although many of the claims recited various com-

puter hardware elements, these claims in substance were directed to nothing more than the performance of an abstract business practice on the Internet or using a conventional computer. Such claims are not patent-eligible.

Against this background, we turn to the '399 patent's asserted claims. We begin our § 101 analysis at *Mayo/Alice* step one: determining whether the computer-implemented claims at issue here are "directed to" a patent-ineligible abstract idea.[4] Here, we note that the '399 patent's asserted claims do not recite a mathematical algorithm. Nor do they recite a fundamental economic or longstanding commercial practice. Although the claims address a business challenge (retaining website visitors), it is a challenge particular to the Internet.

Indeed, identifying the precise nature of the abstract idea is not as straightforward as in *Alice* or some of our other recent abstract idea cases. NLG's own varying formulations of the underlying abstract idea illustrate this difficulty. NLG characterizes the allegedly abstract idea in numerous ways, including "making two web pages look the same," "syndicated commerce on the computer using the Internet," and "making two e-commerce web pages look alike by using licensed trademarks, logos, color schemes and layouts." *See, e.g.*, Appellant's Br. 18–20. The dissent characterizes DDR's patents as describing the entrepreneurial goal "that an online merchant's sales can be increased if two web pages have the same 'look and feel.'" Dissenting Op. 2. But as discussed below, under

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[4] The parties do not dispute that the asserted system and method claims of the '399 patent, for the purposes of § 101, are no different in substance. *See* Appellee Br. 63; Appellant Br. 24. Thus, the form of the asserted claims (system or method) does not affect our analysis of their patent eligibility. *See Alice*, 134 S. Ct. at 2360.

any of these characterizations of the abstract idea, the '399 patent's claims satisfy *Mayo/Alice* step two.

As an initial matter, it is true that the claims here are similar to the claims in the cases discussed above in the sense that the claims involve both a computer and the Internet. But these claims stand apart because they do not merely recite the performance of some business practice known from the pre-Internet world along with the requirement to perform it on the Internet. Instead, the claimed solution is necessarily rooted in computer technology in order to overcome a problem specifically arising in the realm of computer networks.

In particular, the '399 patent's claims address the problem of retaining website visitors that, if adhering to the routine, conventional functioning of Internet hyperlink protocol, would be instantly transported away from a host's website after "clicking" on an advertisement and activating a hyperlink. For example, asserted claim 19 recites a system that, among other things, 1) stores "visually perceptible elements" corresponding to numerous host websites in a database, with each of the host websites displaying at least one link associated with a product or service of a third-party merchant, 2) on activation of this link by a website visitor, automatically identifies the host, and 3) instructs an Internet web server of an "outsource provider" to construct and serve to the visitor a new, hybrid web page that merges content associated with the products of the third-party merchant with the stored "visually perceptible elements" from the identified host website. *See supra* 5.

In more plain language, upon the click of an advertisement for a third-party product displayed on a host's website, the visitor is no longer transported to the third party's website. Instead, the patent claims call for an "outsource provider" having a web server which directs the visitor to an automatically-generated hybrid web page

that combines visual "look and feel" elements from the host website and product information from the third-party merchant's website related to the clicked advertisement.[5] In this way, rather than instantly losing visitors to the third-party's website, the host website can instead send its visitors to a web page on the outsource provider's server that 1) incorporates "look and feel" elements from the host website, and 2) provides visitors with the opportunity to purchase products from the third-party merchant without actually entering that merchant's website.

The dissent suggests that the "store within a store" concept, such as a warehouse store that contains a kiosk for selling a third-party partner's cruise vacation packages, is the pre-Internet analog of the '399 patent's asserted claims. Dissenting Op. 4. While that concept may have been well-known by the relevant timeframe, that practice did not have to account for the ephemeral nature of an Internet "location" or the near-instantaneous transport between these locations made possible by standard Internet communication protocols, which introduces a problem that does not arise in the "brick and mortar" context. In particular, once a customer enters a physical warehouse store, that customer may encounter a kiosk selling third-

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[5] On a fundamental level, the creation of new compositions and products based on combining elements from different sources has long been a basis for patentable inventions. *See, e.g.*, *Parks v. Booth*, 102 U.S. 96, 102 (1880) ("Modern inventions very often consist merely of a new combination of old elements or devices, where nothing is or can be claimed except the new combination."); *KSR Int'l Co. v. Teleflex Inc.*, 550 U.S. 398, 418–19 (2007) ("[I]nventions in most, if not all, instances rely upon building blocks long since uncovered, and claimed discoveries almost of necessity will be combinations of what, in some sense, is already known.").

party cruise vacation packages. There is, however, no possibility that by walking up to this kiosk, the customer will be suddenly and completely transported outside the warehouse store and relocated to a separate physical venue associated with the third-party—the analog of what ordinarily occurs in "cyberspace" after the simple click of a hyperlink—where that customer could purchase a cruise package without any indication that they were previously browsing the aisles of the warehouse store, and without any need to "return" to the aisles of the store after completing the purchase. It is this challenge of retaining control over the attention of the customer in the context of the Internet that the '399 patent's claims address.

We caution, however, that not all claims purporting to address Internet-centric challenges are eligible for patent. For example, in our recently-decided *Ultramercial* opinion, the patentee argued that its claims were "directed to a specific method of advertising and content distribution that was previously unknown and never employed on the Internet before." 2014 WL 5904902, at *3. But this alone could not render its claims patent-eligible. In particular, we found the claims to merely recite the abstract idea of "offering media content in exchange for viewing an advertisement," along with "routine additional steps such as updating an activity log, requiring a request from the consumer to view the ad, restrictions on public access, and use of the Internet." *Id.* at *5.

The '399 patent's claims are different enough in substance from those in *Ultramercial* because they do not broadly and generically claim "use of the Internet" to perform an abstract business practice (with insignificant added activity). Unlike the claims in *Ultramercial*, the claims at issue here specify how interactions with the Internet are manipulated to yield a desired result—a result that overrides the routine and conventional sequence of events ordinarily triggered by the click of a hyperlink. Instead of the computer network operating in

its normal, expected manner by sending the website visitor to the third-party website that appears to be connected with the clicked advertisement, the claimed system generates and directs the visitor to the above-described hybrid web page that presents product information from the third-party and visual "look and feel" elements from the host website. When the limitations of the '399 patent's asserted claims are taken together as an ordered combination, the claims recite an invention that is not merely the routine or conventional use of the Internet.

It is also clear that the claims at issue do not attempt to preempt every application of the idea of increasing sales by making two web pages look the same, or of any other variant suggested by NLG. Rather, they recite a specific way to automate the creation of a composite web page by an "outsource provider" that incorporates elements from multiple sources in order to solve a problem faced by websites on the Internet. As a result, the '399 patent's claims include "additional features" that ensure the claims are "more than a drafting effort designed to monopolize the [abstract idea]." *Alice*, 134 S. Ct. at 2357. In short, the claimed solution amounts to an inventive concept for resolving this particular Internet-centric problem, rendering the claims patent-eligible.

In sum, the '399 patent's claims are unlike the claims in *Alice*, *Ultramercial*, *buySAFE*, *Accenture*, and *Bancorp* that were found to be "directed to" little more than an abstract concept. To be sure, the '399 patent's claims do not recite an invention as technologically complex as an improved, particularized method of digital data compression. But nor do they recite a commonplace business method aimed at processing business information, applying a known business process to the particular technological environment of the Internet, or creating or altering contractual relations using generic computer functions and conventional network operations, such as the claims

in *Alice*, *Ultramercial*, *buySAFE*, *Accenture*, and *Bancorp*. The claimed system, though used by businesses, is patent-eligible under § 101.[6] The district court did not err in denying NLG's motion for JMOL of invalidity under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as to these claims.

C. Indefiniteness

In its motion for JMOL of invalidity, NLG also sought to invalidate the asserted claims of the '572 and '399 patents on the ground that the terms "look and feel" and "visually perceptible elements" render the claims indefinite because they are impermissibly subjective and fail to notify the public of the bounds of the claimed invention.[7] On appeal, NLG contends that the district court erred by denying its motion. We disagree.

Since the '572 patent's asserted claims are invalid under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a), we need not decide NLG's indefiniteness challenge to the patent based on the term "look and feel." We thus focus our analysis on the term "visually perceptible elements" in the '399 patent's asserted claims. The parties stipulated to a construction of the

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[6] Of course, patent-eligible does not mean patent*able* under, *e.g.*, 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103. As discussed in footnote 3 *supra*, the patent*ability* of the '399 patent's asserted claims is not before us.

[7] Though NLG contended that the term "look and feel" is indefinite before the district court, on appeal NLG shifts its focus to "look and feel *description*." "Look and feel" and "look and feel description," while related, are recited as separate terms within the asserted claims. *E.g.*, '572 patent, claim 13 (". . . a *look and feel* based on the *look and feel description* in the data store . . ."). NLG provides no explanation or justification for its shift in focus. As does DDR in its briefing, we focus our analysis on the term "look and feel."

term as "'look and feel' elements that can be seen." J.A. 542. NLG argues that the term "is effectively the same as 'look and feel description,'" and therefore lacks definiteness for the same reasons. Appellant's Br. 30 n.12.

Indefiniteness is a question of law we review *de novo*. *Wellman, Inc. v. Eastman Chem. Co.*, 642 F.3d 1355, 1365–66 (Fed. Cir. 2011). The definiteness requirement is set forth in 35 U.S.C. § 112 ¶ 2, which states that "[t]he specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention." The definiteness requirement focuses on whether "a patent's claims, viewed in light of the specification and prosecution history, inform those skilled in the art about the scope of the invention with reasonable certainty." *Nautilus, Inc. v. Biosig Instruments, Inc.*, 134 S. Ct. 2120, 2129 (2014). The inquiry "trains on the understanding of a skilled artisan at the time of the patent application." *Id.* at 2130.

When a claim term "depend[s] solely on the unrestrained, subjective opinion of a particular individual purportedly practicing the invention," without sufficient guidance in the specification to provide objective direction to one of skill in the art, the term is indefinite. *Datamize, LLC v. Plumtree Software, Inc.*, 417 F.3d 1342, 1350 (Fed. Cir. 2005) (finding "aesthetically pleasing" to be indefinite because the specification lacked any objective definition of the term). For some facially subjective terms, the definiteness requirement is not satisfied by merely offering examples that satisfy the term within the specification. *See Interval Licensing LLC v. AOL, Inc.*, 764 F.3d 1364, 1371–73 (Fed. Cir. 2014) (finding a single example of the term "unobtrusive manner" in the specification did not outline the claims to a skilled artisan with reasonable certainty). For other terms like, for example, terms of degree, specific and unequivocal examples may be sufficient to provide a skilled artisan with clear notice of what

is claimed. *See Enzo Biochem, Inc. v. Applera Corp.*, 599 F.3d 1325, 1334–35 (Fed. Cir. 2010) (finding the phrase "not interfering substantially" to be definite where intrinsic evidence provided multiple examples that would allow a skilled artisan to determine whether a particular chemical bond linkage group would "interfer[e] substantially" with hybridization).

Here, though NLG attempts to characterize "look and feel" as purely subjective, the evidence demonstrates that "look and feel" had an established, sufficiently objective meaning in the art, and that the '399 patent used the term consistent with that meaning. The specification explains that "the look and feel is captured by selecting an example page [from] the host, retrieving the sample page from the host, identifying the look and feel elements from the sample page and saving the identified look and feel elements." '399 patent, 13:5–9. "Look and feel elements" are described as "includ[ing] logos, colors, page layout, navigation systems, frames, 'mouse-over' effects, or other elements that are consistent through some or all of a Host's website." *Id.* at 13:9–12. DDR's expert on infringement testified that a skilled artisan would interpret these "other elements" as elements such as headers, footers, fonts, and images. J.A. 3584.

These examples are consistent with the established meaning of the term "look and feel" in the art, as demonstrated by Digital River's own evidence at trial. For example, as discussed in Section II. A., Digital River advertised its prior art SSS as generating composite web pages that displayed third-party merchandise but also replicated the "'look and feel' of the [host website's] identity." J.A. 6123. Digital River also explained that the composite web pages generated by its SSS "retain[ed] the look and feel of the [host's web]site." J.A. 6202. At trial, Digital River conceded that it understood the meaning of "look and feel." J.A. 4146–47 ("Q. And Digital River understood what it meant when it said: we'll match your

look and feel, right? A. Yes, sir."). Digital River also admitted that its *customers* understood the meaning of "look and feel." J.A. 4199 ("Q. . . . [S]omebody who is reading Digital River's [advertising] document should understand what Digital River means when it says matching look and feel, right? . . . A. Yes, sir.").

In sum, "look and feel" is not a facially subjective term like "unobtrusive manner" in *Interval* or "aesthetically pleasing" in *Datamize*. Rather, as demonstrated by Digital River's own advertisements for its prior art SSS and its admissions at trial, the term had an established meaning in the art by the relevant timeframe. The examples of "look and feel" elements disclosed in the specification are consistent with the term's established meaning. In short, the term "visually perceptible elements," or "'look and feel' elements that can be seen," viewed in light of the specification and prosecution history, informed those skilled in the art about the scope of the '399 patent's claims with reasonable certainty. The district court did not err by denying NLG's motion for JMOL of invalidity of the '399 patent under 35 U.S.C. § 112 ¶ 2.

D. Infringement

NLG also contends that the district court erred by denying its motion for JMOL of noninfringement as to both the '572 and '399 patents. Since the '572 patent is invalid under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a), we address only NLG's noninfringement appeal of the '399 patent. We find, as did the district court, that the jury was presented with substantial evidence on which to base its finding that NLG infringes the asserted claims of the '399 patent.

NLG argues that the jury's finding that NLG's accused websites satisfy the "visually perceptible elements" limitation of the asserted claims is unsupported. NLG further argues that DDR failed to introduce evidence that NLG's accused system automatically identifies or recognizes the source web page as required by claims 1 and 19

of the '399 patent. NLG also argues that DDR only showed the jury screenshot images of the accused websites running NLG's e-commerce system on a single day, and thus did not provide evidence of NLG's alleged infringement throughout the entire damages period.

The record tells a different tale. For the "visually perceptible elements" limitation, the jury viewed screenshot images from nine NLG-partner host websites and their corresponding accused NLG-operated composite web pages. DDR's expert on infringement also presented the jury with lists of the "look and feel elements" from each host website allegedly incorporated in a corresponding NLG-generated composite web page and opined that the accused composite web pages satisfied the limitation. The jury was free to use this proffered evidence and testimony to form its own conclusions as to whether NLG's accused composite web pages satisfied the "visually perceptible elements" limitation of the asserted claims.

As for the other contested limitations of the '399 patent's asserted claims, DDR's expert on infringement testified that on activation of a link on an NLG-partner host website corresponding to an NLG-generated composite web page, a keyword identifier is sent to NLG's e-commerce web server (*e.g.*, "OBWEB" for Orbitz's host website), and a processor therein determines the location and identity of the host website (*e.g.*, Orbitz). The jury was free to credit this testimony as evidence that NLG's accused e-commerce system "automatically . . . recogniz[es]" or "automatically identif[ies]" the source page "on which the link has been activated."

NLG's argument that DDR provided the jury with screenshot images of NLG's accused composite web pages—and thus evidence of infringement—for only one day appears to be more relevant to damages than to infringement. Regardless, NLG's contention is without merit. DDR's expert testified that he had examined NLG's

accused system throughout the entire period of alleged infringement, including any changes in its software source code, deposition testimony on its operation, and, via the Internet Archive, prior versions of accused composite web pages. Based on his review, DDR's expert testified that nothing about NLG's accused system "had changed in any substantial way" during this period. J.A. 3751–52. Substantial evidence supports the jury's finding that NLG's accused system infringes the '399 patent, and thus the district court did not err in denying NLG's motion for JMOL of noninfringement.

E. Damages

DDR sought $6.04 million in damages for NLG's infringement of the '572 and '399 patents; NLG countered with $375,000. The parties agreed on a verdict form that instructed the jury to award a single sum to compensate DDR for NLG's infringement of the asserted claims found to be infringed and not invalid. J.A. 3080. The jury awarded DDR $750,000 in damages for NLG's infringement, without specifying how this award was apportioned between the '572 and the '399 patents.

Because we find the '572 patent invalid as anticipated, we vacate the damages award. This could warrant a new trial on damages. *See Verizon Servs. Corp. v. Vonage Holdings Corp.*, 503 F.3d 1295, 1310 (Fed. Cir. 2007). NLG did not, however, move for a new trial under FRCP 59 and may not have preserved its recourse to this option. *DDR Holdings*, 954 F. Supp. 2d at 522 ("Interestingly however, NLG does not move for a new trial pursuant to Rule 59."). We remand to the district court to determine the effect—if any—of our invalidation of the '572 patent on the jury's damages award.[8]

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[8] We note that NLG's contention that the jury's damages award was "grossly excessive" because its ac-

F. Prejudgment Interest

The district court also awarded DDR prejudgment interest. NLG contends that DDR should not be entitled to any prejudgment interest because it is a non-practicing entity and at a minimum, DDR should not be entitled to any prejudgment interest during a four-year stay in litigation since the stay was the result of DDR's request for *ex parte* reexamination of the '135 and '572 patents.

We review the district court's award of prejudgment interest for an abuse of discretion. *See Telcordia Techs., Inc. v. Cisco Sys., Inc.*, 612 F.3d 1365, 1377 (Fed. Cir. 2010); *see also Gen. Motors Corp. v. Devex Corp.*, 461 U.S. 648, 657 (1983) ("[A] decision to award prejudgment interest will only be set aside if it constitutes an abuse of discretion."). Under 35 U.S.C. § 284, after a finding of infringement, the court "*shall award* . . . damages . . . together with *interest* and costs." (emphases added). Prejudgment interest should ordinarily be awarded absent some justification for withholding such an award. *Gen. Motors*, 461 U.S. at 657; *see also Energy Transp. Grp., Inc. v. William Demant Holding A/S*, 697 F.3d 1342, 1358 (Fed. Cir. 2012) ("The award of pre-judgment interest is the rule, not the exception.") (quotation and citation omitted).

NLG cites no case law suggesting that prevailing non-practicing entities are *not* entitled to prejudgment interest. We decline to create such a statutory exception. *See Energy Transp.*, 697 F.3d at 1358 ("The district court did

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cused websites infringed for only one day is based on a flawed premise and is without merit. As the district court explained, NLG cannot attempt to "reverse engineer the jury's math . . . and use its substituted, and purely speculative, analysis to call the award excessive." *DDR Holdings*, 954 F. Supp. 2d at 530.

not abuse its discretion in this case by following the standard rule of awarding pre-judgment interest."). However, since the '572 patent is invalid, the district court must recalculate its award of prejudgment interest so that it is tied solely to NLG's infringement of the '399 patent, which issued in 2010, more than four years after issuance of the '572 patent. *Nickson Indus., Inc. v. Rol Mfg. Co.*, 847 F.2d 795, 800 (Fed. Cir. 1988) ("Generally, prejudgment interest should be awarded from the date of infringement to the date of judgment."). Since the '399 patent did not issue until after the stay was lifted in 2010, we need not determine whether DDR is entitled to pre-judgment interest during the pendency of the contested stay.

We have considered the parties' remaining arguments and find them unpersuasive.

III. CONCLUSION

In large part, we affirm the district court. The asserted claims of the '572 patent, however, are anticipated by Digital River's prior art Secure Sales System under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a), and no substantial evidence supports the jury's contrary finding. As such, the district court erred in denying defendants' motion for JMOL of invalidity as to the '572 patent. We vacate the award of damages and prejudgment interest to DDR based on NLG's infringement of the '572 and '399 patents and remand to the district court in order to determine the damages and prejudgment interest attributable solely to NLG's infringement of the '399 patent.

AFFIRMED IN PART, REVERSED IN PART, AND REMANDED

COSTS

No costs.

United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit

DDR HOLDINGS, LLC,
Plaintiff-Appellee,

v.

HOTELS.COM, L.P., CENDANT TRAVEL DISTRIBUTION SERVICES GROUP, INC., EXPEDIA, INC., TRAVELOCITY.COM, L.P., SITE59.COM, LLC, INTERNATIONAL CRUISE & EXCURSION GALLERY, INC., OURVACATIONSTORE, INC., INTERNETWORK PUBLISHING CORPORATION, AND ORBITZ WORLDWIDE, LLC,
Defendants,

AND

NATIONAL LEISURE GROUP, INC. AND WORLD TRAVEL HOLDINGS, INC.,
Defendants-Appellants,

AND

DIGITAL RIVER, INC.,
Defendant.

2013-1505

MAYER, *Circuit Judge*, dissenting.

I respectfully dissent. The claims asserted by DDR Holdings, LLC ("DDR") fall outside 35 U.S.C. § 101 because they simply describe an abstract concept—that an online merchant's sales can be increased if two web pages have the same "look and feel"—and apply that concept using a generic computer.

I.

The common specification of DDR's patents notes that an online merchant will often lose customers when those customers click on an advertisement from a third-party vendor that has been displayed on the original merchant's web page. *See* U.S. Patent No. 6,993,572 (the "'572 patent") col.2 ll.30–33. The specification explains, however, that the original merchant could potentially avoid "the loss of hard-won visitor traffic," *id.* col.2 ll.64–65, if he were able to dupe customers into believing that they were still on the merchant's web page even when they were actually viewing goods from a third-party vendor, *id.* col.2 ll.26–65. Notably, though, DDR's patents are very vague as to how this duping is to occur, indicating only that the web page of the original merchant and that of the third-party vendor should be made to look alike using "visually perceptible elements." *See* U.S. Patent No. 7,818,399 (the "'399 patent") col.28 ll.31–32 (requiring the use of a "plurality of visually perceptible elements visually corresponding to the [original merchant's web] page"). DDR's patents fail to meet the demands of section 101 because they describe a goal—confusing consumers by making two web pages look alike—but disclose no new technology, or "inventive concept," *Mayo Collaborative Servs. v. Prometheus Labs., Inc.*, 132 S. Ct. 1289, 1294 (2012), for achieving that goal. *See O'Reilly v. Morse*, 56 U.S. (15 How.) 62, 120 (1854) (rejecting a claim which covered "an effect produced by the use of electro-magnetism distinct from the process or machinery necessary to produce it"); *In re*

Brooks, 90 F.2d 106, 107–08 (CCPA 1937) ("It is for the discovery or invention of some practicable method or means of producing a beneficial result or effect, that a patent is granted, and *not for the result or effect itself*." (emphasis added) (citations and internal quotation marks omitted)).

DDR's patents are long on obfuscation but short on substance. Indeed, much of what they disclose is so rudimentary that it borders on the comical. For example, the patents explain that two web pages are likely to look alike if they are the same color, have the same page layout, and display the same logos. *See* '572 patent col.14 ll.5–18. The recited computer limitations, moreover, are merely generic. The claims describe use of a "data store," a "web page having a link," and a "computer processor," *id.* col.29 ll.1–13, all conventional elements long-used in e-commerce. Because DDR's claims, like those at issue in *Alice Corporation v. CLS Bank International*, "simply instruct the practitioner to implement [an] abstract idea . . . on a generic computer," they do not meet section 101. 134 S. Ct. 2347, 2359 (2014); *see id.* at 2360 (rejecting claims requiring a "data processing system'" with a "communications controller" and a "data storage unit" as "purely functional and generic" (citations and internal quotation marks omitted)); *Accenture Global Servs., GmbH v. Guidewire Software, Inc.*, 728 F.3d 1336, 1344 (Fed. Cir. 2013) (rejecting claims requiring "a combination of computer components including an insurance transaction database, a task library database, a client component, and a server component, which include[d] an event processor, a task engine, and a task assistant").

II.

The court concludes that the asserted claims of DDR's '399 patent fall within section 101 because "they do not merely recite the performance of some business practice known from the pre-Internet world along with the

requirement to perform it on the Internet." *Ante* at 20. This is incorrect. DDR's claims do, in fact, simply take a well-known and widely-applied business practice and apply it using a generic computer and the Internet. The idea of having a "store within a store" was in widespread use well before the dawn of e-commerce. For example, National Leisure Group, Inc. ("NLG"), one of the defendants here, previously "sold vacations at . . . BJ's Wholesale Clubs through point of purchase displays in the 45 BJ's Clubs along the Eastern Seaboard." Br. of Defendants-Appellants National Leisure Group, Inc. and World Travel Holdings, Inc. at 4. DDR's patents are directed to the same concept. Just as visitors to BJ's Wholesale Clubs could purchase travel products from NLG without leaving the BJ's warehouse, the claimed system permits a person to purchase goods from a third-party vendor, but still have the visual "impression that she is viewing pages served by the [original host merchant]." '399 patent col.3 ll.23–24; *see ante* at 3 (explaining that DDR's claimed system "permits a website visitor, in a sense, to be in two places at the same time"). Indeed, any doubt as to whether the claimed system is merely an Internet iteration of an established business practice is laid to rest by the fact that one of the named inventors acknowledged that the innovative aspect of his claimed invention was "[t]aking something that worked in the real world and doing it on the Internet." J.A. 03208.

Alice articulated a technological arts test for patent eligibility. 134 S. Ct. at 2359 (explaining that the claimed method fell outside section 101 because it did not "improve the functioning of the computer itself" or "effect an improvement in any other technology or technical field"). Here, the court correctly recognizes *Alice's* technological arts standard, but applies it in a deficient manner. According to the court, DDR's claims fall within section 101 because the "solution" they offer "is *necessarily rooted in computer technology* in order to overcome a problem

specifically arising in the realm of computer networks." *Ante* at 20 (emphasis added). The solution offered by DDR's claims, however, is not rooted in any new computer technology. Its patents address the problem of preventing online merchants from losing "hard-won visitor traffic," '572 patent col.2 ll.64–65, and the solution they offer is an entrepreneurial, rather than a technological, one. DDR has admitted that it did not invent any of the generic computer elements disclosed in its claims. J.A. 3311–16. There is no dispute, moreover, that at the time of the claimed invention the use of hyperlinks to divert consumers to particular web pages was a well-understood and widely-used technique. *See* '399 patent col.1 ll.29–52. While DDR's patents describe the potential advantages of making two web pages look alike, they do not disclose any non-conventional technology for capturing the "look and feel" of a host website or for giving two web pages a similar appearance. *See Alice*, 134 S. Ct. at 2360 ("[W]hat petitioner characterizes as specific hardware . . . is purely functional and generic."); *Accenture*, 728 F.3d at 1345 (rejecting claims that contained no "detailed software implementation guidelines"). DDR's patents fall outside section 101 because they simply "tak[e] existing information"—the visual appearance of a host merchant's website—and use conventional technology to "organiz[e] this information into a new form." *Digitech Image Techs., LLC v. Elecs. for Imaging, Inc.*, 758 F.3d 1344, 1351 (Fed. Cir. 2014); *see Mayo*, 132 S. Ct. at 1298 (emphasizing that reciting "well-understood, routine, [or] conventional activity" does not impart patent eligibility).

In concluding that DDR's claims meet the demands of section 101, the court focuses on the fact that "they recite a *specific* way to automate the creation of a composite web page . . . ." *Ante* at 23 (emphasis added). The Supreme Court, however, has emphatically rejected the idea that claims become patent eligible simply because they disclose a specific solution to a particular problem. *See*

Bilski v. Kappos, 561 U.S. 593, 599–601 (2010) (concluding that claims fell outside section 101 notwithstanding the fact that they disclosed a very specific method of hedging against price increases); *Parker v. Flook*, 437 U.S. 584, 593 (1978) (rejecting the argument "that if a process application implements a principle in some specific fashion, it automatically falls within the patentable subject matter of § 101"). Indeed, although the claims at issue in *Alice* described a very specific method for conducting intermediated settlement, the Court nonetheless unanimously concluded that they fell outside section 101. 134 S. Ct. at 2358–60.

Nor is the fact that the claims address an "Internetcentric problem," *ante* at 23, sufficient to render them patent eligible. The Supreme Court has repeatedly made clear that "limiting the use of an abstract idea to a particular technological environment" is insufficient to confer patent eligibility. *Alice*, 134 S. Ct. at 2360 (citations and internal quotation marks omitted); *see also Mayo*, 132 S. Ct. at 1294; *Bilski*, 561 U.S. at 610. Accordingly, the fact that DDR's system operates "in the context of the Internet," *ante* at 22, does not bring it within patentable subject matter.

The potential scope of DDR's patents is staggering, arguably covering vast swaths of Internet commerce. DDR has already brought infringement actions against ten defendants, including Digital River, Inc., Expedia, Inc., Travelocity.com, L.P., and Orbitz Worldwide, LLC. *See* J.A. 255–63; *ante* at 7. DDR's claims are patent ineligible because their broad and sweeping reach is vastly disproportionate to their minimal technological disclosure. *See Mayo*, 132 S. Ct. at 1303 (In assessing patent eligibility, "the underlying functional concern . . . is a *relative* one: how much future innovation is foreclosed relative to the contribution of the inventor.").

Alice made clear that claims untethered to any advance in science or technology do not pass muster under section 101. 134 S. Ct. at 2359. Viewed as a whole, DDR's claims contain no more than an abstract idea for increasing sales implemented via "some unspecified, generic computer," *id.* at 2360. The inventive concept, if any, embedded in DDR's claims is an idea for "retaining control over the attention of the customer," *ante* at 22. Because this purported inventive concept is an entrepreneurial rather than a technological one, DDR's claims are not patentable.

Electronic Acknowledgement Receipt

EFS ID:	20877714
Application Number:	13970515
International Application Number:	
Confirmation Number:	2289
Title of Invention:	Methods of expanding commercial opportunities for internet websites through coordinated offsite marketing
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	D. Delano Ross
Customer Number:	26362
Filer:	Louis J. Hoffman/Donald Hertz
Filer Authorized By:	Louis J. Hoffman
Attorney Docket Number:	23-CON4
Receipt Date:	05-DEC-2014
Filing Date:	19-AUG-2013
Time Stamp:	13:30:24
Application Type:	Utility under 35 USC 111(a)

Payment information:

Submitted with Payment	no

File Listing:

Document Number	Document Description	File Name	File Size(Bytes)/ Message Digest	Multi Part /.zip	Pages (if appl.)
1	Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) Form (SB08)	14-12-05-DDR-CON4-IDS.pdf	612246 4a7fe77a420db9543ddb316b75e2511a21e2b062	no	4

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2	Non Patent Literature	DDR_FedCirc-OPINION_JUDGMENT.pdf	349512 e5310eaf24e8d8618e2734238519de6e7d6ad38c	no	38

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If a new application is being filed and the application includes the necessary components for a filing date (see 37 CFR 1.53(b)-(d) and MPEP 506), a Filing Receipt (37 CFR 1.54) will be issued in due course and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the filing date of the application.

National Stage of an International Application under 35 U.S.C. 371

If a timely submission to enter the national stage of an international application is compliant with the conditions of 35 U.S.C. 371 and other applicable requirements a Form PCT/DO/EO/903 indicating acceptance of the application as a national stage submission under 35 U.S.C. 371 will be issued in addition to the Filing Receipt, in due course.

New International Application Filed with the USPTO as a Receiving Office

If a new international application is being filed and the international application includes the necessary components for an international filing date (see PCT Article 11 and MPEP 1810), a Notification of the International Application Number and of the International Filing Date (Form PCT/RO/105) will be issued in due course, subject to prescriptions concerning national security, and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the international filing date of the application.

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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
13/970,515	08/19/2013	D. Delano Ross JR.	23-CON4	2289

26362 7590 09/26/2014

LOUIS J. HOFFMAN, P.C.
14301 North 87th Street, Suite 312
Scottsdale, AZ 85260

EXAMINER	
GARG, YOGESH C	

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3625	

NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE
09/26/2014	ELECTRONIC

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

Louis@valuablepatents.com
donald@valuablepatents.com
shaelyn@valuablepatents.com

Office Action Summary	Application No. 13/970,515	Applicant(s) ROSS ET AL.	
	Examiner YOGESH C. GARG	Art Unit 3625	AIA (First Inventor to File) Status No

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE *3* MONTHS FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *9/12/2014*.

☐ A declaration(s)/affidavit(s) under **37 CFR 1.130(b)** was/were filed on _____.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ An election was made by the applicant in response to a restriction requirement set forth during the interview on _____; the restriction requirement and election have been incorporated into this action.

4)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims*

5)☒ Claim(s) *71-78* is/are pending in the application.

5a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

6)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

7)☒ Claim(s) *71-78* is/are rejected.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

9)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

* If any claims have been determined allowable, you may be eligible to benefit from the **Patent Prosecution Highway** program at a participating intellectual property office for the corresponding application. For more information, please see http://www.uspto.gov/patents/init_events/pph/index.jsp or send an inquiry to PPHfeedback@uspto.gov.

Application Papers

10)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

11)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

Certified copies:

a)☐ All b)☐ Some** c)☐ None of the:

1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

** See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08a and/or PTO/SB/08b) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.

3) ☒ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. *9/18/2014* .

4) ☐ Other: _____.

The present application is being examined under the pre-AIA first to invent provisions.

Response to Amendment & Response to Arguments

1. Applicant's request for reconsideration of the finality of the rejection of the last Office action is persuasive and, therefore, the finality of that action is withdrawn.
In view of filing a proper Terminal Disclaimer rejection of claims 71-78 on the grounds of nonstatutory double patenting is now moot and withdrawn. However, in view of the recent Supreme Court ruling Alice v. CLS Bank claims 71-78 cannot be placed in condition for allowance as they are directed to an Abstract idea of providing information about a commerce object to a customer in order to support marketing of the commerce object.

Examiner has noted the Applicant's arguments filed 9/12/2014, pages 7-9, with reference to Alice Corp.v. CLS Bank but are not found persuasive. Rejection of claims 71-78 under 35 USC 101 is given below with details as why claims 71-78 are considered as directed to an Abstract Idea.

Applicant's comments about IDs have been noted.

Claims 71-78 are interpreted as being directed to an Abstract idea. Claims 71-78 are primarily directed to the concept of supporting a commerce opportunity for selling or purchasing a commerce object. Examples of abstract ideas include fundamental economic practices; certain methods of organizing human activities; an idea itself; and mathematical relationships/formulas. Alice Corporation Pty. Ltd. v. CLS Bank

International, et al., 573 U.S. ____ (2014). Further Claims 71-78 do not, for example, purport to improve the functioning of the computer itself. Nor do they effect an improvement in any other technology or technical field. A detail rejection is provided in the attached Office Action.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

2. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

> Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Claims 71-78 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

Claims 71-78 are to methods primarily directed to the concept of supporting a commerce opportunity for managing selling or purchasing a commerce object thereby supporting a commercial activity which is a part of fundamental economic practice. Examples of abstract ideas include fundamental economic practices; certain methods of organizing human activities; an idea itself; and mathematical relationships/formulas. Alice Corporation Pty. Ltd. v. CLS Bank International, et al., 573 U.S. ____ (2014).

The Supreme Court set forth a framework for distinguishing patents that claim laws of nature, natural phenomena, and abstract ideas from those that claim patent-eligible applications of those concepts. First.. .determine whether the claims at issue are directed to one of those patent-ineligible concepts .... If so, we then ask, "[w]hat else is

there in the claims .... To answer that question, [] consider the elements of each claim both individually and "as an ordered combination" to determine whether the additional elements "transform the nature of the claim" into a patent- eligible application. [The Court] described step two of this analysis as a search for an "'inventive concept'"--i.e., an element or combination of elements that is "sufficient to ensure that the patent in practice amounts to significantly more than a patent upon the [ineligible concept] itself." Alice Corp.Pty. Ltd. v CLS Bank Intl.,2014 WL 2765283 (U.S.), (citing Mayo Collaborative Services v. Prometheus Laboratories, Inc., 132 S.Ct. 1289 (2012) (citation omitted).

We must first determine whether the claims at issue are directed to a patent-ineligible concept. We conclude that they are. These claims are drawn to the abstract idea of managing and supporting a commerce opportunity for selling or purchasing a commerce object. Examples of abstract ideas include fundamental economic practices; certain methods of organizing human activities; an idea itself; and mathematical relationships/formulas. Alice Corporation Pty. Ltd. v. CLS Bank International, et al., 573 U.S. ____ (2014). It follows from prior cases, and Bilski in particular, that the claims at issue here are directed to an abstract idea. On their face, the claims are drawn to the concept of managing and supporting a commerce opportunity for selling or purchasing a commerce object. Like the risk hedging in Bilski, the concept of managing and supporting a commerce opportunity for selling or purchasing a commerce object is a fundamental economic practice long prevalent in our system of commerce. The use of the concept of managing and supporting a commerce opportunity for selling or

purchasing a commerce object is also a building block of the modern economy. Thus, managing and supporting a commerce opportunity for selling or purchasing a commerce object, like hedging, is an "abstract idea" beyond the scope of § 101.

The Court found that it need not labor to delimit the precise contours of the "abstract ideas" category in a case such as this. It is enough to recognize that there is no meaningful distinction between the conceptual abstraction of risk hedging in Bilski and the concept of managing and supporting a commerce opportunity for selling or purchasing a commerce object at issue here. Both are squarely within the realm of "abstract ideas" as the Court has used that term. See Alice Corp.

The introduction of a computer into the claims does not alter the analysis at Mayo step two. Method claims, which merely require generic computer implementation, fail to transform that abstract idea into a patent-eligible invention.

> The mere recitation of a generic computer cannot transform a patent-ineligible abstract idea into a patent-eligible invention. Stating an abstract idea "while adding the words 'apply it'" is not enough for patent eligibility. Nor is limiting the use of an abstract idea "'to a particular technological environment.'" Stating an abstract idea while adding the words "apply it with a computer" simply combines those two steps, with the same deficient result. Thus, if a patent's recitation of a computer amounts to a mere instruction to "implement[t]" an abstract idea "on... a computer," that addition cannot impart patent eligibility. This conclusion accords with the preemption concern that undergirds our § 101 jurisprudence. Given the ubiquity of computers, wholly generic computer implementation is not generally

the sort of "additional feature[e]" that provides any "practical assurance that the process is more than a drafting effort designed to monopolize the [abstract idea] itself[.]".

Alice Corp.

The relevant question is whether the claims here do more than simply instruct the practitioner to implement the abstract idea of managing and supporting a commerce opportunity for selling or purchasing a commerce object and related tasks on a generic computer. They do not. Examples of abstract ideas include fundamental economic practices; certain methods of organizing human activities; an idea itself; and mathematical relationships/formulas. *Alice Corporation Pty. Ltd. v. CLS Bank International, et al.*, 573 U.S. ____ (2014).

Taking the claim elements separately, the function performed by the computer at each step of the process is purely conventional. Using a computer to receive a request associated with a commerce object initiated from a source web page from a user's computing device, based on the received request serving a dynamically generated composite page to the user's computing device to display information associated with the commerce object and plurality of elements corresponding to the source web page ---are basic functions of a computer, which are well-understood, routine, conventional activities previously known to the industry and in any event no more than an extension of the abstract idea of managing and supporting a commerce opportunity for selling or

purchasing a commerce object. In short, each step does no more than require a generic computer to perform generic computer functions.

Considered as an ordered combination, the method adds nothing that is not already present when the steps are considered separately. Viewed as a whole, the method claims simply recite the concept of managing and supporting a commerce opportunity for selling or purchasing a commerce object and related solutions as performed by a generic computer. **The method claims do not, for example, purport to improve the functioning of the computer itself. Nor do they effect an improvement in any other technology or technical field.** Instead, the claims at issue amount to nothing significantly more than an instruction to apply the abstract idea of managing and supporting a commerce opportunity for selling or purchasing a commerce object and related solutions using some unspecified, generic computer. Under our precedents, that is not enough to transform an abstract idea into a patent-eligible invention

Note: The analysis above applies to all dependent claims of the invention, since there is no meaningful distinction between the independent and dependent claims. *See Planet Bingo*, 961 F. Supp. 2d at 854, 857.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to YOGESH C. GARG whose telephone number is (571)272-6756. The examiner can normally be reached on Increased Flex/Hoteling.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jeffrey A. Smith can be reached on 571-272-6763. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

YOGESH C GARG
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3625

/YOGESH C GARG/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3625

Examiner-Initiated Interview Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	13/970,515	ROSS ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	YOGESH C. GARG	3625	

All participants (applicant, applicant's representative, PTO personnel):

(1) *YOGESH C. GARG*. (3)_____.

(2) *LOUIS J.HOFFMAN*. (4)_____.

Date of Interview: *18 September 2014*.

Type: ☒ Telephonic ☐ Video Conference
☐ Personal [copy given to: ☐ applicant ☐ applicant's representative]

Exhibit shown or demonstration conducted: ☐ Yes ☐ No.
If Yes, brief description: _____.

Issues Discussed ☐101 ☐112 ☐102 ☐103 ☐Others
(For each of the checked box(es) above, please describe below the issue and detailed description of the discussion)

Claim(s) discussed: *71-78*.

Identification of prior art discussed: _____.

Substance of Interview
(For each issue discussed, provide a detailed description and indicate if agreement was reached. Some topics may include: identification or clarification of a reference or a portion thereof, claim interpretation, proposed amendments, arguments of any applied references etc...)

In response to receiving Applicant's response after Final action, Examiner called Mr. Hoffman to discuss and explain as why the Application cannot be allowed in view of the Supreme Court ruling Alice.v.CLS Bank. Examiner discussed that in view of the filing of proper Termial Disclaimer previous rejection on the grounds of Double Patenting are now moot and withdrawn. However, claims 71-78 are interprted as being directed to an Abstract idea. Claims 71-78 are primarily directed to the concept of supporting a commerce opportunity for selling or purchasing a commerce object. Examples of abstract ideas include fundamental economic practices; certain methods of organizing human activities; an idea itself; and mathematical relationships/formulas. Alice Corporation Pty. Ltd. v. CLS Bank International, et al., 573 U.S. (2014). Further Claims 71-78 do not, for example, purport to improve the functioning of the computer itself. Nor do they effect an improvement in any other technology or technical field. A detail rejection is provided in the attached Office Action. .

Applicant recordation instructions: It is not necessary for applicant to provide a separate record of the substance of interview.

Examiner recordation instructions: Examiners must summarize the substance of any interview of record. A complete and proper recordation of the substance of an interview should include the items listed in MPEP 713.04 for complete and proper recordation including the identification of the general thrust of each argument or issue discussed, a general indication of any other pertinent matters discussed regarding patentability and the general results or outcome of the interview, to include an indication as to whether or not agreement was reached on the issues raised.

☐ Attachment

/YOGESH C GARG/ Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3625	

Search Notes	Application/Control No.	Applicant(s)/Patent Under Reexamination
	13970515	ROSS ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	YOGESH C GARG	3625

CPC- SEARCHED		
Symbol	Date	Examiner

CPC COMBINATION SETS - SEARCHED		
Symbol	Date	Examiner

US CLASSIFICATION SEARCHED			
Class	Subclass	Date	Examiner
705	26.1, 27.1	10/6/2013	YG
707	E17.117	10/6/2013	YG
709	218	10/6/2013	YG
715	207	10/6/2013	YG

SEARCH NOTES		
Search Notes	Date	Examiner
Keyword search on east database	10/6/2013	YG
Palm search for inventors' names	10/6/2013	YG
Reviewed Patents resukting from the parent applications	10/6/2013	YG
Revised Keyword search on east database	4/30/2014	YG
Backward and forward search of best cited references	4/30/2014	YG
Interference search	4/30/2014	YG
Pqdialog Search	4/30/2014	YG
Consulted panel 101. CLaims defiined Abstract per ALice ruling	9/17/2014	YG

INTERFERENCE SEARCH			
US Class/ CPC Symbol	US Subclass / CPC Group	Date	Examiner
705	26.1,26.7,27.1,14.19,14.27,14.39	4/30/2014	YG
709	218,245	4/30/2014	YG

INTERFERENCE SEARCH			
US Class/ CPC Symbol	**US Subclass / CPC Group**	**Date**	**Examiner**
715	205,207,234,781	4/30/2014	YG
707	E17.117	4/30/2014	YG

Index of Claims	Application/Control No.	Applicant(s)/Patent Under Reexamination
	13970515	ROSS ET AL.
	Examiner	**Art Unit**
	YOGESH C GARG	3625

✓	Rejected	-	Cancelled	N	Non-Elected	A	Appeal
=	Allowed	÷	Restricted	I	Interference	O	Objected

☐ Claims renumbered in the same order as presented by applicant ☐ CPA ☐ T.D. ☐ R.1.47

CLAIM		DATE								
Final	Original	10/03/2013	05/01/2014	09/16/2014						
	1	✓	-	-						
	71		✓	✓						
	72		✓	✓						
	73		✓	✓						
	74		✓	✓						
	75		✓	✓						
	76		✓	✓						
	77		✓	✓						
	78		✓	✓						

To: Louis@valuablepatents.com,donald@valuablepatents.com,shaelyn@valuablepatents.com
From: PAIR_eOfficeAction@uspto.gov
Cc: PAIR_eOfficeAction@uspto.gov
Subject: Private PAIR Correspondence Notification for Customer Number 26362

Sep 26, 2014 05:20:17 AM

Dear PAIR Customer:

LOUIS J. HOFFMAN, P.C.
14301 North 87th Street, Suite 312
Scottsdale, AZ 85260
UNITED STATES

The following USPTO patent application(s) associated with your Customer Number, 26362 , have new outgoing correspondence. This correspondence is now available for viewing in Private PAIR.

The official date of notification of the outgoing correspondence will be indicated on the form PTOL-90 accompanying the correspondence.

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Application	Document	Mailroom Date	Attorney Docket No.
13970515	CTNF	09/26/2014	23-CON4
	INTV.SUM.EX	09/26/2014	23-CON4

To view your correspondence online or update your email addresses, please visit us anytime at https://sportal.uspto.gov/secure/myportal/privatepair.

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Monday - Friday 6:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m.

Thank you for prompt attention to this notice,

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

PATENT APPLICATION INFORMATION RETRIEVAL SYSTEM

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Inventors	:	Ross, D. Delano Jr. et al.	Art Unit	:	3625
Serial No.	:	13/970,515	Examiner	:	Garg, Yogesh C.
Filing Date	:	08/19/2013	Conf. No.	:	2289
Title	:	A method of a specially programmed computer server serving pages offering commercial opportunities for merchants through coordinated offsite marketing			

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Filed via EFS – September 18, 2014

RESPONSE TO NOTICE

Dear Sir:

In response to the Notice dated September 10, 2013, assignee submits concurrently replacement Inventor Declarations in compliance with 37 CFR § 1.63.

If the Office has any questions, please feel free to contact applicant's undersigned attorney of record.

Respectfully submitted,

DDR HOLDINGS, LLC
by its attorney

Dated: September 18, 2014

/Louis J. Hoffman/
Louis J. Hoffman
Reg. No. 38,918

LOUIS J. HOFFMAN, P.C.
14301 North 87th Street
Suite 312
Scottsdale, Arizona 85260
(480) 948-3295

PTO/AIA/01 (06-12)
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DECLARATION (37 CFR 1.63) FOR UTILITY OR DESIGN APPLICATION USING AN APPLICATION DATA SHEET (37 CFR 1.76)

Title of Invention	A method of a specially programmed computer server serving pages offering commercial opportunities for merchants through coordinated offsite marketing

As the below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

This declaration is directed to:

☐ The attached application, or

☒ United States application or PCT international application number 13/970,515

filed on 08/19/2013.

The above-identified application was made or authorized to be made by me.

I believe that I am the original inventor or an original joint inventor of a claimed invention in the application.

I hereby acknowledge that any willful false statement made in this declaration is punishable under 18 U.S.C. 1001 by fine or imprisonment of not more than five (5) years, or both.

WARNING:

Petitioner/applicant is cautioned to avoid submitting personal information in documents filed in a patent application that may contribute to identity theft. Personal information such as social security numbers, bank account numbers, or credit card numbers (other than a check or credit card authorization form PTO-2038 submitted for payment purposes) is never required by the USPTO to support a petition or an application. If this type of personal information is included in documents submitted to the USPTO, petitioners/applicants should consider redacting such personal information from the documents before submitting them to the USPTO. Petitioner/applicant is advised that the record of a patent application is available to the public after publication of the application (unless a non-publication request in compliance with 37 CFR 1.213(a) is made in the application) or issuance of a patent. Furthermore, the record from an abandoned application may also be available to the public if the application is referenced in a published application or an issued patent (see 37 CFR 1.14). Checks and credit card authorization forms PTO-2038 submitted for payment purposes are not retained in the application file and therefore are not publicly available.

LEGAL NAME OF INVENTOR

Inventor: William R. May Date (Optional): May 28, 2014

Signature: [signature]

Note: An application data sheet (PTO/SB/14 or equivalent), including naming the entire inventive entity, must accompany this form or must have been previously filed. Use an additional PTO/AIA/01 form for each additional inventor.

This collection of information is required by 35 U.S.C. 115 and 37 CFR 1.63. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.11 and 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 1 minute to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. **SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**

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Title of Invention	A method of a specially programmed computer server serving pages offering commercial opportunities for merchants through coordinated offsite marketing

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- ☐ The attached application, or
- ■ United States application or PCT international application number 13/970,515 filed on 08/19/2013.

The above-identified application was made or authorized to be made by me.

I believe that I am the original inventor or an original joint inventor of a claimed invention in the application.

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LEGAL NAME OF INVENTOR

Inventor: Joseph R. Michaels Date (Optional): 6/4/2014

Signature: Joseph R. Michaels

Note: An application data sheet (PTO/SB/14 or equivalent), including naming the entire inventive entity, must accompany this form or must have been previously filed. Use an additional PTO/AIA/01 form for each additional inventor.

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LEGAL NAME OF INVENTOR

Inventor: Daniel D. Ross Date (Optional): 5.30.14

Signature: [signature]

Note: An application data sheet (PTO/SB/14 or equivalent), including naming the entire inventive entity, must accompany this form or must have been previously filed. Use an additional PTO/AIA/01 form for each additional inventor.

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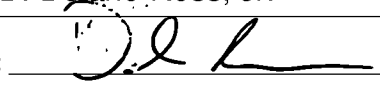
LEGAL NAME OF INVENTOR

Inventor: D. Delano Ross, Jr. Date (Optional): May 30, 2014

Signature: 

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LEGAL NAME OF INVENTOR

Inventor: Richard A. Anderson Date (Optional): _____

Signature: _____

Note: An application data sheet (PTO/SB/14 or equivalent), including naming the entire inventive entity, must accompany this form or must have been previously filed. Use an additional PTO/AIA/01 form for each additional inventor.

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Electronic Acknowledgement Receipt

EFS ID:	20181724
Application Number:	13970515
International Application Number:	
Confirmation Number:	2289
Title of Invention:	Methods of expanding commercial opportunities for internet websites through coordinated offsite marketing
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	D. Delano Ross
Customer Number:	26362
Filer:	Louis J. Hoffman/Donald Hertz
Filer Authorized By:	Louis J. Hoffman
Attorney Docket Number:	23-CON4
Receipt Date:	18-SEP-2014
Filing Date:	19-AUG-2013
Time Stamp:	17:19:26
Application Type:	Utility under 35 USC 111(a)

Payment information:

Submitted with Payment	no

File Listing:

Document Number	Document Description	File Name	File Size(Bytes)/ Message Digest	Multi Part /.zip	Pages (if appl.)
1	Applicant Response to Pre-Exam Formalities Notice	14-09-18-DDR-CON4-Resp_Ntc_Defic_Declarations.pdf	35807 fab24ab6309a4208b9775c4f665be0c7ee925387	no	1

Warnings:	
Information:	

2	Oath or Declaration filed	14-05-28-DDR-CON4-Declaration_May_signed2.pdf	1668522 7a9cd861b83cb439699619b511c72360d06287ff	no	1
Warnings:					
Information:					
3	Oath or Declaration filed	14-06-04-DDR-CON4-Declaration_Michaels_signed2.pdf	152051 e8c6d38c605004e470dd4891d8d888a3fdc2b8fe	no	1
Warnings:					
Information:					
4	Oath or Declaration filed	14-05-30-DDR-CON4-Declaration-Danny_Ross-signed.pdf	1827726 f957e427b108eae76c34c4be05e4046cc51576ed	no	1
Warnings:					
Information:					
5	Oath or Declaration filed	14-05-30-DDR-CON4-Declaration-Del_Ross-signed.pdf	106491 7acf351aaae83d1d97a18bb0beba7424c8a4fd62	no	1
Warnings:					
Information:					
6	Oath or Declaration filed	14-09-16-DDR-CON4-Declaration_Anderson_signed2.pdf	125705 3e30576a0ddc6bdca31890ffa322a00ee2bb3cb8	no	1
Warnings:					
Information:					
		Total Files Size (in bytes):	3916302		

This Acknowledgement Receipt evidences receipt on the noted date by the USPTO of the indicated documents, characterized by the applicant, and including page counts, where applicable. It serves as evidence of receipt similar to a Post Card, as described in MPEP 503.

New Applications Under 35 U.S.C. 111

If a new application is being filed and the application includes the necessary components for a filing date (see 37 CFR 1.53(b)-(d) and MPEP 506), a Filing Receipt (37 CFR 1.54) will be issued in due course and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the filing date of the application.

National Stage of an International Application under 35 U.S.C. 371

If a timely submission to enter the national stage of an international application is compliant with the conditions of 35 U.S.C. 371 and other applicable requirements a Form PCT/DO/EO/903 indicating acceptance of the application as a national stage submission under 35 U.S.C. 371 will be issued in addition to the Filing Receipt, in due course.

New International Application Filed with the USPTO as a Receiving Office

If a new international application is being filed and the international application includes the necessary components for an international filing date (see PCT Article 11 and MPEP 1810), a Notification of the International Application Number and of the International Filing Date (Form PCT/RO/105) will be issued in due course, subject to prescriptions concerning national security, and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the international filing date of the application.

Doc Code: DIST.E.FILE **Document Description: Electronic Terminal Disclaimer - Filed**	PTO/SB/26 U.S. Patent and Trademark Office Department of Commerce

Electronic Petition Request	**TERMINAL DISCLAIMER TO OBVIATE A DOUBLE PATENTING REJECTION OVER A "PRIOR" PATENT**
Application Number	13970515
Filing Date	19-Aug-2013
First Named Inventor	D. Ross
Attorney Docket Number	23-CON4
Title of Invention	Methods of expanding commercial opportunities for internet websites through coordinated offsite marketing

☒ Filing of terminal disclaimer does not obviate requirement for response under 37 CFR 1.111 to outstanding Office Action

☒ This electronic Terminal Disclaimer is not being used for a Joint Research Agreement.

Owner	Percent Interest
DDR HOLDINGS, LLC	100%

The owner(s) with percent interest listed above in the instant application hereby disclaims, except as provided below, the terminal part of the statutory term of any patent granted on the instant application which would extend beyond the expiration date of the full statutory term of prior patent number(s)

8515825

7818399

6993572

6629135

as the term of said prior patent is presently shortened by any terminal disclaimer. The owner hereby agrees that any patent so granted on the instant application shall be enforceable only for and during such period that it and the prior patent are commonly owned. This agreement runs with any patent granted on the instant application and is binding upon the grantee, its successors or assigns.

In making the above disclaimer, the owner does not disclaim the terminal part of the term of any patent granted on the instant application that would extend to the expiration date of the full statutory term of the prior patent, "as the term of said prior patent is presently shortened by any terminal disclaimer," in the event that said prior patent later:
- expires for failure to pay a maintenance fee;
- is held unenforceable;
- is found invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction;
- is statutorily disclaimed in whole or terminally disclaimed under 37 CFR 1.321;
- has all claims canceled by a reexamination certificate;
- is reissued; or
- is in any manner terminated prior to the expiration of its full statutory term as presently shortened by any terminal disclaimer.

(●) Terminal disclaimer fee under 37 CFR 1.20(d) is included with Electronic Terminal Disclaimer request.

( ) I certify, in accordance with 37 CFR 1.4(d)(4), that the terminal disclaimer fee under 37 CFR 1.20(d) required for this terminal disclaimer has already been paid in the above-identified application.

Applicant claims the following fee status:

( ) Small Entity

( ) Micro Entity

(●) Regular Undiscounted

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

THIS PORTION MUST BE COMPLETED BY THE SIGNATORY OR SIGNATORIES

I certify, in accordance with 37 CFR 1.4(d)(4) that I am:

(●) An attorney or agent registered to practice before the Patent and Trademark Office who is of record in this application

Registration Number 38918

( ) A sole inventor

( ) A joint inventor; I certify that I am authorized to sign this submission on behalf of all of the inventors as evidenced by the power of attorney in the application

( ) A joint inventor; all of whom are signing this request

Signature	/Louis J. Hoffman/
Name	Louis J. Hoffman

*Statement under 37 CFR 3.73(b) is required if terminal disclaimer is signed by the assignee (owner).
Form PTO/SB/96 may be used for making this certification. See MPEP § 324.

Electronic Patent Application Fee Transmittal

Application Number:	13970515
Filing Date:	19-Aug-2013
Title of Invention:	Methods of expanding commercial opportunities for internet websites through coordinated offsite marketing
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	D. Delano Ross
Filer:	Louis J. Hoffman/Donald Hertz
Attorney Docket Number:	23-CON4

Filed as Large Entity

Utility under 35 USC 111(a) Filing Fees

Description	Fee Code	Quantity	Amount	Sub-Total in USD($)
Basic Filing:				
Statutory or Terminal Disclaimer	1814	1	160	160
Pages:				
Claims:				
Miscellaneous-Filing:				
Petition:				
Patent-Appeals-and-Interference:				
Post-Allowance-and-Post-Issuance:				
Extension-of-Time:				

Description	Fee Code	Quantity	Amount	Sub-Total in USD($)
Miscellaneous:				
			Total in USD ($)	**160**

Doc Code: DISQ.E.FILE
Document Description: Electronic Terminal Disclaimer – Approved

Application No.: 13970515

Filing Date: 19-Aug-2013

Applicant/Patent under Reexamination: Ross et al.

Electronic Terminal Disclaimer filed on September 12, 2014

☒ APPROVED

This patent is subject to a terminal disclaimer

☐ DISAPPROVED

Approved/Disapproved by: Electronic Terminal Disclaimer automatically approved by EFS-Web

U.S. Patent and Trademark Office

Electronic Acknowledgement Receipt

EFS ID:	20130765
Application Number:	13970515
International Application Number:	
Confirmation Number:	2289
Title of Invention:	Methods of expanding commercial opportunities for internet websites through coordinated offsite marketing
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	D. Delano Ross
Customer Number:	26362
Filer:	Louis J. Hoffman/Donald Hertz
Filer Authorized By:	Louis J. Hoffman
Attorney Docket Number:	23-CON4
Receipt Date:	12-SEP-2014
Filing Date:	19-AUG-2013
Time Stamp:	20:42:42
Application Type:	Utility under 35 USC 111(a)

Payment information:

Submitted with Payment	yes
Payment Type	Credit Card
Payment was successfully received in RAM	$160
RAM confirmation Number	5749
Deposit Account	
Authorized User	

File Listing:

Document Number	Document Description	File Name	File Size(Bytes)/ Message Digest	Multi Part /.zip	Pages (if appl.)

1	Electronic Terminal Disclaimer-Filed	eTerminal-Disclaimer.pdf	34802 eb333f0b288d7480ca2a453f1f15ab6e040ed8cb	no	3
Warnings:					
Information:					
2	Fee Worksheet (SB06)	fee-info.pdf	30473 b60487fc2c0cf676eab0d4f12c60e123c8693a89	no	2
Warnings:					
Information:					
		Total Files Size (in bytes):	65275		

This Acknowledgement Receipt evidences receipt on the noted date by the USPTO of the indicated documents, characterized by the applicant, and including page counts, where applicable. It serves as evidence of receipt similar to a Post Card, as described in MPEP 503.

New Applications Under 35 U.S.C. 111
If a new application is being filed and the application includes the necessary components for a filing date (see 37 CFR 1.53(b)-(d) and MPEP 506), a Filing Receipt (37 CFR 1.54) will be issued in due course and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the filing date of the application.

National Stage of an International Application under 35 U.S.C. 371
If a timely submission to enter the national stage of an international application is compliant with the conditions of 35 U.S.C. 371 and other applicable requirements a Form PCT/DO/EO/903 indicating acceptance of the application as a national stage submission under 35 U.S.C. 371 will be issued in addition to the Filing Receipt, in due course.

New International Application Filed with the USPTO as a Receiving Office
If a new international application is being filed and the international application includes the necessary components for an international filing date (see PCT Article 11 and MPEP 1810), a Notification of the International Application Number and of the International Filing Date (Form PCT/RO/105) will be issued in due course, subject to prescriptions concerning national security, and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the international filing date of the application.

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Inventors	:	Ross, D. Delano Jr. et al.	Art Unit	:	3625
Serial No.	:	13/970,515	Examiner	:	Garg, Yogesh C.
Filing Date	:	08/19/2013	Conf. No.	:	2289
Title	:	A method of a specially programmed computer server serving pages offering commercial opportunities for merchants through coordinated offsite marketing			

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Filed via EFS – September 12, 2014

RESPONSE TO FINAL OFFICE ACTION

Dear Sir:

In response to the Office Action dated May 12, 2014, made final, applicant requests consideration of the following remarks. No amendments are submitted. A one-month extension of time is requested and the fee submitted for it.

Remarks

In the May 12, 2014, Office Action, the only rejection is for double-patenting. In response, applicant submits concurrently with this paper a terminal disclaimer for e-processing through the Office's electronic filing system, to overcome the non-statutory double patenting rejection (the sole ground of rejection) over U.S. Patents 6,629,135, 6,993,572, 7,818,399, and 8,515,825. No admission is being made about the closeness of the present claims to the previous patents; to the contrary, there are important distinctions between the claims argued here and elsewhere that should not be overlooked. Rather, applicant submits the terminal disclaimers to moot the rejections most easily and with a minimum of expense.

Applicant respectfully requests prompt allowance.

I. No New Rejection Should Be Made for Previously Cited Digital River Art.

Despite the Office's rules relating to compact prosecution, in which all rejections should be made at one time, the Office Action requested applicant to furnish copies of certain previously cited references relating to Digital River and indicated an intention to consider that previously cited art after final and despite an indication of allowance.

A. The Request Concerns References Previously Provided.

The undersigned spoke to the Examiner shortly after receipt of the Office Action to ensure that applicant understood the Examiner's request precisely. The Examiner clarified that he simply wanted additional copies of previously provided references, with the requested references provided informally, so he can see the collection of art related to Digital River in a single place. Because no new references are being cited, a new Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) is not needed.

In response to the request, applicant is sending copies via electronic mail to the Examiner's email address today.

Applicant authorizes the Examiner to receive this information via email and to send email communications in reply, including to arrange any conversations deemed necessary to complete this matter.

The list of Digital River-referenced references being provided is, from the IDS dated 8/26/2013 in this application, item numbers 102, 104, 105, 254, 255, 257-267, 269-278, 280-287, 289-332, 421-424, 442, 444, 445, and 447; in addition, the portions of item numbers 437, 438, and 465 (expert reports) that related to Digital River are included.

Assignee cited most of the above-identified references (those for which copies are being provided again) in parent application Serial No. 11/343,464 (issued as U.S. Patent 7,818,399) through submission of an IDS on 10/23/2007 (indicated received on 10/26/2007), considered (initialed) by the Office in the first Office Action, dated 06/11/2008. Those references were also considered in parent application Serial No. 12/906,979 (issued as U.S. Patent 8,515,825) through an IDS filed on 10/18/2010, considered (initialed) by the Office in the first Office Action, dated 07/03/2012. Applicant cited the remainder of the above-listed references (those for which copies are being provided again) in the same parent application through an IDS filed on 07/30/2012, considered (initialed) by the Office in the 10/10/2012 final Office Action.

In sum, this examiner (Examiner Garg) considered each and every one of these references during examination of the immediate parent application, in 2012, which became the '825 Patent, and most of these references have been before the Office for nearly seven years and were considered not only in connection with the '825 Patent but also during examination of the grandparent application, which became the '399 Patent. In short, these are not new references.

B. Litigation Update, as Related to the Digital River Art.

As mentioned in applicant's last Response to Office Action (the comments that led the examiner to request these references), Digital River used this art to try, but failed, to invalidate certain claims of an earlier-issued parent patent, U.S. Patent 6,993,572, in a lawsuit in Texas. The jury ruled that the claims were not invalid, and the judge supported the jury verdict.

By issuance of the Office Action, and in the follow-on telephone call, the Examiner made clear that he wanted to know more about the Digital River art and the litigation relating thereto. In response to that request, applicant offers the Examiner the

following information about litigation-related matters, as connected to the Digital River art references discussed above:

1. Digital River and DDR entered into a Settlement and Patent License Agreement in April 2014, which resolved the lawsuit as to Digital River. Digital River satisfied the court judgment against Digital River in full, by paying DDR. As a result of the settlement, Digital River dropped its appeal to the Federal Circuit.

2. In applicant's opinion, the settlement indicates that Digital River did not have sufficient faith in its position that the "Digital River art" would invalidate the asserted claims of the '572 Patent to proceed with the appeal, even though the cost of appearing at oral argument would not be extremely large. This should signal to the Examiner that the distinctions that the Office (including this Examiner) previously recognized between the parent claims and the Digital River art remain viable.

3. DDR did not assert the other parent patent-in-suit, the '399 Patent, against Digital River, but asserted it against a co-defendant called WTH/NLG. That co-defendant has continued its appeal of the judgment against it, and the appeal remains pending as Case No. 13-1305 in the Federal Circuit. However, the co-defendant has never made any *prior art* argument to challenge the verdict, and it did not challenge the asserted claims of either the '572 Patent or the '399 Patent by arguing that they were invalid on account of the Digital River art asserted by its co-defendant, either (a) at trial, (b) through post-trial motions, or (c) through points of asserted error on appeal.

4. The decisions by Digital River's co-defendants should likewise signal to the Office that they did not have sufficient faith in the Digital River art to use that art as a main ground of defense or to proceed with arguments relying on it. WTH/NLG is the only co-defendant that maintained a defense, and it relies on approximately 8 other grounds of asserted error but not the Digital River prior art. The four other former co-defendants settled with DDR just before trial.

5. Applicant had hoped that the Federal Circuit opinion would be available by now, but the Court has not yet issued its decision in the case (argued on May 6th).

The oral argument is available to the Examiner, if he wishes to listen, on the Federal Circuit's website.

6. The litigation, including the trial in Texas and the appeal pending before the Federal Circuit, concerned certain claims of the '572 and '399 Patents only. As indicated in the last Response to Office Action, these claims are different, and they are intended to have even sharper distinctions from the Digital River art for which copies are provided now. Even if it is possible to use the Digital River art to question the claims of the '572 Patent, or even the claims of the '399 Patent (which has not been done), it should not be as easy to use the same art to question the claims of the '825 Patent that is the immediate parent (which was not asserted at trial), nor the claims pending now.

7. Applicant had previously advised the Examiner of the availability, if the Examiner wished, of the Digital River prior art in the form of the trial exhibits specifically. The undersigned confirmed in the phone call that the Examiner was interested in seeing the previously cited art, as cited to the Office, so no request has been made for the Digital River art in trial-exhibit form. However, if the Examiner wishes to see the Digital River art repackaged into the trial exhibit form, the Office can make an information request for those documents.

8. The undersigned nevertheless undertook to review the trial exhibits in detail to determine if anything significant about the Digital River art was included in trial exhibits but missing from the references in the form that they are before the Office. The undersigned concluded that, for the most part, the trial exhibits were the same as the art previously cited to the Office, or the trial exhibits were repackaged versions of the art cited to the Office. In some instances, for example, the trial exhibits provided information about the same systems or uses mentioned in references cited to the Office but contained additional pages, or constituted different documents with identical or similar content. The references already cited to the Office, however, in many instances focus more precisely on the parts of the documents on which Digital River relies. Providing a duplicate that includes added, less relevant pages, would seem pointless.

Because providing the information as repackaged in the trial exhibit form seemed substantially duplicative, and likely less valuable than what the Office already has, the undersigned concluded that it was neither necessary nor wise to cite any additional information in the form of the trial exhibits.

9. The primary distinction argued at trial was that the Digital River art failed completely to show even one outsourced page where visually perceptible elements copied from the host page produced a substantially similar *overall* appearance. Digital River carried over isolated elements from time to time from the host page to an outsourced page and *called* that "matching look and feel" (or similar words) on occasion, but *never* was there evidence of any matching *overall appearance*. Other differences may exist, but given time limits at trial, the parties to the case focused on this point. The pending claim includes a "wherein" clause that says, "wherein the plurality of visually perceptible elements define an overall appearance of the composite page that, excluding the information associated with the commerce object, visually corresponds to the source web page …."

10. Furthermore, the pending claims even more specifically state, "wherein the visually perceptible elements comprise logos, colors, page layout, navigation systems, frames, and/or visually perceptible mouse-over effects," in other words, whichever combination of those features are applicable to a specific case. Thus, as argued before, the pending claims are even more distinct from the Digital River art and other known prior art than the claims considered in the litigation.

If the Examiner has any questions regarding the Digital River prior art, please let us know. No new ground of rejection seems warranted, procedurally or substantively. Certain new events since the last response, indeed, even seem to *support* patentability more strongly than before.

II. No New Rejection Should Be Made for Section 101.

In the first Office Action, the Office rejected a previous claim for violation of Section 101, patentability. Applicant responded, including by amending the claims, and the final Office Action withdrew the Section 101 rejection of the previous claim.

Applicant suspects that the Examiner knows of the subsequent June 19th decision by the Supreme Court in *Alice Corp. v. CLS Bank Int'l*. Applicant's last Response to Office Action at pages 8-11 referred to, and discussed in detail, the Federal Circuit decision affirmed by the Supreme Court, and it mentioned the then-forthcoming decision by the Supreme Court. Applicant respectfully submits that the Section 101 rejection, overcome already as to these claims, should not be renewed.

To accelerate allowance, applicant offers the following remarks on this subject, based on the new *Alice* decision, as interpreted by the Office's Interim Guidelines on that case (http://www.uspto.gov/patents/announce/alice_pec_25jun2014.pdf):

The first step is to determine whether the claims are directed to one of the four statutory categories of invention. These claims clearly pass that step, because they are methods, which are processes under the Patent Act. *See* 35 U.S.C. § 100(b), 101. Also, the claims are implemented by a machine, specifically "a computer system serving displayable information of an outsource provider." [Claim 71]

The second step is to determine if the claims relate to any law or nature or natural phenomenon. The claims here clearly do not do so.

The third step is to determine if the claims are directed to an abstract idea. The Office's Interim Guidelines describe well the tension involved in making this decision:

> "As emphasized in *Alice Corp.*, abstract ideas are excluded from eligibility based on a concern that monopolization of the basic tools of scientific and technological work might impede innovation more than it would promote it. At the same time, the courts have tread carefully in construing this exclusion because, at some level, all inventions embody, use, reflect, rest upon or apply abstract ideas and the other exceptions. Thus, an invention is not rendered ineligible simply because it involves an abstract concept. In fact, inventions that integrate the building blocks of human ingenuity into something more by applying the abstract idea in a meaningful way are eligible."

The Interim Guidelines proceed to list "examples of abstract ideas referenced in Alice Corp." namely "fundamental economic practices," "certain methods of organizing human activities," "an idea of itself," and "mathematical relationships/formulas."

The Examiner can see that the pending claims fall into none of those categories. If the Examiner believes that the claims here are "directed to an abstract idea," applicant respectfully requests that the Office identify *with particularity* what that abstract idea is.

In applicant's opinion, as stated in the preamble, the claim is directed to the idea of "serving informational pages offering computer opportunities" on behalf of "an outsource provider." But the claims do not seek to monopolize all outsource providing, nor all means of serving informational pages. The methods are computer-performed, and performed by *specially programmed* computers, with certain specifics of the programming being included in claim limitations (*see, e.g.*, the "wherein" clauses). Therefore, referring to the Guidelines, there can be no concern about monopolization of the basic tools of scientific or technological work.

The fourth step, performed if the Examiner concludes that the claim is directed to an abstract idea, is to "determine whether any element, or combination of elements, in the claim is sufficient to ensure that the claim amounts to significantly more than the abstract idea itself. In other words, are there other limitations in the claim that show a patent-eligible application of the abstract idea, e.g., more than a mere instruction to apply the abstract idea," taking into account "the claim as a whole and all claim limitations, both individually and in combination." Examples of things that might qualify as "significantly more" include improvements "to another technology or technical field" or "to the functioning of the computer itself."

The claims here, even should it be necessary to reach this step (which should not be the case at all because the claims are not directed to an abstract idea in the first place), meet this test easily. The claims are chock full of limitations that go well beyond the "abstract idea itself." Dependent claims add more limitations that also do so.

Aside from the business concepts underlying the claims, the presently claimed invention relates to improvement of a computer itself, namely a method of operating an

improved server to do outsource providing, as well as improvements to the technology of connecting an outsource provider computer to the host computer across the Internet.

Applicant's discussion at pages 8-11 audited in some detail certain aspects of the claims pending now that went beyond a general concept, and the discussion explained why those specifics make the claims more than just directed to abstract ideas. The Office found that discussion persuasive before, so applicant will not repeat it.

Accordingly, there seems no reason to issue another Section 101 rejection despite the intervening case decision by the Supreme Court in *Alice Corp.*, at least not for this application given the circumstances and previous discussion.

Please feel free to telephone the undersigned if there are any questions or concerns or if it would in any way advance prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

DDR HOLDINGS, LLC
by its attorney

Dated: September 12, 2014

/Louis J. Hoffman/
Louis J. Hoffman
Reg. No. 38,918

LOUIS J. HOFFMAN, P.C.
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(480) 948-3295

Electronic Patent Application Fee Transmittal

Application Number:	13970515
Filing Date:	19-Aug-2013
Title of Invention:	Methods of expanding commercial opportunities for internet websites through coordinated offsite marketing
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	D. Delano Ross
Filer:	Louis J. Hoffman/Donald Hertz
Attorney Docket Number:	23-CON4

Filed as Large Entity

Utility under 35 USC 111(a) Filing Fees

Description	Fee Code	Quantity	Amount	Sub-Total in USD($)
Basic Filing:				
Pages:				
Claims:				
Miscellaneous-Filing:				
Petition:				
Patent-Appeals-and-Interference:				
Post-Allowance-and-Post-Issuance:				
Extension-of-Time:				
Extension - 1 month with $0 paid	1251	1	200	200

Description	Fee Code	Quantity	Amount	Sub-Total in USD($)
Miscellaneous:				
			Total in USD ($)	**200**

Electronic Acknowledgement Receipt

EFS ID:	20130790
Application Number:	13970515
International Application Number:	
Confirmation Number:	2289
Title of Invention:	Methods of expanding commercial opportunities for internet websites through coordinated offsite marketing
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	D. Delano Ross
Customer Number:	26362
Filer:	Louis J. Hoffman/Donald Hertz
Filer Authorized By:	Louis J. Hoffman
Attorney Docket Number:	23-CON4
Receipt Date:	12-SEP-2014
Filing Date:	19-AUG-2013
Time Stamp:	20:47:32
Application Type:	Utility under 35 USC 111(a)

Payment information:

Submitted with Payment	yes
Payment Type	Credit Card
Payment was successfully received in RAM	$200
RAM confirmation Number	5768
Deposit Account	
Authorized User	

File Listing:

Document Number	Document Description	File Name	File Size(Bytes)/ Message Digest	Multi Part /.zip	Pages (if appl.)

1	Response After Final Action	14-09-12-DDR-CON4-RTFA.pdf	135815 accf2c2e21805e5945d03106c70f441c0cd66f11	no	9
Warnings:					
Information:					
2	Fee Worksheet (SB06)	fee-info.pdf	30184 af1d76b31f51de3c72312c112e7c48dd811631cd	no	2
Warnings:					
Information:					
			Total Files Size (in bytes):	165999	

This Acknowledgement Receipt evidences receipt on the noted date by the USPTO of the indicated documents, characterized by the applicant, and including page counts, where applicable. It serves as evidence of receipt similar to a Post Card, as described in MPEP 503.

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PTO/SB/06 (09-11)
Approved for use through 1/31/2014. OMB 0651-0032
U.S. Patent and Trademark Office; U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
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PATENT APPLICATION FEE DETERMINATION RECORD Substitute for Form PTO-875	Application or Docket Number 13/970,515	Filing Date 08/19/2013	☐ To be Mailed

ENTITY: ☒ LARGE ☐ SMALL ☐ MICRO

APPLICATION AS FILED – PART I

	(Column 1)	(Column 2)		
FOR	NUMBER FILED	NUMBER EXTRA	RATE ($)	FEE ($)
☒ BASIC FEE (37 CFR 1.16(a), (b), or (c))	N/A	N/A	N/A	**280**
☐ SEARCH FEE (37 CFR 1.16(k), (i), or (m))	N/A	N/A	N/A	
☐ EXAMINATION FEE (37 CFR 1.16(o), (p), or (q))	N/A	N/A	N/A	
TOTAL CLAIMS (37 CFR 1.16(i))	minus 20 =	*	X $ =	
INDEPENDENT CLAIMS (37 CFR 1.16(h))	minus 3 =	*	X $ =	
☐ APPLICATION SIZE FEE (37 CFR 1.16(s))	If the specification and drawings exceed 100 sheets of paper, the application size fee due is $310 ($155 for small entity) for each additional 50 sheets or fraction thereof. See 35 U.S.C. 41(a)(1)(G) and 37 CFR 1.16(s).			
☐ MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM PRESENT (37 CFR 1.16(j))				
* If the difference in column 1 is less than zero, enter "0" in column 2.			TOTAL	**280**

APPLICATION AS AMENDED – PART II

		(Column 1)		(Column 2)	(Column 3)		
AMENDMENT	**09/12/2014**	CLAIMS REMAINING AFTER AMENDMENT		HIGHEST NUMBER PREVIOUSLY PAID FOR	PRESENT EXTRA	RATE ($)	ADDITIONAL FEE ($)
	Total (37 CFR 1.16(i))	* 8	Minus	** 20	= 0	X $80 =	0
	Independent (37 CFR 1.16(h))	* 1	Minus	***3	= 0	X $420 =	0
	☐ Application Size Fee (37 CFR 1.16(s))						
	☐ FIRST PRESENTATION OF MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM (37 CFR 1.16(j))						
						TOTAL ADD'L FEE	**0**

		(Column 1)		(Column 2)	(Column 3)		
AMENDMENT		CLAIMS REMAINING AFTER AMENDMENT		HIGHEST NUMBER PREVIOUSLY PAID FOR	PRESENT EXTRA	RATE ($)	ADDITIONAL FEE ($)
	Total (37 CFR 1.16(i))	*	Minus	**	=	X $ =	
	Independent (37 CFR 1.16(h))	*	Minus	***	=	X $ =	
	☐ Application Size Fee (37 CFR 1.16(s))						
	☐ FIRST PRESENTATION OF MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM (37 CFR 1.16(j))						
						TOTAL ADD'L FEE	

* If the entry in column 1 is less than the entry in column 2, write "0" in column 3.
** If the "Highest Number Previously Paid For" IN THIS SPACE is less than 20, enter "20".
*** If the "Highest Number Previously Paid For" IN THIS SPACE is less than 3, enter "3".
The "Highest Number Previously Paid For" (Total or Independent) is the highest number found in the appropriate box in column 1.

LIE
/GWENDOLYN MYERS/

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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
13/970,515	08/19/2013	D. Delano Ross JR.	23-CON4	2289

26362 7590 05/12/2014

LOUIS J. HOFFMAN, P.C.
14301 North 87th Street, Suite 312
Scottsdale, AZ 85260

EXAMINER	
GARG, YOGESH C	

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3625	

NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE
05/12/2014	ELECTRONIC

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

Louis@valuablepatents.com
donald@valuablepatents.com
shaelyn@valuablepatents.com

Office Action Summary	Application No. 13/970,515	Applicant(s) ROSS ET AL.	
	Examiner YOGESH C. GARG	Art Unit 3625	AIA (First Inventor to File) Status No

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTHS FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *3/7/2014*.

☐ A declaration(s)/affidavit(s) under **37 CFR 1.130(b)** was/were filed on _____.

2a)☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☐ This action is non-final.

3)☐ An election was made by the applicant in response to a restriction requirement set forth during the interview on _____; the restriction requirement and election have been incorporated into this action.

4)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims*

5)☒ Claim(s) *71-78* is/are pending in the application.

5a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

6)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

7)☒ Claim(s) *71-78* is/are rejected.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

9)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

* If any claims have been determined allowable, you may be eligible to benefit from the **Patent Prosecution Highway** program at a participating intellectual property office for the corresponding application. For more information, please see http://www.uspto.gov/patents/init_events/pph/index.jsp or send an inquiry to PPHfeedback@uspto.gov.

Application Papers

10)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

11)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

Certified copies:

a)☐ All b)☐ Some** c)☐ None of the:

1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

** See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08a and/or PTO/SB/08b) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.

3) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .

4) ☐ Other: _____.

1. The present application is being examined under the pre-AIA first to invent provisions.

2. Applicant's amendment filed 3/7/2014 is entered. Claims 1-70 are canceled. New claims 71-78 are added. Claims 71-78 are pending.

3. Applicant's amendment to Specification in amending the Title is entered.

In view of the cancelation of claim 1, previous rejections of claim 1 under 35 USC 101, 35 USC 112, second paragraph, under 35 USC 103 (a) are now moot.

Information Disclosure Statement

4. Examiner considered and reviewed the Applicant's remarks filed 3/7/2014. With reference to Applicant's remarks, see pages 7-8, over Digital River's prior art, Examiner wanted to review the references related to Digital River but could not find them in the current Application and also could not trace them back in the parent applications. Accordingly Examiner called the Applicant's representative and requested Mr. Donald Hertz to furnish them for the Examiner's review. Mr. Hertz agreed to do so and provide them in their next response.

Double Patenting

5. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory double

patenting rejection is appropriate where the claims at issue are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the reference application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement. A terminal disclaimer must be signed in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(b).

The USPTO internet Web site contains terminal disclaimer forms which may be used. Please visit http://www.uspto.gov/forms/. The filing date of the application will determine what form should be used. A web-based eTerminal Disclaimer may be filled out completely online using web-screens. An eTerminal Disclaimer that meets all requirements is auto-processed and approved immediately upon submission. For more information about eTerminal Disclaimers, refer to http://www.uspto.gov/patents/process/file/efs/guidance/eTD-info-I.jsp.

Claim 71 is rejected on the ground of nonstatutory double patenting as being unpatentable over (a) claims 1-22 of U.S. Patent No.8515825, (b) over claims 1-26 of U.S. Patent No. 7,818,399, (c) claims 1-27 of US Patent No. 6,993,572 and (d) claims 1-18 of US Patent No. 6,629,135. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the inventions claimed in both the patent and the instant application are directed to the same inventive concept that is an outsource provider serving web pages offering commercial opportunities, the method comprising: (a) automatically at a server of the outsource provider, in response to activation, by a web browser of a computer user, of a link displayed by one of a plurality of first web pages, recognizing as the source page the one of the first web pages on which the link has been activated; wherein each of the first web pages displays at least one active link associated with a commerce object associated with a buying opportunity of a selected one of a plurality of merchants; and (iii) wherein the selected merchant, the outsource provider, and the owner of the first web page are each third parties with respect to one other; (b) automatically retrieving from a storage pre-stored data associated with the source page; and then (c) automatically with the server computer-generating and transmitting to the web browser a second web page that includes: (i) information associated with the commerce object associated with the link that has been activated, and (ii) a plurality of visually perceptible elements derived from the retrieved pre-stored data and visually corresponding to the source page.

6. Prior art discussion: The prior art of record alone, or combined, neither discloses nor renders obvious, as a whole, a method of serving informational pages offering commercial opportunities, the method comprising, with a computer system serving displayable information of an outsource provider: upon receiving over the Internet an electronic request generated by an Internet- accessible computing device of a visitor in response to selection of a uniform resource locator (URL) within a source web page that has been served to the visitor computing device when visiting a host website controlled by a third party to the owner of the computer system, wherein the URL correlates the source web page with at least one commerce object associated with a buying opportunity of a merchant that is a third party to the owner of the computer system, automatically serving to the visitor computing device a dynamically generated composite page containing instructions directing the visitor computing device to display: (i) information associated with the commerce object associated with the URL that has been activated, which commerce object includes at least one product available for sale through the computer system after activating the URL, and (ii) a plurality of visually perceptible elements visually corresponding to the source web page, wherein the visually perceptible elements comprise logos, colors, page layout, navigation systems, frames, and/or visually perceptible mouse-over effects, wherein the plurality of visually perceptible elements define an overall appearance of the composite page that, excluding the information associated with the commerce object, visually corresponds to the source web page, wherein the instructions direct the visitor computing device to download data defining the visually perceptible elements

from an information storage that is accessible to the visitor computing device through the Internet.

Note: Subject to (i) receiving a proper Terminal Disclaimer and (ii) Examiner's reviewing the Digital River related cited references the currently filed claims 71-78 can be placed in condition for allowance.

Conclusion

7. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to YOGESH C. GARG whose telephone number is (571)272-6756. The examiner can normally be reached on Increased Flex/Hoteling.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jeffrey A. Smith can be reached on 571-272-6763. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

YOGESH C GARG
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3625

/YOGESH C GARG/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3625

Notice of References Cited	Application/Control No. 13/970,515	Applicant(s)/Patent Under Reexamination ROSS ET AL.	
	Examiner YOGESH C. GARG	Art Unit 3625	Page 1 of 1

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

*		Document Number Country Code-Number-Kind Code	Date MM-YYYY	Name	Classification
*	A	US-6,016,504 A	01-2000	Arnold et al.	709/200
*	B	US-2002/0194337 A1	12-2002	Knight et al.	709/225
*	C	US-2004/0165007 A1	08-2004	Shafron, Thomas J.	345/781
*	D	US-2008/0201488	08-2008	Kenner et al.	709/245
*	E	US-8,046,255 B2	10-2011	Bistriceanu et al.	705/14.19
	F	US-			
	G	US-			
	H	US-			
	I	US-			
	J	US-			
	K	US-			
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FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

*		Document Number Country Code-Number-Kind Code	Date MM-YYYY	Country	Name	Classification
	N					
	O					
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NON-PATENT DOCUMENTS

*		Include as applicable: Author, Title Date, Publisher, Edition or Volume, Pertinent Pages)
	U	
	V	
	W	
	X	

*A copy of this reference is not being furnished with this Office action. (See MPEP § 707.05(a).)
Dates in MM-YYYY format are publication dates. Classifications may be US or foreign.

Search Notes	Application/Control No.	Applicant(s)/Patent Under Reexamination
	13970515	ROSS ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	YOGESH C GARG	3625

CPC- SEARCHED		
Symbol	Date	Examiner

CPC COMBINATION SETS - SEARCHED		
Symbol	Date	Examiner

US CLASSIFICATION SEARCHED			
Class	Subclass	Date	Examiner
705	26.1, 27.1	10/6/2013	YG
707	E17.117	10/6/2013	YG
709	218	10/6/2013	YG
715	207	10/6/2013	YG

SEARCH NOTES		
Search Notes	Date	Examiner
Keyword search on east database	10/6/2013	YG
Palm search for inventors' names	10/6/2013	YG
Reviewed Patents resukting from the parent applications	10/6/2013	YG
Revised Keyword search on east database	4/30/2014	YG
Backward and forward search of best cited references	4/30/2014	YG
Interference search	4/30/2014	YG
Pqdialog Search	4/30/2014	YG

INTERFERENCE SEARCH			
US Class/ CPC Symbol	US Subclass / CPC Group	Date	Examiner
705	26.1,26.7,27.1,14.19,14.27,14.39	4/30/2014	YG
709	218,245	4/30/2014	YG
715	205,207,234,781	4/30/2014	YG

INTERFERENCE SEARCH			
US Class/ CPC Symbol	**US Subclass / CPC Group**	**Date**	**Examiner**
707	E17.117	4/30/2014	YG

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Search Strategy

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Page 1 of 3

Serial No.:	13/970,515
First Inventor:	Ross, D. Delano, Jr.
Filed:	08/19/2013
Art Unit:	3625
Examiner:	Garg, Yogesh C.
Conf. No.:	2289

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

Examiner Initials	Item	Document Number	Publication Date MM-DD-YYY	Name of Patentee or Applicant
	1	5918010	06-29-1999	Appleman et al.
	2	6014638	01-11-2000	Burge et al.
	3	6016494	01-18-2000	Isensee et al.
	4	6564320	05-13-2003	de Silva et al.
	5	6886013	04-26-2005	Beranek

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

Examiner Initials	Country Code-Number	Publication Date	Name of Patentee	Translation Yes / No

Examiner: /Yogesh Garg/ Date Considered: 05/02/2014

EXAMINER: Initial if reference considered whether or not citation is in conformance with MPEP 609. Draw line through citation if not in conformance *and* not considered. Include copy of this form with next communication to applicant.

ALL REFERENCES CONSIDERED EXCEPT WHERE LINED THROUGH. /Y.G./

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Examiner:	Garg, Yogesh C.
Conf. No.:	2289

NON PATENT LITERATURE DOCUMENTS

Examiner Initials	Item	Author, Title, Date, Pertinent Pages, Etc.
	6	KELLER, ARTHUR M.; "Smart Catalogs and Virtual Catalogs"; Proceedings of the First Conference on Usenix Workshop on Electronic Commerce; 1995.
	7	LAUFMANN, STEVE; "The Information Marketplace: Achieving Success in Commercial Applications"; Lecture Notes in Computer Science 1028; pp. 115-147; 1996.
	8	JACOBS, MARCIA A.; "Microsoft Details Merchant Plans"; CommunicationsWeek; February 26, 1996.
	9	"Now Software redefines calendar and address book publishing on the World Wide Web; New products enable Atlantic Records, Wall Street Journal, Sports Illustrated, and other top Web sites to publish 'State-of the-Art' calendars and address books"; Business Wire; April 8, 1996.
	10	"Microsoft Makes It Simple to Sell on the Web; Release of Merchant Server Expected to Ignite Internet Commerce"; Microsoft Corporation; October 30, 1996.
	11	ARDEN, RONALD K.; "Safe Internet Shopping with Microsoft Merchant System"; WindowsITPro.com; October 31, 1996.
	12	ASFAR, ROY; "Supersite makes browsing easier"; Computer Reseller News; pg. 359; November 11, 1996.
	13	SPRING, GREG; "Warner CityWeb seeks online affiliates"; Electronic Media; January 6, 1997.
	14	"About Vicinity Corporation/Infinet and Vicinity Announce Partnership to Provide Vicinity's Premier Local Content and Services to Infinet's Newspaper Customers Nationwide"; archived webpages at www.vicinity.com; February 4, 1997.
	15	"Customer Management on the Internet - Building a Community of Customers"; The Ragens; April 1997.
	16	"Microsoft Internet Commerce Strategy: A Foundation for Doing Business on the Internet"; Microsoft Corporation; May 1997.
	17	PEREIRA, PEDRO; "Online ordering takes off"; Computer Reseller News; May 5, 1997.
	18	BLAKE, PAUL; "Unobscured objects of desire"; Information World Review; September 30, 1997.
	19	"World Media Network Launches Shopping Network"; Worldwide Videotex Update; October 1997.
	20	CHRONISTER, KRISTIAN; "Is Agentics the sourcing solution? - Co. to introduce new approach to online purchasing dilemma"; Electronic Buyers' News 1087; December 8, 1997.

Examiner: /Yogesh Garg/ Date Considered: 05/02/2014

EXAMINER: Initial if reference considered whether or not citation is in conformance with MPEP 609. Draw line through citation if not in conformance *and* not considered. Include copy of this form with next communication to applicant.

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NON PATENT LITERATURE DOCUMENTS

Examiner Initials	Item	Author, Title, Date, Pertinent Pages, Etc.
	21	"Kicking Tires, Virtually, Via Cars.com"; Newsbytes; December 17, 1997.
	22	Be Free Technology; archived webpage from wee.befree.com; January 24, 1998.
	23	Be Free Sites; archived webpage from www.befree.com; January 24, 1998.
	24	"Be Free Affiliate Management Service Chosen By Electronic Newsstand, Inc.; archived webpage from www.befree.com; January 24, 1998.
	25	"The Daily News Surges Toward $100,000 in New Annual Revenues Using AdOne Online Classified Ad Solution"; Ad-One Classified Network; archived webpage from www.adone.com; February 4, 1998.
	26	PC Order - Who We Are/Web Storefront 3.0; archived webpages from www.pcorder.com; February 18, 1998.
	27	"DataMark's Books Now Division to Provide Virtual Bookstores for ElectricVillage's Network of Radio Station Web Sites"; Business Wire; April 7, 1998.
	28	"The Opportunity: Affiliate Networks: A Revolution in Retail"; archived webpage from www.befree.com; May 12, 1998.
	29	KUCHINSKAS, SUSAN; "Floating A Website"; Web Review - Cross-Training For Web Teams; May 29, 1998.
	30	"LinkShare Corporation Launches Software to Link Merchants to Internet's Most Advanced Affiliate Program"; PR Newswire; August 10, 1998.
	31	"NewsEdge for Extranets Program Lets Customers 'News Enable' Web Sites, Private Networks; NewsEdge; September 1, 1998.
	32	"Mecklermedia's Internet.com Enhances No-Cost Internet News Affiliate Program With News Harvester 3.0"; Mecklermedia; September 3, 1998.

Examiner: /Yogesh Garg/ Date Considered: 05/02/2014

EXAMINER: Initial if reference considered whether or not citation is in conformance with MPEP 609. Draw line through citation if not in conformance *and* not considered. Include copy of this form with next communication to applicant.

ALL REFERENCES CONSIDERED EXCEPT WHERE LINED THROUGH. /Y.G./

Index of Claims	Application/Control No.	Applicant(s)/Patent Under Reexamination
	13970515	ROSS ET AL.
	Examiner	**Art Unit**
	YOGESH C GARG	3625

✓	Rejected	-	Cancelled	N	Non-Elected	A	Appeal
=	Allowed	÷	Restricted	I	Interference	O	Objected

☐ Claims renumbered in the same order as presented by applicant ☐ CPA ☐ T.D. ☐ R.1.47

CLAIM		DATE								
Final	Original	10/03/2013	05/01/2014							
	1	✓	-							
	71		✓							
	72		✓							
	73		✓							
	74		✓							
	75		✓							
	76		✓							
	77		✓							
	78		✓							

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Search Strategy

Set#	Searched for	Databases	Results
S1	((serv??? OR provid??? OR provision) NEAR/25 (instructions OR algorithm OR code OR software) NEAR/15 (generat??? OR creat??? OR produc??? OR production) NEAR/15 (composite NEAR/15 (web NEAR/5 page))) AND pd(<19990917)	ABI/INFORM® Professional Advanced, British Library Inside Conferences, Business & Industry, Ei Compendex®, Gale Group Computer Database™, Gale Group Health Periodicals Database, Gale Group New Product Announcements / Plus®, Gale Group Newsletter Database™, Gale Group PROMT®, Gale Group Trade & Industry Database™, Inspec®, NTIS: National Technical Information Service, ProQuest Advanced Tech & Aerospace Professional, ProQuest Advanced Tech & Aerospace Professional, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Professional, ProQuest Newsstand Professional, SciSearch®: a Cited Reference Science Database	0°
S2	((activat??? OR initiat??? OR point??? OR click???) NEAR/25 (URL OR icon OR link)) NEAR/50 ((connect??? OR link??? OR access???) NEAR/25 (provider OR (third NEAR/1 party)) NEAR/15 (computer OR site OR server)) AND ((serv??? OR provid??? OR provision) NEAR/25 (instructions OR algorithm OR code OR software) NEAR/15 (generat??? OR creat??? OR produc??? OR production) NEAR/15 (web NEAR/5 page)) AND pd(<19990917)	ABI/INFORM® Professional Advanced, British Library Inside Conferences, Business & Industry, Ei Compendex®, Gale Group Computer Database™, Gale Group Health Periodicals Database, Gale Group New Product Announcements / Plus®, Gale Group Newsletter Database™, Gale Group PROMT®, Gale Group Trade & Industry Database™, Inspec®, NTIS: National Technical Information Service, ProQuest Advanced Tech & Aerospace Professional, ProQuest Advanced Tech & Aerospace Professional, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Professional, ProQuest Newsstand Professional, SciSearch®: a Cited Reference Science Database	0°

° Duplicates are removed from your search and from your result count.

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EAST Search History

EAST Search History (Prior Art)

Ref #	Hits	Search Query	DBs	Default Operator	Plurals	Time Stamp
S141	3	"7240022".pn.	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; FPRS; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	OR	OFF	2014/04/30 18:28
S140	77	S136 and S138	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; FPRS; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	OR	OFF	2014/04/30 18:20
S139	258	("6016504").URPN.	USPAT	OR	OFF	2014/04/30 18:20
S138	258	("6016504").URPN.	USPAT	OR	OFF	2014/04/30 18:18
S137	29	S132 and S136	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; FPRS; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	OR	OFF	2014/04/30 17:57
S136	215454	((host or source or original) near55 (website or site or webpage or page))	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; FPRS; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	OR	OFF	2014/04/30 17:57
S135	0	(customiz$5 near15 ((web near2 page) near5 layout)) same ((host or source or original) near55 (website or site or webpage or page))	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; FPRS; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	OR	OFF	2014/04/30 17:57
S134	0	(customiz$5 near15 ((web near2 page) near5 layout)) same ((host or source or original) near15 (website or site or webpage or page))	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; FPRS; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	OR	OFF	2014/04/30 17:56
S133	20	(customiz$5 near15 (display$3 near15 (web near2 page) near5 layout))	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; FPRS;	OR	OFF	2014/04/30 17:55

			EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB			
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S131	0	(customiz$5 near15 ((web near2 page) near5 layout)) near55 ((host or source or original) near15 (website or site or webpage or page))	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; FPRS; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	OR	OFF	2014/04/30 17:54
S130	0	(customiz$5 near15 (web near2 page) near5 layout) near55 ((host or source or original) near15 (website or site or webpage or page))	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; FPRS; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	OR	OFF	2014/04/30 17:54
S129	0	(customiz$5 near15 (web near2 page) near5 layout) near15 ((host or source or original) near15 (website or site or webpage or page))	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; FPRS; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	OR	OFF	2014/04/30 17:54
S128	263	("6141666").URPN.	USPAT	OR	OFF	2014/04/30 17:11
S127	25	("5576951" | "5649186" | "5706434" | "5710887" | "5712979" | "5717860" | "5740430" | "5768510" | "5794207" | "5796393" | "5796952" | "5799285" | "5839117" | "5852809" | "5855008" | "5864822" | "5870718" | "5890175" | "5897622" | "5907830" | "5918214" | "5933811" | "6009413" | "6029142" | "6061057").PN.	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR	OR	OFF	2014/04/30 17:11
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		code or software) near15 (generat$3 or creat$3 or produc$3 or production) near15 (web near5 page) near25 (display$3 near5 ((information or data) near25 (logo near15 (source or host) near5 (site or page)))))	USOCR; FPRS; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB			
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S122	1	((serv$3 or provid$3 or provision) near25 (instructions or algorithm or code or software) near15 (generat$3 or creat$3 or produc$3 or production) near15 (web near5 page) near25 (display$3 near5 ((information or data) near25 (elements near15 (source or host) near5 (site or page)))))	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; FPRS; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	OR	OFF	2014/04/30 17:04
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S118	183	S115 not S117	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; FPRS; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	OR	OFF	2014/04/30 15:44
S117	97	S115 and S116	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; FPRS; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	OR	OFF	2014/04/30 15:40
S116	173688	"705"/$.ccls.	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; FPRS;	OR	OFF	2014/04/30 15:39

			EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB			
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S114	94596	"I5" not "I6"	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; FPRS; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	OR	OFF	2014/04/30 15:39
S113	40	((activat$3 or initiat$3 or point$3 or click$3) near25 (URL or icon or link)) same ((connect$3 or link$3 or access$3) near25 (provider or (third near1 party)) near15 (computer or site or server)) and ((serv$3 or provid$3 or provision) near25 (instructions or algorithm or code or software) near15 (generat$3 or creat$3 or produc$3 or production) near15 (web near5 page))	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; FPRS; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	OR	OFF	2014/04/30 15:31
S112	298	((activat$3 or initiat$3 or point$3 or click$3) near25 (URL or icon or link)) same ((connect$3 or link$3 or access$3) near25 (provider or (third near1 party)) near15 (computer or site or server)) same ((serv$3 or provid$3 or provision) near25 (web near5 page))	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; FPRS; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	OR	OFF	2014/04/30 15:29
S111	1144	((activat$3 or initiat$3 or point$3 or click$3) near25 (URL or icon or link)) same ((connect$3 or link$3 or access$3) near25 (provider or (third near1 party)) near15 (computer or site or server)) and ((serv$3 or provid$3 or provision) near25 (web near5 page))	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; FPRS; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	OR	OFF	2014/04/30 15:28
S110	0	((activat$3 or initiat$3 or point$3 or click$3) near25 (URL or icon or link)) same ((connect$3 or link$3 or access$3) near25 (provider or (third near1 party)) near15 (computer or site or server)) and ((serv$3 or provid$3 or provision) near25 (composite near5 page))	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; FPRS; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	OR	OFF	2014/04/30 15:28
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S108	2949	((activat$3 or initiat$3 or point$3 or click$3) near25 (URL or icon or link)) same ((connect$3 or link$3 or	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR;	OR	OFF	2014/04/30 15:27

		access$3) near25 (provider or (third near1 party)) near15 (computer or site or server))	FPRS; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB			
S107	1	(Digital near1 River) and (plumbing near2 web)	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; FPRS; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	OR	ON	2014/04/30 13:40
S106	1	(Digital near1 River) and (secure near1 sales near1 system)	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; FPRS; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	OR	ON	2014/04/30 13:39
S105	0	(Digital near1 River) and (social near1 security near1 system)	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; FPRS; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	OR	OFF	2014/04/30 13:38
S104	244	(Digital near1 River)	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; FPRS; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	OR	OFF	2014/04/30 13:38
S103	1	"8515825".pn.	USPAT	OR	OFF	2014/04/30 13:26

EAST Search History (Interference)

Ref #	Hits	Search Query	DBs	Default Operator	Plurals	Time Stamp
L11	7	l3 and l8	US-PGPUB; USPAT; UPAD	OR	OFF	2014/05/02 11:10
L10	7	l2 and l8	US-PGPUB; USPAT; UPAD	OR	OFF	2014/05/02 11:10
L9	11	l1 and l8	US-PGPUB; USPAT; UPAD	OR	OFF	2014/05/02 11:10
L8	41	((activat$3 or initiat$3 or point$3 or click$3) near25 (URL or icon or link)) same ((connect$3 or link$3 or access$3) near25 (provider or (third near1 party)) near15 (computer or site or server)) and ((serv$3 or provid$3 or provision) near25 (instructions or algorithm or code or software) near15 (generat$3 or creat$3 or produc$3 or production) near15 (web	US-PGPUB; USPAT; UPAD	OR	OFF	2014/05/02 11:08

		near5 page))				
L7	0	L4 and l3	US-PGPUB; USPAT; UPAD	OR	OFF	2014/05/02 11:08
L6	0	L4 and l2	US-PGPUB; USPAT; UPAD	OR	OFF	2014/05/02 11:07
L5	3	L4 and l1	US-PGPUB; USPAT; UPAD	OR	OFF	2014/05/02 11:07
L4	3	((serv$3 or provid$3 or provision) near25 (instructions or algorithm or code or software) near15 (generat$3 or creat$3 or produc$3 or production) near15 (web near5 page) near25 (display$3 near5 ((information or data) near25 ((frames or elements or colors or logo or layout form) near35 (source or host) near5 (site or page)))))	US-PGPUB; USPAT; UPAD	OR	ON	2014/05/02 11:07
L3	83421	"715"/$.ccls.	US-PGPUB; USPAT; UPAD	OR	OFF	2014/05/02 11:06
L2	144621	"707"/$.ccls.	US-PGPUB; USPAT; UPAD	OR	OFF	2014/05/02 11:06
L1	155777	"709"/$.ccls.	US-PGPUB; USPAT; UPAD	OR	OFF	2014/05/02 11:06
S147	1	"5870717".pn.	US-PGPUB; USPAT; UPAD	OR	ON	2014/04/30 17:08
S146	3	((serv$3 or provid$3 or provision) near25 (instructions or algorithm or code or software) near15 (generat$3 or creat$3 or produc$3 or production) near15 (web near5 page) near25 (display$3 near5 ((information or data) near25 ((frames or elements or colors or logo or layout form) near35 (source or host) near5 (site or page)))))	US-PGPUB; USPAT; UPAD	OR	ON	2014/04/30 17:07
S145	22175	"l5" not "l6"	US-PGPUB; USPAT; UPAD	OR	OFF	2014/04/30 15:39
S144	19	S142 and S143	US-PGPUB; USPAT; UPAD	OR	OFF	2014/04/30 15:35
S143	144290	"705"/$.ccls.	US-PGPUB; USPAT; UPAD	OR	OFF	2014/04/30 15:34

S142	41	((activat$3 or initiat$3 or point$3 or click$3) near25 (URL or icon or link)) same ((connect$3 or link$3 or access$3) near25 (provider or (third near1 party)) near15 (computer or site or server)) and ((serv$3 or provid$3 or provision) near25 (instructions or algorithm or code or software) near15 (generat$3 or creat$3 or produc$3 or production) near15 (web near5 page))	US-PGPUB; USPAT; UPAD	OR	OFF	2014/04/30 15:32

5/2/2014 11:15:27 AM
C:\Users\Ygarg\Documents\EAST\Workspaces\13970515.wsp

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May 12, 2014 05:21:28 AM

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Application	Document	Mailroom Date	Attorney Docket No.
13970515	CTFR	05/12/2014	23-CON4
	892	05/12/2014	23-CON4
	1449	05/12/2014	23-CON4

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UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

PATENT APPLICATION INFORMATION RETRIEVAL SYSTEM

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Inventors	:	Ross, D. Delano Jr. et al.	Art Unit	:	3625
Serial No.	:	13/970,515	Examiner	:	Garg, Yogesh C.
Filing Date	:	08/19/2013	Conf. No.	:	2289
Title	:	A method of a specially programmed computer server serving pages offering commercial opportunities for merchants through coordinated offsite marketing			

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Filed via EFS – March 7, 2014

RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION

Dear Sir:

In response to the Office Action dated October 11, 2013, applicant respectfully requests entry of the following amendments. Reexamination and reconsideration under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111, in view of the amendments and on the basis of the below remarks, is hereby respectfully requested.

- **Amendment to the Title** is found on page 2.
- **Amendment to the Specification** is found on page 3.
- **Amendments to the Claims** begin on page 4.
- **Remarks** begin on page 7.

An interview is requested on page 17 of this paper, per MPEP 713.01.

Applicant requests a two-month extension of time and submits the corresponding extension fee of $600.

A Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement is also being filed concurrently, with a fee of $180.

Amendments

IN THE TITLE:

Please amend the title as follows:

"~~Methods of expanding~~ A method of a specially programmed computer server serving pages offering commercial opportunities for ~~Internet websites~~ merchants through coordinated offsite marketing"

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the first paragraph on page 1 as follows:

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation of application Serial No. 12/906,979, filed October 18, 2010, now U.S. Patent 8,515,825, which is a continuation of application Serial No. 11/343,464, filed January 30, 2006, now U.S. Patent 7,818,399, which is a continuation of application Serial No. 10/461,997, filed June 11, 2003, now U.S. Patent 6,993,572, which is a continuation of application Serial No. 09/398,268, filed September 17, 1999, now U.S. Patent 6,629,135, which claims the benefit of application Serial No. 60/100,697, filed September 17, 1998, which applications are hereby incorporated by reference.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-70 (Cancelled).

71. (New) A method of serving informational pages offering commercial opportunities, the method comprising, with a computer system serving displayable information of an outsource provider:

upon receiving over the Internet an electronic request generated by an Internet-accessible computing device of a visitor in response to selection of a uniform resource locator (URL) within a source web page that has been served to the visitor computing device when visiting a host website controlled by a third party to the owner of the computer system, wherein the URL correlates the source web page with at least one commerce object associated with a buying opportunity of a merchant that is a third party to the owner of the computer system,

automatically serving to the visitor computing device a dynamically generated composite page containing instructions directing the visitor computing device to display:

(i) information associated with the commerce object associated with the URL that has been activated, which commerce object includes at least one product available for sale through the computer system after activating the URL, and

(ii) a plurality of visually perceptible elements visually corresponding to the source web page,

wherein the visually perceptible elements comprise logos, colors, page layout, navigation systems, frames, and/or visually perceptible mouse-over effects,

wherein the plurality of visually perceptible elements define an overall appearance of the composite page that, excluding the information associated with the commerce object, visually corresponds to the source web page, wherein the instructions direct the visitor computing device to download data defining the visually perceptible elements from an information storage that is accessible to the visitor computing device through the Internet.

72. (New) The method of claim 71 wherein the information storage is a device coupled to the computer system serving a website of an outsource provider.

73. (New) The method of claim 71 wherein at least some of the visually perceptible elements are each associated with respective of a plurality of URLs, each of which URLs also are present on at least some of the web pages of the host website, and which URLs point to respective web pages of the host website.

74. (New) The method of claim 71 wherein the commerce object associated with the URL that has been activated comprises information defining an electronic catalog having a multitude of products offered for sale by the merchant through a website of an outsource provider, and wherein the composite page contains one or more selectable URLs connecting a hierarchical set of additional web pages of the outsource provider website, each pertaining to a subset of the product offerings in the catalog.

75. (New) The method of claim 74 further comprising, automatically with the computer system, (i) accepting search parameters inputted at the visitor computing device, (ii) using said parameters to search for specific products within the catalog, and (iii) serving the results for display on the visitor computing device.

76. (New) The method of claim 75 wherein the search parameters are inputted through a browser running on the visitor computing device and wherein the results are displayed through the browser.

77. (New) The method of claim 71 wherein the commerce object associated with the URL that has been activated comprises information defining a multitude of products of at least the merchant, and further comprising, automatically with the computer system, (i) accepting search parameters inputted at the visitor computing device, (ii) using said parameters to search for specific products within the plurality of products, and (iii) serving the results for display on the visitor computing device.

78. (New) The method of claim 77 wherein the search parameters are inputted through a browser running on the visitor computing device and wherein the results are displayed through the browser.

Remarks

The amendments to the specification are being made to update only the "related applications" section and hence do not contain any "new matter."

Applicant cancels the remaining claim filed in the parent application in favor of a new claim set that avoids the grounds of rejection stated in the Office Action.

As the Examiner knows from the information disclosure statements filed previously in this application and the immediate parent application, the owner of this application, DDR Holdings, LLC, successfully enforced certain claims of two parent patents, U.S. Patents 6,993,572 and 7,818,399, against certain defendants in a lawsuit in the Eastern District of Texas. The jury ruled that two of the six defendants (the other four wisely settled before trial) had infringed those patents and that the claims of the two patents were not invalid. The federal district judge affirmed and entered the jury verdict, denying defendants' many post-trial motions to overturn the verdict.

The defendants appealed the case to the Federal Circuit Court of Appeals, and the matter is fully briefed and awaiting oral argument, in Federal Circuit docket numbers 13-1504 and 13-1505. Some of the issues on appeal relate to matters concerning the trial, such as admission of evidence, damages, or infringement by the activities of the particular defendants-in-suit, but the rest of the issues relate to patentability of the asserted claims of the parent patents, namely: (a) Alleged indefiniteness under 35 U.S.C. § 112(2); (b) anticipation or obviousness in view of Digital River's prior system called "Secure Sales System"; and (c) alleged non-patentable subject matter under 35 U.S.C. § 101. The judge rejected all of those defenses, but defendants seek reversal on appeal. Oral argument is likely to occur in May, and a decision could be issued late this year.

The undersigned invites the examiner to review the briefs and appendix on appeal as needed, and we stand ready to assist in providing any materials thought helpful to examination of this application.

Applicant has presented the pending claims, though, with the goal of obtaining allowance of claims that are, first, not subject to the grounds of rejection stated in the Office Action, and, second, patentable regardless of how the appeals court rules in the

case involving the parent patents. Applicant wishes to obtain a patent that does not depend on the appeal. Accordingly, the discussion below explains in some detail why the claims should not be rejected for the reasons applied to now-canceled claim 1. And, although there is some mention of rulings in the court case, none of the explanations below depend on the outcome of the court case, and the remarks say why that is true.

Applicant respectfully requests, therefore, that the Office reconsider this matter promptly and grant this application, and that there is no need to delay until the Federal Circuit rules on the lawsuit involving the parent patents.

The Office Action rejects claim 1 as unpatentable under Section 101, as indefinite for a handful of reasons, as obvious over the combination of Tobin and Bezos, and for double patenting. Applicant hereby cancels claim 1 and presents amended claims that should not be rejected for any of those reasons, as explained below.

1. <u>Section 101 – patentability</u>

The pending claims refer to a computer system – which is a machine – that functions as a server and that is specially programmed to respond to a request that a "visitor computing device" has caused to be sent to the server by activating an appropriate URL link on a "host" web page. In response, the computer system serves a "composite page" with specific sorts of information: The computer system is programmed to serve to the visitor computing device a dynamically constructed page, including instructions that cause the visitor computing device to display a composite page that contains the specifically requested commercial information (commerce object) and also visual elements that cause the page's overall appearance that corresponds to the appearance of the particular host web page.

The pending claims differ from claim 1, to which the Office Action applied a Section 101 rejection, because – as to the pending claims – the claim body: (1) responds to a request of a specific sort, and (2) serves a page to another computing device, of a particular sort, as outlined above. The statement made in the Office Action in the course of rejecting claim 1 – namely that the body of the claim recites only storing indicia and causing display steps, viewed as "merely storing or displaying data" and thus

"representing insignificant extra-solution activity" – does not apply to the amended claims.

The claims as now pending meet all tests under Section 101 established by *CLS Bank International v. Alice Corp.*, 717 F.3d 1269, 1326 (Fed. Cir. 2013) (en banc), *cert. granted*, 82 U.S.L.W. 3131 (U.S. Dec. 6, 2013) (No. 13-298), which the Office Action cites as containing the "current standard" for patentability. Under any of the various opinions in *CLS Bank*, the claims pending here refer to a specific machine and do not cover an abstract idea.

The lead opinion in *CLS Bank*, 717 F.3d at 1273 *ff.* (Lourie, J.), establishes a "preemption analysis," *i.e.*, "that claims should not be coextensive with [an] abstract idea"; a claim cannot "subsume the full scope of a fundamental concept." *Id.* at 1281. To meet that test, a claim "must include one or more substantive limitations that … add 'significantly more' to the basic principle …." *Id.*

First, for the Office to meet its burden of showing a *prima facie* ground for rejecting the claims as unpatentable under a preemption analysis, the Office must identify the "abstract idea" supposedly preempted. "[O]ne cannot meaningfully evaluate whether a claim preempts an abstract idea until the idea supposedly at risk of preemption has been unambiguously identified." *Id.* at 1282.

Second, the explanation of the pending claims just above shows that they do not preempt all ways of implementing any abstract idea, at least not so far as applicant can perceive. For example, the claims do not cover machines programmed to serve a web page with commercial content without use of an "outsource" computer system of the sort described, nor machines programmed to display the commercial material without a "composite page" of the sort claimed, nor machines programmed to display the commercial material without serving a page to a computing device connected through the Internet, nor machines programmed to serve a page other than in response to activation of the selection of a URL, nor machines programmed to serve pages with

commercial content that do not have corresponding overall appearance to a host page elsewhere on the Internet, and so forth.

An alternative test in *CLS Bank*, 717 F.3d at 1292 *ff.* (Rader, C.J.), the "meaningful limitations" test, considers whether a claim limits its scope to "an application, rather than merely an abstract idea." *Id.* at 1299.[1] Claims that "cover all possible ways to achieve the provided result" fail the test. *Id.* at 1301. A case after *CLS Bank*, called *Ultramercial, Inc. v. Hulu, LLC*, 722 F.3d 1335, 1343 (Fed. Cir. 2013), written for the Court by Chief Judge Rader (the lead author of the alternative test in *CLS Bank*), elaborated on the "meaningful limitations" test. *Ultramercial* clarified that computer/Internet limitations can still be "meaningful": Claims "directed to a *specific computer* for doing something" or "tied to a computer in a specific way" do not preempt abstract ideas. 722 F.3d at 1348-49 (emphasis in original)

The claims here meet the "meaningful limitations" test of *CLS Bank* and *Ultramercial* for reasons similar to those discussed above. The pending claims contain meaningful limitations related to programming a specific outsource provider computer system to serve a page with specific commercial content, to serve a "composite page" of the sort claimed, to cause a computing device across the Internet (which may be a PC or laptop, for example, or a mobile device such as a tablet or smartphone) to display the page, to serve the page in response to activation of the selection of a URL, and so forth.

In considering certain claims of parent patents sharing the same specification as this application (the '572 Patent, claims 13, 17, and 20 and the '399 Patent, claims 1, 3, and 19), the federal court ruled that those claims are directed to "functional and palpable applications in the field of computer technology" to implement certain concepts. [See opinion attached to IDS filed June 25, 2013 in parent app. Serial No. 12/905,979] The district court relied on *Research Corp. Techs., Inc. v. Microsoft Corp.*, 627

[1] The third and fourth opinions apply the same test but reach different outcomes. 717 F.3d at 1313 (Moore, J.); *id.* at 1327 (Linn, J.).

F.3d 859, 868 (Fed. Cir. 2010), in which the appeals court affirmed a patent with computer-related claims having some parallels to those here. Another case with parallels to the pending claims is *Ultramercial*, where the appeals court likewise held claims were not abstract when, like here, they focus on "a specific application of a method implemented by several computer systems, operating in tandem, over a computer network," and such claims are patentable, the court said, even though they operate "in a cyber-market environment." 722 F.3d at 1350.

In rejecting canceled claim 1, the Office Action referred to *Cybersource v. Retail Decisions*, 654 F.3d 1366, 1375 (Fed. Cir. 2011). *Cybersource* is not applicable to the pending claims. In *Cybersource*, 654 F.3d at 1376-77, the claim mentioned "the Internet" merely as a location to perform a generalized display method. The pending claims, by contrast, require a specific electronic request received over the Internet using specific links and a specific response also delivered over the Internet; the Internet is not merely an environment of use mentioned in a non-limiting preamble.

In sum, applicant has presented a new set of claims that clearly meet the latest standards of patentability under the *CLS Bank* case and its successor, *Ultramercial*. Regardless of the outcome of the case involving the claims of the parent patents asserted in litigation (which have different limitations from those pending now), and regardless of which *CLS Bank* test the Supreme Court selects when it considers that case on appeal, the pending claims remain directed to patentable subject matter.

2. <u>Section 112(2) – definiteness</u>

The second rejection of canceled claim 1 relies on Section 112(2) and identifies five claim limitations that the examiner considered indefinite. Applicant has carefully reviewed the examiner's comments and crafted the pending claims to avoid each and every ground of alleged indefiniteness, to prevent any similar problem. Specifically:

The Office Action first says, as to the previous claim, that it "is unclear what are the 'perceptible elements' and the 'primary content'." Applicant has deleted "primary

content" from the pending claims, and clarified "visually perceptible elements" in two ways: First, the claims specify that the "visually perceptible elements" can include "logos, colors, page layout, navigation systems, frames, and/or visually perceptible mouse-over effects," all of which are disclosed in applicant's specification. Second, the claims specify that "the plurality of visually perceptible elements define an overall appearance of the composite page that, excluding the information associated with the commerce object, visually corresponds to the source web page." Thus, it is quite clear what elements one must consider (any of those elements that are present in a certain instance) to test whether the "overall appearance" of the "composite page" does or does not "visually correspond," and the claim also clarifies that one should not consider, in testing for correspondence, any information in the "composite page" that is "associated with the commerce object."

In short, with respect to this issue, the boundaries of what constitutes infringement is quite clear, and the claim language is as precise as needed to relate the "elements" to specific content, as the Office Action insists must be done.

Second, the Office Action says, again as to the prior claim, that it is "ambiguous as from where does the server extract information." The pending claims do not require the server to extract information, just to serve a page. The claims now further clarify matters by reciting that the server's served "instructions direct the visitor computing device to download data defining the visually perceptible elements from an information storage that is accessible to the visitor computing device through the Internet." This type of ambiguity likewise does not apply to the pending claims.

Third, the Office Action says, again as to the prior claim, that "it is unclear how [the] step [of causing display on web browsers] is executed" and "which computer or device executes the step," and whether it is the same or a remote computer. Applicant has presented pending claims, by contrast, that clearly specify how the "causing display" is done and which computing device performs which step. Applicant has

amended the claims to refer to the visitor "computing device" and the outsource provider "computer system" using distinct terminology, to add further clarity. Specifically, in the claims as amended, the server sends instructions to the visitor computing device, and the instructions cause the visitor computing device (remote computer, in the sense of being connected through the Internet to the "computer system" server) to display the composite page, constructed as described. Finally, applicant has divided some of the dependent claims so that the browser is introduced as an element added by dependent claims 76 and 78, which makes clear that browser programs particularly are not necessary, although quite commonly used. Again, this type of ambiguity does not apply to the pending claims.

Fourth, the Office Action says, again as to the prior claim, that "it is unclear as how the buying opportunity that is a commerce object displayed on a second web page belongs to a third party." The pending claims clarify the point by saying that a "commerce object" is "associated with a buying opportunity of a merchant that is a third party to the owner of the computer system," which is believed amply clear. Again, this type of ambiguity does not apply to the pending claims.

Fifth, the Office Action says, again as to the prior claim, that the "wherein" clauses "merely recite language describing the ownership of web pages and the buying opportunity and therefore will not transform an unpatentable process into a patentable one." This comment is found in the section setting forth a rejection under Section 112(2), but the comment seems to speak about the Section 101 (patentability) issue and does not identify any perceived ambiguity. In any event, in the Section 101 discussion above, applicant does not rely on the separate ownership of web pages and buying opportunities to demonstrate that this is a machine within the scope of Section 101, as such is not necessary.

Applicant does not necessarily agree that the previously worded claim contained any ambiguity as to any of the five grounds stated in the rejection. However, debate is

not needed because applicant has carefully written the pending claims to avoid all five grounds of ambiguity as applicant best understand them.

Because the same issues and claim language, in these five respects, are not parallel to the indefiniteness issue raised on appeal, and because the new language in the claim contains more detail than that found on appeal, regardless of the outcome of the case involving the claims of the parent patents asserted in litigation, the pending claims remain directed to unambiguous subject matter.

3. Section 103 – non-obviousness

The Office Action rejected previous claim 1 as obvious over the combination of Tobin and Bezos, which Bezos being used to fill in the missing element of two web page owners having contracted with one another to share revenue when computer users purchase from a merchant through the second web page. Applicant does not believe it is necessary to discuss the rejection as applied specifically to claim 1, given the cancelation of claim 1. However, a similar rejection based on Tobin ought not to apply to the pending claims. As recognized in the parent applications (Tobin was the main reference overcome to allow the claims that became parent patents 6,629,135 and 7,818,399), and as recognized by the jury and judge in the court case, Tobin does not disclose an invention similar to that presented here. Specifically as to the pending claims of this particular application:

Tobin discloses a system that allows a *merchant* to extend sales of the merchant's product by "co-branding" a sales page of the merchant's site with the logo of a referring site that agrees to link to the merchant's site. Tobin discloses a two-site system – referring site to merchant directly – whereby a merchant can extend its reach by incorporating various referring sites.

By contrast, the presently claimed invention relates to a system that mentions three roles: An "outsource provider" (whose information is served by the claimed computer system) intermediates between referring "host" sites on the one hand and

merchants on the other hand. The merchants are unrelated to the outsource provider, and the hosts are unrelated to the outsource provider.

Specifically, in the invention as claimed, when a user activates the necessary URL on a certain source (host) page, the outsource provider's computer system serves a "composite page" that includes "information associated with the commerce object associated with the URL that has been activated." The pending claim further says that the "commerce object" is "associated with a buying opportunity of a merchant that is a third party to the owner of the computer system." The computer system also serves instructions causing the visitor computing device to generate, as part of the composite page, the "visually perceptible elements" that correspond to the source page.

As explained in the background sections of assignee's specification, various two-party affiliate systems – including the Amazon system described in the Bezos reference – were known before applicant's invention. (Bezos is the founder of Amazon.com.) The background identifies certain drawbacks of prior-known affiliate marketing systems including "loss of the visitors" to a referring site after the visitor clicks a link to a different site, and lack of "scalability," whereby each merchant must create its own website and affiliate system individually.

Tobin, alone or in combination with Bezos, does nothing to solve either of the problems identified in applicant's background. The "loss of eyeballs" problem remains in Tobin's system, because visitors to host (source) websites move to the "PC Flowers and Gifts" website, which looks different, after clicking a link. The only difference between Tobin and conventional affiliate marketing like Bezos/Amazon is that Tobin includes the referring site's logo, but that does not materially differ from the systems that included "frames" and "return to referring website links" in the prior art affiliate systems, mentioned critically in applicant's background section. As can be seen by comparing Tobin's Figs. 21B and 21C, for example, the source and "co-branded" pages

look nothing alike in overall appearance. Thus, Tobin does not cure the first perceived disadvantage specified in applicant's disclosure.

Tobin also does not cure the "lack of scalability" problem, which is the second advantage identified in applicant's specification. In Tobin, the system is customized for a particular merchant, called "PC Flowers and Gifts." Tobin refers the user who clicks on the referring site's link (the HomeArts page in Figs. 21) directly to the merchant's website. In Tobin, the merchant's website is called "pcflower.com," and the user receives the normal merchant page, just with the referring site's (e.g., HomeArts') logo. Tobin does not suggest use with other merchants, or other pages of the same merchant, and Tobin's structure would not seem to allow extension to such.

Using the Tobin system would require a great deal of work for PC Flowers and Gifts. Not only must that merchant develop its own website, it must also develop the co-branding computer system, and it must also recruit referring sites, and it must manage the relationships and compensation. Even if PC Flowers and Gifts also owned various "host" sites (a scenario not discussed by Tobin), Tobin teaches no way to cause the pcflower.com site to adjust, so as to match the different overall appearance of a different one of the host sites.

By contrast, in the outsource-provider-oriented system as claimed, a participating merchant need only develop a single contract (with the outsource provider); otherwise it need only do conventional tasks of providing data on its products, doing product marketing and approval of sources, and handling shipping and "fulfillment," as explained in applicant's specification. A merchant need not develop its own website, even, if it does not wish to do so. Unlike PC Flowers and Gifts, the merchant in the Tobin arrangement, a merchant using the inventive system has no need to program a co-branding "engine" or recruit or maintain referring sites.

Because the benefits of the claimed invention are so significant, the differences between Tobin and the claimed invention cannot be lightly disregarded.

Again, applicant has carefully written the pending claims to avoid any possible rejection based on Tobin, in combination with Bezos or other art, as well as to avoid any possible rejection based on the art (Digital River's SSS) being considered on appeal. Accordingly, the same rejection should not apply, and regardless of the outcome of the case involving the claims of the parent patents asserted in litigation, the pending claims are directed to patentable, non-obvious subject matter.

4. Double-patenting

Applicant agrees to submit a terminal disclaimer to overcome the rejection for double-patenting.

Interview Request

Applicant respectfully requests the examiner to telephone the undersigned before issuance of the next Office Action to arrange a suitable time for an interview to discuss the matter, including the results of any supplemental search, as well as any other issues identified by the examiner as of concern, so that the application can be passed to allowance and issue most efficiently.

Please feel free to telephone the undersigned for any other reason if it would in any way advance prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,
DDR HOLDINGS, LLC
by its attorney

Dated: March 7, 2014

/Louis J. Hoffman/
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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Inventors	:	Ross, D. Delano Jr. et al.	Art Unit	:	3625
Serial No.	:	13/970,515	Examiner	:	Garg, Yogesh C.
Filing Date	:	08/19/2013	Conf. No.	:	2289
Title	:	A method of a specially programmed computer server serving pages offering commercial opportunities for merchants through coordinated offsite marketing			

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Filed via EFS – March 7, 2014

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Dear Sir:

Applicant discloses the references listed on form PTO-1449 attached, recently received from defendant in litigation Case No. 2:13-CV-647 (E.D. Tex.). They appear to be new references used to support obviousness combinations against certain parent patent claims; none were alleged to anticipate any claim. Applicant does not concede that any or all qualify as prior art, nor that the listed dates are accurate, nor that the references are closer or more material to patentability than the many references previously cited. The fee set forth in 37 CFR § 1.17(p) accompanies this submission.

If the Office has any questions, please feel free to contact applicant's undersigned attorney of record.

Respectfully submitted,

DDR HOLDINGS, LLC

by its attorney

Dated: March 7, 2014

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Smart Catalogs and Virtual Catalogs

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Abstract. We present an architecture for electronic catalogs, called Smart Catalogs and Virtual Catalogs. Smart catalogs are searchable, annotated combinations of machine-readable (i.e., minimally processable) and machine-sensible (i.e., actually understood by the computer) product data. Virtual catalogs dynamically retrieve information from multiple smart catalogs and present this product data in a unified manner with its own look and feel, not that of the source smart catalogs. These virtual catalogs do not store product data from smart catalogs directly (except when caching for performance); instead virtual catalogs obtain current product data from smart catalogs to satisfy specific customer queries. Customers interact with smart catalogs and virtual catalogs through WWW or other interfaces.

1. Introduction.

Electronic catalogs are a key component of electronic commerce. The procurement process extends from product selection to source selection to negotiation of price and other terms and conditions to ordering to order fulfillment to payment. Electronic catalogs are the reference for product selection and can assist with source selection and description of terms and conditions. Other electronic commerce components, such as EDI, handle the other aspects of the procurement process.

Electronic catalogs can be organized as individual company catalogs or they can participate in a multi-catalog framework. Currently, companies that have electronic catalogs organize them uniquely. Companies perceive a competitive advantage from how they organize their catalogs. Furthermore, each company has to base its electronic catalog at least in part on legacy systems or legacy organizational structure, and these influence the nature of the electronic catalog produced.

The challenge is to enable companies to have their catalogs to participate in a multi-catalog framework while still retaining the uniqueness of the catalogs. That is, these catalogs are highly heterogeneous. Often the catalogs are organized as a collection of static HTML (HyperText Markup Language) documents for the WWW (World-Wide Web). Sometimes these catalogs are stored in databases.

Electronic catalogs organized as a collection of static HTML documents typically use ordinary WWW protocols and WWW clients, such as Mosaic or Netscape. Each HTML document, called a page, is stored in a separate file and these documents can link to other documents somewhere on the Internet. You can think of the World-Wide Web as a giant menu system, where each document contains content as well as links to other documents. Typically there are no roadmaps to the WWW, so the user navigates from document to document, hopefully getting closer to the information desired.

Each vendor maintains its own (collection of) catalogs. There may not be uniformity even among multiple divisions of the same company, let alone among multiple companies

manufacturing or selling comparable products. Because of the difficulty of locating documents within a catalog, some vendors provide search interfaces for their own catalogs. Typically, these search interfaces are for keyword or text search, although some sites support structured searches of databases.

There are a variety of limitations of this typical approach to electronic catalogs. It is hard to find what you are looking for. You have to figure out where to start. For example, in order to find information about a particular product, you must first determine which companies make that product and then separately visit each company's catalog, and then navigate through each of those catalogs separately to find the desired product. Making such navigation more difficult is that each vendor organizes its catalogs differently.

Few catalogs have the ability to search by content (i.e., reverse-search). Those that support reverse-search typically use keyword- or text-based searches. Keyword searching techniques, such as WAIS, are only of limited help, as they require that the user phrase the query using the terminology of the each data source, and vendors tend to use differing terminology from each other to describe products. For example, consider a search for VCRs with editing capability. Different manufacturers use their own proprietary names to describe editing capability. The user may not know the distinctive name used by each manufacturer. Also, keyword searches typically cannot be used to answer such queries as VCRs without editing capability.

Some electronic catalog systems, such as Step Search by Saqqara Systems, support structured search. However, this approach currently only works for a single catalog at a time. PartNet is experimenting with structured cross-catalog search. However, PartNet requires that the catalogs be stored in relational databases and has only limited support for heterogeneity. PartNet supports different database systems, different field and table names, and some unit conversion, but not more complex translations among heterogeneous catalogs.

In contrast, our approach is to support reverse-search (i.e., search by content) of multiple vendor catalogs based on a deeper understanding of the contents of these catalogs, so it supports an extensive framework for heterogeneity.

Section 2 describes the goals and principles of Smart Catalogs. Section 3 describes the overall architecture of a Smart Catalog. Section 4 describes the concept of a Virtual Catalog. Section 5 contains a usage scenario of Smart Catalogs and Virtual Catalogs. Section 6 describes the current status and future work of this project. Section 7 gives our conclusions.

2. Goals and Principles.

The primary goal of the Smart Catalog approach is to enable the creation of single company catalogs with powerful search mechanisms that facilitate the transition to multi-company cross-catalog search mechanisms. A secondary goal is to enable the reuse of catalog information for other purposes than originally intended.

In May 1994, the CommerceNet Catalog Working Group developed a list of about 30 requirements for electronic catalogs. These requirements can be summarized as follows. The system should be scalable and support distributed search (not centralized). Heterogeneous information sources should be supported (not one format or one structure forced on all catalogs). The system should provide up-to-date information (printed catalogs and CD ROMs are obsolete

as soon as they are produced). The system should have an open architecture (allow connection of new information sources, adhere to standards, and allow integration of other approaches and legacy systems). A variety of search techniques should be supported (e.g., menus, keyword, text-based, parameterized, structured "reverse-search"). Cross-search of multiple catalogs for comparable products should also be supported by each catalog.

The requirement for an open architecture supporting a variety of search engines led to several design decisions. First, we the query processing core from the data sources and the user interfaces. Thus, multiple user interfaces can access the remainder of the system. Also, a variety of data sources can be connected including various search engines. Secondly, we use an intelligent-agent-based architecture. This architecture supports such functions as translation, routing, and notification. Thirdly, internally we use a very powerful query and data description language that is capable of encoding practically any data source or query capability. This language is KIF (Knowledge Interchange Format). KIF was developed as part of the ARPA Knowledge Sharing Initiative and is currently undergoing standardization by ANSI. We also use KQML (Knowledge Query and Manipulation Language) in order to communicate KIF among the agents in our architecture. KQML was also developed for the ARPA Knowledge Sharing Initiative. We use ontologies to formally describe the structure and the terms of each catalog as well as the relationships among these terms.

3. Architecture.

Our architecture is illustrated in Figure 1. It consists of intelligent agents communicating with facilitators, plus other components, such as data sources and user interfaces, that interact with the collection of intelligent agents and facilitators.

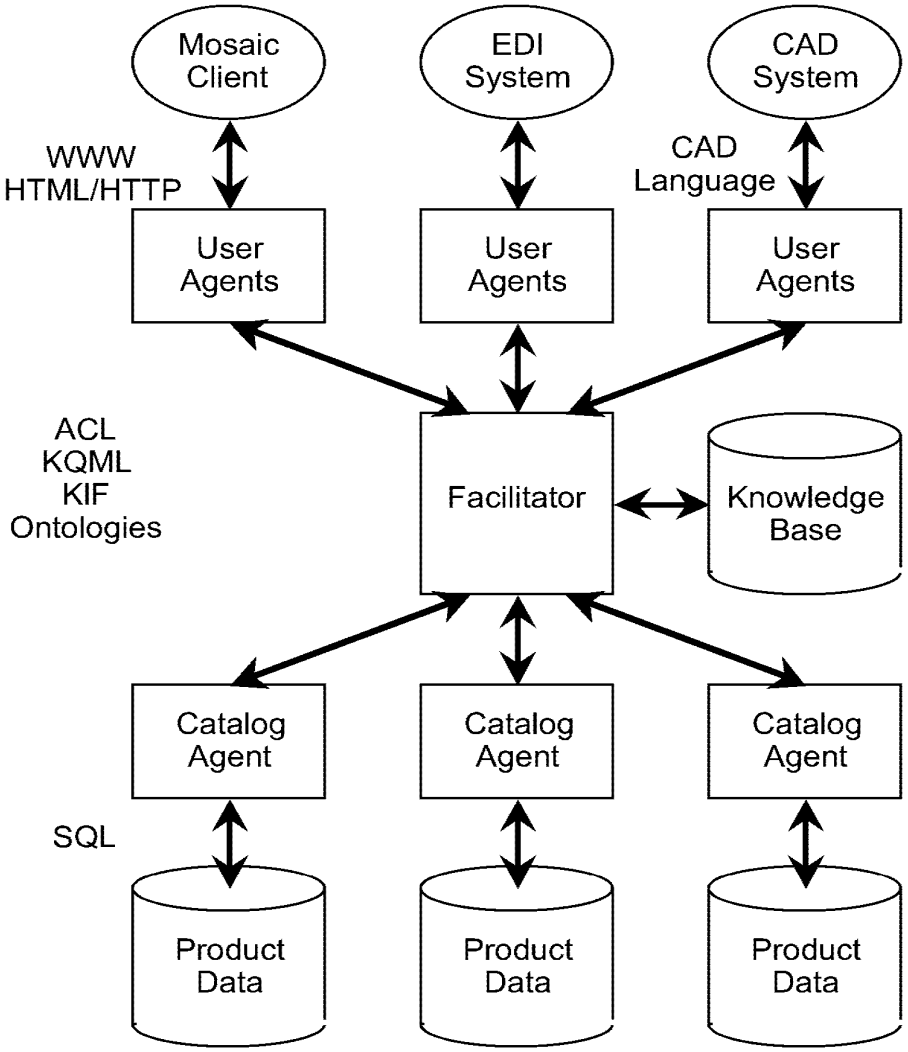

Figure 1. Smart Catalog and Brokering Architecture for Electronic Commerce

The communication language used by the intelligent agents in our architecture is Agent Communication Language (*ACL*). ACL consists of the Knowledge Query and Manipulation Language (KQML), the Knowledge Interchange Format (KIF), and a set of Ontologies. *KQML* consists of performatives, such as `ask-one`, `ask-all`, and `tell`, that describe the nature of the action to be taken. KQML has the role of the communication language in CORBA. *KIF* is based on First-Order Predicate Calculus and is the content language we use with KQML. KIF is powerful enough to contain or to encapsulate any other first-order or simpler content language, so that any information may be obtained from the information source, translated to the desired format, and transmitted to the requester, assuming the necessary components exist. Each product database is described by an *Ontology* (another term for ontology is "controlled vocabulary"), which defines the database, its structure, the terms used in it, and how they relate to each other. You can think of KIF as the content language, KQML as the transport protocol, and ontologies as the terminology used within the KIF language for interoperating intelligent agents in our architecture.

Each Facilitator in our architecture acts as a broker. Facilitators perform routing and translation. Each facilitator stores agent-provided advertisements of coverage in a knowledge base along with relevant ontologies. For example, an agent may advertise that it can respond to queries for VCRs. The facilitator uses these advertisements to determine which agents can support a particular request. For example a request for Super-VHS VCRs with editing capability will be given to the above VCR agent among others. And the facilitator translates requests into the language and terminology used by each responding agent and also translates responses into the language and terminology used by the requesting agent. For example, one manufacturer refers to editing capability as "random assemble editing" while another manufacturer uses the terms "Control L" and "Control S" for their editing systems. A facilitator will decompose requests requiring action by multiple agents and then compose the responses for the requester. For example, a request for reliable used cars for sale for less than $5000 that get more than 30 miles per gallon will be decomposed into a request to a classified-advertisement service for used car listings, a request to a car-rating service for the ratings of those cars, and a request to a car-specification service for gas mileage for the reliable cars for sale.

Product data is stored in databases, for easy search and maintenance. Such data includes structured information, parameters, text, pictures, sound, video, etc. Each product database communicates with a Catalog Agent using its native language, such as SQL. The Catalog Agent performs 3 roles: It advertises the coverage of a product database; it understands queries and translates them into the language of the product database, and it packages answers from the product database into ACL, our standard format for communicating among intelligent agents.

Consider the query for Super-VHS VCRs with editing capability. Support that there is a Catalog Agent that advertises to facilitators that it can respond to requests for VCRs. Its ontology defines the concept "Random Assemble Editing." Its database specifies which of the company's Super-VHS VCRs have Random Assemble Editing. The relevant facilitator has a taxonomy that indicates that Super-VHS VCR is a subclass of VHS VCR, which is in turn a subclass of VCR. The facilitator's knowledge base has a rule that Random Assemble Editing is a form of editing capability. Our query for Super-VHS VCRs with editing capability is translated by the rule to Random Assemble Editing. Because VCR is a superclass of Super-VHS VCR, our VCR agent is given the request for Super-VHS VCRs with Random Assemble Editing. The agent converts this ACL query into an SQL query against the catalog database. The result is packaged by the agent into ACL. Depending on the request of the user interface agent, the facilitator will return the resulting information about Super-VHS VCRs with Random Assemble Editing, or will translate these reponses into Super-VHS VCRs with editing capability.

Someone using a WWW client, such as Mosaic or Netscape, will connect to a User Agent using the ordinary WWW protocols HTTP and HTML. The User Agent will present the user with an HTML form, either statically or dynamically created. The user will describe the desired object using an HTML form. When responses come back from the facilitator, the User Agent will prepare dynamically created HTML documents with those responses.

We define four types of ontologies. *Base ontologies* are used to define common terms, such as engineering math, legal terminology, standard terms and conditions. Base ontologies are shared among all uses of this approach and are created by universities and research laboratories. For example, a common business term for payment timing is "2 10 net 30," which means that a 2% discount may be taken for payment within 10 days, and full payment must be received within 30 days. It is unreasonable for each catalog using our approach to have to separately define this

term, but rather such definitions should exist for all to use. *Domain ontologies* contain terms common to all or most vendors in an area, such as CPU speed, RAM size, or disk storage capacity. Typically domain ontologies are created by standards bodies and trade associations. *Product ontologies* contain company-specific terminology and refer to domain ontologies, such as NuBus cards for the Apple Macintosh. Individual companies create product ontologies, although other companies may refer to them. *Translation ontologies* are used to translate specific terms used in one ontology or information source to related terms used in another ontology or information source.[1] For example, a translation ontology may describe that Random Assemble Editing is a form of editing capability for VCRs. Individual companies create translation ontologies to enable them to compete in other markets. We expect there to be service organizations that create and maintain product ontologies and translation ontologies on behalf of other organizations.

4. Virtual Catalogs.

One important problem with using the WWW for product catalogs is the interaction between manufacturers and distributors or retailers. Consider a retailer that sells products from multiple manufacturers. The retailer will want to include product information from each manufacturer in its product catalog. Replicating all this product information in the retailers catalog would incur a considerable storage and maintenance cost. The typical current approach using the WWW is for the retailer to hyperlink to each manufacturer's catalog so that the customer may obtain detailed product specifications.

There are several problems with the hyperlink approach. First, the customer may get "lost" within the manufacturer's webspace and not know how to get back to the retailer. Second, the manufacturer does not know the context of the customer's interactions with the retailer. Third, the customer may stumble upon a how-to-order page provided by the manufacturer, and wind up ordering from someone other than the original retailer. Fourth, if the customer does make it back to the original retailer by using the "back" button, no information determined at the manufacturer's site is carried along with the customer, such as the desired product configuration. Fifth, if the customer gets back to the retailer through the manufacturer's how-to-order page, the retailer does not know the original context of the interaction with the customer (e.g., other products selected for order in this same session).

One approach to multivendor catalogs is the integrated approach, where all the catalogs are stored on one site using one implementation. A notable example of this approach is produced by Open Market. An alternative is to provide some mechanism for manufacturers to respond to specific queries by retailers to satisfy customer requests for product information. This latter approach can be based on a business relationship between the retailer and the manufacturer. That approach is the one we take in a Virtual Catalog.

Virtual catalogs allow retrieval of product data using a distributor's catalog by combining information from multiple manufacturers' catalogs. This retrieval is performed dynamically, upon the user's request, based on the user's search criteria, using the terminology of the

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[1] The term "articulation axiom" is sometimes used to refer to entries in a translation ontology. Translation ontologies may be used to create an ontology algebra supporting translation across multiple ontologies.

distributor or any connected vendor, and will retrieve data from any relevant connected vendor. Therefore, the distributor's virtual catalog is always kept up-to-date and in synchrony with each manufacturer's smart catalog. The distributor can choose to display all of a manufacturer's products or only a subset of those products. Also, manufacturer's catalog information may be cached at the virtual catalog site and updated as it changes. Translation of terminology and concepts may occur when information is retrieved to be cached or when information is retrieved from the cache, or a combination of these times.

With virtual catalogs, the distributor maintains control over the interaction with the user. The user never interacts directly with the manufacturer's catalog. Instead, the manufacturer's information is retrieved on demand and is presented to the user with the distributor's look and feel, not the specific look and feel of each manufacturer. The relationship between the user, virtual catalog, and smart catalogs is shown in Figure 2.

There are two key business relationships in the Virtual Catalog world, and many supporting business relationships. The two key business relationships are between the customer and the retailer (the virtual catalog), and between the retailer and the manufacturer (the smart catalog). Processes may exist in the virtual catalog to bridge these relationships. For example, orders from customers may trigger resupply EDI transactions to the manufacturer. Or the order may be forwarded to the manufacturer for drop shipment of the product directly to the customer. In addition, there are supporting business relationships. For example, if credit cards are used for payment, the customer has a relationship with the issuing bank, and the retailer has a relationship with the acquiring bank, and the two banks have a relationship for clearing the credit card charge. Similarly, there are relationships for order fulfillment, shipment, etc.

Virtual catalogs are appropriate for retailers and distributions as well as in-house procurement catalogs, but they also enable new business models. A virtual distributor may operate using a virtual catalog and business relationships for order fulfillment, shipment, etc. The virtual distributor may not even have any inventory, warehouse, etc. The virtual distributor could be a completely computerized setup, automatically providing product information using manufacturers' catalogs, taking orders and arranging for order fulfillment and payment.

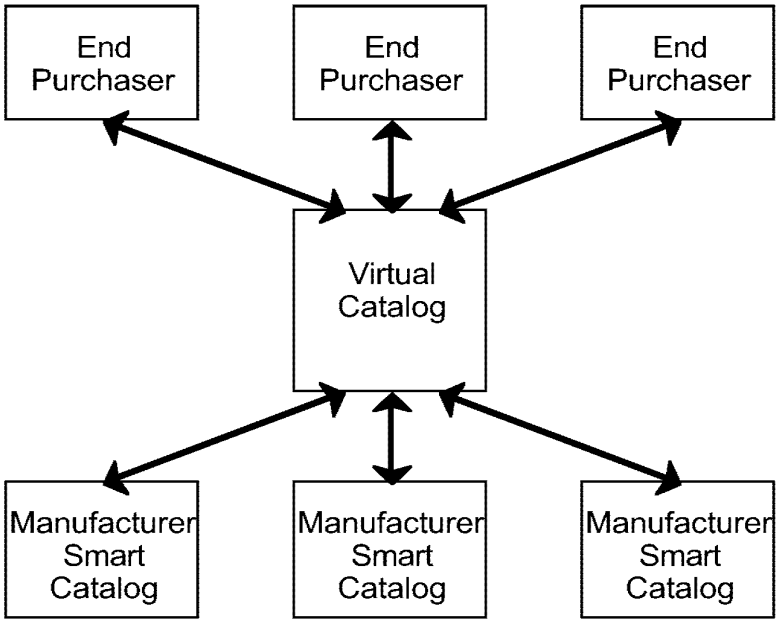

Figure 2. Virtual Catalogs.

5. Scenarios.

Consider a customer's request for color PostScript inkjet printers for the Macintosh costing under $1000. The User Agent will translate the query into KIF and submit it to a Facilitator. The Facilitator handling the query will consult its knowledge base for the facilitators or agents that can handle this request. For example, the Facilitator may transmit the request to the Catalog Agents for Apple and for Hewlett-Packard. The Catalog Agent will then interrogate the product database and translate the answer into KIF. For example, the Hewlett-Packard Catalog Agent may respond with the description of the HP DeskWriter 660C printer. The Apple Catalog Agent may respond with the Apple Color StyleWriter Pro. The facilitator will then collect these responses for the User Agent, which will package the responses in HTML for the Mosaic client. The user agent and facilitator are provided by the virtual catalog company. The catalog agents and product databases are provided by the manufacturers as part of their smart catalogs.

A customer may instead be interested in color PostScript laser printers for the Macintosh for under $3000. As of this publication, such printers cost around $5000, but prices are dropping. So the customer may request notification when any such printer is newly announced, or is lowered in price. This request will be stored in the relevant facilitator's knowledge base. When a manufacturer announces a new product, it will have a catalog agent send a message with the announcement and any changes to the advertisement of the agent to the facilitator. The facilitator will then send appropriate notifications to those parties who have expressed interest in this news.

Notice that the facilitator notification scheme is symmetric. Catalog agents express interest in being given product data queries. User agents express interest in being given product data announcements. The same notification scheme is used for both types of activities.

Operators of virtual catalogs have several alternative models for paying for their operation. The operator may take and process orders and use the markup on the transaction. Alternatively, the operator may make money merely by providing information. (When information is free, search is valuable.) The operator may charge manufacturers, either a fixed fee or per referral. The operator may charge customers, either by subscription or per search. The operator may sell demographic information on customers or on searches to market research firms, manufacturers, retailers, or trade associations. Of course, an operator may obtain revenues from multiple of these approaches.

6. Current status.

The architecture of smart catalogs and virtual catalogs is an application of the facilitator architecture long in use in Logic Group of Stanford University's Computer Science Dept. The facilitator architecture has been demonstrated in the domains of software interoperability and concurrent engineering. It is now being applied to the domain of electronic commerce as part of Stanford's Center for Information Technology's (CIT) efforts on CommerceNet.

Several smart catalogs have been built in collaboration with several companies in the domains of workstations, test and measurement equipment, and semiconductors.

We have also created smart catalogs for several manufacturers and a virtual catalog that can search these smart catalogs. We are working on creating additional smart catalogs for a larger scale trial.

Please contact Arthur Keller by e-mail at `ark@cs.stanford.edu` or by WWW at `http://logic.stanford.edu/cnet.html` for more information.

7. Research Issues.

While the basic architecture for smart and virtual catalogs for electronic commerce now exists, a variety of research and development problems remain. We will describe some of these issues in this section.

Ontologies are now created largely through a manual process. Although some tools exist (such as the Ontology Editor of Stanford University's Knowledge Systems Laboratory), these tools merely facilitate the manual creation of ontologies. Tools are needed that use existing descriptions of data to create initial ontologies that may need manual elaboration. For example, data dictionaries could be used to populate part of an ontology for the corresponding database.

A significant effort will be required in creating the base, domain, and product ontologies needed by our architecture. This effort must be decentralized and scalable for it to succeed. Existing and emerging standards must be used whenever possible to create ontologies that will be adopted widely. An important consideration regarding the smart catalog approach is that it will enable a much greater degree of data reuse than is possible today, and much of this benefit is obtained through the creation of the ontologies. We have yet to create a large collection of ontologies, so the scalability of ontologies is still an issue.

An important feature of our smart catalog approach is the support for heterogeneity. While our approach to heterogeneity has been demonstrated in test cases, the scalability of our approach has

not yet been demonstrated. It is critical that the approach to dealing with heterogeneous information sources approximate a linear cost model rather than a quadratic cost model or worse. Only through a larger deployment can we effectively demonstrate that a linear cost model is appropriate.

Security is an important consideration. Some information about products should only be disseminated to certain parties. Assertions made by agents must be verified to ensure that they do not interfere with assertions made by other agents. Both authentication and authorization need to be added to our agent model for widespread deployment to occur.

There are costs associated with responding to inquiries. While some catalog access is free, other access may require payment. Incorporating a payment model into a catalog query mechanism remains to be done.

When there are alternative information sources that can respond to an inquiry, there must be some objective and fair criteria used to determine which of these sources is chosen. Differences in quality of information sources, experiences in using the various sources, and parameters of the request such as willingness to pay and response time required are factors that need to be considered in determining which information source to utilize. These issues are still open problems.

8. Conclusion.

We have described an architecture for electronic catalogs for multiple companies that interoperate. Companies create smart catalogs of searchable, machine-sensible product information. Retailers and distributors create virtual catalogs that provide customers with product information dynamically requested from manufacturers' smart catalogs. Virtual catalogs provide a new degree of interaction between manufacturers and retailers or distributors. Virtual catalogs enable new business relations and new business models.

Acknowledgments.

This paper has benefited from feedback of numerous people who have heard presentations of this paper, read earlier drafts, or participated in discussions. In particular, Michael Genesereth designed the overall intelligent agent communication architecture used by smart catalogs and virtual catalogs, Narinder Singh implemented the facilitator, and Mustafa Syed programmed some of the other components in our initial prototypes. Note that an earlier version of this paper, co-authored by them, appeared at the Workshop on Electronic Commerce following CIKM, December 1994. A subsequent version of this paper appeared in the USENIX Workshop on Electronic Commerce, July 1995. Infomaster, a virtual information system representing our second generation smart catalog technology, was developed by Donald Geddis. Several other people have worked on the development of smart catalogs. These include Felix Chow, Rohan Aranha, Bob Engelmore, Wanda Pratt, and Rupert Brauch.

This work was funded through a subcontract from the CommerceNet Consortium, which in turn derived its funding from a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Technology Reinvestment Program, as well as over 150 companies and organizations. In addition, several companies have provided funding of this project towards the construction of pilot smart catalogs. Some of the

base technology used in this effort was funded by the ARPA Knowledge Sharing Initiative and the Intelligent Integration of Information program.

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Chapter 8

The Information Marketplace: Achieving Success in Commercial Applications

Steve Laufmann [1]

8.1 The Information Marketplace

Information is useful for a broad variety of tasks and is increasingly being turned to commercial advantage. As the computing and communication infrastructures for the information marketplace mature, enterprises will most likely evolve in ways that will ultimately emulate those seen in the traditional commercial world - namely, a complex blend of independent providers and consumers, interacting in various ways to provide and consume a broad range of wholesale, retail, and facilitation services.

The work described herein is based on the premise that the basic *foundations* of commerce, including the formulas, functions, and processes of commerce, will not appreciably change even as the coming electronic and information revolution changes the *forms* of commerce. Existing commercial processes evolved over a long period of time, so we assume that they accurately reflect the inherent nature of humans in commercial activities. In essence, these functions succeeded because they work. It is unlikely that changes in the forms taken by these processes will radically affect the basic functions.

Thus, it is important to carefully and deliberately consider *existing* commercial activities in designing and proposing new technologies to support them in the future. We must be diligent to understand and respect existing commercial functions in designing new forms. Even though it is possible that early forms of information commerce may not closely resemble existing commercial activities, it is likely that they will either quickly evolve around the same commercial functionality.

This chapter addresses the needs and desires of commercial service providers for offering commercially viable online services to their customers. This vision for future applications, is based on laboratory experimentation with various technologies for information commerce, together with an understanding of customers

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and marketing issues, and a vision for future technological foundations and environments. This chapter describes this vision rather than an implemented environment, as only some portions of this vision have been implemented to date. Section 2 presents a simple model of commerce, and discusses the roles and variations in this model. Section 3 notes key observations of the state of commercial activities today. Our vision for the information marketplace is presented in section 4. Section 5 documents the key technological and business challenges facing the developers of the information marketplace. Section 6 presents our three-part approach and its implications, while section 7 briefly introduces the implementations and application prototype. The advantages and disadvantages of this approach are discussed in section 8, and section 9 presents an overview of work remaining to be done in the future. Conclusions are given in section 10.

8.2 Commerce Model

This discussion is based on a simple commerce model, in which information can be the *means* by which commerce occurs and at the same time the *article* of commerce. The boundary between these uses of information is not distinct, and will not be explored in depth here. This model includes three roles, as shown in Figure 1.

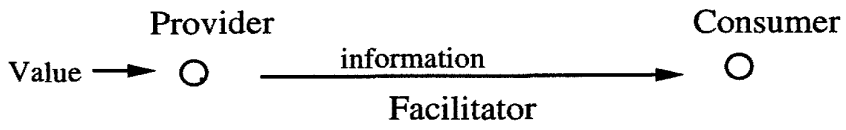

Figure 8.1: Figure 1. A simple model of the roles required in information commerce.

- The *provider* - the information source, which creates something of value which can be bought and sold in the information marketplace. The provider need not offer what would be considered a traditional "information service." Instead, the service may involve some form of problem-solving activity, such as plumbing consultation, landscape architecture, or tax advice. In whatever form, the provider injects value into the overall system.
- The *consumer* - the information sink, which consumes that thing of value. This role may involve browsing, requesting assistance, purchasing informa-

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tion, or using various services. In so doing the consumer incurs expenses, and appropriate payment is eventually made to the provider(s).

- The *facilitator* - the provider(s) of the environment, transport channel, and related support services. This role enables providers and consumers to interact efficiently, over distance if necessary, to securely exchange information and services. This may include formatting, transport, staging and presentation, advertising, security services, registration, indexing, and support operations such as billing and payment collection. This role is roughly analogous to the owner of a shopping mall, providing an accessible, comfortable, and secure environment within which sellers and buyers can transact business.

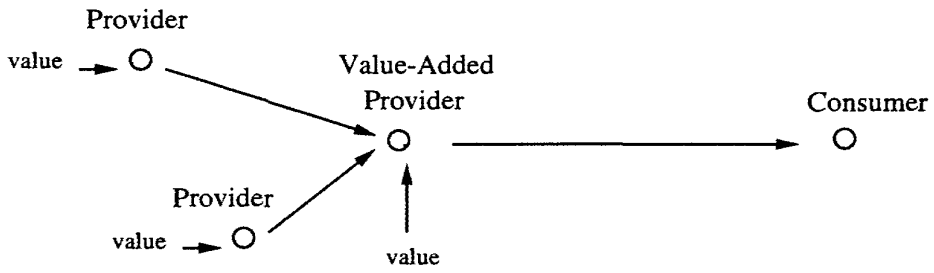

Figure 8.2 Figure 2. An extended model: value-added providers.

Value-added providers (see Figure 2) combine the consumer and provider roles, obtaining "raw" information from various sources (consuming), adding value in the form of additional information or services, and repackaging the results for consumption (providing). In many cases the aggregated, processed, and repackaged information will no longer resemble the "raw" information upon which it is based. For example, an investment service might take raw stock prices from one source, information about Treasury bills from another, and commodity price data from others, then perform a trend analysis, and finally offer buy or sell recommendations. The new service may repackage raw information into a more useful form without requiring consumers to know the location, format, or access mechanisms of the raw information. In using the wholesale services, the final consumer need not worry about the pricing or payment strategies required to gain access to the raw information, since the value-added provider performs these functions and bears the associated costs as a wholesale buyer. The provider that delivers the service to an end consumer assumes the role of retail provider.

Figure 3 shows how services may be bought and sold in different ways in a larger network of services. There are two distinct forms of consumption, each

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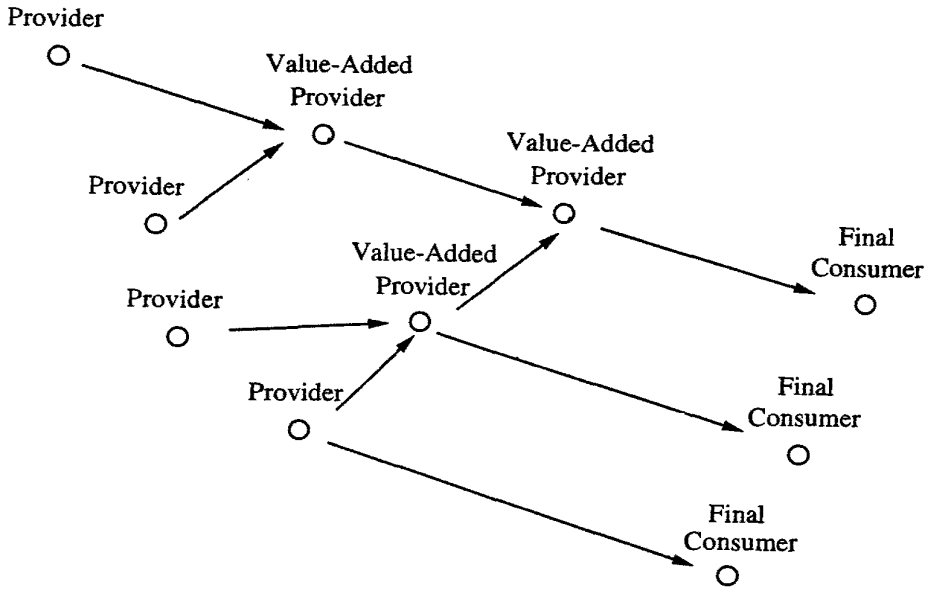

Figure 8.3 Figure 3. The extension of the commerce model.

requiring different tools and techniques. The first is machine-based (i.e., mechanized) access to services, which requires the specification of well-defined service access protocols and languages. The second is human-based access (i.e., manual), and requires platform-independent user interfaces. Providers must choose whether and how to provide these in the creation of their service. This choice will determine how the service is accessed and used. The access tools are described in sections 6.2 and 6.3.

Wholesale services may be offered to consumers in two fundamentally different forms. In the first, raw information is fully consumed in the provision of the value-added service. The value provided by the wholesale service is "swallowed up" by the value-added provider and no longer visible to the consumer of the value-added provider's service. The investment service mentioned above is an example of such a service. The second approach is where the wholesale service is offered directly to consumers by means of a *pass-through interface* , in which the primary functionality of the wholesaler's interface is presented directly to the consumer, but with the look and feel of the retailer's service. An example is a service that offers driving instructions between pairs of addresses. Many businesses with physical addresses may want to provide this service to their customers. However, such a service requires a means for setting the addresses and presenting the directions to the end consumer. These are fairly static input and output requirements, so the provider of the service may create a simple interface for these specific functions. With an appropriately designed interface structure, the retail provider could adapt this standard wholesale interface by overlaying it with certain service-specific presentation properties, like the retail service name, logo, presentation colors, and fonts. The result is an interface that presents the wholesaler's functionality, but looks and feels like part of the retailer's service.

8.3 Observations

There are a number of important lessons to be learned from the existing world of commercial activity. The following observations elucidate key elements for the successful facilitation of the information marketplace.

Observation 1. Market studies indicate that consumers are typically more interested in having their problems solved than in simply obtaining information. Furthermore, very few existing businesses focus on information retrieval. Instead, the large majority of businesses today exist to solve problems for their customers. Though there may be a substantial information retrieval task involved in the problem-solving, the service actually sold to the customer is almost always best characterized as a solution to the customers' problem(s).

The implications of this are important and drive providers, and consequently the supporting infrastructure, away from the retrieval of large quantities of information and toward the access of relevant problem-solving services. For example, the investment service mentioned above is more oriented toward problem-solving than the simple stock quote service upon which it relies. It may also focus much less on transporting raw information to its consumers and more on transporting

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useful summaries or advice. Over the long term, this will be apparent in the increasing availability and popularity of "higher-level" problem-solving services, as discussed above. This shift will fundamentally change the ways information-based services work, and further motivate collaborative and cooperative services.

Also, these services will look more and more like problem-solvers over time, shifting the focus away from the appearance of "advertising" to one of "online presence". At the same time, there will be an increasing shift away from indexing *information* and toward indexing *services* on the network.

Observation 2. Markets are valued much more highly when they are perceived to be effectively ubiquitous in the array of services represented. For example, the perceived value of a yellow pages directory is directly related to the perceived ubiquity of the listings it contains - when customers believe that every potential provider is referenced. Thus, the information marketplace must be positioned to achieve and sustain near-ubiquity within some common regional boundaries, where the region may be defined by geography or domain. There are a number of important implications:

Observation 2a. The existing marketplace in a large metropolitan center has on the order of 100,000 businesses per 1,000,000 mass market consumers. Thus, the problem of scaling up to achieve ubiquity will be severe, and should occur relatively rapidly within the boundaries of the region. A network of this scale raises a number of additional issues, such as how consumers find appropriate services and quickly learn to use them. Proposed facilitation infrastructures must account for this.

Observation 2b. Approximately 85% of existing businesses are categorized as *small* businesses, and approximately 85% of these are owned and operated by a single individual. A large number of these smaller businesses and organizations are focused on providing local services to local consumers. Examples include plumbers, dry cleaners, churches, dentists, gas stations, bakeries, etc. These are not the types of businesses commonly viewed as "information services" companies, and many are not of general interest for distribution beyond their local region. However, they typically comprise the "heart" of local business communities, providing the types of everyday services that people are willing to pay for. Thus, we must carefully consider the needs of these types of potential providers. Specifically, there are large numbers of such businesses and organizations, and they typically exhibit different needs than the traditional "information services" organization.

Thus, while it is unlikely that small businesses, especially owner/operators, will be early adopters of emerging information commerce technologies, it is clear that they are essential for the achievement of ubiquity, and the ultimate success of the information marketplace. Thus, facilitators must carefully consider and account for their needs.

Observation 3. The ultimate potential of the technology cannot be achieved until access by mass market consumers is nearly ubiquitous. Businesses, especially the smaller, local businesses will be most likely to offer an online presence when

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there is broad availability to their customers. Yet mass market consumers will almost certainly want and need to use various different end-user devices to access services. In addition, there will almost certainly be various competing network architectures providing transport and related facilitation services. Thus, facilitation will require a service facilitation layer that "floats" on top of various network transport channels and capabilities, and services must be presentable on a variety of user devices with potentially divergent capabilities.

Observation 4. The modern shopping mall, much like the middle eastern souk, provides a distinct set of useful services to facilitate the interactions of commercial activity. It collects an attractive array of useful products and services into a single location. It provides a measure of personal comfort for its businesses' customers. It distributes the costs of these comforts (e.g., heating, air conditioning, and restrooms) and other amenities (e.g., advertising and special programs to attract customers). It offers a measure of safety. It provides a unified environment, including a certain look and feel, mode of behavior, and operating hours. Yet it allows each individual store to offer its own products and services in its own way. Each has the opportunity to provide its own unique aesthetic environment within the larger, coherent whole. Each is allowed to do business its own way, accepting the forms of payment it deems most suitable, offering its own sales and incentives to customers, hiring its own employees, and creating its own internal look and feel (e.g., friendliness, efficiency, personal touches). Basically, the mall provides an overall environment, which has its own characteristics designed to attract customers, yet stays out of the way when it comes to the ways the individual stores interact with their customers.

It seems likely that the same kinds of relationships will be valued in the information marketplace. The facilitators of the information marketplace must do the same kinds of things - facilitators must "make it possible" by creating an environment that attracts customers and supports a wide variety of business interactions without "getting in the way" or being seen as controlling those interactions. Facilitators must avoid getting into the business of telling businesses how to do business. Instead, they must make business interactions easy and safe in a relatively transparent way. They must provide the means and mechanisms for businesses to interact with their customers without controlling those interactions (i.e., the how, when, what, why, etc.).

In this view, the service functions provided by existing businesses to mass market consumers do not radically change. Instead, the changes occur primarily in the ways in which we interact with the providers of those services - using an electronic, information-based approach to solve many of the problems consumers encounter using today's systems, such as inconvenient time synchrony (e.g., the customer can only talk to the plumber when both are available), and the ability to rapidly distribute corrections and modifications in services (e.g., the business doesn't have to wait until the next edition of the yellow pages book).

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8.4 Vision

As it evolves, the information marketplace will offer a number of attractive opportunities while allowing free market forces to shape future generations of information-based products and services. With an appropriate technological infrastructure as its foundation, the marketplace will favor the entrepreneurial providers and facilitators offering the best (e.g., highest value) approaches, as defined by consumers. Sheth and Sisodia provide a detailed examination of the sociological and economic aspects of the information marketplace [15].

The first wave of services in the information marketplace will be online versions of current businesses and services. It will be necessary for online services to compete, at least initially, with current practices. In competition, the online service must provide some competitive advantage, such as increased convenience, greater flexibility, greater visual impact, lower cost, reduced turnaround times, or increased utility. The online medium also offers opportunities to extend the types and levels of service that may be provided.

The observations lead us to expect the following trends over time in the information marketplace:

Toward greater online presence , and away from online advertising. The difference is primarily related to degree of interactivity. Online presence would involve some form of interaction with the intent of negotiating for or transacting commercial activity. In its early forms, we expect a number of legacy systems being transformed into online services, both to exploit the growing market and to leverage the large investments in such systems.

Toward new "facilitator" services that help consumers with their problem-solving activities. Such services might provide service registration and indexing to assist users in finding appropriate services (e.g., plumbers or appliance repair); ratings and referrals, presumably to enhance credibility of certain online services - a form of differentiation; comparative shopping to assist users in comparing the potential results of interacting with alternative providers; and online tracking, billing and payment services.

Toward new classes of problem-solvers that provide substantial added value to consumers. Examples include the following:

- Information wrappers, that hide information complexity and/or package information in more marketable or user-friendly forms. Such problem-solvers will be especially useful for repackaging legacy systems that provide substantial value, but are very difficult to use in current forms.
- Information brokers and clearinghouses that assist in collecting, categorizing, collating, clarifying, and correcting information and other types of services.
- Information filters, that apply salient properties of the user, the session, and/or the information to make reasonable, mostly automated decisions about which information or service is relevant. These pre-process information using historical references (past experience in the task), predictive

heuristics (educated "guesses" about future performance), user responses (when in doubt, ask), knowledge of the information domain (will this information be helpful?), or some combination of these to prevent information overload in a human user.

- Gateway agents, to act as gateways to different types of service networks (i.e., based on different paradigms or approaches, or functioning on different network platforms.

- Decision-making aids that post-process information for specific tasks. Such tools digest, transform, collate, and/or interpret the information into a more easily assimilated package.

- Presentation and visualization tools that assist in determining the best way to present information, using computer graphics, animations, auditory feedback, or other means.

- User assistants and advocates that help users in various ways. Mass market users will not understand the intricacies of interface tools, the internal formatting of information, or the means by which information is accessed and distributed, so user assistants and advocates can perform complex tasks and represent the user's interests within the service network. Also, such agents might one day learn domain-specific knowledge of various services or service types, and use this to aid the consumer's access to these services.

Toward "local" communities , and away from all-encompassing global perspectives. Such communities may be based on area of interest or special needs, but it is likely that many such communities will be based on geography, with local services catering to local consumers.

8.5 Challenges

The collection of provider, consumer, and facilitation systems that support the information marketplace provide one example of *composite systems*, which exhibit the following characteristics: (1) they are comprised of a possibly very large number of individual entities, each of which is capable of performing one or more specific tasks as a standalone system; (2) these entities work together, and thus must be able to coordinate their actions and work cooperatively to solve problems that none can solve independently; and (3) their fundamental means of exchange is electronic - some form of information. As a result, entities must interoperate to the degree that they effectively communicate to share information, constraints, and goals. Such systems are typically distributed, geographically and/or organizationally, and are functionally heterogeneous, using different hardware and software for different tasks. Furthermore, these entities should perform cooperative tasks with minimal human intervention.

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8.5.1 Technical Issues

The characteristics of composite systems impose a number of important constraints on the computing and communication infrastructure. In addition, systems that must be commercially viable add other requirements. These can be organized into the following types of challenges:

1. Composite systems require some form of interoperability and must account for the effects of *distribution* and *heterogeneity* among and between the entities. Such issues are typically addressed in the distributed and federated databases literature, and include type specification and conversion, distributed transactions and concurrency control, distributed access and coordination, data and knowledge semantics, and application-level semantics, constraints, and "correctness".

2. Composite systems exhibit the characteristics of open systems, as defined by Hewitt [5, 6], and must effectively operate in an environment of *concurrency* and *decentralization* . Such issues are typically addressed in the distributed artificial intelligence and cooperative systems literature, and include asynchronous communication, decentralized control, inconsistent information among entities, and inadequacy of the closed-world assumption.

3. Practical support systems are necessary for real-world deployment, and are necessary to provide *operations* and *support* functions in an operational environment. For example, the provider will want to protect and profit from his efforts, introducing the need for payment in exchange for services rendered. Issues include platform heterogeneity, user interfaces and presentation, authentication, security, privacy, transactions and orders, tracking and accounting, and payment and billing [7].

4. Also, the business environment is inherently characterized by frequent and rapid change. Thus, businesses require autonomy and functional independence, in an environment that is both *flexible* and *dynamic* . Flexibility allows them the freedom to do what they want in the way they want to do it. Dynamicity allows them to change it whenever they want. For example, it is often the case in business that innovation in marketing and sales is more important to success than innovation in products and services. Issues include functional autonomy and independence, functional flexibility to support broadly different and possibly divergent capabilities, and functional dynamicity, for rapid changes in functionality

8.5.2 Business Needs

The above considerations lead to the following technological needs for providers. These are critical to the successful (i.e., profitable) deployment of information commerce. Though providers will have other needs, we have chosen the following eight to focus on here.

1. *Individual Connectivity.* Each individual provider and consumer must have the basic capability to communicate with every other provider and consumer. In order to do this, each individual must have an inter-entity communication protocol and at least one common language by which meaningful semantic exchanges can occur. Shared language necessitates a shared vocabulary, or a set of terms within which this semantic exchange may be stated. This requires a minimal set of shared semantics. However, there are practical limits on the amount and types of semantics that can be shared a priori, at the creation of the entity, and clearly this must be relatively small. Thus, most application- or domain-specific semantics cannot be expressed in this language, and will require other languages. We thus turn to the notion of multiple, small languages that are designed around specific, generally narrow bands of functionality. In effect, they are designed to express concepts and terms for specific applications or domains (e.g., making reservations, leaving messages, negotiating prices and services, requesting data, etc.). Such languages need only be shared among those individual entities that must converse regarding that functionality. Since each entity must share the minimal language, and each may know any number of other domain languages, individual entities will generally be multilingual.

2. *Individual Identification/Location.* Individual entities require direct and unique addressability, which enables direct communication, and makes possible various kinds of support and facilitation services.

3. *Individual Independence.* Each individual entity must retain a reasonable degree of locality, such that each may have its own information, knowledge, and beliefs, which may be implicit. Knowledge about the internal design, naming, and workings of an individual entity remain internal, and should typically be independent of the communication languages. This allows the provider the freedom to change or replace the backend operations of the service with no change to the rest of the network - without notifications, upgrades to customer sites, or expensive software distribution. This introduces the need for translations between the communication language(s) and the languages the entity uses internally to process requests. Such translations are increasingly common and often yield favorable results when compared to the costs of incremental modifications that must be delivered widely to various "consumer" processes.
   This form of locality allows the provider to modify his service with minimal disturbance to existing operations and practices, and with minimal change requirements in other entities that may interact with this one (e.g., as a wholesale buyer). It also allows the provider to use the right solutions and

tools for the right jobs. Because this locality includes the selection and use of hardware resources, it offers the freedom to use those devices that are most suitable for any given service. This policy in the network will result in rampant heterogeneity (i.e., below the level of the communication protocols and languages described above).

4. *Individual Autonomy.* In addition to the need for control over the internal organization of the entity, the provider must retain control over the operations of the entity. Each entity must be operationally autonomous, with its own processes and its own set of goals and priorities (possibly implicit). No outside entity can impose or supersede these without specifically contracting to do so. Thus, no facilitator or other entity, which may belong to someone else, can gain control of the provider's service, and control of the service stays in the hands of the provider.

5. *Individual Persistence.* Individual entities must exist through time so that they remain accessible and become known over extended periods of time. Ongoing availability is essential for many businesses. Also, a large number of businesses, especially those smaller ones that focus on personal service, will want to use individualized service histories to guide the current session with a given consumer. Thus, they must be capable of retaining a history of past contexts (i.e., sessions with a particular customer) for use in future contexts, and recalling those contexts when and as needed. Context retention may require the creation and ongoing revision of the context as multiple communication acts occur in a session.

6. *Individual Differentiation.* Within the limits of some global look and feel decisions, businesses must retain the ability to be different from their competitors. "One size fits all" won't work. This differentiation must occur in two areas:

    - *Content.* Individual entities must retain the ability to distribute their functions or content to the user. In other words, the provider must be able to differentiate his service on the basis of the properties of the service itself. This can take many forms, including the content of the text, images, and other media objects to be presented to consumers.
    - *Presentation.* Individual entities must also differentiate in terms of style and personality in their presentation, in much the same way that businesses differentiate themselves in various advertising media. Providers must be able to present their own sense of style, including personality-bearing information like colors and color schemes, display fonts and sizes, screen layouts, backgrounds, etc. The presentation must play on the user's device in a predictable fashion, without unnecessarily limiting the look, feel, or operation of the service.

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7. *Individual Assurances.* Individual entities must receive reasonable assurances from the facilitation layer regarding performance during the rendering of service and appropriate payment for service.

    - *Tracking and Accounting.* Individual entities must be assured that their agreements with other entities will be properly tracked, accounted for, and paid for in a timely manner. Appropriate operations support systems must be built into the facilitation layer to log, backup, and manage communication acts, transactions, and other activities.
    - *Timeliness.* To be effective, the interactions between providers and consumers must exhibit certain predictable properties of response and throughput, and must account for the tracking and accounting mechanisms mentioned above.

8. *Individual Security.* Individual entities must have a reasonable level of security from attacks, either intentional or inadvertent. The following types of inter-related security services will be required:

    - *Privacy.* Since private information is generally given away only in order to receive some special consideration or advantage, it will be necessary for individual entities, especially those associated with end consumers, to protect such information to the greatest extent possible. Protocols for negotiating to receive such information will eventually be needed.
    - *Access Protection.* Providers with information that offers commercial advantage will not want to release that information or service without proper assurances that it will be duly paid for. One mechanism for achieving this is encryption, either during periods of latent storage or during network transmission.
    - *Intrusion Protection.* Both providers and consumers need assurances that the careless or malicious actions of others will not result in unwanted intrusions into their device(s). For example, there must be reasonable safety from the implantation of viruses or other destructive or uninvited programs.
    - *Authentication.* Some providers must be certain that they are talking to a known and authorized consumer. Thus, an authentication service will be necessary.
    - *Availability.* Eventually it will be necessary to implement support systems in the infrastructure to detect and prevent service jamming,

in which outside sources (possibly with malicious intent) seek to keep a service busy or otherwise limit its availability to its consumers, or to keep the service from reaching its consumers. Mechanisms that detect and/or prevent such actions will eventually become indispensable.

8.5.3 Future Needs

The following needs are similarly useful to those above, but are more difficult to define, due to two factors. First, there are many ways that these issues can be driven in the future, depending on how the information marketplace develops and what emerging technologies become viable in coming years. More experience and marketplace maturity is needed in order to understand market requirements, and greater technical maturity is necessary in order to know exactly what the technology can reasonably offer. Second, the relatively immature state of the technology causes a lack of general-purpose mechanisms for these tasks. Existing mechanisms tend to be constrained to specific applications or domains and therefore useful only under specific conditions. The range of conditions tends to be narrow, and not typically "naturally occurring", so it is difficult to apply them to real-life circumstances and situations. Thus the following appear to be quite useful, but for which we must wait, pending greater experience in the information marketplace and further technological progress.

Conversations, Contexts, and Histories. Because commercial activity is largely composed of ongoing conversations, involving context and history of past experiences, it is essential that the information marketplace support such capabilities. Thus, many individual entities will require mechanisms to support multi-message activities, to collect individual communication acts into *conversations* in a specific *context*, and to collect these contexts into *histories* for subsequent use. Consequently, a mechanism is needed for associating individual messages with sessions, which can subsequently be linked to a historical context, if any. In addition, support for conversations and contexts should be key elements of service provider software. Long-term, history contexts, on the other hand, may be more application-dependent, and require mechanisms for specifying the types of information to be retained in the history and the ways in which historical contexts may be associated with current ones. This is a possible application for case-based reasoning. In any event, this function is *internal* to the service software.

Recovery Mechanisms. These would allow individual entities to recover from various kinds of interruptions due to unexpected failures in the network, in component hardware, or to the intermittent nature of mobile computing environments. These may be based on or related to the conversation and context mechanisms discussed above.

Negotiation and Contracting. Appropriate protocols and skills for various forms of negotiation and contracting would enable entities to dynamically arrange the

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conditions under which they work together. Again, this may require some form of the conversation and context mechanisms discussed above.

Cooperative Problem Solving. At some time in the future, some entities may need additional skills in complex, distributed problem solving activities related to coordinated, cooperative, or collaborative efforts. This will require mechanisms for negotiation and contracting.

Service Discovery. It will at some point be desirable for services to (semi-) automatically detect, probe, and "understand" other online services (e.g., newly available services).

Learning. Individual entities that are capable of automatically performing self-improvements over time offer certain advantages over the life-span of the individual entities. Such "learning" might involve better predicting future performance based on past experiences in similar situations or in working with certain other entities, or the inclusion of new features by having the entity self-discover available enhancements and auto-updating its capabilities.

8.5.4 Current Practices & Solutions

There is currently a surge of interest in information-based commerce, fueled largely by the convergence of the various technologies supporting the World Wide Web (WWW), including the Hypertext Markup Language (HTML), the Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP), and a growing variety of hypertext client and server engines. The following is a brief assessment of these with respect to the eight needs identified above.

The web presents some limitations in its current form. Among these is the inability to provide bandwidth and/or throughput guarantees. Thus, it cannot currently assure levels of performance to either providers or consumers, inhibiting the performance assurance needs of suppliers in information commerce. In addition, three other, existing networks may play roles in the future: the public switched telephone network; the broadcast network, including television, cable, and satellite systems; and utility networks, including the electrical power distribution grid and their control networks. The industries surrounding each of these are exploring various ways of providing facilitation services, and each has expressed some degree of interest in information commerce as an appropriate application domain for their network. the future impact of these is unknown.

The appeal of the web is due primarily to the flexible design, radical simplicity, and low-cost availability of the protocols and various HTML display engines, or browsers, which are designed for extreme ease-of-use for both providers and consumers. Since HTML is based on a hypertext document paradigm, use of the system involves requesting, downloading, and displaying HTML documents on the user's screen by a browsing/display engine. It was recently extended to display forms and accept forms-like input. Only three types of information are allowed in HTML: information to be presented directly to the user (i.e., the document itself), interface navigation options and commands (i.e., to manipulate the interface itself), and upstream commands, including document retrieval

commands and forms input, which are transported over the network to a remote server. This design is both safe from the perspective of the client machine and elegant in its simplicity.

However, the web's current limitations become more apparent in applications that are fundamentally *outside* the world of documents, yet are *inside* the world of electronic commerce. Among these are the following:

- HTTP lacks a notion of "session" - it is strictly single message oriented, rather than conversation or context oriented. Although it is possible to build a session mechanism using the standard widgets, HTTP itself does not currently provide this. This may be resolved in future versions.

- HTML's document metaphor is based on very loosely coupled relationships between client and server, or between browser and document, and as a result lacks an adequate notion of interactivity for many applications associated with information-based commerce [2]. Because it is based on the notion of fetching and retrieving documents, interactive operations such as editing or annotating sections of the presentation are not possible.

- The web uses a fundamental "pull" model of retrieval, as opposed to a "push" model. Information is only obtained when it is explicitly asked for, rather than when it is relevant or needed. There is no mechanism for "subscribing" to information or services and receiving them as they become available. Current email systems, based on a simple push model, lack the utility of the web.

- HTML is based on the fundamental notion of client control over the document's presentation, so most presentation variables are under the direct control of the client. While this may be acceptable for documents, for which the fonts or the color of the "paper" and "ink" are generally less than critical, it is less attractive for business services that seek to be differentiated from their competitors. Expressive aesthetics are critical to this differentiation, yet providers receive no assurances about how the presentations will appear on the user's device. Instead, this is a function of the capabilities of the user's device, the capabilities of the transport channel, and the way the user has set up the interface variables to control fonts, sizes, colors, and whether and how various types of media objects are presented.

- HTML effectively limits the types of interface widgets that can be used in a presentation to those included in the version currently in common use. The needs for business differentiation, especially in an evolving marketplace, will be better served by a capability for dynamically extending

[2]The extension of HTML to include a forms capability allows providers to receive input from the user, which is a limited form of interactivity. However, the "upstream" message containing information entered into the forms is transmitted in a batch mode (i.e., all at once, rather than a character, word, or field at a time). Much more dynamic styles of interactivity are required for unrestricted information commerce.

the set of interface widgets through the use of a widget specification language. Clearly, this capability will increase the size and complexity of the presentation engine. However, its absence reduces the provider's ability to innovate in the design and delivery of service presentations.

Thus, while the web tools were very well designed, they were designed for uses other than those that will ultimately be required in the information marketplace. A large and growing segment of the mass market consumer population is already familiar with a different metaphor that better addresses the needs of business providers - that of interactive computing. Current approaches must either be substantially extended or replaced altogether in order to support these kinds of activities. The following section presents one approach to this.

8.6 Approach

Based on the observations above, our intent is to move away from the basic notion of information retrieval toward the notion of interactive computing. In doing so, our philosophy is to address the needs stated in section 3 with a "best current practices" approach, using the best known solutions to get started, building these in such a way that they can be enhanced, extended, or replaced in the future as new ideas emerge, then making those improvements when the time is right. In addition, we will take an approach similar to that taken in the WWW: a flexible design, the greatest possible simplicity, and near-ubiquitous distribution.
There are four main elements in our approach:

1. The first is to create a "facilitation layer" based on the notion of *multiple cooperating agents* [3]. This layer is comprised of a software infrastructure that supports both providers and consumers, and upon which providers can build services. These agents have the basic properties described above, being autonomous, independent, persistent, etc. The information marketplace can thus be viewed and implemented as a community of cooperating agents.

2. The second component is a *functional access language* (FAL), or group of languages, to provide consumers with mechanized (i.e., machine-oriented) access to the provider, presumably to request, solicit, or invoke the provider's service. This is a mechanized access language for getting the provider's agent to perform its service.

3. The third is an *interface description language* (IDL) that provides consumers with manual (i.e., human-oriented) access to the provider. This allows the provider to specify a user interface through which consumers can interact with the provider's service in ways that are defined and for the most part controlled by the provider.

[3] The notion of agents has become ambiguous during the past few years. Our definition is given below.

4. The fourth is a series of ***special facilitation agents***, that offer special services in support of the other agents' operations and transactions. Δ

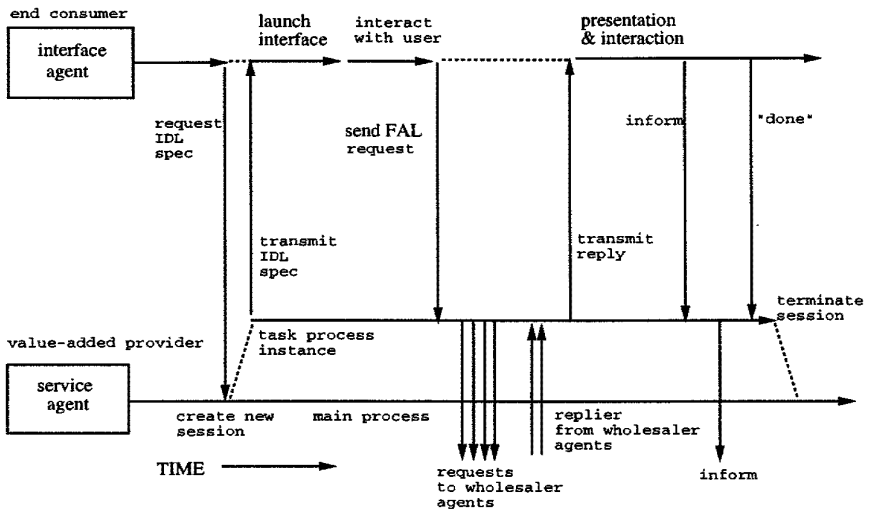

Figure 8.4: Figure 4. Interactions between the interface agent and the service agent.

Collectively, these components can be made to resolve many of the target business needs. The agents, in providing and consuming services, send messages using the FALs. Figure 4 shows an example of a typical series of interactions. Human consumers see and interact with individual services in ways that are defined by the provider using the IDL. In a typical scenario with a human consumer, the human begins a session with a specific provider by requesting that provider's interface. This is downloaded from the provider to the consumer's device and launched. The user interacts with the interface in various ways to accomplish her task. This may include navigating through the interface itself, or it may involve sending messages to the provider's service and possibly receiving responses. Such network activities would typically be completely transparent to the human user, being defined by the user's actions (e.g., text typed to the interface, buttons pushed, etc.), then formatted into the appropriate FAL and transmitted by the user's interface agent. After receiving these messages, the service agent handles them, possibly by invoking various wholesale services provided by others, and returns replies if required. Any number of side effects may occur as needed, including messages to archiving and transaction tracking agents and other operations support functions. Replies received from the provider's service are handled by the interface agent, and may be presented to the user as appropriate, though this is not necessary. This is conceptually very similar to the approach currently taken in the WWW, but allows for a broader range of

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interaction types, and better supports the notion of interactive sessions.
For some services, it may not be necessary or appropriate for human users to interact directly, so the provider need not specify a human interface using the IDL.

8.6.1 Interacting Agents

In this approach, each agent is an autonomous individual within a large society of other individuals. Each individual is capable of interacting with others in some way to solve problems. Each adheres to societal "norms" of behavior. Each possesses its owns skills and abilities, which it makes available to the society. The agents provide a layer of *virtual homogeneity* within which advanced concepts like negotiation and cooperation can be built, and above which a new and broad range of functional heterogeneity can be constructed. This approach is very similar to that known as *agent-based software engineering* [4].
This layer supports interactive computing, yet is very flexible, allows extensions, and does not significantly limit the range of applications that may be deployed. Insofar as possible, this layer should be built on the same notions of radical simplicity, ease of use, and ready distribution that the WWW offers.

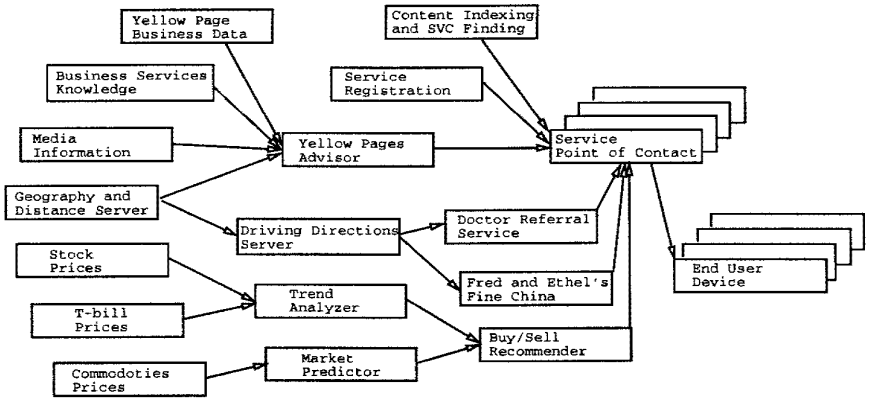

Figure 8.5: Figure 5. A peer-to-peer architecture for the information marketplace, showing wholesale and retail services and value-added relationships among the services., which are made available to mass market consumers.

In a typical information marketplace, we expect to see an arrangement of the form shown in Figure 5, where a large number of providers are available to a large number of consumers for a variety of wholesale, retail, and related interactions. These agents are both conceptually and practically autonomous, and thus interact on a peer-to-peer basis. In this view, agents are conceptually stationary, interacting by exchanging messages rather than by traveling around the network

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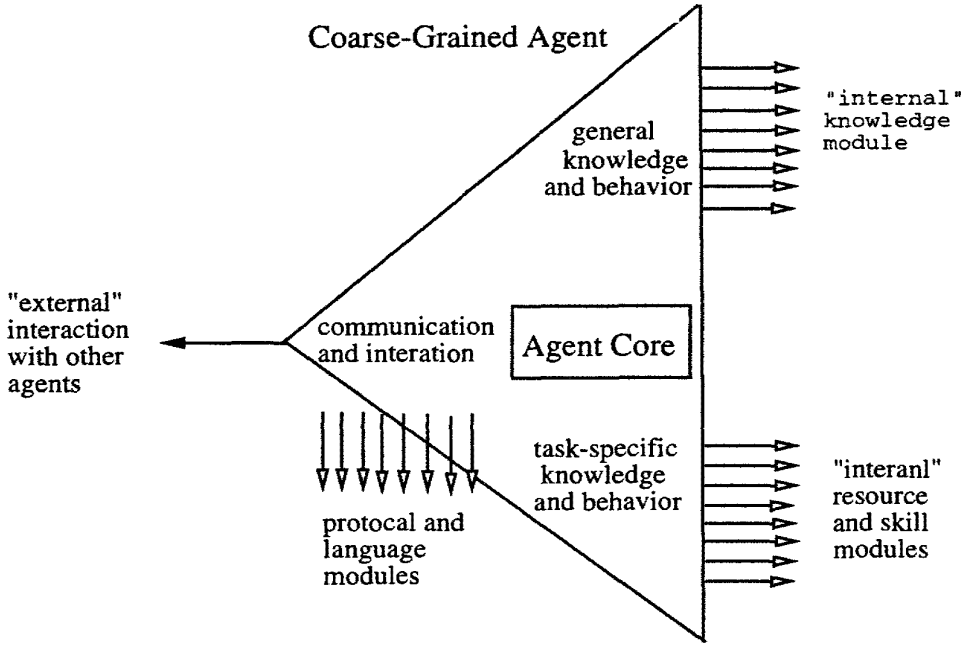

Figure 8.6: Figure 6. The functional components of an agent, as seen in the Coarse-Grained Agent system.

The Coarse-Grained Agent (CGA) system, originally developed to support cooperative information systems, has been adapted [7, 8, 10, 11, 12] in order to support laboratory exploration of interactions and services for information commerce.

CGAs are based on a simple conceptual model for extensible agents, as shown in Figure 6. Each CGA has three main components: *communication* - the ability to interact with other agents using shared protocols and languages; *local , task-specific knowledge and behavior* - the ability to perform one or more task-specific activities (this can be viewed as a set of *skills*); and *general knowledge and behavior* - the ability to perform general task-independent "social" behaviors such as negotiation, cooperative planning, prioritizing tasks, reason-

[4]The notion of functionally stationary agents does not preclude an ability to move from one machine to another, as long as that movement is not essential to the agent's fundamental operation, as is the case with some agent systems that require agents to move about a network as an essential part of performing their tasks. Instead, this approach allows for a form of ambulation that is intended more for load balancing purposes than as a metaphor for distributed problem solving.

ing about agent-internal capabilities, predicting future performance, recovering from unexpected difficulties, modeling external agents and functionalities, and the like. This component captures the behaviors most closely resembling *intellect.* [5] Individual agents may vary widely in these capabilities. For example, simple server-like agents may require no general knowledge capabilities (with the possible exception of certain simple capabilities that may one day be part of the minimal definition of an agent). The three components of a CGA are linked together by the *agent core*, which acts as "glue" to hold the three components and their modules together, providing support for general operations such as asynchronous message sending and receiving, multitasking, and shared memory between tasks.

The definition of CGAs is based on a minimal set of societal norms, or necessary and sufficient behaviors, which are implemented in one or more of these components. This definition will change over time, as the needs of the marketplace become better understood and as new technologies become available. Each of these components is designed to be extended as new technologies and tools emerge. As a result, each of the three components of an agent may be viewed as a series of empty "plugs" into which tools may be placed to extend the functionality of the agent.

Communication and Interaction Modules

CGA communication currently depends on the existence of a byte-stream communication service. All higher level communication functions make use of this underlying facility. Any lower level protocol capable of providing byte-stream service can be used to implement the network communication required. In the future this requirement may be relaxed to allow CGA communication using protocols based on different communication metaphors.

Above the byte-stream service there is a simple message transport protocol for routing and delivering messages directly from one agent to another. This protocol uses a *postal metaphor*, and is used by a collection of mail handlers that run on participating host machines.

The agent coordination protocol (ACP), providing information regarding the message itself, is implemented above the message transport protocol. ACP provides information about the message directly to the recipient agent. It is an extension of the Contract Net protocol [16], and provides information regarding the session to which the message is associated, the names of the recipient agents, and timing and other constraints regarding processing and replies.

The message itself is transported in a single field within the ACP, and contains the semantic intent, expressed in some FAL, through which the sending and receiving agents interact with each other. A detailed examination of the CGA communication system, including the metaphors and protocols used in the CGA system, and a simple example FAL are described in [10].

[5] Note that humans fit within this conceptual view - an important consideration as we move toward an environment in which machines and humans work together cooperatively to accomplish information commerce.

Task-Specific Knowledge and Behavior

Each of the agents in the network has a reason to exist, which is essentially to encapsulate and make available some particular function or set of functions. These functions are internal to the agent, and are accessed using a FAL. The agent thus becomes a contractor with respect to that functionality, offering a particular *skill* or *resource* that may not be available elsewhere. Thus, agents are viewed as *skill-based* entities. The agent's skills consist of one or more functionalities, ranging from the very simple (e.g., controlling a simple robot arm, or a matrix multiplier on a high-speed parallel computer), to the very complex (e.g., finding and assembling complex information from numerous sources, analyzing it, and recommending actions). Because this is implemented via a series of plug-in modules, it is possible for nearly any function to be present. With appropriate tools for creating agents and embedding these functions within them, online services may be constructed very quickly.

For provider agents, the encapsulated skill(s) will involve the provision of some service or set of services, possibly based on special purpose hardware or software resources. Provider agents can be made to "wrap" legacy information systems, retrofitting them for the information marketplace and allowing providers to further leverage their historical investments in these systems.

For end consumer agents, the skill will be representing the user's interests in various ways, including finding and accessing appropriate services, downloading those services' interfaces, and possibly negotiating on behalf of the user.

General Knowledge and Behavior

The types of capability modules in this component are by far the least mature and the least understood. Consequently, this is the area in which the greatest change is expected in the future. Some of the more intriguing areas in which useful progress may be made are those described in section 5.3: contexts and histories, recovery mechanisms, negotiation and contracting, cooperative problem solving, service discovery, and learning. Other areas include general data and knowledge stores, reasoning, and knowledge of social behaviors.

Most of what can be included here would be considered overhead processing, and should arguably not be included in the minimal capabilities of CGAs. Research on these issues is not yet conclusive, so it is not clear which components are necessary and which should be optional.

Agent "Core"

The CGA *agent core* provides a set of agent abstractions by which developers of provider, consumer, and facilitator agents can construct new agents easily, and

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without the need to look below the level of the agent abstractions. This includes functions for sending, receiving, and queuing messages, awaiting replies, spawning new tasks, attaching replies to existing tasks, recovering from task failures, external monitoring of internal activities for troubleshooting, and defining new FALs, including a simple FAL parser. There are high-level functions for wrapping behavioral code with this agent functionality, and for creating and killing agents. The core has functions for performing a variety of useful operations on tasks, which are represented as processes on the host computer. It also includes place holder functions for agent cloning and ambulation to support effectiveness and load balancing. For a more detailed discussion of the CGA architecture, see [8].

8.6.2 Functional Access Languages

Functional access languages (FALs) are designed around the expression of a particular set of functionalities. They provide the means by which a consumer, or more typically an agent working on the consumer's behalf, interact with the service agent(s) to access and use the service. These may be generalized languages that express functionality around a *type of application*, like CycL for knowledge representation [13], or they may be specialized languages that express domain-dependent functionality around a *specific domain*, like accessing a legacy database containing historical product revenue information [11]. Basically, FALs can be designed for any purpose a provider desires. Neither the syntax nor the semantics are limited to any globally-defined form. This offers a number of advantages to the provider in defining, marketing, and selling a particular service, especially when it involves the use of legacy information, resources, or skills.

This poses an obvious and difficult problem to consumers and their agents - what are the syntax and semantics of these languages, and how can these be discovered without specific a priori knowledge of the language? There are two ways to do this: (1) *manual discovery*, a priori, via some form of publication (online or hardcopy), which is subsequently typed directly by a user (a possibly difficult task, since the syntax and vocabulary may not be human-friendly) or hardcoded into some form of access program. This approach is static, and fails to address several of the needs of the information marketplace. (2) *automated discovery*, where agents share languages and mechanisms that enable one agent to express to another the syntax and semantics of a "new" language (i.e., the one being "learned"), such that the learning agent is subsequently able to correctly express requests for services using that language. No solution to this problem is currently known.

However, there is a practicable alternative: manual discovery done by the provider of the service, then embedded within a distinct user interface, such that certain specific manipulations of the interface produce syntactically and semantically correct messages to be sent to the provider's service in the FAL. This effectively hides the syntax and semantics of the FAL within the interface, and thereby minimizes the knowledge and semantics that must be shared, at least for end

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consumer use of the service. This may be better characterized as a form of discovery avoidance, since the provider, who supplies the consumer interface, already knows the FAL.
In order to accomplish this we need the third element of our solution - a suitable IDL, which provides an interface between the user and the service, and in so doing hides the details of the FAL from consumers. Interfaces in the IDL are created and maintained by the provider as a typically essential part of service provision.

8.6.3 Interface Description Language

The interface description language (IDL) is designed to provide a mechanism by which a user may interact with a service in ways meaningful to humans. The IDL provides a machine-independent description of the provider's customer interface, such that when the consumer interacts with the provider's service, the provider is assured that some reasonably faithful rendition of his interface is presented to the user and is behaving in the manner intended by the provider.
To do this, the IDL must capture not only the content of the service, but also most of the details regarding look and feel, including specifications for the following types of information regarding service presentation:

- screen layout, with relative and/or absolute positions of widgets and content
- fonts, including styles, sizes (possibly relative), and definitions when necessary
- colors, color sets, and textures for text, highlighting, backgrounds, etc.
- custom icons and other media objects
- interface widgets, including the specification of new widgets
- interface navigation behaviors for various widgets, like scrollers, buttons, button groups, icons, tool panes, etc.
- functionality access behaviors to compose and transmit messages to the provider's service agent

The display engine that "runs" the IDL, which resides on the user's device, must limit the definition of interface behaviors, especially in specifications of functionality access and new widgets, to the following types of behavioral primitives: presentation of content (i.e., various text or media objects), execution of interface navigation commands (to manipulate the interface itself), and generation of FAL statements and requests (to be sent over the network to a remote agent for servicing). Though somewhat different in functionality, this approach

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is quite similar to that taken in the design of the WWW, and offers similar safety from the spread of viruses and other destructive and unwanted programs to user devices.
This capability adds a functional requirement for most provider and consumer agents - a language that allows a consumer agent to request and receive from the provider a suitable interface, written in the IDL. Also, auxiliary services, such as temporarily downloading fonts as required for a specific interface without forfeiting copyrights, are necessary.

8.6.4 Special Facilitation Agents

As discussed in section 5.2, there are a number of operations support and related needs for information-based commerce. Many of these may be usefully viewed and implemented as special agents whose internal skill in some way provides one or more facilitation tasks. These are known as *facilitation agents*, and are implemented using the same agent software and communications subsystems used by providers and consumers. For example, special agents could exist primarily to register services or provide content-based indexing and access, as shown in figure 5. Other possible facilitation agents might offer calculation of usage fees or taxes, network traffic monitoring, resource discovery, service and/or user registration and indexing, information and service filters, archiving and recovery services, billing support, security vouchers and/or timestamps, public key repositories, and digital cash and electronic payment services.
This approach allows further reuse of the agent mechanisms, and at the same time offers an attractive form of homogeneity and consistency in the overall environment. It also provides a homogeneous mechanism for deploying facilitation services that places all potential providers of such services on an equal footing. No longer will the suppliers of the underlying networks have distinct competitive advantages in these kinds of services. This will encourage open competition among facilitation venders, and eventually lead to better services at lower costs for both consumers and providers.
Also, facilitation agents can be upgraded and enhanced independently of the rest of the infrastructure, enabling easier transitions to new or improved capabilities in the facilitation layer, just as it enables easier transitions for other kinds of services.

8.7 Implementation

The application prototype, known as Raven, was developed to explore the issues of and technological solutions for information commerce on a broad scale, and especially oriented toward smaller businesses and mass market consumers. It includes the following classes of agents:*user agents*, for running the IDL engine; *point-of-contact agents*, for managing the heterogeneities of the provider's and the consumer's platforms; *facilitation agents*, for assisting consumer agents

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in locating and accessing provider agents, managing transactions, tracking and accounting, etc.; and *service agents*, for representing providers' services to consumers.

Various of these agents run on various computer platforms concurrently, including Symbolics Lisp machines, Macintoshes, and Sun workstations. There are two fundamentally different implementations of CGAs to support this, written in Lisp and C, which use slightly different versions of the CGA model, but have identical minimal behaviors.

This application was built in a relatively short period of time by leveraging an existing CGA implementation, as developed for a different application. Developers of the service agents for individual businesses were never required to look below the level of the agent metaphor and implementation in designing this overall system, reaping a substantial savings in time and expense in the development of a relatively complex set of agents and interactions. More details about this application are given in [7, 9].

8.8 Discussion

8.8.1 General

The approach described above addresses many of the needs that have been identified for the information marketplace. The multi-agent software engineering strategy addresses the issues of concurrency and decentralization. The agent communication protocols and the underlying message transport services manage physical distribution transparently by providing each agent with a unique network "address" and corresponding connectivity with other agents. The agent architecture provides suitable mechanisms for independence, autonomy, and persistence, so providers can own and maintain an online presence.

Many of the thorny heterogeneity issues related to semantic interoperability are avoided through the use of multiple, small FALs, which are distributed by means of human-oriented interfaces specified in the IDL. The FALs also limit the size of vocabulary and amount of knowledge that must be shared between agents a priori. There are no currently known semantic models that span the enormous range of existing commercial services, much less the range that may exist in the future as new and unpredictably innovative services are created. Even if there were such a model, it would be too large to reasonably embed in all practical user systems and maintain over time. Thus, a scheme that minimizes the requirements for shared semantics is prudent and facilitates a more dynamic environment in which services are more easily added, removed, and changed.

In the future it may become desirable to include mechanisms for enhancing or extending the minimal shared knowledge of CGAs automatically, either with or without human intervention. However, this is a problematic operation, as shared knowledge tends to diverge over time, leading to the potentially serious problems related to incorrectly assumed levels of shared knowledge.

The IDL is designed to offer providers the opportunity to differentiate themselves on the basis of presentation look and feel as well as content. As a result, businesses have the opportunity to present their service in their own way. The IDL should eventually support a variety of heterogeneous hardware environments, from hand-held "personal digital assistants" to high-capability computing platforms, to continuous media streaming devices such as set-top boxes.

This approach allows an immense range of flexibility, in both functionality and presentation, and creates a very dynamic environment in which services can come and go frequently. It is essential, in order to reach ubiquity among providers of services, that the environment support the breadth of types of services currently available in the commercial world. Furthermore, it is essential for future innovation in sales, marketing, and presentation, that the information marketplace accommodate types of services and presentations that cannot yet be predicted.

This approach provides another benefit - the IDL effectively "hides" the consumer's device and software from the provider, and the FAL "hides" the provider's device and software from the consumer. This architectural disconnect allows for a wide variety of heterogeneous devices and software to coexist, coordinate, and work cooperatively across a large network.

The approach discussed here is more flexible than that in the WWW, but also somewhat more difficult to use, for both providers and consumers. Because this approach provides greater functionality, it requires greater complexity in the consumer and provider engines. However, this approach does not necessarily replace the WWW - it is best viewed as yet another network tool, albeit a more dynamic and interactive one. Furthermore, it does not require a specific transport network, but can work on a variety of networks, including the Internet, the public switched telephone network, various digital narrowband networks, such as integrated services digital network (ISDN), and various broadband networks.

This architecture by itself does not directly address other key issues, however. This approach also does not address the timeliness of service deliveries for information and media objects. This issue is better addressed in the network itself, and is thus beyond the scope of this chapter. However, it may be necessary for the inclusion of mechanisms at the agent level to negotiate regarding these deliveries, then interact with the underlying network (or agents representing the underlying network) to obtain the necessary guarantees.

This architecture also does not provide security services. With the addition of one or more encryption schemes, interagent communication can be augmented to provide access protection and authentication. The design of the IDL and its runtime engine minimizes the opportunity for unwanted intrusions of viruses and other destructive programs that may be piggybacked on legitimate messages.

Privacy is in many regards a social issue, best addressed by non-technical means such as legal restrictions on the uses of the kinds of information that will be available to both providers and consumers. However, user agents, which represent the interests of consumers, provide a place within which privacy protections may be implemented. These agents can conceivably be fitted with filters for giving out information only when it is relevant for some transaction, and thereby

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reduce the size of the privacy problem by limiting the number of outside entities that have access to information. Similarly, provider agents can be implemented to prevent unauthorized accesses.
We will eventually need some mechanism for guaranteeing availability. Recently, two cases of service jamming have been observed in the Internet - a "hunter-killer" program that seeks and destroys certain targeted messages; and a procedure whereby legitimate mailboxes are "flooded" with junk mail to overrun the service and prevent timely handling of serious messages. Mechanisms to detect and/or prevent such occurrences will most probably be developed as specific needs arise. It is possible that some of these may be best implemented as facilitation agents.

8.8.2 Agents

The notion of agents as described herein is useful in two distinct ways. First, it provides an intuitive *metaphor* for devising distributed, heterogeneous problem-solving systems. The metaphor is the model by which developers and providers think about services and their consumers. Second, when implemented it provides a practicable *mechanism* that substantially reduces the cognitive load on developers of services. The mechanism is basically a set of tools that developers and providers employ to solve problems. The metaphor and mechanism combine to form a useful approach to software engineering for the information marketplace

Metaphor

The agent metaphor is that of a "society" comprised of large numbers of rather capable individuals, each specializing in one or more specific resources or skills. Potentially complex social interactions involving many individuals are often required in this setting. In this view the agent takes on anthropomorphic qualities, making the approach quite intuitive to humans.
The agent metaphor offers three useful properties. First, it provides an *intuitive abstraction* which closely resembles the socially-oriented world of human activities. As a result, human problem solvers can more easily conceptualize and implement solutions to difficult or distributed problems. Second, the agent metaphor provides a *coordination model*, useful for linking together providers and consumers. This model is both explicit and separable, allowing incremental development, deployment, maintenance, and enhancement as new or improved models emerge. While this model is not yet complete, it provides a reasonable place to begin to deploy distributed systems. Third, the agent metaphor offers *conceptual separability*. Not only is the model and its implementation separable from other technological elements of the overall system, but the individual entities are conceptually and effectively separable from each other, providing the benefits of separate updates and improvements, separate tools and techniques, separate capabilities, and separate ownership. These benefits, along with the resulting capacity for independence and autonomy in individual agents, offer

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significant potential for business and commercial applications.
This metaphor provides a general framework within which services, especially traditional information retrieval services, can disappear into the problem-solving fabric (i.e., become transparent by virtue of either IDL interfaces or by wholesale selling to retail services), allowing human consumers to concentrate on relevant "higher" problems instead of distracting them with information retrieval tasks.
In traditional distributed problem-solving systems, a typically large portion of the implementation is dedicated to handling interactions and data conversions between and among entities. Maintaining this can be a costly, labor-intensive problem over the lifespan of the overall system. Agents encapsulate many of these operations into code which is separable from the individual services and interfaces in that it can be separately upgraded and maintained with little or no change to the basic services and interfaces. In this way, agents are a conceptual extension to the notion of object-oriented programming (OOP), and offer many of the same benefits to the information marketplace that OOP systems bring to programming [1, 14, 17].

Mechanism

The agent mechanism offers several practical advantages for the development and distributed deployment of services in the information marketplace. It drives the intellectual benefits of the agent metaphor into the development of specific applications by providing a layer of *virtual homogeneity*. This layer offers a known, homogeneous layer of shared capabilities, knowledge, and functionality through which large numbers of individual services can be quickly deployed. There may be broad heterogeneity below this layer, both in the communication networks used and in the computing platforms upon which the agents reside, and a broad functional heterogeneity above this layer, in the specific resources and skills represented by agents.
The agent mechanism is a fully reusable implementation of the virtual homogeneity described above. As such, it is domain independent, and can be widely distributed as the agent foundation for providers, consumers, and facilitators.
It enables easy distribution of solutions by "wrapping" one or more specific skills with the coordination and cooperation models discussed above. With the addition of a suitable FAL and IDL-based interface, a service can be available for distributed, asynchronous access by consumers with relatively little effort. With appropriate auxiliary facilitation services for registration and service finding, the service can be accessible online in a matter of seconds or minutes of being ready for access.
This "wrapping" behavior allows for the rapid distribution of services based on either new or legacy systems, and allows businesses to leverage their existing or legacy systems in a new format and possibly to a much larger group of consumers. This distribution can be as wide as the underlying network upon which it is based.
The modularity and separability of the architecture allow for easy distribution

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of agent updates to various remote sites. With suitable additions to the minimal agent language, or through vendor-dependent languages, agents could be made to update themselves automatically as new versions of the agent software become available. This allows for easy distribution of agent mechanism upgrades and enhancements as new capabilities are developed.

This mechanism is based on a completely open architecture. Once the necessary and sufficient requirements for the entities are published, anyone can build and sell agent software that will interoperate in this environment. Furthermore, a large variety of organizations may define niche markets in this environment (e.g., special consumer agents, special agents for various classes of provider services, such as catalog shopping services or wholesale purchasing services).

Because the agent mechanism is effectively separable from the internal skills of the agent, and the internal design is effectively separable from the FAL, providers can upgrade or modify the back end of their services (e.g., to change host computing platforms) with little or no changes to the agent mechanism, the FAL, or the IDL interface [6] . This facilitates a very general "plug and play" environment.

The autonomy and independence of the agent mechanism allow service providers to retain physical autonomy, independence, and ownership of their own information and services.

8.8.3 Disadvantages

There are some properties of this approach that may be disadvantageous in some situations. First, there are a number of properties that may combine to slow service response times:

- the transport speed and throughput of the underlying network(s)
- the efficiency of the agent software on the provider's device, and the load on the device
- the efficiency and effectiveness of the provider agent's internal "skills"
- the level of indirection required in the wholesale/retail chain during runtime - services that cache information from their suppliers will typically run faster than those that must access the supplier for each retail request. Runtime indirection should generally be avoided whenever possible in the creation of wholesale services. Of course, this will not be possible when the information is dynamic, such as in the raw stock quote service mentioned earlier. In such cases it is imperative that the wholesale service and its network connection be as fast as possible to provide the shortest response times to retail consumers.

[6] This is only true to the extent that the interaction language for accessing the agent has not been modified. Language modifications are effectively changes in the interface, and require appropriate changes in all agents which use that language through means other than the IDL interfaces.

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Second, true device independence is difficult in an environment where the devices have too great a range of capabilities. Possible user devices in the information marketplace can range from the old-fashioned rotary dial telephone to televisions with set-top boxes to wireless hand-held assistants to high-end computer systems. It may be necessary to define an ontology of capabilities and classify devices accordingly. Providers might then define different interfaces for different classes of consumer devices.
Third, this approach requires near-ubiquity in the marketplace in order to achieve its ultimate potential. This poses a "chicken-and-egg" problem. The means by which we effect the transition from current architectures to this new approach are unknown.
Fourth, in attempting to achieve ubiquity this approach imposes a specific environment on the providers, consumers, and facilitators of services. Though it may not be the only approach available, it cannot achieve its potential unless it is nearly ubiquitous. However, the paradigm captured by this approach is well-known and widely used in existing markets. In this regard, this approach may be an advantage.

8.8.4 Summary

The approach taken in this work, when deployed, will facilitate a free-market environment for the creation and distribution of information and problem-solving services. The result will be a continual evolution of profitable, consumer-oriented services, in which the winners are determined by free market forces.
This approach enables the creation of layered wholesale and retail services, which in turn promotes the development of higher-level, value-added problem-solving services. Over time, both providers and consumers should have access to services that are significantly more useful and less expensive than those available under other deployment scenarios. Furthermore, this approach creates new entrepreneurial opportunities for a variety of new kinds of layered facilitation and problem-solving services.
From the provider's perspective, this approach meets several critical needs, including the foundational notions of local ownership and control of services - facilitators can effectively operate without either dictating or controlling the services.
Experience with laboratory prototypes and customer marketing for several related applications indicates that what we propose is practically achievable and can be made to support real-world commercial interactions.

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8.9 Future Work

However, this approach is not without its risks. Much work remains in order to address these:

Definition. The minimal definition of CGAs needs to be very carefully and deliberately revisited and redesigned with a clear orientation toward the information marketplace. Also, a suitable IDL must either be found or designed to support the requisite functions.

Development. The current CGA implementation is not ready for deployment. It was originally intended only for laboratory use, and requires substantial additional work. In development, it may be beneficial to thoroughly review the infrastructure design in order to consider replacing much of the CGA support protocols and mechanisms with similar tools in KQML [2, 3]. Certain basic support functions may be replaced with more generic Internet-based services as well, such as using mail protocols or an upgraded HTTP to replace the CGA message transport subsystem. Also, a suitable IDL engine for various consumer devices must be found or constructed. If possible, it would be useful for such an engine to also display HTML documents in a built-in document-style interface, for compatibility with HTML-based services. Suitable security mechanisms must also be adopted or developed.

Support Tools. If the environment we envision is to ever approach the goal of near-ubiquity in terms of existing businesses, it will be necessary to provide tools to support rapid service creation and easy maintenance, by organizations with little or no technical expertise. Approaches to this have been suggested but not yet implemented. Facilitation Agents. In order to fully support commercial activities, several facilitation agents and support subsystems must be developed.

Field Trials. In order to determine the effects of scaling up to real-world proportions, one or more community-sized field trials will be necessary. This will both stress the infrastructure design and provide realistic marketing information, which is necessary given that the results of traditional marketing techniques have been inconsistent in related applications.

Emerging Technologies. Though we have argued against including advanced techniques in the minimal definition of CGAs, it may nonetheless be desirable in the future to include some of these as optional "plug-ins" for inclusion as appropriate for specific agents and applications. Modules for agent negotiation, agent modeling, and performance predictions are likely candidates.

8.10 Conclusions

This chapter has presented a vision for an information marketplace and explored some of the technical challenges facing those who would realize it. Specifically we have looked at technical solutions for embedding services in the network and allowing them to coordinate their actions and interact with consumers. This approach offers enormous potential for information commerce by focusing on

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the needs of providers, especially those smaller businesses with few resources to spend and little expertise with respect to the foundational technologies.
Laboratory prototypes and experiments to date have yielded positive results, indicating general feasibility, though with associated risks. Market tests indicate strong provider interest among smaller businesses. Thus, we conclude that this approach is reasonable, and should be further explored.

8.11 Acknowledgments

This work would not have been possible without innumerable discussions with colleagues over the past five years. Rick Blumenthal and Bill McIver were instrumental in the design and implementation of the CGA platforms, as well as in the applications. Mari Power, Bill Stack, Adam Marx, Judi Hand, and Irene Rosenthal provided ongoing support, insight, and analysis of marketing data and business needs. Others contributed to the development of the Raven application prototype and its predecessors: Bob Allen, Aruna Bayya, Nina Berry, Steve Bulick, Tony Cox, Simo El-Khadiri, Ed Freeman, Heidi Huber, Robert Joseph, Srdjan Kovacevic, Daniel Lin, Tim McCandless, Edwin Norton, Becky Root, Jill Schmidt, Loren Sylvan, and Dave Wroblewski.

Microsoft Details Merchant Plans

Author: Jacobs, Marcia A

Publication info: CommunicationsWeek (Feb 26, 1996): 18.

ProQuest document link

Links: Linking Service

Full text: Microsoft Corp. plans a rapid-fire entry into the electronic-commerce market this year to assist companies wanting to sell merchandise over the Internet.

The company said it expects to release a family of electronic-commerce software products before the end of the year. The components are a Windows NT-based server, code-named "Merchant"; a set of tracking and management tools; a client that provides a common interface when "shopping" at various "on-line stores"; and application programming interfaces.

"When Microsoft decides to go for something, they go great guns," said Kevin Hamilton, on-line information manager at The Alameda Newspaper Group, Hayward, Calif., which publishes 79 papers nationwide. The company is putting its papers on the World Wide Web and plans to offer subscriptions and other services over the Internet.

Bill Gates, Microsoft chairman, has said that Microsoft would not charge fees per transaction nor would it enter the electronic-retailing market. Instead, it plans to supply electronic-commerce products to retailers, including Wal-Mart Stores Inc. which announced it would help define the Merchant products and begin testing them on a limited basis next month.

Gates said the Merchant products would enter beta tests this summer and would ship by the end of this year.

Merchant Server, which will run on Windows NT and on Microsoft's recently shipped Internet Information Server, will handle order processing, order routing and integration with retailers' legacy systems such as billing systems, said Satya Nadella, lead product manager for Merchant at Microsoft. It will feature Secure Encryption Technology and interfaces necessary for retailers to create gateways to their legacy systems, Nadella added.

Merchant Workbench will be a set of tools for tracking customer hits and purchases, managing content, inventory and other tasks.

The Merchant client will be made available for free via download from Microsoft's Web site and will eventually become part of its Windows operating system. It will first ship as part of the Internet Add-on, due to ship in the second half of this year.

Pricing for Merchant Server and Workbench has not yet been determined, Gates said, but will likely be based on the number of connections required. More connections will cost more, he said.

John Evan Frook contributed to this story.

Subject: COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY; TECHNOLOGY; BUSINESS DATA PROCESSING; SOFTWARE & DATA PROCESSING;

Company: MICROSOFT CORP

Publication title: CommunicationsWeek

Pages: 18

Number of pages: 0

Publication year: 1996

Publication date: Feb 26, 1996

Year: 1996

Section: LANs & Servers

Publisher: United Business Media LLC

Place of publication: Manhasset

Country of publication: United States

Publication subject: Communications

ISSN: 07468121

Source type: Trade Journals

Language of publication: English

Document type: PERIODICAL

ProQuest document ID: 226884568

Document URL: http://search.proquest.com/docview/226884568?accountid=14701

Copyright: (Copyright 1996 CMP Publications, Inc. All rights reserved.)

Last updated: 2010-06-10

Database: ABI/INFORM Global

Contact ProQuest

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Business Wire

April 8, 1996, Monday

Now Software redefines calendar and address book publishing on the World Wide Web; New products enable Atlantic Records, Wall Street Journal, Sports Illustrated, and other top Web sites to publish "State-of the-Art" calendars and address books

LENGTH: 1995 words

DATELINE: PORTLAND, Ore.

April 8, 1996--Now Software Inc., a leading time management software developer for Windows(r) and Macintosh(r) computers worldwide, today announced two new products which provide a breakthrough solution to publishing, updating and capturing calendar and address book information on the World Wide Web.

Now Up-to-Date Web Publisher(tm) automatically creates and maintains calendars and address books in familiar formats within Web pages-with no HTML (hypertext markup language) programming required. New versions of Now Software's award-winning desktop products, Now Up-to-Date(tm)1.5 for Windows and Now Up-to-Date & Contact(tm)3.6 for the Macintosh, allow users to drag-and-drop published information from Web pages into their personal calendars and address books.

"Now Software is very excited to provide a complete, open and standard solution to publishing, distributing and maintaining calendars and address books on the Web," said Duane Schulz, president and CEO of Now Software.

"Now took a system approach to the larger problem of providing access to time and people, and built a solution for and with our partners. Our new products work for consumers surfing the Web, corporate 'intranets', and especially small businesses who need to be more productive managing time and staying in touch with people."

Now Software has also restructured their Web site (www.nowsoft.com) to serve as "the" source for calendars and address books on the World Wide Web. The new Now Software Web site, dubbed the "Time Management Network," serves as the central clearing house for Internet users to locate calendars and address books.

Time Management Network offers individual users and Web publishers free software to download and try for both Windows and Macintosh platforms.

New Versions of Now Up-to-Date

Now Up-to-Date 1.5 for Windows and Now Up-to-Date & Contact 3.6 for Macintosh introduce exclusive Internet features. Both versions of the popular time and contact manager allow users to integrate Web public information which they have selected into their personal calendars and address books.

From a Netscape browser, users search the Web for interesting calendars and address books, then drag-and-drop that information into Now Up-to-Date on their desktop or laptop. Users can drag-and-drop single calendar or address entries or entire categories-without typing a thing.

Drag-And-Drop Eliminates Typing

"This is of great value to Web users who are tired of filling out forms at countless Web sites and doing tedious data-entry into

their personal information software ," said Jerry Michalski, managing editor for Release 1.0, an influential newsletter read by high-tech executives, industry observers, and corporate end users.

"Imagine schedules for movies, theater performances, sporting events, community meetings and family get-togethers all easily available on public and private Web sites to drag-and-drop into Now Up-to-Date's calendar and address book."

Problems Facing Web Publishers

There has been a virtual explosion in the number of Web sites created in the past year, with much of the commercial Web content consisting of event schedules and directories. The vast majority of this information is published in the form of simple text lists, unfamiliar to users and difficult to navigate.

Designing attractive, functional calendars and address books, and filling them with information that remains current, requires extensive and ongoing HTML programming. Web publishers also lack a simple method for transporting their data to the end user with a link back to the original site.

The Solution is Now Up-to-Date Web Publisher

Now Up-to-Date Web Publisher automatically generates calendar and address boo pages with no HTML programming. Anyone can easily maintain data using the familiar Now Up-to-Date interface. Web pages can be updated immediately, so Web sites can always have the most current information.

In addition to viewing published calendars and address book pages on the Web in familiar formats, users can drag and drop that information into their personal Now Up-to-Date calendar and address book. When information is dragged from Web pages, the Web address of the source page is automatically appended for quick navigation back to the publisher's Web page.

"Now Up-to-Date Web Publisher provides a simple and effective approach to sharing time and people information on the Internet" said Ian Campbell, research director at International Data Corp.

"Many users want their PIM to do more than just calendaring, contact management and group scheduling. They want access to the interesting and useful Internet schedules and directories. Now Up-to-Date Web Publisher answers this need with a robust solution to publishing and exchanging calendars and address books on the Web."

Atlantic Records Adopts Now Up-to-Date Web Publisher

"Now Software has given fans a whole new way to interact with their favorite Atlantic artists," said Chris Otto, manager of Multimedia for Atlantic Records. "Along with live concert cybercasts, digital photoshoots, downloadable interviews and video clips, Now Up-to-Date lets fans drag-and-drop online events and artist appearances into their personal calendars and address books, with our Web address attached to that information."

Now Software's publishing tools not only automate the creation and updating of Atlantic's Web calendar and directory pages, Web Publisher enables Atlantic to exercise creative control over the look and feel of their calendars and directories through the use of custom banners, graphics and backgrounds that match the look and feel of their Web site.

Wall Street Journal Transforms Web Site

"Our ad sales Web site provides marketing and media people with quick access to current advertising information about The Wall Street Journal. With Now Software's Web Publisher, we can easily update our calendar of issue and closing dates for special Wall Street Journal advertising sections," said David Wishart, Website director, Marketing Services for The Wall Street Journal.

"More importantly, Now Software lets our advertisers drag-and-drop the latest advertising information into their personal calendars, making our site even more useful for them."

Four11 Internet "White Pages" Employ Now Technology

"E-mail is the most ubiquitous element of the Internet community," said Michael Santullo, president and co-founder of Four11

Corp.

"With Now Up-to-Date Web Publisher, visitors to Four11 can simply drag-and-drop information from the directory's vast resource of Internet addresses into their personal Now Up-to-Date address books. When they wish to send e-mail to an individual whose address they obtained from Four11, one click launches a pre-addressed e-mail message."

Hottest Web Sites Publish With Now Up-to-Date

As of April 1, 1996, six popular Web locations will publish calendars and directories using Now Up-to-Date Web Publisher- Atlantic Records (www.atlantic-records.com), Now Software (www.nowsoft.com), Sports Illustrated (//pathfinder.com/si) the Wall Street Journal (http://adsales.wsj.com),Working Solo (www.acmedia.com), and Four11 (www.Four11.com/).

Later in April, dozens more Web sites will begin publishing calendars and directories with Now Up-to-Date Web Publisher. The following is a partial list as of press time -- American Comedy Network, BankAmerica Ventures, Dartmouth College, Disney Interactive, FMS Techniques, Golden Apple Network Services Inc., Horse Park Polo Club, HotWired, InfoWorld Electric, Johns Hopkins University, Massachusetts General Hospital, Maxperts, MCA Nashville, Motivational Marketing Association, Multicom Communications, Oregon Business Media, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, PCTV, Portland Windows NT User Group, Showtime Networks, Sony Music Corp., Teleport Inc., Tuck School of Business/Dartmouth, UC Santa Barbara, University of Portland, and Vivo Media.

Corporate Intranets Benefit From Web Publisher

In addition to publishing calendars and address books on the Web, Now Up-to-Date Web Publisher and its companion product, Now Up-to-Date, are well-suited for corporate "intranet" publishers.

Now's products enable the business community to develop intranets for publishing their corporate phone directories, company calendars, office locations, business hours and vacation schedules so that information is available to company employees, vendors and partners via the World Wide Web.

Businesses with an intranet can also access current public information such a conference schedules, travel services, and business contacts on the Web and copy it directly into their Now-Up-to-Date-published company calendars and employee directories. Individuals at the company can then drag-and-drop the published intranet data into their personal desktops for future use -- with no typing.

Availability and Pricing

Single-user versions of Now Up-to-Date 1.5 for Windows and Now Up-to Date & Contact 3.6 for the Macintosh will be available on April 30, 1996, at an estimated street price of $ 99 for either platform. Multi-user versions and corporate site licenses will be available at that same time. Free public beta of Now Up-to-Date is currently available for download at Now Software's Web site (http://www.nowsoft.com).

Now Up-to-Date Web Publisher, also available on April 30, 1996, will have an estimated street price of $ 299. Free public beta of Now Up-to-Date Web Publisher is available for download at Now Software's Web site (http://www.nowsoft.com).

About Now Software Inc.

Now Software is dedicated to providing access to time and people-anytime, anywhere-through PC, Internet, LAN, desktop, and mobile solutions. Headquartered in Portland, Now Software is the 65th-largest software company in the U.S. ('95 Soft-Letter), with close to 2 million users of its award-winning product line.

The Now Software product family, comprised of Now Up-to-Date for Windows, Now Up-to-Date & Contact for Macintosh, Now Up-to-Date Web Publisher, Now Synchronize(tm), Now Utilities(tm) and Now TouchBase & DateBook(tm), has consistently garnered industry praise, including Product of the Year, multiple Editor's and Reader's Choice honors, and seven World Class Awards.

The company has strategic partnerships in place with industry leaders, including Sybase, Apple, U.S. Robotics, Visioneer, and Corex. Now Software can be contacted at 800/689-9427; fax at 503/274-0670; e-mail to info@nowsoft.com; or through Now's

Web site at http://www.nowsoft.com. -0-

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LOAD-DATE: April 9, 1996

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

DISTRIBUTION: Business Editors

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Microsoft Makes It Simple to Sell on the Web; Release of Merchant Server Expected to Ignite Internet Commerce

Oct. 31, 1996

Tower Records Among More Than 40 Companies Developing Merchant Server Sites; Microsoft Internet Service Provider Program Brings Cost of Online Commerce to New Low

Press Contacts
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SAN JOSE, Calif., Oct. 30, 1996 — For businesses that have found it too daunting or expensive to begin selling on the World Wide Web, Microsoft Corp. today announced Merchant Server 1.0.

Industry analysts and participants say the new software will jump-start the nascent era of Internet commerce. Internet-related companies are offering broad support for Microsoft® Merchant Server, and early customers have already made it the most popular software for selling over the Internet.

Merchant Server is the only software for selling over the Internet that enables companies to establish selling sites with minimal development costs, to help attract and retain customers through a compelling and secure buying experience, and to help generate higher sales through targeted dynamic sales promotions. Merchant Server is a member of the Microsoft BackOffice ™ family.

"Merchant Server solves some fundamental problems that previously limited the functionality of online stores and made them extremely expensive," said Ted Julian, research manager for Internet commerce at International Data Corp. "For example, the product's support for payment systems and product promotions represents industry advances that will allow firms to make their online presence a more seamless extension of their existing business."

"This is the best commerce software we've ever seen," said Mike Farrace, vice president of publishing and electronic commerce at Tower Records, which is going live with a Merchant Server-based system to sell 150,000 album titles online. "Other software solutions have lacked something - scalability, transaction support from the banks, open extensibility - or they required knowledge of difficult programming languages. Merchant Server successfully addresses these issues. It's powerful and expandable, and the facile user interface lets us use the impressive array of Merchant Server tools to sell the way we want to."

Key Industry Players Support Merchant Server as Complete Selling Solution

Microsoft today also announced support for Merchant Server from key Internet service providers (ISPs) and network carriers, Web site developers, financial institutions and payment processors and software vendors (see separate release). Their support makes Merchant Server the core of a complete, end-to-end solution for selling on the Web.

With Merchant Server and its industry support, business-to-business and business-to-consumer online transactions are within easy, low-cost reach of all potential sellers for the first time. Small sellers can get fully professional sites, running around the clock, without the trouble and expense of maintaining their own servers and systems. Large sellers gain scalability and extensibility to meet any need and any order-processing infrastructure, plus the ability to create dynamic promotions to target new markets and maximize profits.

Key industry support for Merchant Server includes the following:

- **ISPs and network carriers** in the new Microsoft Internet Service Provider Program, which gives businesses a low-cost way to sell on the Web without having to manage their own sites
- **Leading financial institutions and payment processors,** including American Express, BankAmerica Corp. and Wells Fargo, which are working with Microsoft and VeriFone Inc. to support secure payment processing for Merchant Server sites
- **Leading Web site developers** , who are offering site creation services for Merchant Server sites through Microsoft's expanded Site Builder Network
- **Thirteen major ISVs,** including SAP AG, Sterling Commerce Inc. and TAXWARE International Inc., which are offering or planning Merchant Server software extensions that add capabilities for business processes including payment, taxes and EDI

Customers Make Merchant Server the Most Popular Online Selling Solution

More companies have turned to Microsoft Merchant Server than any other software solution for selling on the Internet. More than 40 Merchant Server sites are scheduled to go live within two months, and hundreds of international sites are planned for launch within the next year.

In addition to Tower Records, companies planning Merchant Server-enabled commercial sites include 1-800-FLOWERS, Coles Meyer Ltd., CompUSA, Crabtree & Evelyn Canada, Great Universal Stores, Micro Warehouse Inc., Software Spectrum Inc., Tesco, the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) and USWeb Worldport. This broad support for Merchant Server follows its successful two-month beta program with more than 300 companies and industry participants worldwide. A directory of some of the best commercial sites on the Web that have turned to Merchant Server is attached and is highlighted on Microsoft's corporate Web site at **http://www.microsoft.com/siteserver/commerce/** .

Key Benefits Enable Lower Costs, More Customers, Higher Sales

"Microsoft is committed to enabling all types of Internet commerce; Merchant Server is the first deliverable in our strategy to provide unprecedented support for doing business on the Web," said Microsoft Chairman and CEO Bill Gates. "We are extremely hard-core about reducing the need for custom development, supporting legacy system integration and having secure third-party payment."

For businesses that want to sell on the Web, Merchant Server presents an end-to-end solution. Highlights include these:

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- **Merchant Server minimizes custom development.**

  - **Businesses can be up and running quickly and simply,** without the need for expensive custom development, using one of the included "Starter Stores." Merchant Server also is flexible, allowing businesses to tailor their commerce sites to particular needs.

  - **Businesses can use their existing order-processing and accounting systems** - including SAP AG's R/3 system - thanks to the unique order processing component API in Merchant Server. This API also gives businesses flexibility to write custom solutions for business processes such as orders, payment and fulfillment.

  - **Businesses can use any ODBC-compliant relational database** , running on the Windows NT operating system, Apple Macintosh or UNIX systems, thanks to Merchant Server's database schema independence and support for ODBC. For example, a company that uses Oracle running on UNIX to store product information would not need to modify or port that database, but could simply have Merchant Server connect to it via an ODBC driver.

- **Merchant Server creates compelling customer experiences.**

  - **Customers can interact with stores that suit their individual wants or tastes.** For example, customers could be presented with merchandise or promotions based on their buying history or as a result of a query. Support for technologies such as ActiveX ™ , Java ™ , Web chat and secure Web browsing allows for inventive, compelling sites that attract customers and provide an exciting shopping experience.

  - **Secure payment** - one of the most challenging problems for Internet commerce - is handled with Merchant Server's "order-processing pipeline." It provides a complete electronic sales infrastructure, including evaluation software from VeriFone, the market leader in electronic credit-card authorization. Customers will feel safe shopping on Merchant Server-powered sites because of the secure credit-card processing offered through a combination of VeriFone's vPOS ™ and vGATE software products and industry standards including Secure Electronic Transactions (SET).

  - **Businesses can build "virtual communities of interest."** Merchant Server integrates with the upcoming Windows NT-based Microsoft Commercial Internet System, previously code-named "Normandy," to build online communities of interest, which in turn create even more compelling consumer experiences, and to build a lasting customer base.

- **Merchant Server allows for promotions-based marketing.**

  - **Sellers can maximize sales through dynamic promotions** based on better information about their customers - considered by many marketers to be key to the future of brand marketing. A Promo Manager quickly creates product and price promotions for individual buyers or groups based on their preferences and history. The Order Tracker analyzes the impact of promotions on revenues, and the Activity Tracker analyzes sales and the impact of promotions on buyer activity.

Pricing and Availability

Merchant Server version 1.0 for Windows NT running on Intel and DEC Alpha AXP processors is scheduled to be available by Dec. 1 through any Microsoft reseller including selected members of the Microsoft Internet Service Provider Program. A free evaluation version is available today from Microsoft's Web site at **http://www.microsoft.com/siteserver/commerce/** (connect-time charges may apply).

Server licenses are available for the full package price (FPP) of $14,995, and administration licenses, required to host a live domain, are available for the FPP of $3,495. Companies that host their own Web sites can develop online selling with Merchant Server for a total licensing price of $18,490. For the next six months, Microsoft is offering administration licenses at the special introductory price of $2,330, one-third off the regular price. Companies that use a hosting service will pay a license fee set by their providers. Microsoft estimates these fees to start at well under $5,000.

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (NASDAQ "MSFT") is the worldwide leader in software for personal computers. The company offers a wide range of products and services for business and personal use, each designed with the mission of making it easier and more enjoyable for people to take advantage of the full power of personal computing every day.

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For online product information:

Microsoft Merchant Server Web page: **http://www.microsoft.com/siteserver/commerce/**

Note to editors: If you are interested in viewing additional information on Microsoft, please visit the Microsoft Web page at **http://www.microsoft.com/prespass/** on Microsoft's corporate information pages.

Microsoft Merchant Server Customer References

1-800-FLOWERS, Bill Reihl, (212) 891-0494, **(http://www.800flowers.com/)**

4-Serv Mall, Tony Vasquez, (818) 649-8700, **(http://www.mallserv.com/)**

American Diabetes Assoc., Richard Warren, Judds Inc., (540) 465-6623, **(http://www.ada.judds.com/)**

Asia Connect (Planet Asia), Gavin Bong or Chun Jin, 60-3-230-8818, **(http://www.planetasia.com.my/)**

Cars@Cost, David Melnick, Melnick Consulting, (818) 593-2219

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CompUSA Inc., Carol Ellstrom, (972) 982-4181, **(http://www.compusa.com/)**

Crabtree & Evelyn, Mariellen Ward, MediaLinx Interactive Inc., (416) 369-6747, **(http://www.atmarket.sympatico.ca/crabtree/)**

Cyoni-The Orange Network, Jerome Watts, CBI, (604) 945-0459, **(http://www.cyoni.com/)**

Dakin Farms, Melissa Dever, Competitive Computing, (800) 655-0757, **(http://www.dakinfarm.com/)**

DataNet, Brent Curtis, Datatek, (615) 377-6029, www.marketplace.datatek.com/

David Jones, Judi Hausmann, 612-93-624-966

Empower, Gerry High, (913) 696-5067, **(http://www.empower.com/training/)**

Fisher Micro, Barry Luther, Ram Consulting, (972) 713-4651, www.fishermicro.com/

ForEyes Optical, Juan Silvera, ICN, (800) 353-7111 ext. 205, **(http://www.foreyes.com/)**

Gateway2000, Bruce Morris, (605) 232-1406, **(http://www.spotshop.com/)**

Granville Book Company, Jerome Watts, CBI, (604) 945-0459, **(http://www.granvillebookco.com/)**

Himalayan Mall, Kenneth Friedman, CorporateMicros, (212) 447-6100, **(http://www.himal.com/)**

Inacom Corp., Ed Rider, (402) 392-4516, **(http://www.inacom.com/)**

International Golf Outlet, John Miaso, Digitools, (512) 458-0697, www.digitools.com/cs/igo/

International Sinatra Society, Dan Lundahl (847) 882-0493, **(http://www.sinatraclub.com/)**

Judd's Inc., Cathy Loranger, (540) 667-8588, **(http://www.judds.com/)**

London Drugs, Debra Hamilton, BC TEL Interactive, (604) 482-2820, **(http://www.shopping.london-drugs.com/)**

Memory Express, Barry Luther, Ram Consulting, (972) 713-4651, **(http://www.memoryexpress.com/)**

Microsoft Network: The Plaza on MSN, Anne Marshall, (206) 637-9097, **(http://www.plaza.MSN.com/)**

Micro Warehouse Inc., David Lokes, (203) 899-4485, **(http://www.microwarehouse.com/)**

Novastar, Bob Gibson, Intermaxx, (602) 992 3356, **(http://206.26.42.9/prd.i/pgen/novastar/0L/welcome.html)**

Omac Computers, Roger Lai, (713) 777-6622, **(http://merchant.omac.com/)**

PC Connection, Brian Aron, (603) 355-6079

Provenance Co., Kenneth Friedman, Corporate Micros, (212) 447-6100, **(http://www.provenance.com/)**

Purefilte Gear, Diane Greer, Greer Consulting, (718) 638-9310, **(http://www.gorp.com/)**

Seidler's Jewelers, Barry Wadman, C-Systems, (508) 371-0557, **(http://www.seidlers.com/)**

Shoppers Universe, Eva Keegan, The Rowland Company, 0171-436-4060, http://shoppersuniverse.com/

Snowboard Gear Direct, Bernd Lutz, Cybermarketing LLC, (303) 673-9374, **(http://www.geardirect.com/)**

Software Spectrum Inc., Katherin Dockerill, (972) 864-5958, **(http://www.swspectrum.com/)**

Swiss Connection, Christine Kemp, TechKnow Quest, (407) 248-0400, **(http://www.swissconnection.com/)**

Tesco, Paul Arnold, 44-707-325161, **(http://www.tesco.co.uk/supermarket)**

Tower Records, Sandy Rodrigues, (916) 373-2450, **(http://www.towerrecords.com/)**

Travel Information & Planning Co. (TIPC), Will Kinnear, (312) 258-9200, **(http://www.tipc.com/)**

Trinity Zone, Sterling Ledet & Assoc., (404) 325-3338, **(http://www.trinityzone.com/)**

True Tunes, Richard Warren, Judds Inc., (540) 465-6623, **(http://www.truetunes.com/)**

UCLA, Steve San Marchi, (310) 794-8833, **(http://www.uclastore.ucla.edu/)**

USWeb Worldport, Albert Lopez, (408) 541-0295, **(http://www.worldport.com/marketplace/)**

Virtual Books Co., Jeffrey Benson, The Lande Group, (212) 497-4900, **(http://www.virtualbooks.com/)**

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Safe Internet Shopping with Microsoft Merchant System

Ronald K. Arden | *Windows IT Pro* Oct. 31, 1996

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Personalizing Internet commerce

I can get on the Internet, tell a retail store that I want to buy a new pair of sneakers, and the store knows what color I like when I get them. Yes, and you can create this kind of personalized shopping experience for your customers with the Microsoft Merchant System. This new component of Microsoft's BackOffice, scheduled to be available in the fourth quarter of 1996, is one of the Normandy suite of servers and will make Internet shopping feasible.

Microsoft Merchant System lets retailers set up a complete store on the Internet to sell anything. The system can even host an electronic mall where customers can visit and use their credit cards to buy from many retailers.

Customers can use any Web browser that supports Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) or Secure Electronic Transactions (SETs), such as Netscape Navigator or Microsoft Internet Explorer (IE--for information about SSL and SET, see the sidebar, "Securing Commerce on the Web.") to come into the store, either from the Internet or an intranet. Merchant System lets you customize each customer's shopping experience to suit individual tastes. So when a customer accesses your store, you can have Merchant System build a customer profile to determine buying patterns and other interests.

Imagine the experience from a customer's point of view: You visit an online store, and Merchant System greets you with information about sale items you're interested in. The system knows about your preferences and spending habits--it even knows your shoe size! This personal service makes you want to visit that store again.

Setting Up Your Store

Merchant System lets you, the merchant, install and configure a store without complicated or costly custom application development. The system runs on Windows NT Server 3.51 or later and uses Internet Information Server (IIS) 1.0 or later. Your customers see your store as a series of standard Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) pages that they can access from an SSL- or SET-capable Web browser to purchase goods and services. With text, images, video, and audio, you can create a rich shopping experience for your customers. You can also add ActiveX and Java components to your Merchant System page to further enhance the shopping experience. Merchant System includes sample starter stores to help you go on line quickly.

Customers can see and purchase merchandise from any Open Database Connectivity

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Upcoming Training

SQL Server Database Administration with PowerShell

December 17th @ 11am ET

This class will first introduce you to PowerShell, after which you'll learn the basic SMO object model, how to manipulate

(ODBC) datasource, such as a SQL Server, Sybase, or Oracle database. The database maintains all product, pricing, shipping, tax, and customer information. Merchant System generates Web pages dynamically to give the shopper a customized experience. The system is both database- and table schema-independent. This design lets you use an existing database, one of Microsoft's sample databases, or a new database that meets your needs. You can even leverage your existing systems by accessing information from a legacy database. For example, by using SNA Server and an ODBC driver, you can access existing product and price information from an AS/400. Figure 1 shows a typical Merchant System configuration.

Merchant System can link to your existing financial management system. If you run on a SQL Server or other ODBC-compliant database, you can easily access the financial data. If your financial system is on a legacy system, you may need some translation software, such as a DLL, to access this information.

You can set up Merchant System to use two databases--one for your store information and one for your financial management information. However, if your financial management database contains most of the information in your store database, you can add any missing store information to the financial information and use one integrated database to eliminate any overlapping information.

Shopping Online

Let's look at a typical shopping experience and what happens behind the scenes. Mary uses her favorite SSL- or SET-compatibleWeb browser to access an online sporting goods store. The catchy opening screen shows a video clip of a runner winning a marathon underneath a sale banner that alerts Mary to a sale on running shoes. Mary clicks the sale information, and Merchant System accesses information in a SQL database to generate a Web page that shows Mary the sale shoe's information and price.

Because, in a previous visit to the store, Mary showed an interest in running apparel, Merchant System finds this information in her customer profile and displays running shorts. Mary also sees that if she purchases both items, she can get a 20% discount. The system dynamically generates the promotion and sale information for the customer from the database. Mary decides to purchase the two items and places them in an electronic shopping basket that holds her purchases until she is ready to check out. She clicks back on the home page to look for a runner's watch, but notices that she is late for a meeting and leaves the store.

The next day, Mary comes back to the store. The items she put in her shopping basket are still there. Merchant System sees the items in her shopping basket, checks her customer profile, and asks whether she is interested in purchasing the runner's socks that are on special for one day only. Mary looks at and buys a few pairs of socks.

Now she decides to check out and gets a prompt for payment method, shipping method, and shipping address. She picks a shipping company to deliver the items overnight and enters her credit card information and shipping address. The system then calculates her purchase total. Because Mary lives in London and the store is in New York, the system calculates the purchase price in pounds sterling, adds value-added taxes (VAT) if needed, and calculates shipping costs. Mary sees the system's calculations and information and confirms the accuracy of the information by clicking *Purchase Now*.

Merchant System uses VeriFone's point-of-sale (vPOS) software to send Mary's credit card information to the merchant's financial institution for authorization. The financial institution authorizes payment, and the merchant shows Mary a confirmation receipt and tracking number. Merchant System then updates the sporting goods store's inventory and customer information, based on Mary's recent purchase.

Personalizing the Experience

As you can see from Mary's experience, a key piece of managing your store is giving your customers, especially frequent visitors, a reason to return to your site. In addition to considering special product promotions and sales, you can update your Web page content

data with PowerShell, and how to use SMO to manage objects. We'll then move on to creating Policy-Based Management policies, working with the Central Management Server, managing your system inventory, and gathering performance data with PowerShell.

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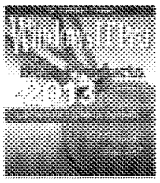

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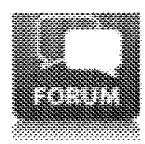

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SQL Server Database Administration with PowerShell

often.

Merchant System makes the process of updating your pages easy. You can modify your Web pages with any standard Web page development utility, including Microsoft's FrontPage, Adobe's PageMill, SoftQuad's HoTMetaL, Sausage Software's HotDog, and good old Windows Notepad.

One caveat applies to creating Web pages for use with Merchant System: After you create or modify your pages with a development tool, you need to edit them in Notepad or some other text editor to develop the HTML code to implement your database queries and tags. The sample stores and pages that Microsoft provides with Merchant System can help guide you through this process.

Besides letting you create a unique shopping experience for your customers, Merchant System can also take over the management and administration of your store. The Merchant Utilities, which you access through a standard Web browser, let you create and maintain one or more stores. The Utilities include a set of starter stores; HTML templates to develop the look of your store or stores; and product, order, shopper, and promotion management tools.

The HTML templates let you show your customers product pages and order forms and give customers querying capabilities. To add a promotional item for frequent buyers or to add a product, simply point and click a few times in your browser, and you're finished. You don't need a staff of database experts or programmers to set up these features.

Planning Transactions

One of the first questions any Internet shopper asks is, "How can you guarantee that my credit card information is secure?" Merchant System uses secure transactions to ensure credit card confidentiality. The system supports SSL and will support SET when the computer banking industry finalizes the SET specification later this year.

At present, Merchant System accepts only credit card payments; however, it will accept purchase orders and other payment methods in the future (Microsoft has not set a timetable for these payment alternatives). In addition, a new feature, Microsoft Wallet, is integrated in Merchant System. The Wallet will hold virtual credit cards, shipping and billing information, personal credentials, and digital signature (SET) information.

To take advantage of the Wallet features, users will need to use a Wallet-enabled browser. All transactions between the Wallet-enabled browser and Merchant System will be encrypted, so the customer won't need to send credit card information during a purchase. Each customer will have an encrypted certificate that contains credit information. Merchant System will send this information to the financial institution--the merchant's store will never see it.

Ready, Set, Sell

IS managers can prepare to implement Merchant System by learning about NT Server and IIS. All the good, common-sense practices of Internet access and Web publishing also apply to Merchant System. These practices include implementing security measures such as firewalls and proxy servers.

If you have a Web site today, you can extend your knowledge to easily add Merchant System. IS managers will need to work with their database administrators to understand what information they need to retrieve, how best to present it to a customer, and how to integrate the database with Merchant System.

The system's sample databases, table schema, and queries can facilitate this process. For example, you can use the sample queries to understand how to extract information from an existing database and to see how the table schema is set up. You can see what information Merchant System expects to insert into a database and how it retrieves information.

Because Merchant System uses any existing table schema or ODBC-compliant database,

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you probably won't need to heavily modify your existing database information. Reviewing the existing database information now will facilitate Merchant's deployment later. Financial systems and databases that aren't OBDC-compliant will need some cleanup and some translation software to prepare them for use with Merchant.

Merchant System follows Microsoft's strategy of helping companies build business systems easily, at a reasonable cost, without requiring a lot of customization. Merchant System uses the third-generation, UNIX-based eShop product that Microsoft purchased and translated to run on NT. The market for online shopping applications is very new, and only a few companies have competing products. For example, Open Market's products require extensive customization and don't support NT; Netscape's Merchant System platform also does not support NT. You can find other solutions that target companies that provide electronic malls, but they are highly customized and very expensive.

Microsoft Merchant System pricing has not been set but will be comparable to other BackOffice products. Merchant System is scheduled to be available by the time you read this.

Microsoft 206-882-8080
Web: www.microsoft.com/ecommerce
Price: Not determined yet

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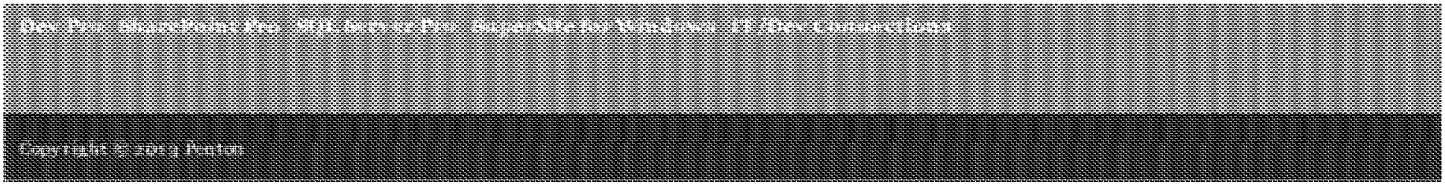

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Supersite makes browsing easier
Asfar, Roy
Computer Reseller News; Nov 11, 1996; 709; ABI/INFORM Global
pg. 359

Wall Street, channel views Ingram IPO as a success

Continued from page 3

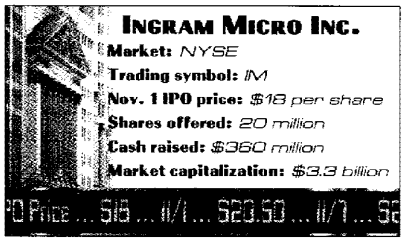
saw its stock price nearly double on the first day of trading.

"Ingram is a lot more mature company," said Steve Raymund, chairman and chief executive of Tech Data, Clearwater, Fla. "Their expected growth rate is somewhat more predictable. Ingram is growing, but it's not as if it's likely their earnings will quadruple in a year or two."

And Tim Cook, chief operating officer for the Reseller Network Division at IE, said it is difficult to compare the valuations of a service company such as XLConnect to a wholesale distributor like Ingram, which generates much lower profit margins.

For instance, for the September quarter, Ingram's gross profit margins were 6.7 percent while XLConnect's were 30.8 percent.

Cook and Raymund both said the Ingram IPO should be looked at as a success for the company and the channel.



"It was a great deal," Raymund said, adding that it is always a desirable situation to trade up following an offering. "It was executed very well, and the timing could not have been better."

Tech Data's stock began its ascent during the Ingram road show, and the completion of the IPO reinforces the investment story for the industry. "Their visibility, size and success provides a structure to support the overall sector in the market," Raymund said.

IE's Cook also said he expects more attention to be paid to the channel.

"I think this will put significantly more attention on the channel and probably get the channel a level of coverage from more and different analysts. That can only be positive for the channel. The channel has a significant amount of value and it's still under a rock, so to speak. I see this as a major milestone for the channel," he said.

Supersite makes browsing easier

BY ROY ASFAR
New York

BROWSING THE INTERNET may soon become a less time-consuming chore for resellers.

A new electronic-commerce "supersite" slated to go live next week is designed to unite channel partners and vendors with realtime product and partner opportunities worldwide.

ChannelWeb (www.channelweb.com), to be launched by CMP Media Inc.'s Channel Group, parent of *Computer Reseller News,* is designed to provide a platform-, vendor- and distributor-neutral "village" exclusively for the channel.

The site will leverage the resources of CMP's four online offerings: *Computer Reseller News, VARBusiness, CRN*'s MAX and *Computer Retail Week.* It will offer a common interface with vendor and distributor data designed to reduce the time currently needed to get such information online.

One highlight of the site will be its "Business Centers," where vendors and distributors may contribute their own Web site information directly to ChannelWeb, cutting down the time required to site-hop. Twenty Business Centers will be operational by Comdex and run the gamut across hardware and software platforms and continents.

Microsoft Corp. and Netscape Communications Corp. have joined, and the distributor ranks currently include MicroAge Inc., Merisel Inc. and Intelligent Electronics Inc. An additional 20 Business Centers partners are expected to climb on board by year's end.

ChannelWeb beta participants said in-house agent technology also will sniff out specific news events reported by the channel group publications and customize them through the ChannelWeb interface. News and data retrieval can be tailored by members according to geography, vendor and vertical market.

BIG NAME START-UP LINKS INTRANET VENDORS, USERS

Continued from page 2

Jackson. Many are providing funds to the company. Investors include partners from Montgomery Securities; Foster Farms Chairman Jiggs Davis; and lawyers from Wilson, Sonsini, Goodrich & Rosati. Venture funds will be sought in a second round of financing.

One likely glaring omission from the lineup will be Microsoft Corp., which in many ways seems to fit in with the balkanization of the Internet space Jackson foresees.

"The channel players are tied into Microsoft. They give money to every one of the technical service people. If Microsoft has the application, that's who they are going to use," he said.

Jerry Michalski, managing editor of *Release 1.0,* said the explosive pace of the development will work in favor of companies like Intraware.

"All of client/server computing, and even a lot of desktop computing, is being reinvented or is about to be reinvented. There is plenty of room for people to smooth out the transition," he said. "Most of what you hear about is consultants or big five firms jumping into the technology. You don't see structured programs."

On the other hand, Van Baker, director of channel and demand side research at research firm Dataquest Inc., San Jose, Calif., said Intraware could get trounced by the larger software resellers such as Stream International or Garland, Texas-based Software Spectrum Inc.

Intraware debuts:

- **New VAR specializes in client/server intranets.**
- **Not tied to Microsoft apps.**

Those two companies are in the process of completing Web-based order systems that can provide customers with customized pricing, asset tracking and tools for license management tools.

In addition, the corporate software resellers also have major customers.

"If they are looking at trying to do specialty stuff, it is possible that they will carve out a niche, but it will require a high degree of specialization," Baker said.

MicroAge reorg puts emphasis on service

Continued from page 3

company into four principal business groups, each focused on the integration and logistical services offered by MicroAge.

Meanwhile, John Lewis, the former chairman and chief executive of First Interstate Bank Southwest, will join MicroAge in January as president of the MicroAge Integration Group.

MicroAge Infosystems Services (MIS), its large-account integration unit composed of reseller affiliates and company-owned operations, will be part of the new Integration Group.

Chris Koziol, who was largely responsible for building MicroAge's MIS business, will serve as president of the MicroAge Distribution Group, which includes MicroAge Technologies, its VAR distribution unit; and MicroAge Computer Centers, its affiliate distribution unit.

Koziol and Lewis will report directly to McKeever, who said the changes probably will not immediately affect MicroAge resellers but that the company should be easier to do business with in the future.

For their part, resellers are mostly pleased with the new structure although MIS members are a bit apprehensive about having an unknown such as Lewis head their group while Koziol, who built the group, has moved to distribution.

Sal Pulitano, president of an MIS branch in East Rutherford, N.J., said his main concern remains how the individual business groups will work together. MicroAge will not change its policy of having separate profit and loss statements for each of its units, and dealers in the past have complained the competition among units leaves them caught in the middle.

As for O'Malley's appointment, Mitch Roth, co-owner of an MIS branch in Van Nuys, Calif., said, "I've seen more positive things happen from MicroAge since Bob got there, especially in information technology and services, than I've seen in the last 10 years."

RESELLER FOCUS

- **Bob O'Malley tapped as new company president.**
- **Company divided into four business groups.**
- **Changes reflect MicroAge's continued focus on services.**

MicroAge also named James Manton senior vice president of operations. Manton, who rejoined MicroAge in 1993 after a four-year hiatus, will be responsible for making sure each unit operates together.

MicroAge also is bringing back Katie Pushor from a yearlong sabbatical to serve as president of ECadvantage Inc., which focuses on developing MicroAge's electronic-commerce interface.

In yet another move, MicroAge Vice Chairman Alan Hald will become president of MicroAge Enterprises Inc., where he will be responsible for identifying and building selected new business opportunities at MicroAge.

COMPUTER RESELLER NEWS (ISSN#0893-8377) is published weekly with a combined issue in December by CMP Media Inc., One Jericho Plaza, Jericho, New York 11753, and is free to qualified management personnel at companies involved in the reselling/distribution of computers/networking systems, software and services. One year subscription rates for all others in the United States are $199.00 and Canada $224.00. Overseas air mail rates are: Europe $370.00; Mexico/South America $370.00; Africa $370.00 and Asia/Australia $470.00.

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Title: Warner CityWeb seeks online affiliates
Author(s): Greg Spring
Source: *Electronic Media.* 16.2 (Jan. 6, 1997): p1. From *Canadian Periodicals Index Quarterly.*
Document Type: Article
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Full Text:

LOS ANGELES - Warner Bros. will make NATPE history next week when it becomes the first major studio to sell an online content package to broadcast television stations.

The CityWeb is designed to become the first national online network based on local affiliates. Warner Bros. will provide national online content to all participating stations, while the stations will use their own Internet home pages to form the backbone of the network.

That way, each CityWeb site around the country will carry the look and feel of the local broadcast affiliate, complete with the affiliate's brand name and logo.

However, each CityWeb site will have much of the same content, including national and international news provided by CNN, celebrity news from People magazine, and original content for kids, teens, women and men produced by Warner Bros. Online.

"This is an opportunity to create a new distribution model on the Internet," said Jim Moloshok, senior vice president of Warner Bros. Online. "It's a network/affiliate relationship. Basically, if you're a TV station with half an hour of local news, you have everything you need to do this."

New markets, new revenue

The CityWeb will be produced by Warner Bros. Online and distributed by Time Warner's Telepictures Distribution on a straight barter basis; there is no license fee.

Stations receiving the package will give up one 30-second spot of advertising in their local evening news per day to Warner Bros. In exchange, stations will get the full content package from Warner Bros., as well as promotional and marketing assistance. Deals will be exclusive within each market.

Telepictures is pitching the CityWeb to stations as a chance for them to get into a new business with new revenue streams. CityWeb affiliates can sell local advertising within the CityWeb content and can tap into online merchandise sales. The CityWeb also allows television stations to sell classified advertising and coupons; a market they have traditionally been shut out of.

For its part, Warner Bros. is selling national advertising opportunities within the CityWeb content and will share in the stations' classified ad sales.

"This is a radical departure from everything we've done before," said Scott Carlin, executive vice president of Telepictures Distribution. "It's not about a television show. It's about a completely new business."

Warner Bros. officials began meeting with station executives from key groups this week in Los Angeles. The CityWeb programming will likely launch in July, when a clutter-free television environment will make promotion easier.

By that time, Warner Bros. plans to have a CityWeb affiliate in markets reaching at least 70 percent of all television households.

Expecting an online boom

By the year 2000, Warner Bros. research predicts that 35.2 million households will be online, up from 13.6 million in

1996. Online advertising revenue is expected to grow from $312 million in 1996 to $5 billion in 2000, for an annual growth rate of 100 percent. That compares with a projected annual growth rate of 7.2 percent for local television through the year 2000.

In the meantime, Warner Bros. Online is selling its existing online advertising spots at a CPM of $45, compared to about $11 CPM for primetime television broadcasting.

Online transactional revenue is expected to rise from $518 million in 1996 to $6.6 billion in the year 2000.

Given those projections, it is easy to see why Warner Bros. is eager to expand its online businesses. And television stations, with their brand awareness, local news expertise and existing sales forces, make the perfect partners, Mr. Moloshok said.

Already, TV stations covering 80 percent of the country have their own Web sites, and 40 percent of those are deriving some revenue from their online activities.

According to Mr. Moloshok, CityWeb affiliates will likely be able to turn a profit off the project within two to three years, compared with five to seven years before new television stations become profitable.

A familiar model

The content package the CityWeb provides will be similar in concept to the old "PM Magazine," only for the Web. Stations will localize the CityWeb with their home page, local television listings, local entertainment, news, weather, sports and community affairs, as well as local classified advertising.

Warner Bros. will provide national news and entertainment, as wall as kids clubs, educational services, games such as chess and "You Don't Know Jack," and original programming targeting specific demographic groups. These include "Mindful Body" for health and beauty issues, and "Protect Your Assets" for business news and information.

Warner Bros. will also provide chat rooms, user polling services and various search engines.

Telepictures is looking to sign multi-year deals with stations, and is taking a 20-minute CityWeb sales presentation to NATPE. The distributor will take the project out on a market-by-market basis, looking to partner with the strongest broadcaster in each market. Major group deals will be unlikely, Mr. Carlin said.

"Ideally, we'll be very selective and try to align this business with the leader in each market," Mr. Carlin said. "This is a window of opportunity for stations to be the default provider of online content in any given market."

Source Citation (MLA 7th Edition)
Spring, Greg. "Warner CityWeb seeks online affiliates." *Electronic Media* 6 Jan. 1997: 1+. *Canadian Periodicals Index Quarterly*. Web. 28 Nov. 2013.

Document URL
http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?
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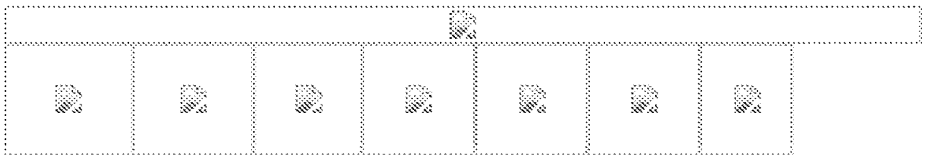

About Vicinity Corporation

Mission

To be the world leader in developing and delivering spatially-oriented and performance based technology solutions to Web Publishers and Corporate Web sites for their Private-Label Inter/ranet use.

Business Model

Vicinity is a technology company that develops, markets and supports a proprietary software language which enables it to "localize" or put key content into spatial context. Current Vicinity product offerings include interactive maps, driving directions, Business Directory and Store/Dealer Locators. Customers brand Vicinity services with their own company and service name as well as their own graphical wrapper to customize the look, feel, and attitude. Vicinity realizes revenue from license and subscription fees or usage fees.

Background

Founded in August 1995, Vicinity Corporation has established itself through key partner/customer alliances as the recognized leader in geographically enhanced content and services exclusively for the World Wide Web. Vicinity Corporation is a member of the CMG Information Services family of Internet-focused companies, which also includes Lycos, Blaxxun Interactive, Silknet Software, Parable, GeoCities, Ikonic, Planet Direct, Koz Inc and PlanetAll.

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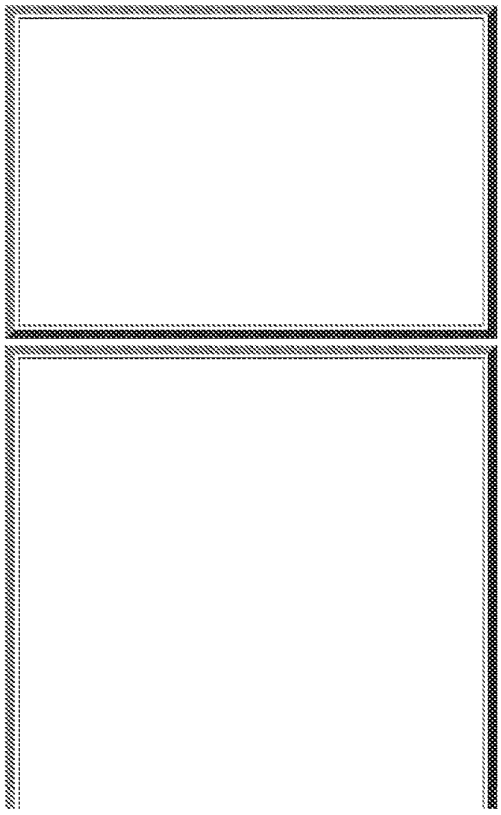

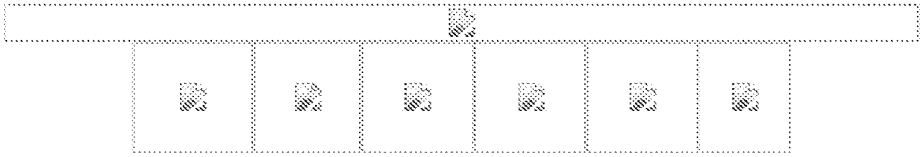

Vicinity Corporation
Fact Sheet

Background

Vicinity Corporation is the premier supplier of private label Yellow Pages and innovative GeoEnabled™ (map-based) services on the World Wide Web. The company licenses its YourTown™ family of services to leading web search and directory services, travel services, Yellow Pages providers, newspapers, national and regional retail operations and other businesses who brand the Vicinity services with their own company look, feel and attitude.

Vicinity also offers MapBlast!™ its free, interactive mapping service that enables end-users to generate a digital map for U.S. locations, embed it in a Web page or email it to others. Vicinity has announced plans to expand into the European markets to offer high quality, detailed, interactive, web-based maps for most of continental Europe.

Founded in August 1995, the company is privately held and backed by the venture capitalist firm, CMG @ventures.

Mission

Vicinity's mission is to localize the web for businesses and consumers through its unique blend of Yellow Pages and GeoEnabled content and services.

Vicinity's Private Label, YourTown Family of Services

Vicinity's YourTown family of content and services provides web publishers, corporate web sites and advertisers with advanced Yellow Pages technology and content, and a range of "GeoEnabled," or geographically oriented, information services that can be customized to the look and feel of individual web sites. These services include:

- **Yellow Pages:** 16 million business listings that can be implemented by customers in whole or in part on either a geographical or a business category basis, built around an intelligent categorization scheme that is easier to use than any other yellow pages service on the web today.
- **Vicinity Interactive Maps (VIMs):** users can create interactive maps of specific business sites, landmarks and other locations of interest.
- **Business Finder:** the ideal web-based store/dealer locator service that enables users to find a specific venue nearest to their home or business location
- **Driving Directions:** provides users with door-to-door, turn-by-turn directions to destinations in metropolitan areas nationwide.
- **Advertising services** that take advantage of the blend of Yellow Pages and GeoEnabled services to achieve true localized, targeted web advertising.

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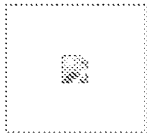

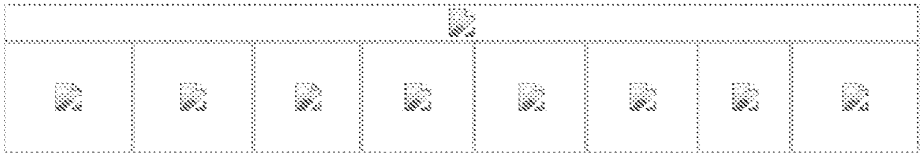

INFINET AND VICINITY ANNOUNCE PARTNERSHIP TO PROVIDE VICINITY'S PREMIER LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICES TO INFINET'S NEWSPAPER CUSTOMERS NATIONWIDE

Norfolk, VA. February 4, 1997 -- InfiNet today announced that it will license Vicinity Corporation's premier localized Web content and services, and will make them available to its online media customers nationwide. These services include dynamic interactive maps, point-to-point driving directions, US business directories, and map-based and directory-based advertising services. InfiNet offers an integrated suite of software and services designed to help newspapers defend and expand their local franchise online in the face of increasingly sophisticated competition.

"Our mission is to provide our newspapers with the most advanced tools available to create rich and compelling local Web sites," said Bob Gilbert, president of InfiNet's Publishing Services Division. "Mapping services, broadly defined, add considerable value to the consumer and advertiser Web experience."

Vicinity Corporation, headquartered in PaloAlto, California, offers its YourTown™ family of localized content and services, providing its customers with advanced Yellow Pages and geographically oriented information services that can be customized to the look and feel of individual web sites. These services also include proximity search, store/dealer locator and driving directions capabilities.

"We are pleased that InfiNet chose Vicinity's comprehensive services to enhance the many newspaper sites throughout the United States," said Hal Logan, president and CEO of Vicinity Corporation. "By offering localized services, newspapers have the opportunity to provide geographically and categorically targeted advertising, resulting in increased traffic on their sites and the potential for greater profitability."

Initially, Vicinity's services will be integrated into the next release of InfiNet's classified applications; however, the services will be built into the rest of InfiNet's end-to-end solutions over time. "Our customers are smart, creative people from over 75 newspapers; when we put a tool this powerful in their hands, they will think of hundreds of ways to use it," said Gilbert. David Richards, president of InfiNet, added: "This is just one of the deals you will see us announce in the next few months," said. "There are many sophisticated applications being developed for newspapers on the Web, including business directories, classified applications, community-building software, and chat. Our objective is to establish relationships with the best of these developers, and integrate their products into a common environment so that everything works seamlessly together for our media customers."

About Vicinity

Vicinity Corporation, headquartered in Palo Alto, California, was established in August of 1995, and offers its YourTown family of private label, localized Web content and services. These services include: Yellow Pages and other directory services, Dealer and Store Locators, Vicinity Interactive Maps, Proximity Search and Driving Directions. The company licenses its YourTown family of services to leading web search and directory services, travel services, yellow pages providers, newspapers, corporate web sites and other businesses. Customers use Vicinity's offerings to create leading-edge web services under their own brand, and look, feel and attitude.

Vicinity also offers MapBlast!™ its free, interactive mapping service that enables end-users to generate a digital map for U.S. locations, embed it in a Web page or email it to others. For more information, please access the company's web site at http://www.vicinity.com, or contact our corporate office at 415/237-0300.

About InfiNet

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InfiNet is owned by three media companies - Gannett Inc., Knight-Ridder Inc., and Landmark Communications, Inc. and specializes in helping newspapers publish profitably on the Internet. InfiNet has developed or partnered with other vendors to offer a full suite of products, including: Real Estate Web, Classified Online, Auto Online, RentalWeb, Employment, Archives that are integrated into InfiNet "Publishing System Software." The software provides a broad range of functionalities - ad management, ad targeting, password management, multi-product billing, tracking and auditing - that that work seamlessly across all applications. In addition, InfiNet has also forged strategic relationships with Oracle, Verity, DEC and Netscape.

# # # #

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This article was a forward-thinking perspective on how Internet technologies that were currently under development at Microsoft had the potential to affect relationships between organizations and their customers.

Customer Management on the Internet

Building a Community of Customers

April 1997

Recent reports show that 88% of large businesses have an Internet presence today -- and that percentage continues to increase. There are many factors driving this kind of business demand for Internet connections. The rapid growth of the Internet has created an enormous opportunity for every organization, large and small, to improve the ways in which they manage customer relationships. After all, customers are an organization's most important asset.

The Internet can be used to improve marketing communications directly to customers. Similarly, Intranets can be used to improve communications among sales and service teams. In January 1996, Gartner Group stated that: "Enterprises must understand how they will use the Internet, and how they will adapt their advertising and marketing methods."

Some distinct objectives that corporations have in establishing and managing their Internet/Intranet systems are:

- To increase customer satisfaction that you can generate by leveraging your existing investment in the development and presentation of data on your web site and targeting the delivery of that data to specific users.
- To create benefits by increasing knowledge transfer and accelerate adoption of your products or services with the ability to hold interactive conferences, seminars and training sessions across the Internet.
- To overcome barriers to purchase and profit from the enhanced customer satisfaction and knowledge of your products by – even leverage your Internet site to manage commercial transactions.

Sales and support systems that are not integrated needlessly complicate the customer relationship, weakening customer service and ultimately reducing total sales potential. The future of customer management lies in integrating sales force automation, customer support, and call center systems into complete solutions that help you track and support customers from initial contact through post-sales support.

Internet-based technologies offer one way to provide such an integrated solution. The objective is to offer a higher level of customer service to both new and existing customers. Beyond simply offering static information through a browser, the Internet offers new ways to interact with customers using interactive technologies coupled with 'active' content. Microsoft® platforms and tools ease customization and quicken deployment of integrated customer management solutions resulting in reduced cost of ownership. Moreover, Internet technologies tightly integrated into every product make it easy to engage with new prospects and to support existing customers.

Background

The Internet began with static content, at first limited to text only, and then added increasing amounts of visual or even multimedia content. Static web sites, which are still a majority of sites on the Internet today, deliver the same page to all users. Web sites today must have the ability to support the needs of many different types of customers with diverse interests and backgrounds.

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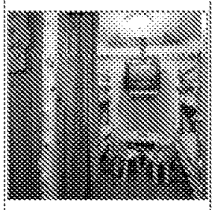

$114.99
Best Price Guarantee

Often, a single web site will offer information on multiple products or services. The greatest benefit for a customer visiting a web site is to be able to receive the right set of information that is most relevant to their particular needs and profile. Aside from reaping the customer retention benefits that this technology provides, the site can also deliver messages targeted to different types of users for maximum effectiveness.

The second stage in this evolution, which innovative developers are beginning to create, will be dynamic web sites. For example, Microsoft Internet Information Server version 3.0 makes it very easy to create these dynamic web sites through technology called Active Server Pages. Dynamic web sites make the web come alive by delivering active content that responds to user interaction and includes richer media types such as audio, animation, and video.

Many commercial web sites already have the ability to accept information from customers, store that information in a database, and then have a telemarketing department follow up directly with the customers that meet the right set of criteria. This kind of 'virtual' call center offers real benefits – customers are contacted who have expressed an direct interest in products or services described on the web site while the organization streamlines the prospecting and qualification period. The result is a shortened sales cycle.

The Next Step: Building A Community of Customers

Personalized web sites take this evolution one step further by delivering the right active content automatically to every individual user. The more that each user visits the web-site, and the more the user describes him or herself during every visit, the better the experience gets. This creates a feedback loop that continually increases customer satisfaction. Dynamic, personalized web sites are the first stage of a new frontier in the customer management markets.

The new solutions that are enabled with this technology improve line-of-business applications in market segments ranging from customer support and service through improved sales processes. The use of personalized information that a customer sees during a visit to such a web site streamlines the presentation of information that is relevant to the customer's view. Coupled with the tools to arrange one-to-one or one-to-many conferences on-line, organizations can service almost all aspects of a customer relationship through such Internet services.

Internet solutions are built around a series of applications starting with the basic Internet web server application that manages and presents information to users. One such web server application, Microsoft's Internet Information Server, is a complete server application designed to take full advantage of the server operating system capabilities offered by Microsoft Windows NT® Server. A set of additional server applications that provide additional services can be layered on top of the Internet Information Server.

The Microsoft Commercial Internet System (MCIS) is a set of Internet server applications that provides a next generation commerce, collaboration, content management, and community services on the Internet. MCIS is a Microsoft BackOffice business solution encompassing a complete suite of commercial grade server applications designed to be used by commercial Internet Service Providers. MCIS includes three services that can be used to help build a community of customers across the Internet.

- **Content Replication** provides companies needing to publish Web content with the most reliable, secure, and efficient way to move content across the Web. It replicates any type of content from one or more remote content servers to multiple destination content.
- **Conference Services** enables dynamic and real-time conferencing across the web with support for the Internet Relay Chat (IRC) protocol and Microsoft Internet Chat protocol. The Conference Server will include two separate servers: the Microsoft Chat Server and the Microsoft Locator Server.
- **Personalization Services** automatically deliver individualized web content to visitors enabling businesses to deliver more satisfying and engaging experiences. It also enables businesses to target the most compelling message to each customer segment rather than settling for broadcast, "least common denominator" solutions.

These server applications can also be implemented separately by any organization with an Internet web site who wants to improve their ability to manage customer relationships through their community of customers.

Improving Customer Management across the Internet

Within the business community, one of the primary uses of the Internet has been to provide improved flow of information and other services to both potential and existing customers. Virtually every corporate web site delivers basic information on a corporation and its products. The Internet is also increasingly being viewed as a facilitator of commercial transactions where products like the Microsoft Merchant Server can provide virtual storefronts on the Internet.

These capabilities are, however, reactive marketing strategies that require the web visitor to search for the information that they need before taking the next step. In order to improve and streamline the marketing process directly to customers, businesses need to be more proactive in understanding the needs of each individual customer and then tailor their experience to a web site to more easily facilitate a decision. The Internet provides a natural way to improve the ways that organizations interact with their customers by leveraging a set of business processes that are often referred to under the umbrella of *customer management*.

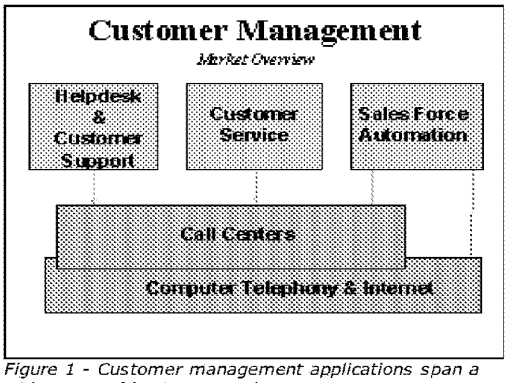

Figure 1 - Customer management applications span a wide range of business needs.

As shown in the picture at the left, the concept of customer management market encompasses applications that span a range of capabilities ranging from sales force automation and customer service all the way through customer support organizations, including helpdesks. Customer management applications are used by every kind of organization – from small businesses to large multi-national corporations.

In short, as an organization becomes larger, the internal processes associated with customer relationships become more complex. Such organizations will, consequently, benefit from the adoption of technology designed to streamline and simplify such business processes with the expected result of increasing customer satisfaction levels and accelerating additional purchases of products or services.

These customer management business applications are a natural fit for the kinds of capabilities that are generated by the Internet. Tools such as web-site personalization, conferencing, and content replication capabilities can add significant value. Taken separately or altogether, these Internet services can streamline the way in which customer receive information.

Today, for example, customer management applications are often implemented in call centers where scores of agents man banks of telephones waiting for customers to call in to ask questions on product support, to place an order for certain products or to satisfy other customer service needs. With the rapid adoption of the Internet, a web server that is designed around customer needs can be used as a vehicle to provide some portion of these same services by personalizing each web visit to meet a visitor's unique set of information requirements. Plus, for services that require additional assistance, the Web visitor can be directed to either call a special number or, alternatively, schedule a callback at a more convenient time.

The following table lists several other examples of how these Internet server applications can be utilized for customer management applications.

Market Segment	Personalization Services	Content Replication	Conference Services
Customer Support and Helpdesks	• Identify existing customers and quickly provide them with information or updates on products	• Automatically distribute product updates, knowledge base articles, or other information to	• Facilitate online chats to enhance knowledge transfer on product usage. • Gather feedback on

DR407997

	they already own. • Collect customer feedback through voting on potential product enhancements.	their customers.	products and services between customers and product designers and support teams,
Sales Force Automation	• Automatically identify existing customers. Knowing which products they already own, present them with data on related products to help them purchase more easily. • Effectively track new prospects. By using site registration data or tracking information from past web visits, guide them to related content on products.	• Easily send product data, sales tips, or other information to web servers in downstream distribution channels. • Quickly build a marketing encyclopedia by replicating HTML web pages to sales rep's laptop computers.	• Conduct interactive seminars online with customers located across many different locations.

The Internet also can be used as a way to directly benefit from the improvement in customer relationships that can be enhanced using these servers. By using the web site as a means to complete business transactions, the entire buying process can be streamlined – sometimes this ability is referred to as "unassisted selling". The Microsoft Merchant Server, another Microsoft BackOffice application, can manage the sales process.

Summary

The Internet offers organizations a new way to improve their business processes. The rapid adoption of Internet technologies by vendors and their customers has resulted in an opportunity to redefine the ways in which the customers can derive incremental value – and, accordingly, enhance their level of satisfaction with the products and services being offered. In turn, this should increase the likelihood that the customer's next purchase will be with that vendor.

Internet services, including the technologies mentioned in this note, can form a viable foundation for enhanced customer management applications. The ability to use these applications to build a dynamic, interactive corporate presence on the Internet will have long-lasting implications on the ways in which customer relationships are created and managed. Microsoft platforms and tools, such as these three server applications, ease customization and quicken deployment of integrated customer management solutions resulting in reduced cost of ownership. Internet technologies tightly integrated into every product make it easy to engage with new prospects and to support existing customers.

Notes:

Note 1: 88% of Fortune 500 firms had a Web site in a survey conducted by IDC. (Reported in the Internet Fact Book, December 1996.) A reader survey conducted by Sales and Marketing Magazine, also reported in December 1996, confirmed that 88% of companies with more than 500 sales representatives had a Web site. Although the numbers dropped when smaller companies were included, it showed that 65% of all companies have a Web site.

Note 2: The Microsoft Commercial Internet System consists of six server applications. Beyond the three mentioned in this note, there is the Microsoft Membership Server, Microsoft News Server, and the Microsoft Internet Mail Server. Altogether, these six applications were designed to meet the demanding needs of commercial Internet Service Providers.

Here is a list of best-selling books on customer relationship management that are available from Amazon.com:

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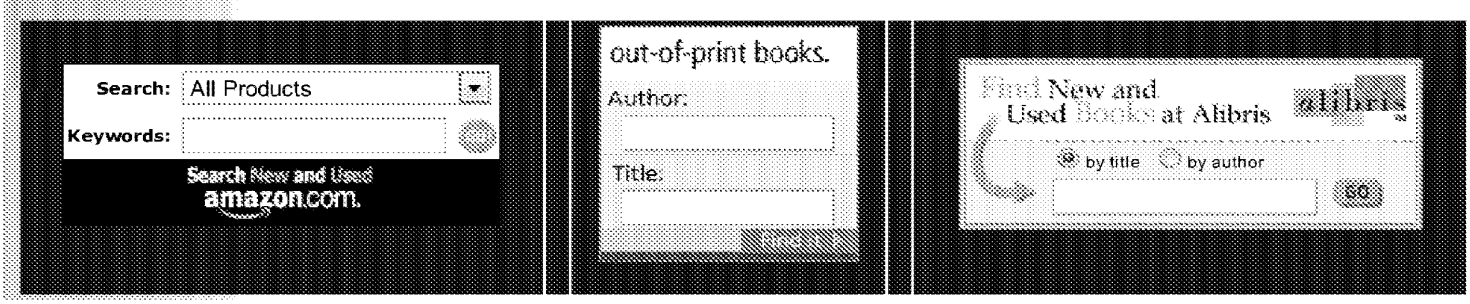
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Serial No.:	13/970,515
First Inventor:	Ross, D. Delano, Jr.
Filed:	08/19/2013
Art Unit:	3625
Examiner:	Garg, Yogesh C.
Conf. No.:	2289

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

Examiner Initials	Item	Document Number	Publication Date MM-DD-YYY	Name of Patentee or Applicant
_____	1	5918010	06-29-1999	Appleman et al.
_____	2	6014638	01-11-2000	Burge et al.
_____	3	6016494	01-18-2000	Isensee et al.
_____	4	6564320	05-13-2003	de Silva et al.
_____	5	6886013	04-26-2005	Beranek

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Examiner Initials	Country Code–Number	Publication Date	Name of Patentee	Translation Yes / No

Examiner: _____ Date Considered: _____

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NON PATENT LITERATURE DOCUMENTS

Examiner Initials	Item	Author, Title, Date, Pertinent Pages, Etc.
_____	6	KELLER, ARTHUR M.; "Smart Catalogs and Virtual Catalogs"; Proceedings of the First Conference on Usenix Workshop on Electronic Commerce; 1995.
_____	7	LAUFMANN, STEVE; "The Information Marketplace: Achieving Success in Commercial Applications"; Lecture Notes in Computer Science 1028; pp. 115-147; 1996.
_____	8	JACOBS, MARCIA A.; "Microsoft Details Merchant Plans"; CommunicationsWeek; February 26, 1996.
_____	9	"Now Software redefines calendar and address book publishing on the World Wide Web; New products enable Atlantic Records, Wall Street Journal, Sports Illustrated, and other top Web sites to publish 'State-of the-Art' calendars and address books"; Business Wire; April 8, 1996.
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_____	13	SPRING, GREG; "Warner CityWeb seeks online affiliates"; Electronic Media; January 6, 1997.
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_____	15	"Customer Management on the Internet - Building a Community of Customers"; The Ragens; April 1997.
_____	16	"Microsoft Internet Commerce Strategy: A Foundation for Doing Business on the Internet"; Microsoft Corporation; May 1997.
_____	17	PEREIRA, PEDRO; "Online ordering takes off"; Computer Reseller News; May 5, 1997.
_____	18	BLAKE, PAUL; "Unobscured objects of desire"; Information World Review; September 30, 1997.
_____	19	"World Media Network Launches Shopping Network"; Worldwide Videotex Update; October 1997.
_____	20	CHRONISTER, KRISTIAN; "Is Agentics the sourcing solution? - Co. to introduce new approach to online purchasing dilemma"; Electronic Buyers' News 1087; December 8, 1997.

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Examiner Initials	Item	Author, Title, Date, Pertinent Pages, Etc.
	21	"Kicking Tires, Virtually, Via Cars.com"; Newsbytes; December 17, 1997.
	22	Be Free Technology; archived webpage from wee.befree.com; January 24, 1998.
	23	Be Free Sites; archived webpage from www.befree.com; January 24, 1998.
	24	"Be Free Affiliate Management Service Chosen By Electronic Newsstand, Inc.; archived webpage from www.befree.com; January 24, 1998.
	25	"The Daily News Surges Toward $100,000 in New Annual Revenues Using AdOne Online Classified Ad Solution"; Ad-One Classified Network; archived webpage from www.adone.com; February 4, 1998.
	26	PC Order - Who We Are/Web Storefront 3.0; archived webpages from www.pcorder.com; February 18, 1998.
	27	"DataMark's Books Now Division to Provide Virtual Bookstores for ElectricVillage's Network of Radio Station Web Sites"; Business Wire; April 7, 1998.
	28	"The Opportunity: Affiliate Networks: A Revolution in Retail"; archived webpage from www.befree.com; May 12, 1998.
	29	KUCHINSKAS, SUSAN; "Floating A Website"; Web Review - Cross-Training For Web Teams; May 29, 1998.
	30	"LinkShare Corporation Launches Software to Link Merchants to Internet's Most Advanced Affiliate Program"; PR Newswire; August 10, 1998.
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Examiner: _____ Date Considered: _____

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Title: Online ordering takes off
Author(s): Pedro Pereira
Source: *Computer Reseller News*. .734 (May 5, 1997): p175. From *Academic OneFile*.
Document Type: Article
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http://ubmtechnology.com/
Full Text:

New York: Providing online ordering capability to customers could not have come any sooner for reseller Robert Friedenthal.

Friedenthal, president of On Call Computer Supply Inc., of Los Angeles, expects about 20 percent of his customers will place orders electronically within a year. They will be using a CD-ROM-based system provided by Daisytek International Inc., the computer supplies distributor based in Dallas.

The system, called SOLO (System for Online Ordering), provides Daisytek's resellers with an interactive electronic catalog with realtime information and the ability to place orders online.

"It's an ideal product for consumables," said Friedenthal, whose company sells computer supplies to corporate customers in addition to hardware and software. "Consumables customers tend to pretty much know what they want.

"I'm very, very interested in online processing. It's something I've wanted to dive into for many, many years," he said, adding he has used the SOLO system for three months.

SOLO is based on software that $570 million Daisytek licensed from Westwood, Mass.-based developer Elcom Systems Inc.

Resellers interested in online ordering may obtain multiple copies of the CD-ROM from Daisytek and place them in the hands of their customers, as Friedenthal has started to do.

Orders placed by end users go directly to Daisytek's processing center through a dial-up network, and the reseller receives notification of each of the customer's orders.

"We're the software provider, if you will. We're not just in the products logistics business anymore, but in information logistics as well," said Mark Layton, Daisytek president and chief operating officer.

Daisytek wants to stay in the vanguard of the electronic commerce revolution, hence the distributor's move to place online ordering capability in the hands of resellers and end users, according to Layton.

The software is customizable. "It will have its own look and feel so the reseller can differentiate itself from everybody else out there," he said.

Multibillion-dollar distributors such as Tech Data Corp., based in Clearwater, Fla.; MicroAge Inc., of Tempe, Ariz.; and Santa Ana, Calif.-based Ingram Micro Inc. also plan to extend to end users the online systems their resellers use for ordering and checking product availability and pricing.

Distributors regard online ordering and product information retrieval as means of cutting costs and making their selling and shipping processes much more efficient.

Merisel Inc., headquartered in El Segundo, Calif., in November started accepting orders through its World Wide Web site.

The company is using a system developed by Spaceworks Inc., of Rockville, Md. Exton, Pa.-based Intelligent

Electronics Inc. launched Web-based ordering in February and competitor Inacom Corp., based in Omaha, Neb., unveiled its effort last month.

Layton said Daisytek also has a Web-based ordering tool waiting in the wings, but the company decided also to use the Elcom software to provide options to the resellers.

Eventually, he added he expects the CD-ROM tool to be replaced by a Web version.

"That's the way the technology is headed, but one thing we've learned is that you can't rule out individuality," Layton said.

"We've got to have flexibility in the technology solutions we provide to customers," Layton added.

About 5 percent of Daisytek's transactions flow through SOLO and another 25 percent through the distributor's other online tools, Layton said.

Michael Rosenberg, Elcom senior project manager, said online catalogs and ordering represent a "productivity gain."

Electronic communications eliminate the need for paper catalogs and reduce the reliance on the telephone for transactions.

Without electronic communications, he said, customers often have to wait on product and pricing information until a sales person calls them back.

Abstract:

On Call Computer Supply is using Daisytek International's CD-ROM-based System for Online Ordering (SOLO) to provide its customers with online ordering capabilities. On Call Computer Supply Pres Robert Friedenthal expects 20% of the company's customers to place orders electronically by May 1998. SOLO provides Daisytek's VARs with an interactive electronic catalog with realtime data and the capability to place orders online. SOLO is based on software licensed from Elcom Systems. VARs interested in online ordering can obtain several copies of the CD-ROM from Daisytek and give them to their customers. The placed orders go directly to Daisytek's processing center via a dial-up network. The software is customizable, allowing VARs to differentiate themselves from other VARs with the same system. Online ordering allows VARs to cut costs and streamline their selling and shipping processes.

Source Citation (MLA 7th Edition)
Pereira, Pedro. "Online ordering takes off." *Computer Reseller News* 5 May 1997: 175+. *Academic OneFile*. Web. 28 Nov. 2013.

Document URL
http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?
id=GALE%7CA19437158&v=2.1&u=ocul_carleton&it=r&p=GPS&sw=w&asid=6ad688fa3807ebe6c1ea541d1959a8ae

Gale Document Number: GALE|A19437158

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Information World Review

September 30, 1997 Tuesday

Unobscured objects of desire

BYLINE: Paul Blake

SECTION: PROFESSIONAL AND LIBRARY

LENGTH: 1121 words

On paper it is rather difficult to get too excited about Desktop Data's NewsOBJECTS. After all, what does it really mean to break down an interface into Java or ActiveX components? Not that much, when you take it as a whole -- the News-OBJECTised version of the NewsEDGE interface is similar to the Web version, albeit with some extra functionality.

However, break those components down and place them into different software packages and suddenly you are talking about a whole new ball game. For example, how about being able to retrieve news from within Microsoft's Outlook contact manager? Using NewsOBJECTS you can click on a company name in your Outlook address book and instantly see a list of scrolling headlines about that company. Now that is exciting, and a revelation to those of us who have been brought up on clunky online interfaces.

Desktop Data's core NewsEDGE service lets corporations distribute information from more than 650 live news sources via their own internal LANs or intranets. A server, installed at the customer site, constantly monitors incoming news and other real-time information, and routes stories to the appropriate individuals or user groups. Desktop Data already offers a choice of 15 user interfaces, including Lotus Notes and Microsoft Exchange, and says that offering Java, HTML and ActiveX NewsOBJECTS components -- small programs which the end-user downloads -- is the next logical step.

The idea, according to Jon McNerney, Managing Director of Desktop Data Europe, is to allow news to be retrieved in whatever software setting it is most useful. For example, type a keyword in Microsoft Word, highlight it, and click a button to retrieve NewsEDGE headlines. "NewsOBJECTS breaks out the functionality of NewsEdge into individual discrete components which you can then deploy into whatever application you use," he explains.

"It is about placing news in a context that makes sense for the individual user, whether it is a scrolling headline or a pull-down menu from any Microsoft Office application. For example, you can embed a ticker symbol search to bring headlines up into Word and Excel, or have a general purpose search button which is put onto intranet home pages, applications or contact management systems."

The launch of NewsOBJECTS is a departure for the company in that it sees a move away from simply being what Mike Richardson, Technical Consultant at Desktop Data, terms a 'news aggregator'. Now it is also a 'news integrator' -- complete with a NewsOBJECTS Alliance Partners Program to help third-party developers build NewsOBJECTS into their applications via a toolkit which will be available this autumn. In addition, the company has established a Professional Services division to help corporate IT departments create their own custom news-enabled applications.

According to Mike Richardson, one of the strengths of the NewsOBJECTS approach for developers is that each component

can be set up independently. "If you click on the right hand side of the mouse you can set preferences. For example, you can colour code newswires, define which columns will appear on screen, and choose the font," he explains. "This indicates that you can set the properties for the headline object independently of the other objects. Ultimately you will be able to set up different priorities for each of the profiles so that they can behave differently -- for example, have different alerting properties for different profiles. Programmers will easily be able to change or add properties depending on the context in which the object is being used."

With NewsOBJECTS coming in three flavours -- ActiveX, Java or HTML -- one of the first tasks for Desktop Data's customers will be to identify the relative merits of each. "There are fundamental differences between the technologies," says Mike Richardson. "It is easier to develop some functions with ActiveX than it is with Java. The work involved with Java is slightly more complex because you have to script the applet. With ActiveX you can just set the properties of the component -- a much easier process.

"The target is to offer the same functionality with both Java and ActiveX," he continues. "As a company we are a technology agnostic as far as telling people what to use, and as our clients are split between ActiveX and Java we plan to support both. A lot of the people who are evaluating ActiveX and Java have security concerns and haven't made a decision which way to go. That is why we are also offering HTML components to pull parts of the NewsEdge Web product out and allow customers to give it their own particular look and feel."

One of Java's selling points is that it is platform independent. "This is a real issue for people who are running Netscape Navigator across Macintosh, UNIX and Windows platforms," says Mike Richardson. "Java is also a thin client implementation, whereas ActiveX is fatter. We anticipate those using ActiveX objects to be very heavily in a Windows NT-based environment. Interestingly what isn't the case is that everyone who is NT-based is necessarily using Internet Explorer or ActiveX."

One missing feature from the first set of News- OBJECTS is a news alerting component, although this is under development. Also in the pipeline is support for Microsoft's Internet Explorer 4.0 with its heavy emphasis on pushing information onto the desktops of users.

"Internet Explorer 4.0 and Netscape's Netcaster are great technologies but no-one is really sure yet how to get the maximum benefit from them," comments Mike Richardson. "The temptation is to try to get too much information down to desktops, which is just going to overwhelm people who are not used to receiving live news. The biggest challenge will be to the system administrators, who must try to give flexibility to the end-user while maintaining control."

Nevertheless Mike Richardson feels that the push phenomenon will have a lasting effect on the news arena. "One of the most interesting developments is the cultural impact of real-time news on users who haven't been used to it. It is the difference between having the radio on all day in the office and so hearing news throughout the day, to getting a newspaper and reading it on the way to work in the morning.

"For a lot of people who are not core knowledge workers the approaches taken by desktop channels and Netcaster present one alternative. For some it may prove too much of a good thing, unless systems administrators can make sure the news they receive is meaningful. It is a little too early to say which way it will go."

Prices for NewsEDGE start at ?15,000 per year for 100 users, with NewsOBJECT components included in the price.

+44 (0) 171 448 4400
http://www.desktopdata.com

LOAD-DATE: March 14, 2011

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

PUBLICATION-TYPE: Magazine

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WORLDWIDE VIDEOTEX UPDATE

October, 1997

WORLD MEDIA NETWORK LAUNCHES SHOPPING NETWORK

SECTION: No. 10, Vol. 16

LENGTH: 363 words

World Media Network, Santa Ana, Calif., which includes RadioWeb and World Access Network has launched an all new World Shopping Network (www.wsnetwork.com), the first Internet Shopping Mall created to empower local radio stations to take advantage of the huge commerce opportunities on the Internet.

It is also the first service of its kind to offer classifieds as an added value feature.

RadioWeb is an affiliated program, with each RadioWeb site appearing to the local online viewer to be wholly created by the regional radio station affiliate with the branding being linked to the local station's look, feel, programming and so on.

"We estimate that a significant percentage of revenue earned by companies like Pathfinder.com is derived from their 'commerce' features, At the same time, there is a growing demand for on-line shopping services," said John Anton, former NBC executive, now President, World Shopping Network.

World Shopping Network plans to offer domestic businesses a way to market their products on the World Wide Web. It's fun and it works. Merchants will have access to tens of thousands of consumers who are making purchases with World Shopping Network through RadioWeb affiliates' Web sites.

Merchant Web sites will be sold for $2,999. The merchant package includes their own address as well as a store front in the World Shopping Network mall as well as regional placement in RadioWeb affiliate sites.

The "shopping malls" will be co-branded with the RadioWeb affiliate and programmed so the viewer will remain on the affiliate's home page when linking into the mall.

"World Shopping Network is one of the key components in our line-up; it will create repeat visits to our affiliated sites and it really makes the RadioWeb affiliate program very exciting," said Doug Hauptman, vice president of marketing, World Media Network.

World Media Network, World Access Network, World Singles Network and RadioWeb are divisions of World Shopping Network Inc., Wyoming. World Media Network produces entertainment and promotional programming for the Internet and commercial online services.

For more information, call 714/427-0760.

LOAD-DATE: September 29, 1997

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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Is Agentics the sourcing solution? -- Co. to introduce new approach to online purchasing dilemma

Author: Chronister, Kristian

Publication info: Electronic Buyers' News 1087 (Dec 8, 1997): PG86.

ProQuest document link

Links: Linking Service

Full text: An Israel-based software developer may just have come up with the solution for the oft-cited barrier to online purchasing - where to store data.

At this week's Internet World show in New York, Agentics will introduce a software package that could revolutionize the market for complete online sourcing from the desktop.

The online purchasing dilemma has been this: Should information on a seller's price and inventory be stored within the purchaser's system as static data and be updated at specified intervals, or should buyers create a link to the seller's remote database - reflecting real-time pricing and inventory but creating a multitude of compatibility problems?

"What was being done was to aggregate the information into a catalog on a company's intranet - that is, into a single database," said Oren Horvitz, president of Agentics, Tel Aviv, Israel. "Then came the OBI {Open Buying on the Internet} standard, which came from the opposite perspective. OBI said it's best not to aggregate, but to supply access to the original information on the supplier's side." This led to many compatibility problems since different suppliers' data was rarely cataloged or databased in the same way, he said.

In looking at the situation, Horvitz came up with requirements for a different system:

- Unified look-and-feel access. Users should be able to buy any product from any vendor without using different screens, order forms, terminology, or software.
- Effective sourcing for catalog-level supplies.
- The ability to compare offerings across suppliers.

Agentics threw out the aggregation model in which data is stored locally. "It's simply never up-to-date and it costs a lot to maintain," Horvitz said. He added that to have even a minimal level of current data, information must be received from each supplier each day and then imported into the system. Just importing it could be quite a task, he said, with different data formats and classification methods from different suppliers.

OBI's "live" system was a step in the right direction, but it wasn't powerful enough and didn't provide for a common look and feel, Horvitz said. Each vendor's area still had its own interface, terminology, etc.

Horvitz provided an example of the problems this look-and-feel issue can cause. "Let's say I need to buy a particular computer. One vendor calls it a laptop. Another calls it a notebook. Multiply that across thousands of products and dozens of vendors, and you start to see the problem."

Agentics tries to solve the problem by adopting mechanisms from both OBI and local catalog methods. Users access the vendor's remote data to ensure that information is current and accurate. However, for searches, ordering, and comparison, they use an interface screen that integrates all the vendor information in one format with uniform terminology.

This seeming contradiction is resolved by Agentics' smart software, which sits between the vendor's data and the user's interface and, essentially, translates the information on the fly.

"The system learns that you prefer the word laptop for small portable computers," Horvitz said. "When you type in 'laptop' as a search parameter, it knows which vendors to ask for laptop and which to ask for notebook to get you what you want."

Publication title: Electronic Buyers' News

Issue: 1087

Pages: PG86

Number of pages: 0

Publication year: 1997

Publication date: Dec 8, 1997

Year: 1997

Section: Online @ EBN

Publisher: United Business Media LLC

Place of publication: Manhasset

Country of publication: United States

Publication subject: Engineering--Electrical Engineering, Business And Economics--Trade And Industrial Directories

ISSN: 01646362

Source type: Trade Journals

Language of publication: English

Document type: PERIODICAL

ProQuest document ID: 228275519

Document URL: http://search.proquest.com/docview/228275519?accountid=14701

Copyright: (Copyright 1997 CMP Publications, Inc. All rights reserved.)

Last updated: 2010-06-19

Database: ABI/INFORM Global

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Microsoft Internet Commerce Strategy: A Foundation for Doing Business on the Internet

2 out of 3 rated this helpful

Microsoft Corporation

May 1997

Contents

Introduction
Internet Commerce Opportunity
Microsoft Internet Commerce Strategy
New Internet Commerce Scenarios
Summary

Summary: Dramatic opportunities exist today on the Internet for forward-thinking businesses. Businesses have an opportunity to create close working relationships with business partners on the Internet, automating and increasing the efficiencies of trade. Businesses can take advantage of a growing Internet channel for marketing directly to consumers, allowing development of closer relationships with consumers. The Microsoft Internet Commerce Strategy—a comprehensive offering of server and tools, payment, and partners—provides a commerce platform upon which businesses can take advantage of these opportunities.

Introduction

Electronic commerce is not a new concept. Companies and consumers have been using electronic media to conduct commercial transactions for years. To date, electronic commerce has been inhibited by high cost and complexity. The complexity arises in establishing lines of communication and even more by the lack of standard applications for viewing and sharing information once connected. The Internet, specifically the World Wide Web, has changed this scenario radically. Connectivity over the Internet is cheap, increasingly secure, and built on standards that make communicating with anyone a straightforward task. Now, Internet commerce—the exchange of goods and services for value on the Internet—is evolving into a more cost-effective and powerful way to do business.

Internet commerce represents a market worth potentially hundreds of billions of dollars in just a few years. It presents tremendous opportunities for businesses. First, a growing standard means for businesses to automate and streamline how they trade with other businesses: *business-to-business commerce*. Business-to-business commerce includes online wholesaling, where businesses sell goods and services to other businesses on the Web. In Internet-based corporate purchasing, wholesaling merges into a system where individual employees make purchases of office materials and supplies using a corporate intranet. With Internet-based supply chain trading, businesses work closely together via the Internet to automate and streamline the supply of goods for production and distribution.

	Hard Goods	Digital Goods, Services
Business-to-Consumer	Retail, Direct	Information, Media, Software, Ticketing, Reservations, Financial Services
	Wholesale	Corporate

Business -to- Business	**Wholesale, Corporate Purchasing, Supply Chain Trading**	**Corporate Subscriptions, Professional Services**

Figure 1. Internet commerce opportunities

Internet commerce also provides businesses a growing, dynamic channel for efficient delivery of goods and services to consumers: *business-to-consumer commerce*. In business-to-consumer commerce, companies market physical goods to consumers online in a more personalized, dynamic environment. Businesses-to-consumer commerce will increasingly include the delivery of digital goods—software, electronic media, and information. Consumers will also look more frequently to the Internet for the delivery of services, including ticketing, reservations, and financial services. In short, Internet commerce—business-to-business and business-to-consumer—will dramatically impact the way goods and services are managed, bought, and sold from manufacturer to consumer.

Overview of the Microsoft Internet Commerce Strategy

Commerce will soon underlie a significant portion of the majority of corporate Web sites. As such, Microsoft has moved rapidly to commerce-enable its software offerings on the desktop and server. The result is a comprehensive desktop and server Internet commerce offering that enables business-to-consumer and business-to-business commerce applications.

Commerce functionality has been integrated into the Microsoft® BackOffice® family to provide a commerce-enabled server. Microsoft Site Server, Enterprise Edition, a new BackOffice product, provides a comprehensive Web-site environment for enhancement, deployment, and the advanced management of commerce-enabled Web sites. Site Server, Enterprise Edition includes Commerce Server, the new name for the follow-on release of Microsoft Merchant Server 1.0. Commerce Server is a leading Internet-selling software product, adopted by hundreds of customers worldwide since its availability in December of 1996.

Support for commerce has also been integrated into Microsoft Internet Explorer and the Microsoft Windows® operating system, creating a commerce-enabled desktop offering. The Microsoft Wallet provides secure, convenient purchasing on the Internet. The Microsoft Wallet, available now for download from the Web, will ship as a part of Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.0 and the next release of the Windows operating system.

The Microsoft desktop and server commerce offering provides significant opportunity for horizontal and vertical integration by independent companies. Interfaces in Site Server and the Microsoft Wallet allow software companies and customers to extend the commerce platform and integrate with existing systems.

The Microsoft Internet Commerce Strategy is based on the following three components (described in detail below):

- Server Foundation
- Payment
- Solutions with Commerce Partners

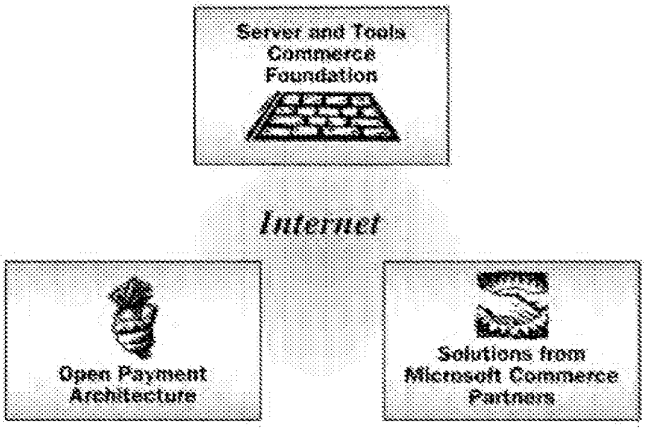

Figure 2. Microsoft Internet Commerce Strategy

Server Foundation. A server and tools commerce foundation based on Site Server, Enterprise Edition. This foundation includes BackOffice server components and tools for rapidly deploying and managing commerce applications—business-to-consumer and business-to-business—that extend the Microsoft Web platform, Active Server Pages, and Microsoft Transaction Server, and integrates Microsoft Windows NT® Server security.

Site Server provides comprehensive functionality for commerce-enabling Web sites. The product supports electronic catalog management, online order processing, and the creation of dynamic product and price promotions. The *Order Processing Pipeline* provides an extensible data structure for managing orders. Its broad application programming interface (API) allows any developer to create components to extend order-processing functionality or integrate with existing systems. Site Server employs new tools, such as the *StoreBuilder Wizard*, that dramatically simplify the process of creating and managing online commerce sites. Site Server also introduces a new capability called *Buy Now*. Buy Now allows the embedding of product information and order forms inline within most any context—such as an online ad banner—allowing businesses to promote and sell without the need for complete online stores.

Future versions of Site Server will help business commerce solution developers dramatically lower the cost of development with a number of new built-in functions, including the *Business Document Pipeline*. The Business Document Pipeline is a workflow system that supports the exchange of EDI and other business document types over multiple transports, including the Internet.

Payment. An open payment architecture based on Site Server and the Microsoft Wallet. The Wallet is simple-to-use client software that will enable consumers to conveniently and securely make purchases over the Internet. The Microsoft Wallet has an open design that allows *Wallet Payment Modules* created by independent-payment technology companies to be plugged in dynamically. This open payment architecture gives consumers freedom of choice in how they choose to pay for goods and services online. This architecture also establishes a framework for interoperability between banks, merchants, and consumers. Microsoft will support standards for next-generation payment protocols, such as Secure Electronic Transaction (SET), by distributing the Wallet with Internet Explorer 4.0 and the next version of the Microsoft Windows operating system.

Solutions with Commerce Partners. The creation of complete solutions with Microsoft Commerce Partners. The Microsoft Internet commerce offering is a commerce platform; hundreds of companies worldwide are extending the Microsoft offering to create complete solutions. Commerce partners include solution providers, hosting Internet service providers, independent software companies, payment software companies, and banks and financial institutions. Industry leaders in these categories are working closely with Microsoft to create new kinds of business-to-business and business-to-consumer commerce solutions on the Internet.

Learn what many industry leaders are doing in Internet commerce in the "Creation of Complete Solutions with Microsoft Commerce Partners" section of this article.

The Microsoft Internet Commerce Strategy provides businesses with a lower-cost means of deploying and managing Internet commerce sites and simpler integration with existing systems. It establishes an architecture for secure and multifaceted methods of payment as well as secure access to sites. Microsoft's strategy will simplify how companies create and distribute structured business documents for transactions, including the use of EDI. The management of complex catalogs of goods and services will be improved, including support for personalized delivery. Businesses will be able to market in new ways, merging commerce with community. Microsoft's Internet Commerce Strategy is based on open standards such as Transport Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP), Hypertext Markup Language (HTML), Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP), Component Object Model (COM), Java, American National Standards Institute (ANSI) X.12, Secure Electronic Transaction (SET), and Secure Sockets Layer (SSL). This lowers risk for adopters and helps ensure interoperability of applications.

The Microsoft Internet Commerce Strategy will help create opportunities for consumers, businesses, software developers, and consultants. For consumers, Microsoft's efforts are aimed at increasing the offering of goods and services available on the Internet. Consumers will also enjoy increased convenience and security. More businesses will be able to afford Internet commerce sites and take advantage of improved customer service and efficiencies in transacting with other businesses. Microsoft's commerce platform gives developers an opportunity to create and market specific enhancements. Such software extensions will be interoperable with those from other developers. Finally, consultants will have an opportunity to assemble rich, complete solutions that meet customers' needs.

This paper explains the Microsoft Internet Commerce Strategy.

- The next chapter, "Internet Commerce Opportunity," describes Internet commerce opportunities and requirements for businesses today.
- The third chapter, "Microsoft Internet Commerce Strategy," is a more detailed and technical explanation of Microsoft's product strategy to meet business requirements for Internet commerce.
- The fourth chapter, "New Internet Commerce Scenarios," illustrates key new scenarios in business-to-business and business-to-consumer commerce that will become common in the near future.
- The final chapter provides a brief summary.

A related article, "Taking Business Web Sites to the Next Level," provides details about the Site Server product offering.

Internet Commerce Opportunity

Phenomenal growth has occurred and is expected to continue for the World Wide Web. Estimates for the numbers of consumers and businesses online vary considerably for markets around the world. Still, experts believe that more than 36 million households will have access to the Web by the year 2000 in the United States alone (Find/SVP, December 1996). In Europe this number is lower, based on lower penetration of personal computers, but still approaches a dazzling figure of near 20 million households. In Japan approximately 12 million households will have access to the Web in the year 2000 (IDC Japan, March 1997).

The number of business Web sites is equally impressive, expected to reach more than 3 million by the year 2000 in the United States, and as many as 1 million each in Europe and Japan (Microsoft estimates).

This significant adoption of the World Wide Web by businesses and consumers presents two tremendous opportunities for businesses. First, a growing standard means for businesses to communicate transactional information with other businesses more cost-effectively. Second, a growing channel for efficient delivery of goods and services to consumers. In this section, we take a quick look at trends in these two areas of opportunity. Common requirements are then explored.

Business-to-Business Commerce Opportunity

EDI for all businesses

Businesses today transact with trading partners in one of two generalized fashions. First, the majority of businesses use a nonautomated means of communicating commerce-related information with trading partners: mail, telephone, and fax. Second, a small number of primarily the largest companies in the world—fewer than 50,000—conduct a significant portion of their transactions in an automated fashion such as Electronic Data Interchange (EDI). EDI—conducted either with leased lines or, more commonly, through Value Added Networks (VANs)—can be costly and complex. Large companies maintain a full-time EDI staff for the ongoing management of translation systems and auditing of the operation. EDI VAN-based systems, because of their complexity and ensuing cost, exclude small and medium-sized businesses from participation in automated trading communities.

The Internet will bring radical change to automation in trading. By providing a ubiquitous public network and standards for communication, the Internet will help businesses lower costs in EDI-like transactions. More importantly, the Internet will make it easier for small and medium-sized businesses to participate in automated commerce transactions. Many businesses—small, medium, and large—will soon send and receive the majority of their purchase orders and invoices over the Internet.

Formation of virtual enterprises

Increased ease of automating commerce will provide opportunities for businesses to increasingly work more closely with other businesses for the supply of goods and information, either for the direct manufacturing process or the indirect operation of the business. The impact on businesses of such improved commerce relationships is the formation of *virtual enterprises*.

Virtual enterprises are best described as business activities that span the business processes of more than one company. In the chapter "New Internet Commerce Scenarios," two examples are given of virtual enterprises that develop out of corporate purchasing and supply-chain trading activities. In the example of an application called *MS Market*, Microsoft employees purchase office supplies from a commerce Web site created and maintained by non-Microsoft vendors. In a second example, ByteComp, Inc. Order Entry System (based on a fictitious company), ByteComp resellers submit purchase

orders for products using a Web-based application created and managed by ByteComp. Forecast information is used to help customize purchase orders for the resellers.

The formation of Virtual Enterprises represents an opportunity for businesses on the Internet. By establishing intimate business relationships with vendors and suppliers, companies can lower operational costs, improve customer service, and focus on their core contributions in the marketplace. The Internet provides a means for companies of all sizes to participate in virtual enterprises.

Business-to-Consumer Commerce Opportunity

Growth of a new direct channel

Every year, consumers spend more than $2.2 trillion on goods and services in the United States alone. About one-fifth of this astronomical amount, or $400 billion, is spent as a result of direct marketing—mail order, telephone order, catalogs, business reply card inserts, television, and online commerce. Within the online commerce category are included direct sale and marketing of physical goods, digital goods—such as software, media, and information—and services—ticketing, reservations, and financial services.

For many businesses, the Internet is a fast-growing channel of distribution. 1-800-FLOWERS, one of the world's largest florists, has seen their online business grow to 10% of their overall $300 million business; their Web site has grown faster than any other online venue. Not all businesses have seen this kind of success in early ventures into online selling. Critical mass of consumers on the Web is still accumulating. The adoption of new technology and corresponding change in consumer behavior will take time.

Personalization and the beginnings of mass customization

The Web offers a rare disconnect with traditional means of distribution, enabling forward-thinking businesses to create new value-added product and service offerings. Such additions will increasingly mean personalized, tailored service for the mass of buyers—mass customization. For example, visitors to @Tower, Tower Records' Web store, can click on the **New Releases** hyperlink and view the current week's releases for all genres—typically hundreds of CDs. Better yet, registered shoppers enjoy a personalized view of new releases when they click on the same hyperlink; they see a special call-out graphic that appears when their favorite artists have issued a new release in the last several weeks.

Web sites can also significantly improve a customer's experience. On the Web, buyers have direct access to sources of information and the opportunity for direct communication with the seller. Many sites have established communities allowing buyers to interact with other customers. Such examples of value added service to customers will help separate more successful businesses from less successful businesses.

Contextual transactions

A significant opportunity for consumer marketers exists in the marrying of informational content with transactions. The most successful selling sites provide all kinds of information around the sale of product—commerce and community merged. Many marketers will soon go even further. Rather than waiting for consumers to visit their selling sites, they will begin to embed product and service offers in other contexts, using a method known as *contextual transactions* (see the chapter "New Internet Commerce Scenarios"). Contextual transactions will be embedded in online banner ads, articles or stories, and even directly in a consumer's HTML desktop; they will be unobtrusive, leaving the content viewer in place once the transaction is complete. Contextual transactions will enable impulse buying, taking advantage of a consumer's peak moment of interest.

Mass customization and contextual transactions are just the beginning of what will be a radical new way of executing direct online marketing. In the future, the *pull* model of the Web site will be supplemented by the *push* model. In the push model, consumers will be actively sought out based on special interests that they willingly publish. Internet commerce will become a part of each consumer's everyday life.

Requirements for Commerce

Businesses need solutions to take advantage of the multitude of opportunities described above. To date, there has been a lack of comprehensive software, expertise, infrastructure, and mature standards to support Internet commerce applications. The following are critical requirements for customers creating commerce solutions.

- **Lower cost deployment and management of custom Internet commerce sites.** Until fairly recently, the average company spent hundreds of thousands of dollars implementing commerce-enabled sites. Part of this cost derives

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from fees for software packages. More so, it derives from the cost of consulting services to develop code from scratch in order to meet custom needs, making up for the lack of effective tools. Businesses need lower-cost software that also reduces the amount of custom development required. They need tools to improve deployment and support ongoing change and management of site content and data. Businesses need a low-cost investment that can scale as their Internet business grows.

In many cases, shared hosting scenarios will keep costs at their lowest. In such a scenario, a hosting Internet service provider (ISP) will manage multiple sites on one configuration. To help lower costs, support for shared hosting is needed.

- **Simpler integration with existing systems.** Internet commerce sites will often need to mirror and use data from companies' existing business processes. Businesses need simpler ways to set up systems that reflect inventory, write out to accounting systems, or track fulfillment.
- **Flexible support for payment.** Businesses and consumers need standards for secure, Internet-based payment. Solutions are needed to support payment between businesses, and between consumers and businesses.
- **Secure access.** A highly visible issue, security affects a number of aspects of Internet commerce solutions. Businesses need secure commerce sites to allow controlled access for consumers, business trading partners, and administrators.
- **Simpler, lower-cost business document processing, EDI-compatible.** Businesses need to manage and improve structured communications with other businesses. But the shift to the Internet can't mean an end to EDI. Businesses need backward compatibility with traditional EDI to ensure continuation of business that affects the bottom line.
- **Dynamic, promotional, searchable content management.** Businesses that sell need to manage electronic catalogs that display product and service offerings to customers in a clear, compelling, searchable fashion. In a consumer environment, such content needs to be highly promotional, supporting price and product promotions. Content must also support personalized service.

  For businesses with complex offerings, customers need to make selections easily, sometimes configuring product options on the fly.

- **Contextual transactions for online direct marketing.** Consumer marketers need simple tools for embedding product information and order forms in any context.
- **Standards-based solutions.** Businesses need to make investments in open, standard platforms and protocols. This lowers risk and ensures maximum interoperability between various components of a complete system.

Microsoft Internet Commerce Strategy

Microsoft is providing a comprehensive Internet commerce offering to meet the demanding needs of businesses creating commerce solutions. This includes the delivery of best-of-breed commerce products (components, tools, and APIs to enable extension), an open, secure-payment architecture, and complete solutions through partnerships with industry leaders.

Microsoft is currently delivering a server and tools commerce foundation based on Site Server, Enterprise Edition. Site Server runs on the Windows NT Server operating system, and extends Microsoft's Active Server platform—Internet Information Server, Microsoft Transaction Server, and the Component Object Model architecture. Site Server integrates with the Microsoft Internet Security Framework and Windows NT security to ensure support for secured access, authentication, and nonrepudiation. Microsoft's commerce foundation is secure, scalable, and reliable.

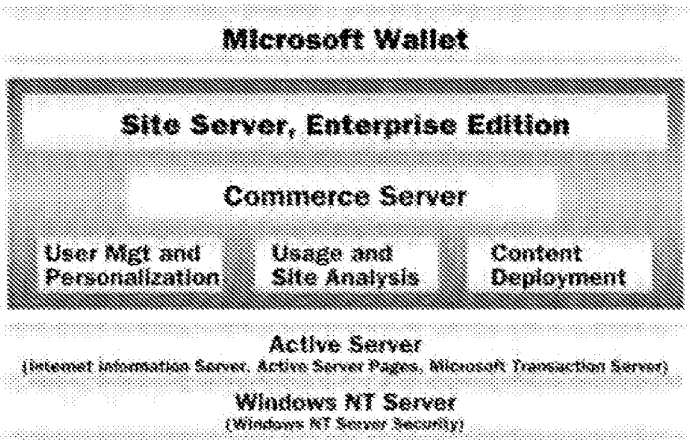

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Figure 3. Microsoft Internet commerce products

To support secure and convenient Internet-based payment for consumers, Microsoft is currently delivering an open payment architecture based on Site Server and the Microsoft Wallet. The Wallet is available free on the Web and will be part of future releases of Microsoft Internet Explorer and Microsoft Windows. The Microsoft payment architecture enables exchange of products, information, and services for different forms of payment on the Internet. Microsoft will support standards, such as Secure Electronic Transaction (SET) and SSL, to ensure interoperability of secure payment systems between banks and financial institutions, businesses, and consumers.

The creation and ongoing management of Internet commerce sites involves the efforts of multiple participants and the combination of several software offerings for a complete solution. Microsoft is working together with leading software companies, banks and financial institutions, systems integrators, site developers, and hosting service providers to make it easier for customers to build and manage complete Internet commerce solutions.

Server and Tools Foundation for Commerce

Site Server, Enterprise Edition

Microsoft Site Server, Enterprise Edition is a comprehensive Web site environment for the enhancement, deployment and advanced management of commerce-enabled Web sites on Windows NT Server and Internet Information Server.

Site Server consists of tools and components to commerce-enable your site, deploy content reliably between staging and production environments, and manage and conduct data analysis of your site. Commerce Server, the follow-on release to Merchant Server 1.0, is a Site Server feature that provides horizontal commerce functionality.

Commerce Server

Commerce Server provides the following key features:

- Server components for managing electronic catalogs, users, and orders.
- An Order Processing Pipeline feature to manage the order process workflow—more than 30 default components to allow price look-ups, product and price promotions, inventory look-up, and shipping and handling, among other functions.
- An Order Processing Pipeline API to enable the integration of software from independent companies, such as commercial tax calculation, enterprise requirements planning, accounting, payment, shipping modules and applications. More than 30 independent companies have delivered or are planning to deliver compatible components.
- Site creation and management tools, including the StoreBuilder Wizard, that enable easy, custom creation of commerce sites; these tools support remote creation and management for Hosting Service Providers.
- Buy Now, a new online selling technology that allows companies to embed product information and order forms in most any online context, such as online banner ads.

Figure 4 illustrates the functional elements of Commerce Server.

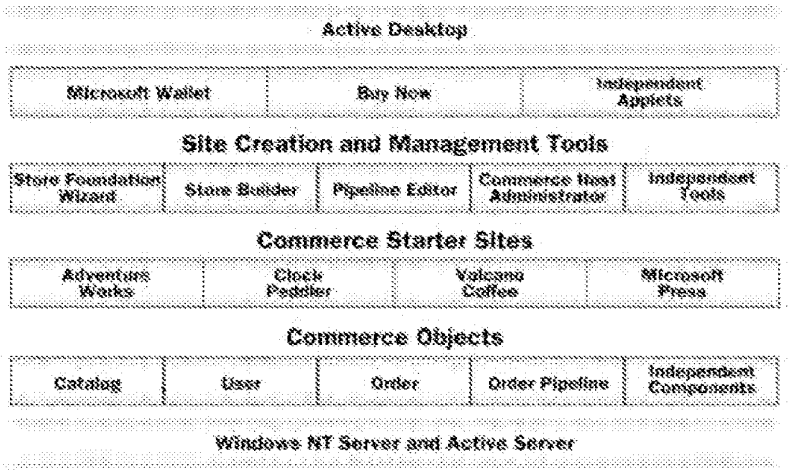

Figure 4. Microsoft Internet commerce functional components

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Commerce Server components

In conjunction with Active Server Pages, Commerce Server components provide the run-time environment for the presentation and operation of commerce Web sites. Commerce Server components are ActiveX™ Server components that supply the basic set of services for access to product information, access to user information, and creation of an order form for presentation to and processing by the Order Processing Pipeline. In addition, there are Commerce Server components for traffic collection, message management, and site debugging. The Commerce Server components allow developers to significantly shorten development time of sophisticated commerce sites.

Order Processing Pipeline

The Order Processing Pipeline (OPP) components are key to any commerce site. They allow businesses to enforce rules that direct the processing of orders through a specified sequence of stages and procedures. The OPP is a comprehensive data structure consisting of COM components that manage 14 stages of order processing.

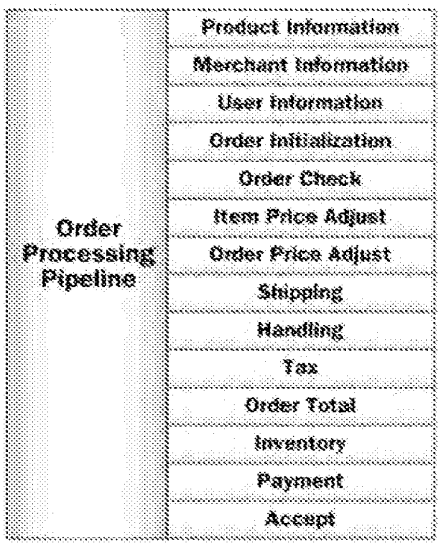

Figure 5. Order Processing Pipeline

Pipeline components included with Site Server are optional and can be integrated with existing systems or replaced with components supplied by independent software companies that are created to work with OPP interfaces. The interfaces of the Order Processing Pipeline are described in the Commerce Server Software Development Kit (SDK). The Order Processing Pipeline, by enforcing rules for a specified processing sequence, ensures component interoperability; this lets customers create a multitude of custom solutions with off-the-shelf add-ons.

Tools and starter sites

Commerce Server tools in Site Server makes it easier to build and maintain online sites that use Commerce Server components and the Order Processing Pipeline. These tools (Store Foundation Wizard, StoreBuilder Wizard, Commerce Host Administrator, and the Pipeline Editor) integrate with other site-creation and management tools such as Microsoft FrontPage® Web authoring and management tool, Microsoft Visual InterDev™ Web development system, Microsoft Internet Information Server Service Manager, and Microsoft SQL Server™ Enterprise Manager. These combined tools make it simpler for site developers to create and manage site virtual directories, site structure, database schema, and the Order Processing Pipeline configuration.

Starter sites, Active Server Pages templates delivered with Site Server, demonstrate the capabilities of the product to serve the needs of different businesses. Starter sites are used as a tool for learning how to implement certain types of functionality in a commerce site. Future releases of Site Server will support new starter sites to enable quick development of additional applications such as corporate purchasing, supply-chain trading, and distribution of digital goods and services.

Client components

- **Buy Now.** Buy Now enables consumers to make quick purchases from any site on the Internet. When the shopper clicks an online banner ad, product name, or any other link, Buy Now opens a window within any browser window to facilitate purchasing. The user is left in the context of the current site or page to complete the purchasing process

[illegible] purchasing. The user is left in the context of the current site or page to complete the purchasing process. Buy Now is integrated with the Microsoft Wallet on the client side and with the Site Server Commerce Server database and Order Processing Pipeline on the server side.
Businesses can include links that initiate Buy Now from within their Commerce Server–based store or catalog (for featured products, for example) or from sites or Web pages other than their own.

- **Microsoft Wallet.** Site Server integrates with and uses the Microsoft Wallet. By providing this support out of the box, users of Site Server can process transactions that are submitted by users of the Microsoft Wallet.

Site Server for business-to-business commerce

In order to meet the needs of businesses looking to lower the cost of creation of business-to-business commerce sites, Microsoft continues to invest heavily in developing enhanced business-to-business functionality. Future enhancements include:

- Corporate Purchasing and Supply-Chain Trading Starter Sites, to support rapid creation of solutions.
- Business Document Pipeline for managing the communication of structured business documents, such as ANSI x.12 transaction sets, between companies.
- Integration of business-to-business payment modules such as Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) solutions, together with independent software companies, allowing businesses to execute payments through the Internet.
- Enhanced Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) integration for tying in online commerce with existing ERP systems.
- Configuration and advanced search support for management of complex electronic catalogs as well as support for dedicated configuration management solutions from independent companies.

Business Document Pipeline

The Business Document Pipeline (BDP) is a workflow system similar in concept to the Order Processing Pipeline but designed to simplify the integration of structured business document communication into Internet commerce sites. The Business Document Pipeline is schema and transport independent. This gives developers of commerce sites a choice in the use of message formats (EDI or similar), and transports (S/MIME, Distributed Component Object Model [DCOM], EDI, or similar). BDP will support document translation, including a plug-in interface for independent company EDI translation software; data encryption for transmission over the Internet; document authentication via digital signatures; and transport independence to allow sending and receiving of documents over the Internet, VANs, or other networks.

The Business Document Pipeline, business-to-business starter sites, improved facilities for managing complex electronic catalogs, and simpler ERP integration will combine to form a powerful business-to-business commerce platform. Most important of all, businesses will develop sites more quickly and at less expense.

Microsoft Windows NT Server and Active Server

Internet Information Server and Active Server Pages

Microsoft Internet Information Server (IIS) is the only Web server integrated with the Microsoft Windows NT server operating system, providing a powerful platform for Web-based line of business applications. By optimizing around the Windows NT Server platform, IIS delivers high performance, excellent security, ease of management, and is up and running in minutes.

With IIS 3.0, Microsoft introduced Active Server Pages (ASP), an open, compile-free scripting environment in which you can combine HTML, scripts and server components to create dynamic HTML and to enable powerful Web-based business solutions. ASP supports virtually any scripting or component language, and provides the easiest way for Web developers to create powerful, dynamic Web sites on Windows NT Server.

Site Server runs on top of IIS and extends ASP. The starter sites that ship with Commerce Server are a collection of ASPs that call into commerce specific ActiveX server components.

Microsoft Internet Security Framework and Windows NT security

The Microsoft Internet Security Framework (MISF) is a comprehensive set of cross-platform, interoperable security technologies that support Internet security standards. Developers and Webmasters can use this set of technologies for a variety of applications, including secure communications, Internet commerce, and controlled access to information or resources. MISF technologies support existing Internet security standards. Applications using MISF technologies will be able to interoperate with other standards-based software. Microsoft is also actively participating in standards bodies to ensure continued interoperability.

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MISF technologies implemented to date include: Authenticode™ technology, CryptoAPI 1.0 and CryptoAPI 2.0, support for client authentication, support for SSL 3.0, and Private Communication Technology–secure (PCT-secure) channel protocols. MISF technologies will soon include a certificate server and Personal Information Exchange (PFX) 1.0 protocol. Support will also be incorporated for Transport Layer Security (TLS), the follow-on specification of SSL, currently near final specification by the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF).

Microsoft Windows NT Server offers excellent security services for account management and enterprise-wide network authentication. Large organizations need flexibility to delegate account administration and manage complex domains. Internet security concerns are driving the development of public, key security technology that must be integrated with Windows NT security. To meet these expanding needs, Microsoft is developing the Distributed Security Services Technology preview; a related article, "Microsoft Windows NT Distributed Security Services," (MSDN™ Library, PDC 97 Conference Papers) examines the components of the Windows NT Server Distributed Services Technology preview and provides details on its implementation.

For user authentication, Commerce Server integrates security mechanisms provided within Windows NT security and MISF:

- Windows NT Challenge/Response
- HTTP basic authentication
- Personal certificates

Commerce Server limits browser-based access to store management pages to users with Windows NT accounts that have been defined as administrators or store managers. In addition, Commerce Server has the capability of requiring account authentication for access to the store's file system, for users of the Windows NT file system (NTFS). It is recommended that customers use the Secure Sockets Layer support in IIS for the security of transactions between the client and the server.

Microsoft Transaction Server

Microsoft Transaction Server is designed to simplify the development of infrastructure needed to execute business logic. It provides services that make it easy for developers to handle security, directory, process and thread management, and database connection management. In addition, Microsoft Transaction Server provides a transaction monitor that enables transactional integrity across business components. Future versions of Site Server, Enterprise Edition will take advantage of Microsoft Transaction Server to enable transactional integrity as part of the Order Processing Pipeline.

Marble

Marble is the code name for commerce extensions for banks and financial institutions that need to create Web sites for the purpose of supporting financial transactions. Marble will enable financial institutions to execute and complete banking and brokerage transactions in a more secure manner through the support of Open Financial Exchange (OFX), a financial transaction protocol backed by Microsoft, Intuit, and CheckFree. Although the initial release of Marble is available separately, it is fully compatible with—and relies on—BackOffice and Site Server, Enterprise Edition components.

Open Payment Architecture

Microsoft provides an open and extensible payment architecture on the client and server. For the server, the Site Server APIs, or Order Processing Pipeline APIs, enable commerce site payment integration. For the client, the Microsoft Wallet and Wallet Payment Modules architecture serve as the point of integration. Leading payment software companies around the world are supporting this architecture with a diverse set of payment methods.

Support for SET and SSL

Microsoft's payment architecture not only supports multiple payment methods but multiple secure payment protocols as well, including SET and SSL. SET, a standard driven by a number of leading industry companies including Visa and Mastercard, is a powerful secure payment alternative. SET is a three-way protocol and manages the interfacing of consumer, merchant, and financial institution in one single message. A number of independent payment software companies are delivering SET payment solutions based on the Microsoft Wallet and Site Server API.

Microsoft Wallet Description

The Microsoft Wallet is a cross-server payment solution. It can be integrated into any commerce site, even sites that are not based on Site Server. The Microsoft Wallet is available as an ActiveX control for Internet Explorer users and as a Netscape plug-in.

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The Microsoft Wallet consists of the Payment Selector control and the Address Selector control. The Payment Selector control provides for the entry, secure storage, and use of various types of payment methods for paying for online purchases. The Address Selector control provides for the entry, storage, and use of addresses that can be referenced for shipping and billing during online order entry. The Payment Selector control also provides a programmatic interface for Wallet Payment Modules, plug-in modules created by independent payment software companies. In addition to open credit card solutions, Payment Modules will be created to support digital cash, private-label credit cards, check payment, and other methods.

Creation of Complete Solutions with Microsoft Commerce Partners

The creation and ongoing management of Internet commerce sites involves the efforts of multiple participants and the combination of several software offerings for a complete solution. Depending on the depth of any given solution, businesses may need to add order processing extensions, integrate with existing systems, and interface with payment systems and financial institutions. Microsoft's commerce partners enable customers to create custom solutions. They provide payment solutions, software extensions, hosting services, and integration and consulting expertise.

Payment solutions from independent software companies, banks, and financial institutions

Leading suppliers of payment software, credit processors, banks, and financial institutions from around the world are working with Microsoft to make it easy for customers to incorporate their payment solutions into the Microsoft Wallet and Site Server.

Payment and security technology companies

- CyberCash, Inc.
- CyberCharge
- DigiCash
- First Virtual Holdings Inc.
- GCTech, Inc.
- GO Software, Inc.
- GTE CyberTrust
- IC Verify
- GlobeSet, Inc. (formerly Interval, Inc.)
- Merchant Technical Services
- Paylinx Corp.
- RSA Data Security, Inc.
- Tellan Software, Inc.
- Trintech, Inc.
- VeriFone, Inc.
- VeriSign, Inc.

Banks and financial institutions

- American Express
- Bank America Merchant Services
- Barnett Bank
- Cardservice International, Inc.
- e-COMM
- First Data Corporation
- GZS
- JCB
- MasterCard International
- Old Kent Merchant Services
- Royal Bank of Canada
- SSB—Società per i Servizi Bancari
- Sumitomo Credit Service
- Unified Merchant Services, A FDC/Nations BankVenture
- Visa International
- Wells Fargo

Secure Electronic Transaction (SET) will enable consumers, businesses, and banks and financial institutions to

conduct secure, reliable transactions over the Internet. We're glad to be working with an industry leader such as Microsoft to help establish SET as a true, interoperable standard worldwide.

—Steve Herz, Senior Vice President, Electronic Commerce, Visa International

We are delighted to see Microsoft, a major Internet player, commit to SET—the standard that secures credit card transactions over the Internet for consumers, merchants and banks. MasterCard has worked with Microsoft, Visa, IBM and others to make SET a reality. Microsoft's formal entrance into the market should ensure that consumers get full-strength SET capabilities on their computers sooner rather than later.

—Steve Mott, Senior Vice President, Electronic Commerce/New Ventures MasterCard International

The development and hosting of sites, that include integrated payment options, must become a mass production phenomenon for consumer Internet commerce to become mainstream; Microsoft's efforts, with capabilities like the new StoreBuilder Wizard, are clearly a major step in the right direction.

—Debra Rossi, Senior Vice President, Wells Fargo

VeriSign and Microsoft have a history of working closely to make certificate acquisition seamless to the user and payment certificates are a natural extension of our current efforts. By providing a commerce platform that supports open, secure payment, Microsoft is helping to establish infrastructure to make Internet commerce a reality.

—Stratton Sclavos, President and CEO, VeriSign Inc.

VeriFone, a world leader in retail payment solutions, is working with Microsoft to offer customers secure, reliable, Internet payment solutions based on the Secure Electronic Transaction (SET) protocol. The Microsoft Wallet, along with the SET-compliant payment modules VeriFone and Microsoft are collaborating on, will help us ensure widespread distribution of consumer software that works with our merchant payment and financial institution gateway systems.

—Hatim Tjabi, CEO, VeriFone, Inc.

Trintech offers a comprehensive Internet payment software solution that supports the full end-to-end Secure Electronic Transaction protocol established by Visa/MasterCard. Working with Microsoft, we will be able to offer consumers, merchants and financial institutions a complete Internet commerce solution that includes the security of SET for their payment transactions.

—John McGuire, CEO, Trintech, Inc.

RSA, the supplier of a leading SET enabling toolkit, supports Microsoft's open payment efforts. Microsoft's support of the SET initiative will add tremendous momentum to the payment industry's efforts to drive SET as a true interoperable payment standard. We are pleased to be offering the world's most widely used security technology as part of this payment infrastructure.

—Jim Bidzos, President, RSA Data Security, Inc.

GC Tech recognizes the need for consumer wallets to be deployed at the platform level and we strongly support Microsoft's efforts towards the development of a standard wallet interface. We plan to integrate our GlobeID Payment Module with the Microsoft Wallet to heighten consumer convenience and confidence in Internet commerce.

—Fabrice de Comarmond, Executive Vice President, GC Tech, Inc.

First Data Corporation, a leading global processor of credit cards, is working with Microsoft to offer Internet commerce solutions to merchant customers of some of the world's leading banks. First Data provides services to approximately 1.8 million merchant outlets and 1,400 financial institutions—and through our partnership with Microsoft we can provide these clients with industry-leading, high-impact Internet selling solutions that work.

—Allen Weinberg, Senior Vice President, First Data Corp.

Microsoft's open payment architecture will help us integrate our payment services—including CyberCoin and PayNow, the leading digital cash and Internet check alternatives, and SET—transparently with Internet Explorer and Microsoft Windows software. This will clearly be a significant step towards the adoption of innovative payment services by consumers and merchants.

—Denis Yarg, Executive Vice President, Products and Operations, CyberCash Inc.

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—Dennis Yang, Executive Vice-President, Products and Operations, CyberCash Inc.

Microsoft's efforts in business-to-business commerce are naturally complementary to those of American Express. Customers will benefit from a complete solution including Microsoft's offering of tools and components beneath the commerce site, and Amex's back-end systems for payment processing, tracking, and reporting.

—Ed Gilligan, President, American Express Corporate Services

Internet commerce software extensions to Site Server

A number of companies are planning to offer product and service enhancements to Site Server allowing customers to obtain nearly customized solutions right out of the box.

- The Baan Company
- Belarc, Inc.
- Calico Technology
- CyberSource Corp.
- Dydacomp Development Corp.
- Elekom Corp.
- EveNTs Software Products, Inc.
- Great Plains Software, Inc.
- Harbinger Corp.
- Intelisys
- Interactive Coupon Network
- LitleNet
- Navision Software
- Net VR
- PeopleSoft, Inc.
- Portland Software, Inc.
- Premenos
- Release Software Corp
- SAP AG
- SAQQARA Systems, Inc.
- Sterling Commerce, Inc.
- TanData Corp.
- TAXWARE International, Inc.
- Technologies For Growth, International
- TSI International Software
- Vertex, Inc.

Sterling Commerce is working with Microsoft to help define the future of Electronic Commerce and EDI—a future that includes expanding integration of EDI compatible business messaging into Internet commerce applications.

—Brad Sharp, President, Interchange Software Group, Sterling Commerce, Inc.

Microsoft continues to be a leader in the delivery of horizontal online commerce functionality. SAP is working closely with Microsoft to simplify integration between Site Server, Enterprise Edition and R/3 for business-to-business and business-to-consumer commerce sites. Our goal is to make integration of leading online commerce technology with R/3 systems a near out-of-box experience for customers.

—Dr. Peter Zencke, Executive Board Member, SAP AG

Portland Software is integrating its ZipLock™ digital product distribution technology with Site Server, Enterprise Edition, to give Internet commerce customers an easy way to enable highly secure, automated electronic software distribution (ESD). Microsoft is providing Portland a commerce platform upon which to deliver this solution to the broadest possible audience.

—Charles Jennings, President, Portland Software, Inc.

The LitleNet DirectCommerce network provides a unique, integrated suite of services that remove the merchant's burden of building their own electronic commerce infrastructure. LitleNet offers secure Internet payment solutions together with order processing services for companies that need a just-in-time distributed fulfillment of both physical and digital goods. With integration in Site Server, Enterprise Edition, we can offer companies a true end-to-

end turnkey commerce package.

—Tom Litle, President, LitleNet, LLC

To meet the growing demand for effective corporate purchasing solutions, we've been developing state-of-the-art technology for an Internet-based system. One of our biggest development challenges is the business-to-business supplier solution. Microsoft's underlying horizontal Internet commerce infrastructure allows Intelisys to integrate our business-to-business supplier solutions quickly and efficiently. Thanks to Site Server, Enterprise Edition, we can spend more time focusing on value-added Intranet applications development—our core competency.

—Robert Barnes, Vice President of Product Development and Marketing,
Intelisys Electronic Commerce, LLC

Hosting services, systems integration, vertical solutions, and site-development services supporting Microsoft Internet Commerce

A rapidly growing number of expert developers, integrators, consultants, and hosting service providers (HSPs) are at the disposal of customers around the world. They not only deploy Internet commerce sites, but also manage the successful operation of 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week online businesses.

In addition to hundreds of Microsoft Solution Providers worldwide, the following companies offer hosting, integration, and consulting services around Site Server, Enterprise Edition:

- BBN Planet
- Deloitte & Touche LLP
- DIGEX
- Digital Equipment Corporation
- KPMG
- MCI
- Nubium
- SupplyWorks
- USWeb
- UUNET Technologies, Inc.
- Xplora

Web hosting is the future of Internet commerce. It provides high-performance, no hassle access to Internet commerce tools at an economical price. With Microsoft Windows NT Server and Site Server, Enterprise Edition, Web hosting can extend the Internet commerce capabilities of both small and large Web sites. Site Server, Enterprise Edition specifically addresses many of the commerce needs of UUNET's customers.

—Dave Foster, VP and General Manager, UUNET

As a leader in the industry, more businesses are looking to MCI in helping them move their Web sites beyond glorified billboards. Microsoft's Internet commerce products will allow more businesses to reap the benefits from 'Internet enabling' current business processes and applications like retailing, ordering, and transaction processing.

—John Scarborough, Director, Internet MCI Marketing

Microsoft's Internet commerce offering—including Site Server, Enterprise Edition—brings significant value to the market. We believe the extensibility, flexibility, and cost-effective scalability of Site Server, Enterprise Edition and (Windows) NT Server will be beneficial to many of our clients that require electronic commerce solutions.

—Robin Palmer, Partner, KPMG

Microsoft's Internet commerce offering will change the shape of the hosting business by helping to dramatically lower the cost of entry. We're offering customers a complete, robust turnkey dedicated hosting environment based on Windows NT Server and Site Server, Enterprise Edition.

—Earl Galleher, President, Web Site Management Group, Digex, Incorporated

Microsoft Internet Commerce Strategy Solutions

Microsoft's Internet Commerce Strategy meets the demanding needs of businesses creating commerce solutions. The

following table provides a summary of solutions to critical requirements identified above.

Requirement	Microsoft Internet Commerce Strategy Solution
1. Lower cost deployment and management of custom Internet commerce sites	* Site Server, Enterprise Edition Commerce Server components. * Tools: StoreBuilder Wizard, Pipeline Editor. * Starter sites. * Support for remote hosting by Internet service providers, allowing low-cost creation of commerce sites.
1. Simpler integration with existing systems	* Components offered by Microsoft Commerce Partner solutions that integrate with and extend Site Server, including those from Enterprise Requirements Planning and accounting vendors: SAP, Baan, Great Plains and so forth. * Site Server, Enterprise Edition Order Processing Pipeline API, enabling custom integration.
1. Flexible support for payment	* Open payment architecture and multiple Microsoft Commerce Partners offering payment solutions (listed above).
1. Secure access	* Integration with Microsoft Internet Security Framework and Windows NT security; Site Server, Enterprise Edition Commerce Server supports Windows NT Challenge/Response, HTTP authentication, and personal certificates.
1. Simpler, lower cost business document processing, EDI-compatible	* Planned enhancements including the Business Document Pipeline. * Leading independent EDI and electronic commerce software vendors providing solutions that will integrate with the Business Document Pipeline.
1. Dynamic, promotional, searchable content management	* Site Server, Enterprise Edition electronic catalog support. * Independent configuration management software companies that offer solutions that integrate with Site Server.
1. Contextual transactions for online direct marketing	* Site Server, Enterprise Edition Buy Now feature.
1. Standards-based solutions	* Support for TCP/IP, HTML, HTTP, COM / DCOM, Java, and ANSI X.12, SET, SSL, S/MIME.

Customers adopting Microsoft Internet commerce solutions

Microsoft's Internet Commerce Strategy addresses the fundamental needs of companies that want to build business-to-business commerce solutions. You need a solid and comprehensive commerce environment that supports structured business transactions, flexible order processing, electronic catalog management, and integration with existing systems.

existing systems.

—Roger King, Vice President, Sales and Marketing, Software Spectrum

A number of industry-leading businesses around the world have adopted Microsoft Internet commerce products, including Merchant Server 1.0. Many more companies are evaluating beta versions of Site Server, Enterprise Edition.

Among hundreds of businesses worldwide that have adopted Microsoft Internet commerce products are the following:

- 1-800-FLOWERS
- British Telecommunications PLC (BT)
- Club Dial
- CompUSA
- Dell Computer
- Digital Equipment Corp.
- Eddie Bauer
- Galeries Lafayette
- Gateway 2000
- Inacom
- Kraft Jacobs Suchard
- Lauda Air
- Motley Fool
- MPSNet
- Nautica International
- Software Spectrum
- Tesco
- Tower Records
- Unisys Corp.

New Internet Commerce Scenarios

There are a number of examples of Internet commerce taking place today. Scenarios that are becoming more common include online retail stores or catalogs, online business wholesaling, physical goods stores and catalogs, digital goods sites, services, and Web malls. Below are three scenarios that typify what will become common scenarios over the next several years for businesses around the world:

1. Internet-based corporate purchasing
2. Internet-based supply-chain trading
3. Internet-based direct marketing with contextual transactions

Scenario 1: MS Market—A Corporate Purchasing Virtual Enterprise

Corporate purchasing is the procurement of "indirect" materials for use by company employees, materials that are not used in the manufacturing or production process. Corporate purchasing is typically executed today with paper forms and purchasing managers.

At Microsoft, a tool called *MS Market* is being implemented on top of Site Server, Enterprise Edition. MS Market allows any employee to visit a centrally managed Web "supplies mall." This virtual mall contains Web sites featuring Boise Cascade office supplies, Barnes & Noble books, a catering vendor, a computer and peripherals vendor, and so on. To obtain a new book about management techniques, an employee links to the MS Market home page. MS Market knows who she is and where she is located by her logon ID. The employee selects the books link and brings up a categorized catalog and order form where she can search for hundreds of books pre-selected by Microsoft purchasing agents who have negotiated the titles and prices with Barnes & Noble. The employee selects the right book and places it on her order form. She then completes the purchase, verifying her group's cost center and her manager's name. When she submits the order, MS Market generates an order tracking number for her reference, sends notification via e-mail to her manager that contains a Web shortcut to the order (should the manager wish to see more details about the purchase), and sends the order electronically to Barnes & Noble for fulfillment. In this case, since the purchase total is only $20.00, the manager's specific approval is not required. Two days later, the book arrives at the employee's office.

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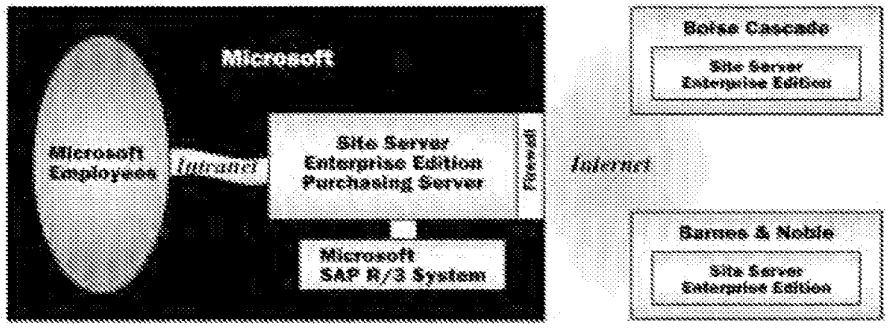

Figure 6. MS Market: employees buy from outside vendors.

Components and Functions of the MS Market System

- **Web browser.** Microsoft employees typically use Microsoft Internet Explorer, though any SSL-capable browser is sufficient.
- **Purchasing server** (Site Server, Enterprise Edition). The purchasing server resides inside Microsoft's firewall and serves a number of functions:
  - **Personalization:** manages user information and facilities for creating group-specific logon forms.
  - **Authorization/notification:** integrates with the Microsoft Exchange e-mail system supporting approval and notification.
  - **Order form:** manages orders and serves as aserver-side receptacle for multiple order items.
  - **Purchasing requisition generator:** creates purchase orders in Microsoft formats.
  - **Supplies mall:** hosts internal presentation of available supply vendors.
  - **ERP interface:** integrates with Microsoft's SAP R/3 system for tracking purchases and expenses.
- **Supplying vendor server** (Site Server, Enterprise Edition). The vendor server can reside either outside of Microsoft's firewall or on site at the supplier's site. The vendor server provides several functions:
  - **Catalog management:** provides display, promotion, and management of potentially complex product offerings.
  - **Personalization:** creates custom pages on a per company, per group/division, or even per individual basis.
  - **Business document communication:** depending on invoicing relationship with specific supplier, may generate structured invoice messages (ANSI X.12 and UN/EDIFACT format EDI messages, or native Business Document Pipeline format).

Benefits to Microsoft and Suppliers

- MS Market is a virtual enterprise between Microsoft and select vendors that leads to increased efficiency in business transactions.
- Corporate purchasing is a process where a high percentage of overall procurement transactions occur encompassing a relatively low percentage of overall business expenditures. In other words, a lot of management overhead takes place in manually executed corporate purchasing—automating this reduces costs and headcount needed to support a paper-driven system.
- MS Market enables Microsoft to serve its employees in the most efficient way possible, leading to higher productivity among employees. It's more efficient and puts information directly at employees' fingertips. For example, a single tracking number allows all parties to check status of the order.
- The centralized, high-volume relationship with suppliers allows for economy of scale.
- MS Market allows the Finance department to track expenses with high accuracy reports.

Scenario 2: ByteComp, Inc. Order Entry System—A Supply Chain Virtual Enterprise

Supply-chain trading refers to the sale of "direct" product that is either raw material used in the manufacturing process of the demanding business or goods to be distributed by the demanding business. Supply-chain purchasing is typically executed today by phone, fax, or mail between most companies. Many large "hub" companies operate EDI systems. These systems are usually inaccessible to small and medium-sized businesses that cannot afford to maintain full-time EDI staff.

In the following fictitious scenario, a manufacturer of hundreds of office supply products, called "ByteComp, Inc.," employs a supply-chain trading system over the Internet. The system, ByteComp, Inc. Order Entry System, allows ByteComp, Inc. resellers who don't support EDI today to execute forecasts, distributed requisition planning, and orders using the Web.

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A ByteComp, Inc. product reseller submits sales forecast data as part of the current order cycle to ByteComp, Inc. over the Internet. This data is then factored into a distributed requisition plan by ByteComp, Inc. The reseller buying agent accesses the ByteComp, Inc. Order Entry System over the Internet, using Windows NT Server authentication to access the site. The buying agent then reviews an order form based on an order template that was created from the distributed requisition plan. The order is submitted to ByteComp, Inc., who then generates an invoice and forwards this to the reseller. The office supplies shipment is then shipped from ByteComp, Inc.'s distribution center to the reseller location.

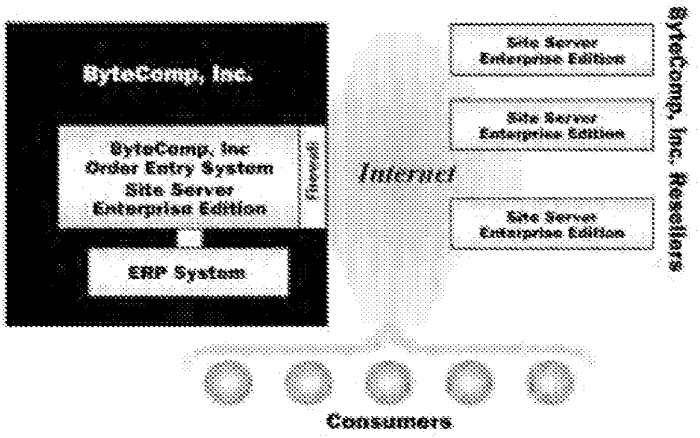

Figure 7. ByteCom, Inc. Order-Entry System: ByteComp partners are ordering from ByteComp across the Internet.

Components and Functions of the ByteComp, Inc. Order Entry System

- **Web browser.** Used by reseller to access Order Entry System, requires SSL.
- **Supplying vendor server** (Site Server, Enterprise Edition). Resides inside ByteComp, Inc.'s firewall to handle a number of functions:
  - **Catalog management:** provides display, promotion, and management of an extensive product offering; provides prices based on ByteComp, Inc.'s pricing discount structure.
  - **Order form:** manages the display of order forms based on distributed requisition plans.
  - **Data validation:** validates that data submitted in the order form is correct, preventing problems later that might affect customer service.
  - **Purchasing requisition generator:** creates purchase orders.
  - **Business document communication:** depending on invoicing relationship with specific reseller, may generate structured invoice messages (ANSI X.12 and UN/EDIFACT format EDI messages, or native Business Document Pipeline format).
  - **Pre-ship and customs notification:** forms can be generated and transmitted to shipping partners and customs agents.

Benefits to ByteComp, Inc. and Resellers

The ByteComp, Inc. Order Entry System, like MS Market, is a virtual enterprise between different companies, in this case between ByteComp, Inc. and select resellers. It provides several key advantages.

- Allows ByteComp, Inc. to extend the benefits of automated supply chain trading to a greater number of small and medium-sized trading partners.
- Improves customer service for resellers and customers of resellers.
- Provides more efficient forecasting for ByteComp, Inc. manufacturing.
- Decreases errors in order processing.

Scenario 3: 1-800-FLOWERS Mother's Day Campaign—Internet Direct Marketing

Direct marketing on the Web is nascent. Marketers have used the Web successfully to date as a survey tool. But direct marketing designed to capitalize on spontaneous purchase based on personal interest is just now becoming possible.

Two weeks before Mother's day, a frequent Web user is online and reading his favorite online magazine. Suddenly, he sees an ad from 1-800-FLOWERS, "Click and Order Now for Mother's Day. Get 10% off an already unbeatable price for a dozen premium roses." The consumer decides to take up the offer and clicks on the ad banner. To his delight, he doesn't leave the

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original online magazine site. A dialog box pops up that displays the roses, provides a description, tax, shipping and handling information, and includes a 10% discount. Using the Microsoft Wallet, the consumer chooses his mother's address—already entered in his Wallet—and selects his favorite frequent flier Visa card. He types a gift message into the gift message field and finishes with a quick click on the submit button. The whole process of purchasing the roses took 90 seconds from start to finish. The consumer is left to finish reading his article. Minutes later he receives e-mail confirmation from 1-800-FLOWERS for his order.

Components and functions of a Buy Now scenario

- **Web browser.** Any SSL supporting browser.
- **MS Wallet.** Manages the consumers' addresses and payment methods.
- **Buy Now client software.** A small client component.
- **Site Server, Enterprise Edition.** Used by direct marketer to manage the order processing for Buy Now transactions. Typically, Buy Now will be used by merchants who also run Site Server–based commerce sites.

Benefits of Buy Now

Buy Now allows online marketers to capitalize on spontaneous purchases by consumers based on personal interest. Consumers enjoy the benefits of executing quick, convenient transactions without leaving the context they are currently engaged in.

Summary

Dramatic opportunities exist today on the Internet for forward-thinking businesses.

Businesses have an opportunity to form virtual enterprises, incorporating close working relationships with other business trading partners. Virtual enterprises will take shape around multiple applications such as corporate purchasing and supply chain trading. The formation of virtual enterprises will separate businesses that compete well from those that don't.

Businesses can take advantage of a growing Internet channel for marketing directly to consumers. The Internet allows businesses to develop closer relationships with consumers. As consumers participate increasingly in online communities on the Internet, businesses will be able to reap the benefits of contextual transactions, merging commerce and community into a unified consumer experience.

The Microsoft Internet Commerce Strategy provides a commerce platform upon which businesses can take advantage of these opportunities. Microsoft's commerce platform is open, scalable, reliable, and based on standard protocols. This commerce platform provides low cost server, tools, and payment components along with a burgeoning set of interoperable solutions available from independent companies. The result is lower cost of secure deployment and ongoing management—a strong foundation for doing business on the Internet.

The information contained in this document represents the current view of Microsoft Corporation on the issues discussed as of the date of publication. Because Microsoft must respond to changing market conditions, it should not be interpreted to be a commitment on the part of Microsoft, and Microsoft cannot guarantee the accuracy of any information presented after the date of publication.

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Newsbytes

December 17, 1997, Wednesday

Kicking Tires, Virtually, Via Cars.com

LENGTH: 595 words

DATELINE: CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, U.S.A.

(NB) -- By Bob Woods, Newsbytes. Classified Ventures, a new World Wide Web company created out of a partnership with the Times Mirror Co. [NYSE:TMC], Tribune Co. [NYSE:TRB], and the Washington Post Co. [NYSE:WPO], said it will create a syndication-like Web site that will help newspapers sell classified advertising. The first of several Web ventures will focus on classified auto sales, with the "cars.com" site.

Cars.com is described by company officials as a Web site that will offer consumers not only online information about new and used vehicles, but largest, most current inventory of vehicles available for sale on both a local and national scope as well.

Classified Ventures spokesperson Ernie Clark told Newsbytes that cars.com will be able to compete with the likes of competitors Auto-By- Tel and Microsoft's CarPoint because of four factors: inventory, with immediate access to ads from newspaper properties owned by Classified Venture's parent companies; the "cars.com" universal resource locator (URL), an "easy to remember" Web site location; the site's focus on automotive information and ads; and the company's focus on building a national brand with local established branding coming from newspapers around the US.

The site will be accessible through the Web sites of affiliates, as well as the worldwide site. Local newspapers can choose to blend cars.com pages into the look and feel of their own local Web sites, officials said.

Besides classified listings from its affiliate newspapers, cars.com will offer thousands of vehicle reviews and other resources and services for buyers, sellers and owners of vehicles. Search functions, finance calculators, and editorial content on new and used autos will be featured, officials said.

Initially, a preview site will offer classified vehicle listings from eight markets, including four of the US's 10 largest, through Classified Venture's parents' newspapers: the Chicago Tribune, the Los Angeles Times, Newsday and The Washington Post. Web sites from these papers will also serve as local entry points for cars.com.

Clark would not reveal other Web sites that Classified Ventures is planning to build. But he said a person only has to look at what local classified ads offer to guess where the company will go next. Company officials said, though, that each additional Classified Ventures service will be focused in bringing consumers complete online information and resources, including buying decision-support tools, as well as the most comprehensive listings of products for sale for its market space.

Cars.com will gain a valuable outpost in cyberspace -- besides its Web site -- as it will become a "leading automotive services advertiser" for AOL Networks, the Internet online services division of America Online. The two-year, multi-million dollar agreement means that cars.com will be one of the primary links users see when they search for sites or information regarding motor vehicles in key "Auto" related areas throughout AOL.

The cars.com site is on target to enter a "preview" stage in January, although Clark said the Web listings may be opened later this month. Full implementation is expected by the end of 1998's first calendar quarter.

Cars.com will be at http://www.cars.com .

Reported By Newsbytes News Network: http://www.newsbytes.com .

(19971216/Press Contacts: Ernie Clark, Classified Ventures, 312-575- 2726; Susan Brophy, 312-228-6874, or Rashmi Turner, 312-228-6889, both of Ketchum Public Relations)

LOAD-DATE: July 10, 1998

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TYPE: NEWS

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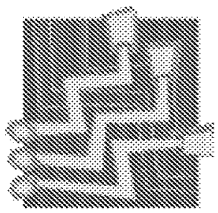
Proven, Proprietary Technology



Be Free's technology is unique. The company has developed the first-ever product for serving affiliate networks, allowing retailers to stretch beyond their on-line storefronts and sell products right where the consumers are: on content sites. That same technology will allow thousands of content sites--large and small--to benefit directly from the explosion in on-line commerce. Combined with our advanced advertising targeting engine, this affiliate serving technology creates new revenue streams for retailer and affiliate alike.

BFAST(TM)- Be Free Affiliate Serving Technology (TM)
An "Affiliate program" allows a merchandiser to sell goods to users through thousands of "virtual stores" that are located on content sites, search engines, and ISPs. In return for hosting a "virtual store," sites typically receive a percentage of sales that result from the affiliate listing. Affiliate networks allow retailers to generate traffic and sales at a fraction of the cost of regular, repeated advertising campaigns. These networks also directly link marketing costs to sales, making marketing a more predictable, measurable line item.

Until now, individual retailers had to invest hundreds of thousands of dollars constructing the software and systems to track their affiliate program. On September 8, 1997, however, Be Free unveiled leading-edge technology available to retailers at a fraction of the cost of developing a proprietary server.

Be Free Affiliate Serving Technology (BFAST) allows merchandisers to erect thousands of virtual storefronts across a myriad of affiliate sites. It lets them continue to use their centralized transaction engine of choice, whether that be in-house, Microsoft Site Server, Netscape Merchant System, or Oracle Commerce Server. It provides complete management solution, from enrollment, buyer tracking, decision support, executive information, and affiliate processing (accounting, reporting, and affiliate payments). BFAST then allows INDIVIDUAL storefront management, based on key decision support factors like viewing/transaction rates, inventory turnover, comparative success. Contact us to register for the tour. If you have your password, you can enter the demonstration site now.

BFIT(TM)- Be Free Intelligent Targeting(TM)

For the first time in history, an advertiser can deliver an individually-tailored message to each member of a mass audience with the Be Free targeted-marketing engine. Be Free has developed patent-pending, next generation targeting techniques that allow far greater control and focus than existing technologies. Be Free brings true one-to-one marketing to its clients and their advertisers, giving them the ability to reach the individual consumer most likely to buy, rather than a group of people who fit the "typical buyer" (or traditional "target market") profile. Rudimentary targeting (e.g., by browser, system software, and/or ISP) has already demonstrated its ability to increase advertisement click-through rates four-fold and has therefore allowed sites that use these methods to charge a proportionately higher CPM (cost per thousand impressions). Contact us to register for the tour. If you have your password, you can enter the demonstration site now.

The Advantages of Integrated Technology

Virtual storefronts do more than sell a lot of goods; they create a presence controlled by the retailer. In real-world, low-margin businesses (grocery stores, bookselling in retail), retailers create value by leveraging access to that space; selling or trading high visibility space to suppliers for discounts or cash. The retailer then provides detailed reporting on sales that result. Be Free's software creates virtual storefronts by (1) tightly integrating affiliate management software (BFAST) and advertising delivery software (BFIT)and (2) providing detailed tracking about what customers see, how often they see it, and what they have been interested in buying--- all on a storefront by storefront basis.

By creating "virtual storefronts," we allow retailers to generate new revenue streams from their affiliate network. In a highly competitive business where margins tend toward zero, leveraging the retail presence to generate completely new revenue streams (advertising, product placement) provides a key advantage to players with a major presence. A retailer can leverage its network to bring hundreds of millions of monthly impressions to its suppliers and other advertisers. Our integrated affiliate and advertising technologies allow our client to offer a supplier golf-club maker virtual shelf-space (advertising) on those virtual storefronts that have been successfully selling sports-related merchandise.

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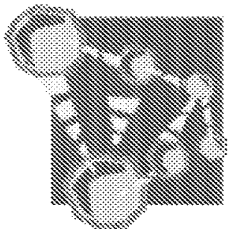
The be Free® Network

Be Free has developed an award-winning network of personalized, interactive Internet media programming channels to deliver entertainment, sports, news, and information tailored specifically to each user, based on its technologies. Two proprietary web sites developed by the Company are already generating revenues.



Experience Kathy Ireland

The Internet is a great place for us to learn about one another, explore new ideas, and work to solve our problems.

- Kathy Ireland

Launched on October 20, 1996, the Official Kathy Ireland Site shows that there is much more than meets the eye to world famous actress and business woman Kathy Ireland. Kathy's site, produced by Be Free, includes feature articles and tips on fitness, grooming, and family fun. Kathy uses her site as a forum to answer mail from her friends on-line and to explore new issues with her thousands of visitors.

Enter to win! Pittsburgh Penguins

We are very enthused about reaching out to our fans in this new and exciting way. The web site will give fans a way to stay up with the latest news and information on the Penguins, no matter where they live.

- Penguins owner Howard Baldwin

The Official Pittsburgh Penguins Site launched on September 14, 1996, featuring previews and summaries of each Penguins game and a "Living Yearbook" with all of the Penguins players, including personal profiles, photos, and statistics. Memorable moments in the team's history are archived in the "Glory Days" section of the site. Fans can check the team's

schedule and get up-to-the-minute information on promotions and special pricing in the "Take Your Seats" section. The latest news releases are posted in the "Pens In The News" section, as well as updates on the team's many community relations activities. The "Talk to the Pens" section gives fans the opportunity to contact the team, the coaches, and the front office directly.

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BE FREE AFFILIATE MANAGEMENT SERVICE CHOSEN BY ELECTRONIC NEWSSTAND, INC.

PITTSBURGH, PA, December 15, 1997 - Be Free Corporation, an innovative service provider to online retailers, has signed a three-year agreement with The Electronic Newsstand, Inc., to manage the Newsstand Network for this leading online direct sales vendor of discount magazine subscriptions.

Beginning in January 1998, Be Free will manage and operate all technical functions of Electronic Newsstand's fast growing affiliate network using its Be Free Affiliate Serving Technology™ (BFAST™) solutions package. This unique package will streamline the process of signing on new affiliates, monitor sales, check inventory and perform other reporting tasks, Be Free said, adding that the system is highly secure and protects customer privacy by not recording individual contact information.

Electronic Newsstand has also licensed Be Free's Intelligent Targeting™ Solutions system (BFIT™) to target, place, and track advertisements on their site, and Electronic Newsstand may, at its option, extend this advertising placement across the Newsstand Network. BFIT provides an end-to-end advertising management solution that includes placement, tracking, automated campaign fulfillment, reporting and decision support tools and invoicing.

"The creation of a large affiliate network is central to the success of our marketing strategy," said Brian Hecht, president and CEO of Electronic Newsstand. "Our long-term goal is to generate sales from thousands of diverse sites, and we believe Be Free's system will make that possible.

Since there are no other players offering a complete end-to-end solution right now, our only other choice would have been to build our own affiliate management system. Contracting through Be Free's service bureau made the best sense for us."

"Electronic Newsstand joins BarnesandNoble.com and Public Broadcast Marketing Inc. as an early beneficiary of the Be Free service bureau," said Tom Gerace, president of Be Free Corporation. "All three organizations have lowered their development and maintenance costs. In addition, our relationship with Electronic Newsstand demonstrates the effectiveness of syndicated selling for a diverse group of product and service industries. We see this as a real opportunity to grow and diversify as an end-to-end systems provider."

Gerace added that in magazine publishing and sales, where prices and terms can change very quickly, it is critical that an

affiliate network be integrated into the seller's catalog - (the list of products and services) - as well as the commerce site where the transaction occurs.

The Electronic Newsstand, Inc., headquartered in Washington, DC is an online media company dedicated to selling discount magazine subscriptions directly to users. The company owns and operates the Electronic Newsstand at www.enews.com, which features the largest selection of magazine resources on the Web. Electronic Newsstand provides users the guaranteed lowest subscription offers on the Internet in a content-rich environment.

Be Free Corporation, headquartered in Pittsburgh, is a service provider to on-line media and retail sites. The company specializes in marketing information services, including BFAST technology for affiliate management and BFIT software for targeted advertising delivery. Both BFAST and BFIT are available through the Be Free service bureau or through software license agreements.

Contact:
Tom Gerace, President
Be Free, Inc.
617.497.5630
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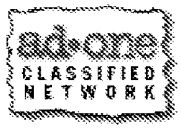
Steve Gaynes
Stanton Crenshaw Communications
212.780.1900 (ext.521)



About AdOne

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An AdOne Customer Success Sidebar

The Daily News Surges Toward $100,000 in New Annual Revenues Using AdOne Online Classified Ad Solution

Profile The Daily News serves the city of Longview in the southwest corner of Washington state, and maintains a full-featured Web site at www.TDN.com. It has offered online classified advertising since November 1996 when the 25,000 circulation paper began using a variety of AdOne's services and products. The Daily News projects revenues from online classifieds in their first year will reach $100,000 - on an up-front cash outlay of only $1,000.

AdOne Results Like many publications considering a move to online classifieds, The Daily News came to AdOne with significant skepticism, but according to Advertising Director Bill Marcum, AdOne delivered. "AdOne told us we could make additional revenues by putting our classifieds online and they were right," Marcum says. "We had no idea it would be this successful. Back in November of 1996, we projected $36,000 for our first year online revenues. Now we're projecting $100,000 - triple our original figure. The success of AdOne completely blew our sales and revenue goals out of the water."

Marcum says that the results have been so impressive that he's encouraged other papers to put their classifieds online. "A 105,000 circulation paper may make $80,000 in the first six months," he says, "And I ask them, 'Why leave that money on the table?' " Marcum also adds that, contrary to the conventional wisdom, a newspaper doesn't need an existing Web site to benefit from this new revenue stream. "The truth is that even a paper with no Web site, and no cash out of pocket, can make good money with online ads by taking advantage of AdOne's services," he says.

Happy Customers Classified Advertising Manager Rhonda Madison says that Daily News sales people offer online placement to every advertiser buying a regular print classified. At an affordable 50 cents/day, 85 percent of all advertisers buy the online service. In December 1996, The Daily News sold 11,600 ad appearances (placement of one ad for one day), but by May 1997, that figure had nearly doubled to 21,000 appearances. Madison says that the paper's advertisers are very pleased with the results. "For example, a new car dealer recently ran a help wanted ad and tracked the hits. Over half of all responses came from the Internet," she says. "Another advertiser who manages retail properties tells us that prospective buyers are shopping via the Web classifieds, and sales are closing in two to three days, rather than the couple weeks it often took in the past."

Madison adds that consumers using the online service "think it's outstanding, particularly with features like the AdHound intelligent agent, which does searching for you then sends an e-mail when it finds an ad that

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matches your request. We know of people who are using it to look for jobs online. It's a huge time-saver for them, and that encourages them to keep using the system."

Leveraging a Network of Online Papers As with all online businesses, one important question for Web-based classified ads is how to pull interested consumers to the listings. Bill Marcum says that a key reason The Daily News selected AdOne is the extra muscle provided by the AdOne Classified Network - a convenient central location where buyers can search online through the classified ads of all publications belonging to the Network.

"We pull 6,000 hits a month to our classifieds from our TDN.com Web site, and an additional 15,000 hits from the AdOne Network's search engine," Marcum explains. "That's where the real success happens. My hit rate has grown each time another local paper rolled-out their classifieds. Through the Network, I'm getting help from other publications online - and I'm helping them - by making it easier for advertisers to sell, and helping readers to find the right items. If someone's looking for a red Corvette, they can search the classified ads for more papers in our region and have a better chance of success. Then they'll be more likely to come back again."

Web Design A number of factors came together to make The Daily News' online classifieds such a success. Marcum says that they began with AdOne's Web design services, which took only one week to build and launch a customized classified Web page. "AdOne created a Web page for our classifieds that mirrors our existing look and feel, and can be entered directly from our Web site," Marcum explains. "Unless you look at the URL, you'll never know that you just jumped to the server at AdOne back in New York, which hosts the classified ads. This allows us to maintain our own identity and continue building our relationships with our advertisers and readers."

Marcum notes that AdOne provided a seamless transition to their new online capabilities. He says that AdOne worked closely with the paper's existing front-end ad-taking vendor to make the transfer of data to the Web page very easy - and also to save the sales people time in posting new ads.

Low Cost Start-Up AdOne's classified ad solutions can be implemented with no large initial investment, and in fact, The Daily News spent only $1,000 up-front to launch their online effort. Rhonda Madison explains that the cost went to training their sales force. "AdOne's training was exceptional," she says. "We have a very experienced sales staff but no one was familiar with the Internet. AdOne gave them a good grasp of the basics, explaining how to work with the new technology, and also gave them insight into why it makes particularly good sense to use the Internet for classified ads."

Sold on Service Regarding the service The Daily News has received from AdOne, Bill Marcum says he was amazed that a small newspaper in the Pacific Northwest got such prompt attention. "We're sold on AdOne's services and their people," he says. "They respond in a very short time and resolve problems quickly. I'd say they made me go Wow and customer service doesn't often Wow me."

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service doesn't often WOW me.

For more information, contact AdOne at 1-800-555-4231 or sales@adone.com.

Home | Publications | AdHound | About AdOne | Place an Ad
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Send comments and suggestions to AdOne's Webmaster.

"pcOrder is a company that bears evaluation... Take a look at pcOrder's solutions. Examine the elements of the pcOrder solution on the basis of cost savings as well as from a customer service perspective. Reconsider in-house solutions in light of saving time and money via utilization of pcOrder's components."

Gartner Group Report, Dec. 29,1997 - Van Baker

WHO WE ARE:

pcOrder provides Value-Added Resellers with technology and services to connect you to your customers.

pcOrder is a key technology supplier to channel leaders such as ECadvantage by MicroAge, Avnet, GE Capital, Compucom, and Hewlett-Packard.

pcOrder's two key products enable you to use e-commerce technology to drive sales productivity and increase revenue.

- pcOrder Online streamlines the sales process by providing you with everything you need to service your customers quickly and efficiently.
- pcOrder's Web Storefront provides you with a total Reseller e-commerce platform at a fraction of the cost of building your own.

WHO WE AREN'T:

pcOrder is NOT a site for buying computers.
pcOrder is NOT an IT product vendor for end users.
pcOrder is NOT an expensive solution to the electronic commerce problem.

WE ARE THE CHANNEL'S LEADING PROVIDER OF E-COMMERCE SOLUTIONS

"The pcOrder technology is the perfect complement to our electronic commerce solution and will continue to allow us to set the standard in exceeding our customers' requirements. By combining our warehouse on the Web with pcOrder, we will be able to give better service to our customers and lower their cost of transactions as well as ours."

Ed Anderson, CEO of CompuCom

WEB STOREFRONT 3.0:

Powering your electronic commerce initiatives with pcOrder's solution allows you to combine the Internet's flexibility and convenience with our award-winning technology.

For a limited time pcOrder is offering this total Reseller e-commerce platform at a reduced cost. You can begin to expand your business and make more money for only $10K for 15 months. That is a savings of $2500 off of our base offering.

WE'VE DONE THE HARD PART

pcOrder provides you with a total Reseller commerce platform at a fraction of the cost of building your own.

WE OFFER:

- Real Time Pricing and Availability from all major distributors
- Detailed Product Information from over 1,000 vendors with links to manufacturer websites.
- Industry Leading Configuration Technology
- Online Order Submittal System
- Fully Customizable Interface

INCREASE MARGINS

- Eliminate returns due to improper and unauthorized orders
- Use the industry leading configuration engine and product database to accurately assemble standard bundles

INCREASE REVENUE AND EFFICIENCY

- Maximize the Internet's reach to generate new business
- Reduce the amount of time Sales Representatives spend generating quotes and processing orders
- Reduce order processing costs through electronic ordering

CONTROL YOUR CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

- Create a Web Storefront with a look and feel that reflects your company and the needs and requests of your customers
- Easily integrate the storefront with your current website or your customer's Intranet

INCREASE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

- Provide your customers with their specific pricing and availability
- Offer customer access to detailed product information
- Customers can order online, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

As the business model for the Computer industry continues to change and customers increasingly demand

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access to Internet buying tools, it is essential for you to enhance your competitive advantage by providing access to the most advanced electronic commerce solution available -- pcOrder's Web Storefront 3.0.

DR407970

"pcOrder has helped us leapfrog the competition by giving us the technology to serve customers with the speed and efficiency that they expect."

Jim Arnold, Executive Vice President of Lewan and Associates

STANDARDS MANAGEMENT:

pcOrder's industry leading technology and electronic commerce solutions allow Resellers thrive in the new Computer Industry. The pcOrder client application and Web Storefront are the keys to driving customer satisfaction, raising efficiency, and increasing margins.

Customers are increasingly requesting the ability to purchase from custom corporate catalogs. Our new Standards Management module is designed with the same goals in mind. In order to maintain a competitive edge, pcOrder offers you the opportunity to provide your customers with the flexibility and convenience of custom catalogs and product bundles, integrated into our complete Reseller commerce platform.

pcOrder's Standards Management module allows you to:

DRIVE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

- Tailor your e-commerce initiatives to your customer's procurement preferences
- Easily create a unique catalog view and custom product set for each of your customers
- Online ordering over the Internet, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

RAISE EFFICIENCY

- Leverage the pcOrder system to deliver state-of-the-art e-commerce at a fraction of the cost of building from scratch
- Easily allow your team or your customers to maintain standard bundles

INCREASE MARGINS

- Eliminate returns due to improper and unauthorized orders
- Use the industry leading configuration engine and product database to accurately assemble standard bundles

Business Wire

April 7, 1998, Tuesday

DataMark's Books Now Division To Provide Virtual Bookstores For ElectricVillage's Network of Radio Station Web Sites

LENGTH: 715 words

DATELINE: SALT LAKE CITY

April 7, 1998--

Radio-VillageNet Bookstores Will Be Customized to Reflect Individual Stations' Look and Feel

DataMark Holding Inc. (NASDAQ: DTAM) Tuesday announced that its Books Now Inc. subsidiary has signed an agreement with ElectricVillage to build and maintain custom Internet bookstores for ElectricVillage's national network of 325 radio station Web sites. Each bookstore will be built to reflect each station's format. Books Now Inc. (www.booksnow.com), a three year old company, provides the book buying public the opportunity to shop from home, through its Virtual Bookstore and through its strategic alliances with hundreds of national magazines such as Cosmopolitan, Field & Stream, Science News and Town & Country. The service, available 24 hours a day, every day of the year, via telephone access or through the World Wide Web, offers over 500,000 titles and a powerful, yet easy-to-use search engine. "Unlike the other large Internet book sites on the Web today, Books Now's business model is to build a quality bookstore offering that leverages our partner's brand," remarked David Chazin, president of Books Now Inc. "We believe that the branding and promotional strengths of ElectricVillage's radio station clients will allow us to sell books into a market from which we might otherwise be excluded." "Books are an obvious early success story in the evolution of electronic commerce," said Carl Koppel, president and chief operating officer of ElectricVillage. "Our agreement with Books Now allows our affiliates to participate in this proven revenue stream with a virtual storefront that is customized to reflect each station's format. For example, we will have a country music bookstore, and a rock music bookstore. The ability to customize storefronts clearly places Books Now as the best solution for our radio station customers."

About DataMark

DataMark Holding Inc. is an Internet services company specializing in complex Web hosting and content distribution. It utilizes state-of-the-art server, Internet connectivity and database facilities from its Salt Lake City headquarters. DataMark provides complete Internet solutions to corporate and other clients in a variety of industries. Its Books Now subsidiary, provides the book buying public the opportunity to shop from home, through its Virtual Bookstore and through its strategic alliances with hundreds of national magazines such as National Review, Southern Living, Cosmopolitan and Field & Stream. DataMark's WorldNow subsidiary operates an interconnected community of television station Websites throughout the country.

About ElectricVillage

ElectricVillage is the radio industry's preeminent full-service Web partner. ElectricVillage provides a complete array of Internet services, including Web site design and hosting, advertising sales and support, e-commerce capabilities, and tools for creating, maintaining, and leveraging a listener database. In addition, ElectricVillage distributes award-winning format-specific Web site content in a variety of forms, both syndicated and customized, to an extensive national network of radio station Web sites. Radio-VillageNet is a joint initiative of ElectricVillage and the Katz Radio Group, the radio industry's leading ad rep firm. ElectricVillage can be found on the Web at www.ElectricVillage.com. -0- Note to Editors: ElectricVillage logo art for press use is available at http://www.ElectricVillage.com/evhome/evnew/art.html

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or
Books Now Inc.
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or
ElectricVillage
John Simmons, 408/477-4480, Ext.160
jsimmons@electricvillage.com

Today's News On The Net - Business Wire's full file on the Internet

with Hyperlinks to your home page.

URL: http://www.businesswire.com

LOAD-DATE: April 8, 1998

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

DISTRIBUTION: Business Editors/Computer and Publishing Writers

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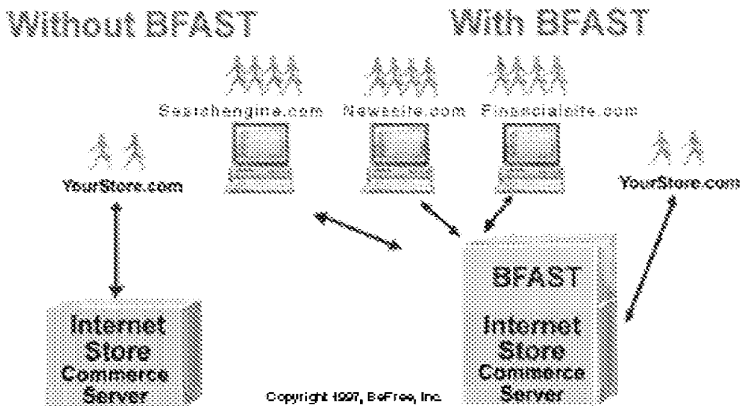
The Opportunity: Affiliate Networks: A Revolution in Retail

- Maximize your reach
- Drive transactions through your electronic commerce site
- Grow online sales more cost-effectively than with CPM advertising

An Affiliate Network is a Key Piece of your Retail Electronic Commerce Puzzle

What Is An Affiliate Network?



What is an Affiliate Network?

Affiliate network sales means selling in context: selling your products and services by erecting virtual storefronts within thousands of high-profile web sites. You display your merchandise directly on the affiliate web sites, driving the sales transactions back through your existing electronic store. An affiliate network lets you extend your reach and maximize your impression-to-sale ratio through affinity-selling. Today's leading online merchandisers find that affiliate networks result in dramatically-increased sales at a fraction of the cost of CPM advertising.

Create your Affiliate Network!

Within four weeks, one client was driving 500,000 more people to their site each day! You can too, with BFAST and BFIT:

An affiliate network is NOT:

Banner advertisements that are circulated on a cost or commission-per-transaction basis, because:

- With banner ads, items are not placed in context, *resulting in*

response rates that are half that of embedded affiliate links. (The Forrester Report, *Syndicated*

- Install Be Free software
- Enroll affiliates
- Erect your virtual storefronts
- Begin selling in context!

Use BFAST to rapidly build an affiliate network, soliciting, screening, approving, and enrolling affiliates. Then let BFAST assist you in rapidly creating thousands of virtual storefronts within your affiliates' compelling web sites, selling to consumers in context. Affiliates can begin displaying merchandise immediately upon approval. You and your affiliates can use the extensive decision support information to maximize your online sales.

Manage your Affiliate Network!

Apply the same sophisticated retail techniques you use in the real world to your electronic commerce efforts, in real time:

- Respond to the marketplace
- Manage your display space
- Know your numbers

BFAST and BFIT offer a complete, executive style decision support interface, including performance reports, sales reports, cost and effectiveness analyses, and display-space trending. A complete ad hoc interface allows you to answer the right questions for carrying out your retail strategy.

Selling, December, 1997)
- Rotating banner ads do not allow an affiliate to choose the individual items from your catalog *that will appeal most to their audience*. In fact, since they do not integrate with your commerce server, only a tiny subset of your catalog ends-up on the banner network. Additionally, because they are not integrated with your commerce engine, banner networks will continue to display out of stock products!
- There is no way to carry out sophisticated display strategies. *You cannot control your brand,* because you cannot control where or when your products are displayed.

Don't be fooled! Build a real affiliate network with BFAST.

Barnes and Noble, the world's largest bookseller, uses BFAST and BFIT to manage their

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Affiliate Network on over 40 of the top 50 Internet sites including MSN, CNN, Lycos, The New York Times and Webcrawler.

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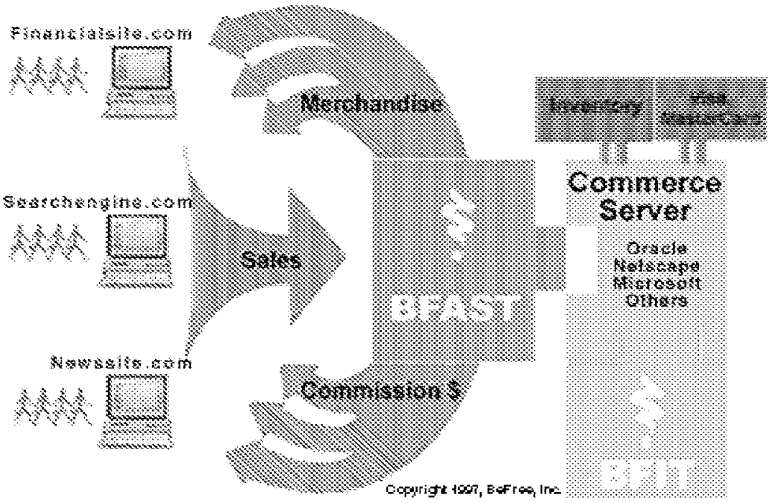
Sell More: BFAST Affiliate Technology

Syndicated selling (affiliate network selling) will take over... [and] rapidly outpace both Internet shopping malls and destination-only stores. - Forrester Research, February 1997.



Be Free Affiliate Serving Technology (BFAST) is a complete, paperless solution for the entire business process of enrolling, supporting, tracking, and managing affiliate networks, including sophisticated decision support and executive information tools.

Affiliate Solicitation and Enrollment: With BFAST, you have an integrated set of tools for accepting online applications by prospective affiliates; screening and approving affiliate applications; preparing standardized or individualized affiliate commission, incentives, and bonus packages; and automated management by account executives. Once enrolled, your affiliates have access to an automated online interface to assist

BFAST allows you to

- Enroll and approve affiliates
- Display your merchandise/services across thousands of virtual storefronts
- Drive transactions through your e-commerce site
- Track impressions, click-throughs and transactions
- Automatically manage storefront displays for maximum sales
- Command a complete marketing-intelligence and decision support system

them in creating storefronts on their sites.

Affiliate Sales Processing: With BFAST, you can track where and when merchandise has been seen, inquired about, and purchased. Track merchandise impressions, click-throughs, and transactions in real time. Keep your affiliates well-informed, so they can maximize your exposure.

Decision Support: BFAST includes a complete decision support interface for both you and your affiliates. You can individually or collectively manage storefronts by context, merchandise category, product, or a variety of other factors.

Affiliate Account Processing: BFAST includes a complete transactional system for aggregating, reporting, and distributing commissions, incentives, and bonuses to affiliates. BFAST integrates easily with the most common business accounting systems, as well as Electronic Fund Transfer and Online Banking services.

The [information-enabled] virtual value chain is determining real margin in competitive markets.
-Harvard Business Review

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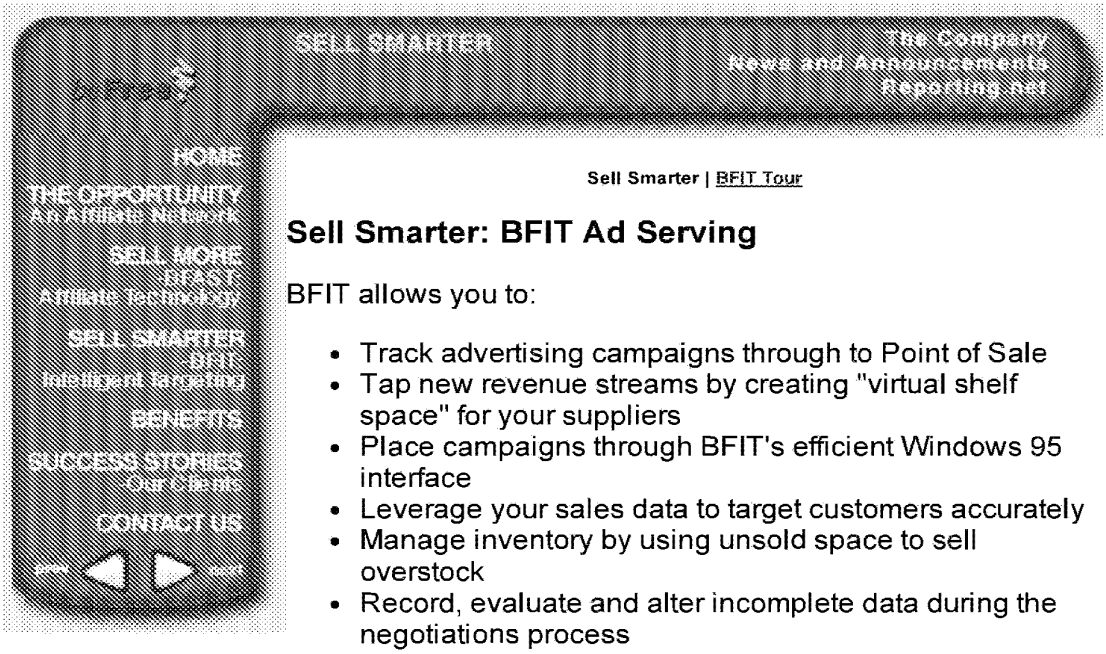
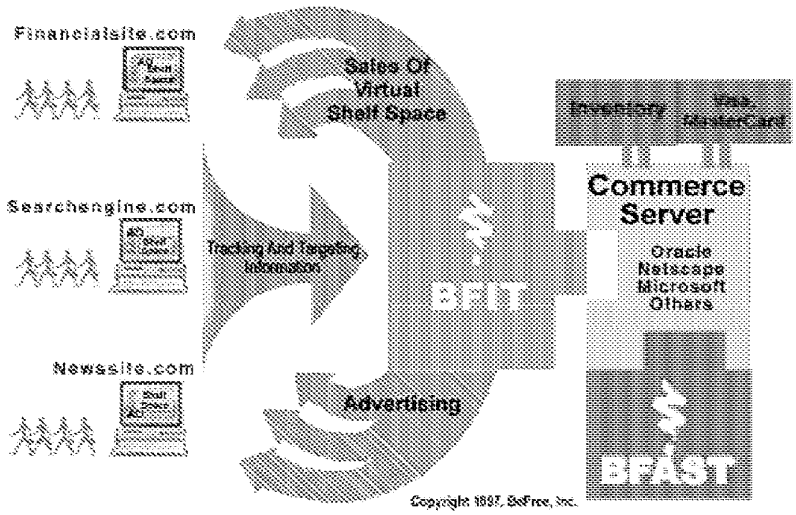


Sell Smarter: BFIT Ad Serving

BFIT allows you to:

- Track advertising campaigns through to Point of Sale
- Tap new revenue streams by creating "virtual shelf space" for your suppliers
- Place campaigns through BFIT's efficient Windows 95 interface
- Leverage your sales data to target customers accurately
- Manage inventory by using unsold space to sell overstock
- Record, evaluate and alter incomplete data during the negotiations process



Be Free Intelligent Targeting (BFIT) is a robust, flexible, advertising and merchandise targeting engine that is specially designed for a retail environment. For the first time in history, online sellers can track targeted, outbound advertising through to Point of Sale with the BFIT advertising delivery engine. BFIT's tracking, reporting, and analysis tools allow sellers to determine the cost-per-sale of an entire campaign, an individual creative, or a placement with a specific site. With BFIT, retailers can sell intelligently, by buying only campaigns that pay for themselves.

Tracking to Point of Sale: With BFIT, you can track where and when different ad banners have appeared, been clicked-on, and resulted in sales. Track impressions, click-throughs, and transactions in real time. Keep your agency and media sites well-informed, so they can maximize your exposure by switching creatives or locations to increase sell-through.

Sell Virtual Shelf Space: With BFIT, you can capture slotting

fees by selling "virtual shelf space." Your customer-base is a valuable resource which you take the time to grow and retain. You can capture advertising revenue and discounts from your manufacturers and suppliers by leveraging the virtual shelf space across your entire affiliate network, just as you do with real-world shelf space.

Accurate Targeting: Your virtual shelf space becomes more valuable when you use BFIT's advanced targeting features to bring a higher response rate to your advertisers. You can selectively sell virtual shelf space by context, and use our targeting tools (patent-pending) to selectively display merchandise based on a wide variety of customer characteristics. With a BFAST-BFIT combination, you can leverage your transactional information to target advertising users who have purchased from you before.

Decision Support: BFIT includes a complete decision support interface for both you and your advertising clients. Detailed reporting identifies the best locations, banners, and other targeting criteria for maximizing your response. These tools can also be used to realize premium pricing on test campaigns.

Flexible Pricing for Campaigns: With BFIT, you can track and bill the campaigns you sell, and determine the cost-per-sale of campaigns you buy. The system can track, bill, and report on CPM, cost-per-click (CPC), cost-per-transaction (CPT), flat rate advertisements, or any combination of these. When you use it in combination with BFAST, you can run performance-based house-ads for your own merchandise, and track the results from impression to purchase!

Complete Work-Flow Support: With BFIT, you can enter campaigns in half the time of HTML and Java-based systems. The BFIT interface allows your sales staff to skip quickly from pricing a campaign to assigning its targets and then to setting its flight dates. BFIT includes contact information for hundreds of advertising agencies. This pre-entered data means less set-up and increased data accuracy for new campaigns, as well as aggregated reporting and billing for agencies.

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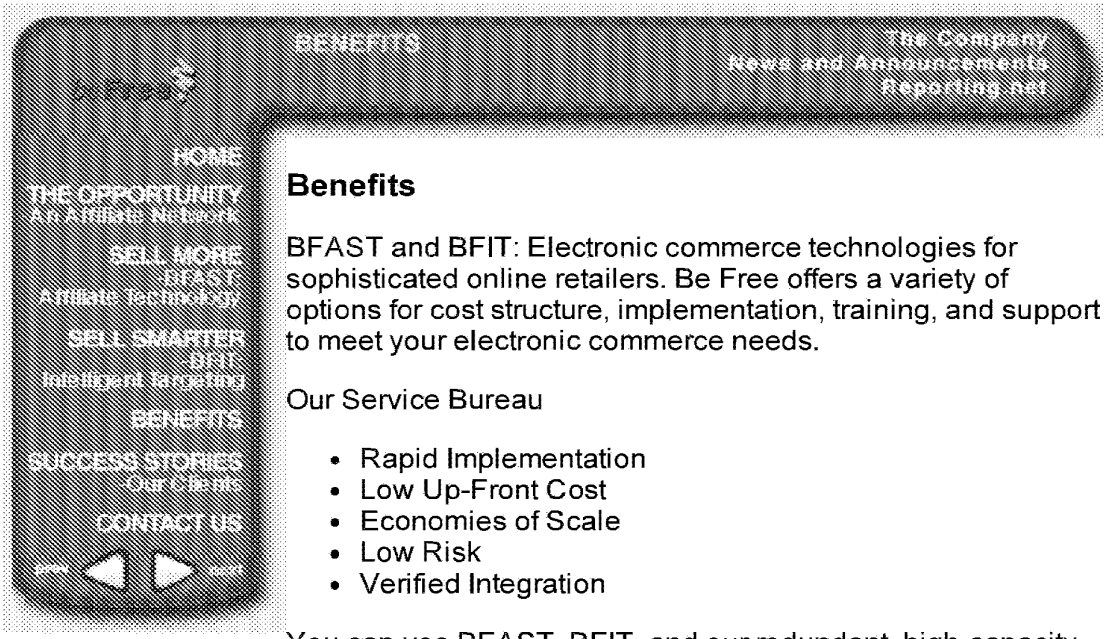

Benefits

BFAST and BFIT: Electronic commerce technologies for sophisticated online retailers. Be Free offers a variety of options for cost structure, implementation, training, and support to meet your electronic commerce needs.

Our Service Bureau

- Rapid Implementation
- Low Up-Front Cost
- Economies of Scale
- Low Risk
- Verified Integration

You can use BFAST, BFIT, and our redundant, high-capacity, high-bandwidth data center on a service bureau basis, using a cost-effective transactional fee or percentage of sales structure. Using the service bureau lets you avoid a large initial investment in software and hardware, eliminates the delay of installation, implementation, training, and testing; and reduces your overall risk. This allows you to concentrate on maximizing your online sales.

Contact us today for a customized proposal that meets your e-commerce needs.

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Strategists

Floating A Website

By Susan Kuchinskas
Rank: 3

Cruising NetMarket

Both the off- and online Cendant properties use the membership model,where customers pay an annual fee. This gives them access to discounted goods and services, and the ability to make their purchases using a toll-free number. Around 65 million people, mostly in the U.S., have thought this was a good enough deal to pay $69.95 to sign up.

Besides the overall goal of selling products, the NetMarket site's internal goal is to help customers understand and navigate through the diverse shopping opportunities.

There are nine business areas: shopping, auto, travel, home, local discounts, auction, grocery, flea market and classifieds. Although many of them were purchased intact by Cendant, each area on the site is dealt with as an individual business. Some of these existed previously as independent Web sites, and most had transaction processing systems in place. Bringing all this online into one "area" gives new meaning to the term "leveraging content." As in, pushing it into a shape that would fit, both visually and functionally.

At a Glance

Floating a Website
Find out what it takes to put up a site the size of NetMarket as we go below decks to learn about their custom-built API.

Build or Buy?
Not everything that runs NetMarket is custom-built. The developers have learned ways to leverage existing systems and have integrated them with the latest technologies.

Life Above Deck
Behind every good crew is a great captain. As leader of NetMarket's Interactive Development Group, Jack Staehler leads the crew by empowering them to prototype and design the site, while keeping in mind the needs of the customer.

Below deck

On the infrastructure side, the key to making all the areas look the same was an API developed by the Interactive Services team and christened "Gallery," which developers can use as a content authoring tool. Cendant's developers are divided into horizontal and vertical teams, with horizontal developers creating company-wide tools, and vertical developers creating the content and services for individual business units.

"The API is our proprietary middleware," explains Cendant's vice president of Internet Engineering, Peter Schilling. "This makes it so the developers don't need to learn 12 different APIs for the various different types of databases, business logic libraries, and third-party vendor APIs to which Gallery connects."

To any vertical Web developer, transactions look consistent, but in reality Gallery is acting as a "Rosetta Stone," routing each transaction to the correct underlying system and translating each input and output argument into native formats on the fly.

Gallery is much more than an API; it's a full development and page-generation environment running within Solaris, NT, VMS and HPUX. Since most NetMarket developers are using Windows 95, Macintosh or Sun workstations, the development tools are Java-based (page generation and production tools were written in a combination of C and Java). It's an object-oriented environment, with classes of reusable objects that can be instanced, supporting variants and inheritance.

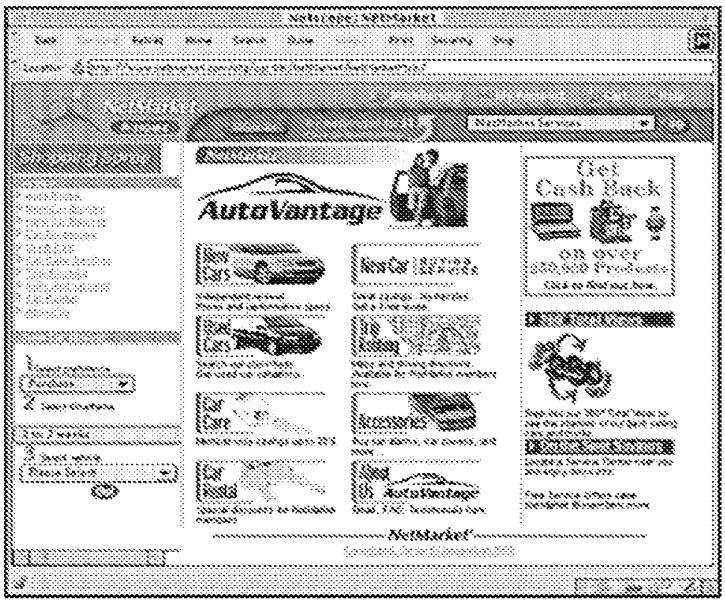
On the site, pages are served dynamically on demand from objects stored in an Oracle database, in order to reinforce the brand identity of the content areas, and to provide flexibility in how pages look.

"Literally every object may need to, at some point, appear differently (to match the look of the site)," Schilling explains, while they need to maintain the same functions. On the other hand, a submit button may need to look the same from area to area but behave differently depending on the ordering system it's connecting to. The object-oriented environment allows the developer to change the look and/or function of an object throughout the site.

It also lets that brand identity shift. Sites become chameleons, changing their appearance depending on how they're accessed. Sometimes Cendant's partners want a content area to seem graphically connected to their own site. In most development environments, the team would have to copy and change every page, in essence maintaining two different sites. But Cendant's enormous reach precludes that -- they'd have hundreds of copies to maintain.

"Because our page development environment understands the idea of a variant of an object," Schilling says, "the same object on the same page could depict itself differently at run-time based on the information we have from the inbound person.

"For example, the content in NetMarket's auto area is also available to AutoVantage members through **www.autosavings.com**. The content is identical, with the same functionality, but with a different look."



This environment also lets NetMarket track whatever is relevant to the individual business units, creating custom reports. Behavior within the site is tracked extensively; also transactions volume, number of unique visitors, and standard things such as page hits, based on the number of HTML templates delivered. But most important is tracking sessions, which Cendant defines as any number of contiguous pages requested by the same person, which indicates the person was actually using the site.

Next: Build or Buy?
Floating a Website

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LinkShare Corporation Launches Software to Link Merchants to Internet's Most Advanced Affiliate Program

Publication info: PR Newswire [New York] 10 Aug 1998: 1.

ProQuest document link

Abstract (Abstract): NEW YORK, Aug. 10 /PRNewswire/ -- A new generation of on-line distribution software was introduced today by LinkShare Corporation, host to the Internet's largest affiliate program. The software is called LinkShare Network 3.0 (LSN 3.0) and with its introduction, LinkShare is the only commerce network to use its patent-pending Referral, Tracking, and Payment (RTP) technology to facilitate electronic commerce by building beneficial business relationships along the Web. LSN 3.0's advanced features include a merchant's personalized storefront to be available for each affiliate site, live technology allowing instant feedback from customer-service representatives at affiliate and merchant sites, and hundreds of new links to affiliates.
"We have seen a recent flood of interest and activity on on-line distribution and the current challenge is to help merchants sell quickly and in large volume," states LinkShare's Chief Executive Officer, Stephen Messer. "LinkShare developed version 3.0 to meet the unprecedented demand for on-line distribution tools." He adds, "Over one-hundred LinkShare merchants will use LSN 3.0 to advertise, market, and sell their goods on-line during the upcoming holiday season. When Christmas comes, it is an all or nothing game. LSN 3.0 will enable on-line merchants to make a clean sweep."

Links: Linking Service

Full text: Industry: COMPUTER/ELECTRONICS; INTERNET MULTIMEDIA ONLINE; RETAIL

NEW YORK, Aug. 10 /PRNewswire/ -- A new generation of on-line distribution software was introduced today by LinkShare Corporation, host to the Internet's largest affiliate program. The software is called LinkShare Network 3.0 (LSN 3.0) and with its introduction, LinkShare is the only commerce network to use its patent-pending Referral, Tracking, and Payment (RTP) technology to facilitate electronic commerce by building beneficial business relationships along the Web. LSN 3.0's advanced features include a merchant's personalized storefront to be available for each affiliate site, live technology allowing instant feedback from customer-service representatives at affiliate and merchant sites, and hundreds of new links to affiliates.

Enhanced Affiliate Program

LinkShare affiliates use LSN 3.0 to accept offers form over one hundred premier on-line merchants, such as Avon Products, FAO Schwartz, and Omaha Steaks, and these affiliates then sell on a commission basis to earn revenue. Nicole Vanderbilt at Jupiter Communications expects that "By 2002, twenty-five percent of the expected $37.5 billion in Internet retail sales, not including autos, will have originated on affiliate sites."

"We have seen a recent flood of interest and activity on on-line distribution and the current challenge is to help merchants sell quickly and in large volume," states LinkShare's Chief Executive Officer, Stephen Messer. "LinkShare developed version 3.0 to meet the unprecedented demand for on-line distribution tools." He adds, "Over one-hundred LinkShare merchants will use LSN 3.0 to advertise, market, and sell their goods on-line during the upcoming holiday season. When Christmas comes, it is an all or nothing game. LSN 3.0 will enable on-line merchants to make a clean sweep."

New Features Provide Merchants with Added Flexibility

Storefront Feature: LSN 3.0 gives merchants the ability to create a storefront, designed to have the look and feel of a miniature store window, that LinkShare affiliates then add to their sites. Storefronts display products selected by the merchant and may feature themed specials, such as "back to school" products, or select items of general merchandise. LSN 3.0 allows merchants to instantly update their storefronts and to offer their storefronts to over six thousand LinkShare affiliate sites.

Virtual Sales Representative: Through a unique partnership with OnLive Inc., LinkShare has incorporated OnLive(TM) technology to LSN 3.0 so that merchants can give "live" assistance to consumers as they would at an off-line store. On-line merchants con provide a virtual sales representative to answer consumer questions, suggest merchandise, and complete the transaction. A cartoon representative greets each site visitor, and then interacts with the on-line consumer using the most current live technology.

Promotional "Pop - Up" Windows: The new pop-up window feature allows merchants to recommend products, provide information on the amount discounted or saved, and to promote special merchandise. Merchants use LSN's ready-made template to create a customized pop-up window.

New Interface Gives Merchants Immediate Access to Sales Information: LSN 3.0 was designed to provide merchants with immediate access to traffic and sales activity. On one page, LinkShare merchants can view their top performing affiliates, the number of sales made, the amount of sale, and personalized information about their affiliate programs.

LSN 3.0 Gives Affiliates More Options and Incentives

In developing LSN 3.0 LinkShare expanded upon its existing unique affiliate technology which provides for a variety of payment options for affiliates. (LinkShare affiliates can use a hybrid structure to be paid per click, per impression, on a percentage basis, on a flat fee, or a combination of all). LSN 3.0 now gives affiliates the ability to create a variety of links, incorporate a merchant's prefabricated storefront, access sales information immediately, and participate in new revenue raising programs. With the introduction of LSN 3.0, LinkShare Corporation offered its affiliates a bounty for each member directly referred from each affiliate site.

The new software also gives affiliates the ability to create many more types of links than just banner ads. Messer explains that, "During the last year, we learned that banner ads had the lowest conversion to sales ratio. With our new generation of software we are enabling our affiliates to expand and develop new types of linking partnerships." Using LSN 3.0, affiliates can combine images with textual links, incorporate e-mail links, and use merchant storefronts to generate sales.

LinkShare Corporation (http://www.linkshare.net) is the leading provider of transaction-based solutions online, offering the only turnkey solution to establishing an affiliates/partnership program in a network environment. LinkShare Corporation is headquartered in New York City and is privately owned. SOURCE LinkShare Corporation

Company: LinkShare Corporation

Publication title: PR Newswire

Pages: 1

Number of pages: 0

Publication year: 1998

Publication date: Aug 10, 1998

Year: 1998

Dateline: New York

Publisher: PR Newswire Association LLC

Place of publication: New York

Country of publication: United States

Publication subject: Business And Economics

Source type: Wire Feeds

Language of publication: English

Document type: WIRE FEED

ProQuest document ID: 449966031

Document URL: http://search.proquest.com/docview/449966031?accountid=14701

Copyright: Copyright PR Newswire - NY Aug 10, 1998

Last updated: 2010-07-01

Database: ProQuest Business Collection

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Introduction

Background

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Chairman's Column

NewsEdge® for Extranets Program Lets Customers 'News-Enable' Web Sites, Private Networks

Return To:

1998 Releases

1997 Releases

Boston, MA., - September 1, 1998 (E-Business World Conference) - NewsEdge Corporation (Nasdaq:NEWZ), the leader in global news and current awareness solutions, today introduced the NewsEdge for Extranets Program. Targeted at the unique news needs of existing NewsEdge customers building extranet sites, the program is designed to enhance corporate extranets with highly-targeted news stories of daily interest to a company's clients, partners, resellers or other constituencies. Examples of these innovative news solutions are being demonstrated this week from the E-Business World Conference and Exposition in Boston.

NewsEdge customers can now 'news-enable' their extranet sites to encourage visits from and provide value-added services to their resellers, vendors, customers, partners and prospects. This new offering is available today in a number of flexible packages. These include offers based on NewsEdge ReviewTM Topics, which use content from over 500 worldwide sources created, reviewed and updated daily by NewsEdge editors, as well as real-time feeds from select news providers able to display up-to-the-minute breaking news.

"One of the biggest challenges companies face with extranet sites is keeping them fresh with compelling content," said Paul Pinella, director of NewsEdge Strategic Partner Programs marketing. "Having the ability to provide targeted news to business partners, clients, vendors, resellers and others is a powerful way to add value to an extranet or virtual private network application, to keep valued stakeholders coming back again and again."

NewsEdge delivers comprehensive, consolidated news every day from hundreds of worldwide information sources. Customers can choose from 1,400 NewsEdge Review™ Topics which are created, reviewed and updated by NewsEdge industry editors, or can use select portions of their existing NewsEdge Live™ and NewsEdge Insight™ services to deliver breaking news externally to extranet readers. The news feeds to extranet sites can be delivered in HTML or SGML formats, or can be delivered as a complete Web solution with NewsEdge hosting the service from its data center.

Customers can also work with NewsEdge's Professional Services Group to further customize the delivery and format of news to their extranets or private networks, including the ability to weave branded external news sources with proprietary internal intelligence as well as customer, vendor, and partner communications. The Professional Services Group can leverage a broad set of tools to match the "look and feel" of a client's extranet site, including the NewsEdge NewsObjects® family of HTML and ActiveX components. NewsEdge offerings for extranets are available only to NewsEdge customers and only for use on private, password-protected Web sites or VPNs (virtual private networks).

Examples of these innovative news solutions are being demonstrated this week from the E-Business World Conference and Exposition in

this week from the E-Business World Conference and Exposition in Boston, at the NewsEdge booth (#1321).

NewsEdge Corporation is the leader in global news and current awareness solutions for business. The Company's mission is to make news valuable for busy people at work. Formed by the merger of Desktop Data, Individual, and ADP/ISS, NewsEdge Corporation is the world's largest independent news integrator. Clients at nearly 1200 organizations are provided with a powerful combination of authoritative content, a comprehensive line of technologies, customization options, editorial value-added capabilities, and unparalleled client support and consulting services. NewsEdge Corporation helps business people find the most important, relevant stories from an overwhelming volume of daily news, enabling them to act on the most current information possible.

About NewsEdge

NewsEdge Corporation is a leader in global news and current awareness solutions for business. The Company's mission is to make news valuable for busy people at work. Formed by the merger of Desktop Data, Individual, and ADP/ISS, NewsEdge Corporation is the world's largest independent news integrator. Clients at nearly 1200 organizations are provided with a powerful combination of authoritative content, a comprehensive line of technologies, customization options, editorial value-added capabilities, and unparalleled client support and consulting services. NewsEdge Corporation helps business people find the most important, relevant stories from an overwhelming volume of daily news, enabling them to act on the most current information possible.

NewsEdge Corporation is headquartered in Burlington, Massachusetts with sales offices throughout North America, Europe and Japan. Shares of NewsEdge Corporation are traded publicly on the Nasdaq National Market (NEWZ). For more information, visit our web site at http://www.newsedge.com.

# # #

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Certain of the above statements on the Company's future revenue and financial performance, are forward-looking statements that involve risks and uncertainties. Actual results could differ materially as a result of a variety of factors, including, risks associated with acquisitions, the timely development and acceptance of new products, competitive developments, the success of relationships with third parties, and other risk factors described from time to time in the Company's SEC reports.

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RELEASE

MECKLERMEDIA'S INTERNET.COM ENHANCES NO-COST INTERNET NEWS AFFILIATE PROGRAM WITH NEWS HARVESTER 3.0

(WESTPORT, CT - September 3, 1998) - Web sites owners and developers can now provide their users access to Internet industry news headlines by enrolling in a no-cost affiliate program including News Harvester 3.0 software from InternetNews.com, the Internet news site operated by Mecklermedia Corporation's Internet.com network of sites. Mecklermedia Corporation, "The Internet Media Company," is listed on the Nasdaq under the symbol MECK.

Web sites interested in participating in the program can download an easy-to-install application, install it on their pages and offer users unique content in a matter of minutes. Key features of the application include automatic online fulfillment, easy installation, visual integration, broad server support, and a choice of headlines in 10 Internet-specific topics. News Harvester 3.0 is available on a royalty-free basis and can be downloaded at http://webreference.com/headlines/nh/.

"News Harvester 3.0 is an extraordinary tool for Web site owners and developers looking to provide valuable content to their users and expand their advertising and sponsorship inventory," said News Harvester 3.0 project director Robert Peyser. "This incredibly versatile application can be easily customized to suit the needs of any site."

News Harvester 3.0 displays the latest InternetNews.com headlines updated throughout the day. It can be installed on multiple pages on Web sites of any size. Two of the three formats of News Harvester feature easy copy-and-paste installation. News Harvester 3.0 can be customized to complement the look and feel of any site and can be sized to fit on one line, fill an entire Web page, or sized anywhere in between. Its code supports UNIX, Microsoft NT, and other Web servers running Perl 5.

Currently News Harvester 3.0 delivers headlines from the following ten news categories on Mecklermedia's InternetNews.com: Business News, ISP News, E-Commerce News, Internet Product News, Internet Finance News, WebDeveloper News, International News, Intranet News, Internet Advertising News, and Top Internet News Stories.

Mecklermedia's Internet.com network of Web sites provides real-time news

and information resources for Internet professionals and Web developers. The Internet.com network includes other well-known sites such as BrowserWatch.com, InternetNews.com, Stroud's Consummate Winsock Applications List (CWS Apps), as well as SearchEngineWatch.com. Internet.com sites currently serve approximately 18 million pages to 1 million unique visitors monthly.

Mecklermedia Corporation, "The Internet Media Company," based in

Westport, Connecticut, is a leading provider of Internet information through its Internet World and ISPCON trade shows, Internet World weekly and Boardwatch monthly print publications, and the Internet.com network of Web sites, which provides daily news and information resources for the Internet community, as well as ISPCON.com and Boardwatch.com. Mecklermedia also publishes the ISDEX, the only 100% Internet stock index featuring 50 leading companies. Mecklermedia's global presence includes Internet World trade shows and licensed publications throughout Canada, Mexico, South America, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Australia.

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All current MECKLERMEDIA press releases can be found on the World Wide Web at http://www.internet.com/corporate/press.html.

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http://www.internet.com

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Electronic Patent Application Fee Transmittal

Application Number:	13970515
Filing Date:	19-Aug-2013
Title of Invention:	Methods of expanding commercial opportunities for internet websites through coordinated offsite marketing
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	D. Delano Ross
Filer:	Louis J. Hoffman/Donald Hertz
Attorney Docket Number:	

Filed as Large Entity

Utility under 35 USC 111(a) Filing Fees

Description	Fee Code	Quantity	Amount	Sub-Total in USD($)
Basic Filing:				
Pages:				
Claims:				
Miscellaneous-Filing:				
Petition:				
Patent-Appeals-and-Interference:				
Post-Allowance-and-Post-Issuance:				
Extension-of-Time:				
Extension - 2 months with $0 paid	1252	1	600	600

Description	Fee Code	Quantity	Amount	Sub-Total in USD($)
Miscellaneous:				
Submission- Information Disclosure Stmt	1806	1	180	180
		Total in USD ($)		**780**

Electronic Acknowledgement Receipt

EFS ID:	18408627
Application Number:	13970515
International Application Number:	
Confirmation Number:	2289
Title of Invention:	Methods of expanding commercial opportunities for internet websites through coordinated offsite marketing
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	D. Delano Ross
Customer Number:	26362
Filer:	Louis J. Hoffman/Donald Hertz
Filer Authorized By:	Louis J. Hoffman
Attorney Docket Number:	
Receipt Date:	07-MAR-2014
Filing Date:	19-AUG-2013
Time Stamp:	17:32:47
Application Type:	Utility under 35 USC 111(a)

Payment information:

Submitted with Payment	yes
Payment Type	Credit Card
Payment was successfully received in RAM	$780
RAM confirmation Number	5014
Deposit Account	
Authorized User	

File Listing:

Document Number	Document Description	File Name	File Size(Bytes)/ Message Digest	Multi Part /.zip	Pages (if appl.)

1	Amendment/Req. Reconsideration-After Non-Final Reject	14-03-07-DDR-CON4-RTOA.pdf	196386 4d50c01589b97c3da21365d785bf7082382de6cf	no	17
Warnings:					
Information:					
2	Transmittal Letter	14-03-07-DDR-CON4-Supp_IDS_Cover.pdf	35888 92da307fc3234b32a90fc928925a269a39685e39	no	1
Warnings:					
Information:					
3	Non Patent Literature	6-Keller-SmartCat.pdf	796754 8b07ee50711fed8aaceb8c7f4ea3b14a799f8c34	no	11
Warnings:					
Information:					
4	Non Patent Literature	7-Laufmann-InfoMkplc.pdf	1876084 65704d219f5b42382a5fe74c1b7bb03d72ea0fed	no	33
Warnings:					
Information:					
5	Non Patent Literature	8-Jacobs-CommsWeek.pdf	3664330 a9674df27ba635d689b6d8ac6c74b6a851b5e456	no	2
Warnings:					
Information:					
6	Non Patent Literature	9-NowSoftware-BusWire.pdf	293402 4493c69c4190ec749c2cab01c5ca84d0fab242f9	no	4
Warnings:					
Information:					
7	Non Patent Literature	10-MicrosoftMakesIt.pdf	9628159 2aee952b16ca0083f9ccce4eb99a2cca7ff38950	no	5
Warnings:					
Information:					
8	Non Patent Literature	11-Arden-WindowsIT.pdf	11512788 5181e5889e07c2df19a6a4327c5ce441b609122a	no	5
Warnings:					
Information:					
9	Non Patent Literature	12-Asfar-CompResellNews.pdf	187811 084dbba0588e757d436230f9c44176ea2d0bc6a9	no	1
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Information:					

10	Non Patent Literature	13-Spring-ElecMedia.pdf	5840511 86e5f890842068b6f598e396530b1926427ce090	no	2
Warnings:					
Information:					
11	Non Patent Literature	14-AboutVicinity.pdf	10793634 b129dcbc09502cfc9a5bc4938e3383c85be0bcf3	no	4
Warnings:					
Information:					
12	Non Patent Literature	15-TheRagens.pdf	14297941 c1af1cea85ed26f018c3c8dbae5df2b222971c8a	no	5
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Information:					
13	Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) Form (SB08)	14-03-07-DDR-CON4-FORM_1449.pdf	97644 f7aaa28f1bc7a2e3b94d282c5a935b43e8f3c52b	no	3
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14	Non Patent Literature	17-Pereira-CompResellNews.pdf	5531740 8a87fb7a361f188fca9fa8d6611daf133b488399	no	2
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16	Non Patent Literature	19-WorldMedia-WVU.pdf	64755 bfe093fe962fe30fffb1afec2d9b05e6b7299713	no	1
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23	Non Patent Literature	25-AdOne-DailyNews.pdf	4135677 4c8d90a94c4c47dee15e5db7f144d9b684c1f4de	no	3
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27	Non Patent Literature	29-Kuchinskas-WebReview.pdf	5622416 e46ed9874353ba8c073735d6a31d245ada3412ce	no	2

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28	Non Patent Literature	30-LinkShare-PRnewswire.pdf	4329329 08d4e9c17e1b1ca88479b98ea1496d51c6d63eaf	no	3
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Information:					
29	Non Patent Literature	31-NewsEdge.pdf	5423949 e422dbc69e01be301091921d7246f32eb17faa3f	no	2
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Information:					
30	Non Patent Literature	32-MecklerMedia.pdf	4507521 084803b11da114e630ebb2ed1ec5335cea8d8a71	no	2
Warnings:					
Information:					
31	Fee Worksheet (SB06)	fee-info.pdf	31847 cbc135fb50c03fa541cf55eeef38880925bba39c	no	2
Warnings:					
Information:					
		Total Files Size (in bytes):	130468857		

This Acknowledgement Receipt evidences receipt on the noted date by the USPTO of the indicated documents, characterized by the applicant, and including page counts, where applicable. It serves as evidence of receipt similar to a Post Card, as described in MPEP 503.

New Applications Under 35 U.S.C. 111

If a new application is being filed and the application includes the necessary components for a filing date (see 37 CFR 1.53(b)-(d) and MPEP 506), a Filing Receipt (37 CFR 1.54) will be issued in due course and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the filing date of the application.

National Stage of an International Application under 35 U.S.C. 371

If a timely submission to enter the national stage of an international application is compliant with the conditions of 35 U.S.C. 371 and other applicable requirements a Form PCT/DO/EO/903 indicating acceptance of the application as a national stage submission under 35 U.S.C. 371 will be issued in addition to the Filing Receipt, in due course.

New International Application Filed with the USPTO as a Receiving Office

If a new international application is being filed and the international application includes the necessary components for an international filing date (see PCT Article 11 and MPEP 1810), a Notification of the International Application Number and of the International Filing Date (Form PCT/RO/105) will be issued in due course, subject to prescriptions concerning national security, and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the international filing date of the application.

PTO/SB/06 (09-11)
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PATENT APPLICATION FEE DETERMINATION RECORD Substitute for Form PTO-875	Application or Docket Number 13/970,515	Filing Date 08/19/2013	☐ To be Mailed

ENTITY: ☒ LARGE ☐ SMALL ☐ MICRO

APPLICATION AS FILED – PART I

FOR	(Column 1) NUMBER FILED	(Column 2) NUMBER EXTRA	RATE ($)	FEE ($)
☐ BASIC FEE (37 CFR 1.16(a), (b), or (c))	N/A	N/A	N/A	
☐ SEARCH FEE (37 CFR 1.16(k), (i), or (m))	N/A	N/A	N/A	
☐ EXAMINATION FEE (37 CFR 1.16(o), (p), or (q))	N/A	N/A	N/A	
TOTAL CLAIMS (37 CFR 1.16(i))	minus 20 =	*	X $ =	
INDEPENDENT CLAIMS (37 CFR 1.16(h))	minus 3 =	*	X $ =	
☐ APPLICATION SIZE FEE (37 CFR 1.16(s))	If the specification and drawings exceed 100 sheets of paper, the application size fee due is $310 ($155 for small entity) for each additional 50 sheets or fraction thereof. See 35 U.S.C. 41(a)(1)(G) and 37 CFR 1.16(s).			
☐ MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM PRESENT (37 CFR 1.16(j))				
* If the difference in column 1 is less than zero, enter "0" in column 2.			TOTAL	

APPLICATION AS AMENDED – PART II

AMENDMENT **03/07/2014**

	(Column 1) CLAIMS REMAINING AFTER AMENDMENT		(Column 2) HIGHEST NUMBER PREVIOUSLY PAID FOR	(Column 3) PRESENT EXTRA	RATE ($)	ADDITIONAL FEE ($)
Total (37 CFR 1.16(i))	* 8	Minus	** 20	= 0	X $80 =	0
Independent (37 CFR 1.16(h))	* 1	Minus	***3	= 0	X $420 =	0
☐ Application Size Fee (37 CFR 1.16(s))						
☐ FIRST PRESENTATION OF MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM (37 CFR 1.16(j))						
					TOTAL ADD'L FEE	0

AMENDMENT

	(Column 1) CLAIMS REMAINING AFTER AMENDMENT		(Column 2) HIGHEST NUMBER PREVIOUSLY PAID FOR	(Column 3) PRESENT EXTRA	RATE ($)	ADDITIONAL FEE ($)
Total (37 CFR 1.16(i))	*	Minus	**	=	X $ =	
Independent (37 CFR 1.16(h))	*	Minus	***	=	X $ =	
☐ Application Size Fee (37 CFR 1.16(s))						
☐ FIRST PRESENTATION OF MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM (37 CFR 1.16(j))						
					TOTAL ADD'L FEE	

* If the entry in column 1 is less than the entry in column 2, write "0" in column 3.
** If the "Highest Number Previously Paid For" IN THIS SPACE is less than 20, enter "20".
*** If the "Highest Number Previously Paid For" IN THIS SPACE is less than 3, enter "3".
The "Highest Number Previously Paid For" (Total or Independent) is the highest number found in the appropriate box in column 1.

LIE
/DALE A. HALL/

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.16. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 12 minutes to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. **SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**
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LOUIS J. HOFFMAN, P.C.
14301 North 87th Street, Suite 312
Scottsdale, AZ 85260

Courtesy Reminder for
Application Serial No: 13/970,515

Attorney Docket No:
Customer Number: 26362
Date of Electronic Notification: 10/11/2013

This is a courtesy reminder that new correspondence is available for this application. If you have not done so already, please review the correspondence. The official date of notification of the outgoing correspondence will be indicated on the form PTOL-90 accompanying the correspondence.

An email notification regarding the correspondence was sent to the following email address(es) associated with your customer number:

Louis@valuablepatents.com
donald@valuablepatents.com
shaelyn@valuablepatents.com

To view your correspondence online or update your email addresses, please visit us anytime at **https://sportal.uspto.gov/secure/myportal/privatepair.** If you have any questions, please email the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at EBC@uspto.gov or call 1-866-217-9197.

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www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
13/970,515	08/19/2013	D. Delano Ross JR.		2289

26362 7590 10/11/2013

LOUIS J. HOFFMAN, P.C.
14301 North 87th Street, Suite 312
Scottsdale, AZ 85260

EXAMINER	
GARG, YOGESH C	
ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3625	

NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE
10/11/2013	ELECTRONIC

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

Louis@valuablepatents.com
donald@valuablepatents.com
shaelyn@valuablepatents.com

Office Action Summary	Application No. 13/970,515	Applicant(s) ROSS ET AL.	
	Examiner YOGESH C. GARG	Art Unit 3625	AIA (First Inventor to File) Status No

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *8/19/2013*.

☐ A declaration(s)/affidavit(s) under **37 CFR 1.130(b)** was/were filed on _____.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ An election was made by the applicant in response to a restriction requirement set forth during the interview on _____; the restriction requirement and election have been incorporated into this action.

4)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

5)☒ Claim(s) *1* is/are pending in the application.

5a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

6)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

7)☒ Claim(s) *1* is/are rejected.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

9)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

* If any claims have been determined allowable, you may be eligible to benefit from the **Patent Prosecution Highway** program at a participating intellectual property office for the corresponding application. For more information, please see http://www.uspto.gov/patents/init_events/pph/index.jsp or send an inquiry to PPHfeedback@uspto.gov.

Application Papers

10)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

11)☒ The drawing(s) filed on *8/19/2013* is/are: a)☒ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

Certified copies:

a)☐ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of the:

1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date *8/26/2013*.

3) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .

4) ☐ Other: _____.

1. The present application is being examined under the pre-AIA first to invent provisions.

2. Applicant's preliminary amendment filed 8/19/2013 is entered. Claims 2-70 are canceled. In remarks filed 8/19/2013, see page 4, Applicant states that he will cancel all claims but twenty but that is not the case as all claims are canceled except for claim 1. Claim 1 is pending for examination.

3. Amendment to Specification is entered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

4. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

> Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter because based upon consideration of all of the relevant factors with respect to the claim as a whole, claim 1 is held to claim an abstract idea, and is/are therefore rejected as ineligible subject matter under 35 U.S.C. 101. The rationale for this finding is explained below:

Claim 1 is directed to method. One tool for assisting in determining whether the claimed invention is directed to a statutory process under 35 USC 101 is the "machine-or-transformation" test. If a claimed method meets the "machine-or-transformation" test, the method is likely patent-eligible under 35 USC 101 unless there is a clear indication that the method is directed to an abstract idea. If a claimed method does not

meet the "machine-or-transformation" test, the claim will be considered directed to a non-statutory process unless there is a clear indication that the method is not directed to an abstract idea.

An analysis of method claims using the "machine-or-transformation" test seeks to determine whether the claimed method is (1) tied to a particular machine or apparatus, or (2) transforms a particular article to a different state or thing. In addition, mere field of use limitations or limitations reciting insignificant extra-solution activity will not transform an unpatentable process into a patentable one as the machine or transformation must impose meaningful limits on the method claim's scope.

In the instant case, the body of claim recites two processing steps that (a) storing indicia and the other (b) causing display….., which are mere field of use limitations directed to merely string or displaying data and representing insignificant extra-solution activity which will not transform an unpatentable process into a patentable one as the machine or transformation must impose meaningful limits on the method claim's scope. All other steps are directed to wherein clauses describing as what web pages contain or who owns the web pages which are not active manipulative/functional steps and therefore claim 1 does not satisfy conditions to be a statutory process under 35 USC 101.

The "machine-or-transformation" test was articulated in In re Bilski, 545 F.3d 943 (Fed. Cir. 2008) (en banc), cert. granted sub. nom. Bilski v. Doll, 129 S. Ct. 2735 (2009). After the mailing of the Final Rejection, the Supreme Court clarified that the "machine-or- transformation" test was not the sole test of patent eligibility. Bilski v. Kappos, 130 S.

Ct. 3218 (2010). Nevertheless, even under the current standard for § 101, articulated most recently in CLS Bank, claim 1 is directed to patent-ineligible subject matter. Claims cannot be made patent eligible by mere manipulation or reorganization of data that is displaying or storing data, see also CyberSource Corp. v. Retail Decisions, Inc., 654 F.3d 1366, 1375 (Fed. Cir. 2011).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 112(b):
(b) CONCLUSION.—The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the inventor or a joint inventor regards as the invention.

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 112 (pre-AIA), second paragraph:
The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112(b) or 35 U.S.C. 112 (pre-AIA), second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the inventor or a joint inventor, or for pre-AIA the applicant regards as the invention.

5.1. Claim 1 recites the limitation, “computer storing indicia describing the appearance of a set of one or more visually perceptible elements, which elements are displayed, along with primary content, on web browsers accessing a first web page, and which set of elements suggest a source of the first web page” . It is unclear what are the perceptible elements" and the "primary content" because a web page can include

elements and content relating to anything in the world that is unlimited products/news/art/videos/data which renders the subject matter of claim 1 indefinite. ". It is unclear and is ambiguous as from where does the server extract information that is from outside sources or a data stored within the server and what information. There is infinite information available for storing and displaying on a web pages and therefore in order to ensure that the scope of claim is clear to demarcate the boundaries of what constitutes infringement of the patent it is required that the claim language to be precise and unambiguous as to relate the indicia to specific elements and content.

5.2. Claim 1 recites the limitation, "using the computer-stored indicia to cause the display of a second web page on web browsers of computer users who indicate interest in a buying opportunity by following a selectable navigation link from the first web page leading to the second web page". It is unclear how this step is executed that which computer or device executes the step that is if it is the same computer which stored the indicia or another remote device/computer coupled to the computer storing indicia which causes the display of a second web page. If it is the same computer storing the indicia and displaying a second web page then it is unclear as how there can be two different owners of two different web pages being displayed by the same computer. Further it is unclear as how the buying opportunity that is a commerce object displayed on second web page belongs to a third party other than the first and second owner.

Further all wherein clauses do not recite any manipulative step buy merely recite language describing the ownership of web pages and the buying opportunity and therefore will not transform an unpatentable process into a patentable one as the machine or transformation must impose meaningful limits on the method claim's manipulative functions.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of pre-AIA 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 1 is rejected under pre-AIA 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tobin (US Patent 6,141,666) cited in the IDS filed 8/26/2013 in view of Bezos et al. (US 6,029,141), hereinafter Bezos.

Tobin teaches a process of creating and displaying Internet web pages comprising:

(a) computer storing indicia describing the appearance of a set of one or more visually perceptible elements, which elements are displayed, along with primary content, on web browsers accessing a first web page, and which set of elements suggest a source of the first web page (see col.2, line 58- col.3, line 4, "…. The system employs a

server software tool for presenting HTML tagged information which is customized according to a particular class to which a client, accessing the system, belongs to. The class of the client may be clients referred to the system by a particular network site. *The system also includes a database responsive to the server which dynamically retrieves data stored on the system, in accordance with stored requirements which define the customization for the particular class of clients, to provide customized content on HTML documents.* Lastly, the system includes a processing subsystem for manipulating the server and database software tools in response to the HTML tagged requests from the client. ". The data stored in the system corresponds to storing the visually perceptible elements to represent the first web site from where the client is referred to the system and these elements are retrieved and displayed along with primary content, see Fig.2 content, in response to a client web browser accessing the first web site of the system to provide familiarity tot eh client that he is still on the first web site); and

(b) using the computer-stored indicia to cause the display of a second web page on web browsers of computer users who indicate interest in a buying opportunity by following a selectable navigation link from the first web page leading to the second web page and (c) wherein said second web page contains the set of visually perceptible elements along with content describing at least one commerce object;

(see col.2, line 58- col.3, line 4, "…. The system employs a server software tool for presenting HTML tagged information which is customized according to a particular class to which a client, accessing the system, belongs to. The class of the client may be clients referred to the system by a particular network site. *The system also includes a database responsive to the server which dynamically retrieves data stored on the system, in accordance with stored requirements which define the customization for the particular class of clients, to provide customized content on HTML documents.* Lastly, the system includes a processing subsystem for manipulating the server and database software tools in response to

the HTML tagged requests from the client. ". The data stored in the system corresponds to storing the visually perceptible elements to represent the first web site from where the client is referred to the system and these elements are retrieved and displayed along with primary content in response to a client web browser accessing the first web site of the system to provide familiarity tot eh client that he is still on the first web site and see Fig.2 wherein the a computer uses follows a selectable link from the first web site of PC flowers [see Fig.1C] leading to the second web page as shown in Fig.2 showing a buying opportunity consisting of " birthday gifts 202" or "anniversary gifts 203" etc. describing commercial objects along with the set of visually perceptible elements of the first web site of PC flowers);

(d) wherein the second web page apart from the commerce objects has a distinctive overall appearance corresponding to a distinctive overall appearance of the first web page apart from its primary content (see Fig.2 . "200" corresponds to the second web page wherein it, apart from the commerce objects, has a distinctive overall appearance corresponding to a distinctive overall appearance of the first web page apart from its primary content) ;

(e) wherein a first owner controls the primary content of the first web page and a second owner controls the content of the second web page and the information displayed on the second web page about the commerce object and (f) wherein said at least one commerce object pertains to an opportunity to purchase an offering of a merchant, which is neither the first nor the second owner (It is obvious that the owners of the first web site "PC flowers" and the owners on any linking web site related to linked

second web page can be different owners and the commerce object related to birthday or anniversary gifts can belong to third party/merchant such as a seller of these gift items who has posted these items on the second web page link).

Tobin does not teach specifically (g) wherein the first and second owners have contracted with each other to share revenue generated as a result of computer users purchasing from the merchant as a result of visiting the second web page. However, Bezos teaches the concept of sharing revenues in the form of providing commissions to the sites from where the clients were referred to the second web site wherein the client ends up buying a referred product from the referred link (see Abstract). In view of the teachings of Bezos, it would have been obvious to an ordinary skilled in the art at the time of the applicant's invention to modify Tobin's process and method to include the concept of sharing revenues between the two web sites because both the web sites are involved in accruing revenues.

Double Patenting

7. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory double patenting rejection is appropriate where the claims at issue are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been

obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the reference application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement. A terminal disclaimer must be signed in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(b).

The USPTO internet Web site contains terminal disclaimer forms which may be used. Please visit http://www.uspto.gov/forms/. The filing date of the application will determine what form should be used. A web-based eTerminal Disclaimer may be filled out completely online using web-screens. An eTerminal Disclaimer that meets all requirements is auto-processed and approved immediately upon submission. For more information about eTerminal Disclaimers, refer to http://www.uspto.gov/patents/process/file/efs/guidance/eTD-info-I.jsp.

Claim 1 is rejected on the ground of nonstatutory double patenting as being unpatentable over (a) claims 1-22 of U.S. Patent No.8515825, (b) over claims 1-26 of U.S. Patent No. 7,818,399, (c) claims 1-27 of US Patent No. 6,993,572 and (d) claims 1-18 of US Patent No. 6,629,135. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they

are not patentably distinct from each other because the inventions claimed in both the patent and the instant application are directed to the same inventive concept that is an outsource provider serving web pages offering commercial opportunities, the method comprising: (a) automatically at a server of the outsource provider, in response to activation, by a web browser of a computer user, of a link displayed by one of a plurality of first web pages, recognizing as the source page the one of the first web pages on which the link has been activated; wherein each of the first web pages displays at least one active link associated with a commerce object associated with a buying opportunity of a selected one of a plurality of merchants; and (iii) wherein the selected merchant, the outsource provider, and the owner of the first web page are each third parties with respect to one other; (b) automatically retrieving from a storage pre-stored data associated with the source page; and then (c) automatically with the server computer-generating and transmitting to the web browser a second web page that includes: (i) information associated with the commerce object associated with the link that has been activated, and (ii) a plurality of visually perceptible elements derived from the retrieved pre-stored data and visually corresponding to the source page.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to YOGESH C. GARG whose telephone number is (571)272-6756. The examiner can normally be reached on Increased Flex/Hoteling.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jeffrey A. Smith can be reached on 571-272-6763. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

YOGESH C GARG
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3625

/YOGESH C GARG/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3625

Notice of References Cited	Application/Control No. 13/970,515	Applicant(s)/Patent Under Reexamination ROSS ET AL.	
	Examiner YOGESH C. GARG	Art Unit 3625	Page 1 of 1

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

*		Document Number Country Code-Number-Kind Code	Date MM-YYYY	Name	Classification
*	A	US-6,029,141 A	02-2000	Bezos et al.	705/27.1
	B	US-			
	C	US-			
	D	US-			
	E	US-			
	F	US-			
	G	US-			
	H	US-			
	I	US-			
	J	US-			
	K	US-			
	L	US-			
	M	US-			

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

*		Document Number Country Code-Number-Kind Code	Date MM-YYYY	Country	Name	Classification
	N					
	O					
	P					
	Q					
	R					
	S					
	T					

NON-PATENT DOCUMENTS

*		Include as applicable: Author, Title Date, Publisher, Edition or Volume, Pertinent Pages)
	U	
	V	
	W	
	X	

*A copy of this reference is not being furnished with this Office action. (See MPEP § 707.05(a).)
Dates in MM-YYYY format are publication dates. Classifications may be US or foreign.

EAST Search History

EAST Search History (Prior Art)

Ref #	Hits	Search Query	DBs	Default Operator	Plurals	Time Stamp
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L5	228	l2 and (commission or fee)	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; FPRS; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	OR	ON	2013/10/06 17:33
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S13	2	"6016504".pn.	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; FPRS; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	OR	OFF	2012/06/25 15:28
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S8	9	S3 and (link$3 near15 page near15 object)	USPAT	OR	OFF	2012/06/25 12:41
S7	37	S3 and (link$3 near15 page)	USPAT	OR	OFF	2012/06/25 12:41

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EAST Search History (Interference)

Ref #	Hits	Search Query	DBs	Default Operator	Plurals	Time Stamp
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S83	4	S73 and S81	USPAT	OR	OFF	2013/05/22 16:47
S82	3	S78 and S81	USPAT	OR	OFF	2013/05/22 16:47
S81	431	("5963915").URPN.	USPAT	OR	OFF	2013/05/22 16:46
S80	2	("5671279" | "5710887").PN.	US-PGPUB; USPAT	OR	OFF	2013/05/22 16:46
S78	64	(server near15 (serv$3 or provid$3 or download$3 or transmit$4 or transmission or send$3 or displa$3 or present$5)) near15 (composite near5 page)	US-PGPUB; USPAT; UPAD	OR	OFF	2013/05/22 16:45
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S76	38	S73 and S75	US-PGPUB; USPAT; UPAD	OR	OFF	2013/05/22 16:32
S75	125901	"705"/$.ccls.	US-PGPUB; USPAT; UPAD	OR	OFF	2013/05/22 16:32
S74	63	((link$3 or URL or (uniform near1 resource near1 locator)) near15 ((correlat$3 or associat$5 or initiat$5 or invok$3) near10 ((first or source) near5 page) near15 (item or merchandise or product or item or catalog or catalogue or (commercial near2 object))))	US-PGPUB; USPAT; UPAD	OR	OFF	2013/05/22 16:32
S73	106	((link$3 or URL or (uniform near1 resource near1 locator)) near15 ((correlat$3 or associat$5 or initiat$5 or invok$3) near10 ((first or source) near5 page) near15 (item or merchandise or product or item or catalog or catalogue or object)))	US-PGPUB; USPAT; UPAD	OR	OFF	2013/05/22 16:31
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		merchandise or product or item or catalog or catalogue or (commercial near2 object)))	UPAD			
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Search Notes	Application/Control No.	Applicant(s)/Patent Under Reexamination
	13970515	ROSS ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	YOGESH C GARG	3625

CPC- SEARCHED		
Symbol	Date	Examiner

CPC COMBINATION SETS - SEARCHED		
Symbol	Date	Examiner

US CLASSIFICATION SEARCHED			
Class	Subclass	Date	Examiner
705	26.1, 27.1	10/6/2013	YG
707	E17.117	10/6/2013	YG
709	218	10/6/2013	YG
715	207	10/6/2013	YG

SEARCH NOTES		
Search Notes	Date	Examiner
Keyword search on east database	10/6/2013	YG
Palm search for inventors' names	10/6/2013	YG
Reviewed Patents resukting from the parent applications	10/6/2013	YG

INTERFERENCE SEARCH			
US Class/ CPC Symbol	US Subclass / CPC Group	Date	Examiner

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	2	5515270	05/07/1996	Weinblatt	
	3	5537314	07/16/1996	Kanter	
	4	5590197	12/31/1996	Chen et al.	
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	13	5721827	02/24/1998	Logan et al.	
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	29	5825884	10/20/1998	Zdepski et al.	

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	35	5878219	03/02/1999	Vance, Jr. et al.	
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	38	5890171	03/30/1999	Blumer et al.	
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	52	5930777	07/27/1999	Barber	
	53	5933811	08/03/1999	Angles et al.	
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	62	5983227	11/09/1999	Nazem et al.	
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	64	5987498	11/16/1999	Athing et al.	
	65	5991735	11/23/1999	Gerace	
	66	5991740	11/23/1999	Messer	
	67	6012098	01/04/2000	Bayeh et al.	
	68	6016504	01/18/2000	Arnold, et al.	
	69	6023714	02/08/2000	Hill et al.	
	70	6029141	02/22/2000	Bezos et al.	
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	91	7337133	02/26/2008	Bezos et al.	
	92	7565308	07/21/2009	Bollay	
	93	7930307	04/19/2011	Merriman et al.	
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	95	20040042432	03/04/2004	Riazi et al.	
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Examiner Initials		Country Code-Number	Publication Date	Name of Patentee	Translation Yes / No
	97	WO 99/46709	09/16/1999	Voorhees et al.	No

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	375	Yarden; "Evaluating the Performance of Electronic Commerce Systems"; Proceedings 1997 Winter Simulation Conference; 1997.
	376	Zwass; "Structure and Macro-Level Impacts of Electronic Commerce: From Technological Infrastructure to Electronic Marketplaces"; Emerging Information Technologies/Sage Publications; 1998.
	377	Bakos; "The Emerging Role of Electronic Marketplaces on the Internet"; Communications of the ACM; August 1998.
	378	Bailey & Bakos; "An Exploratory Study of the Emerging Role of Electronic Intermediaries"; International Journal of Electronic Commerce; Vol. 1, No. 3, Spring 1997.
	379	Burton & Mooney; "The Evolution of Electronic Marketplaces: An Exploratory Study of Internet-Based Electronic Commerce Within the American Independent Insurance Agency System"; AJIS; November 1998.
	380	Dogac et al.; "An Electronic Marketplace Architecture"; Idea Group Publishing; 1999.
	381	Claim Construction ORDER; Civil Action No. 2:06-CV-00042 (DF); November 21, 2011.
	382	ORDER on Defendants' Rule 72 Objections and Motion for Reconsideration; Civil Action No. 2:06-CV-00042 (DF); February 21, 2012.
	383	Defendants' Amended Invalidity Contentions Pursuant to Local Rule 3-6; Civil Action No. 2-06CV-42 (DF); February 6, 2012.

Examiner: /Yogesh Garg/ Date Considered: 10/03/2013

EXAMINER: Initial if reference considered whether or not citation is in conformance with MPEP 609. Draw line through citation if not in conformance *and* not considered. Include copy of this form with next communication to applicant.

ALL REFERENCES CONSIDERED EXCEPT WHERE LINED THROUGH. /Y.G./

OTHER ART

Examiner Initials	Item	Author Title Date Pertinent Pages Etc.
	384	Claim Charts from Defendants' Amended Invalidity Contentions; Civil Action No. 2-06CV-42 (DF), comparing claims of Ross et al. U.S. Patent 6,629,138 to various references; February 6, 2012.
	385	Claim Charts from Defendants' Amended Invalidity Contentions; Civil Action No. 2-06CV-42 (DF), comparing claims of Ross et al. U.S. Patent 6,993,572 to various references; February 6, 2012.
	386	Claim Charts from Defendants' Amended Invalidity Contentions; Civil Action No. 2-06CV-42 (DF), comparing claims of Ross et al. U.S. Patent 7,818,399 to various references; February 6, 2012.
	387	Edwards, et al.; "Making Money In Cyberspace"; September 1998.
	388	Archived web pages at www.wilsonweb.com; February 7, 1998.
	389	Archived web page at www.wilsonweb.com; June 26, 1998.
	390	Wilson, Ralph; "Review of ShopSite Manager 3.1"; Web Commerce Today; Issue 2; September 15, 1997.
	391	Screen images from www.wilsonweb.com, showing "Review of ShopSite Manager 3.1"; from Web Commerce Today; Issue 2; September 15, 1997.
	392	Wilson, Ralph; "How ViaWeb and ShopSite Pro Incorporate Affiliate Program Software; Web Commerce Today; Issue 8, March 15, 1998 (as posted on www.wilsonweb.com)
	393	Archived web page at astrology.net; October 29, 1996.
	394	Archived web pages at www.viamall.com; March 29, 1997.
	395	Archived web page at www.austads.com; May 20, 1998.
	396	"The CDnow Story", pages 172-176, referring to history in November 1994, March 1997, and "early in 1998."
	397	Screen image from Barry's Temple of Godzilla: www.godzillatemple.com, showing CDnow.com; September 24, 1998.
	398	Screen image from rollingstone.com, showing links to CDnow, September 24, 1998.
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	400	Archived web page at www.fredericks.com; July 21, 1997.
	401	Pages from Publishers Weekly, U.S. Copyright Office, and Phoenix Public Library, showing publication of Edwards' "Making Money in Cyberspace"; August 10, 1998.
	402	Archived web page at www.fredericks.com; April 18, 1997.

Examiner: /Yogesh Garg/ Date Considered: 10/03/2013

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OTHER ART

Examiner Initials	Item	Author Title Date Pertinent Pages Etc.
	403	Archived web page at www.thespaceshop.com; December 12, 1998.
	404	Archived web page at www.kennedyspacecenter.com; January 30, 1998
	405	Archived web page at nasa.viamall.com; December 22, 1997.
	406	Trademark Electronic Search System (TESS) record of MARKETPLACEMCI; Reg. No. 1,940,267, filed August 19, 1994.
	407	Messmer, E.; "MCI opens electronic mall on 'Net"; Network World; April 3, 1995.
	408	"Nordstrom E-Mail Shopping Expanded To Marketplacemci"; The Seattle Times; October 5, 1995.
	409	"News Corp./MCI Online Venture adds Nordstrom to marketplaceMCI"; Business Wire; October 5, 1995.
	410	"News Corp./MCI Online Ventures Offers Innovations in Online Shopping"; Business Wire; December 5, 1995.
	411	"News Corp./MCI Online Ventures adds greater shopping variety to marketplaceMCI with six new stores"; Business Wire; November 2, 1995.
	412	"News Corp./MCI Online Ventures Announces Grand Opening of Online Shopping Mall"; Business Wire; September 7, 1995.
	413	"MCI unveils internetMCI; new MCI-branded software, nationwide access, content and shopping services"; Business Wire; March 27, 1995.
	414	"Viaweb's First Business Plan"; from webpage http://www.paulgraham.com/vwplan.html; referring to document dated August 24, 1995.
	415	Archived web page at www.rollingstone.com; December 10, 1997.
	416	Wilson, Ralph F.; "Shopping Carts for Small Sites"; Web Commerce Today; Issue 6; January 15, 1998.
	417	Archived web page at shopsite.com; December 28, 1996.
	418	Archived web pages at www.shopsite.com; January 10, 1997.
	419	United States Copyright Office, Certificate of Registration of Edwards' "Making Money in Cyberspace", submitted September 8, 1998, registered October 13,1998.
	420	Wikipedia page for RTML, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RTML, April 4, 2011.
	421	"Digital River: Plumbing the Web"; The Digital River Review; February 1998.
	422	Web pages from www3.digitalriver.com; May 1998.
	423	Web pages from www.sdcorp.com with related source code; May 14, 1998
	424	Breimhurst, Henry; "Digital River plans an IPO this year"; CityBusiness; April 24, 1998.

Examiner: /Yogesh Garg/ Date Considered: 10/03/2013

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OTHER ART

Examiner Initials	Item	Author Title Date Pertinent Pages Etc.
	425	Archived web pages at www.viaweb.com; "Press Quotes"; June 6, 1997.
	426	Archived web pages at www.austads.com with related source code; May 20, 1998.
	427	Archived web pages at www.fredericks.com; November 4, 1996.
	428	Archived web pages at www.fredericks.com, with related source code; February 4, 1997.
	429	Altaner, David; "Interest in Internet Retailing Sites Slows to a Trickle"; http://articles.sun-sentinel.com; September 25, 1997.
	430	"YAHOO TO ACQUIRE VIAWEB"; Press Release found at http://docs.yahoo.com/docs/pr/release184.html; June 8, 1998.
	431	ForeFront releases WebWhacker 1.0; CNET News; January 4, 1996.
	432	ForeFront-WebWhacker User's Guide; 1995-1996.
	433	"Offline Web browsing: It's like surfing in Ohio"; INFOWORLD.com; Vol. 18, Issue 32; August 5, 1996.
	434	"You can take it with you with ForeFront's WebWhacker"; INFOWORLD.com; Vol. 19, Issue 18; May 5, 1997.
	435	Archived webpage at www.ffg.com regarding WebWhacker 3.0; April 1, 1997.
	436	Archived webpage at www.ffg.com regarding WebWhacker; December 31, 1996.
	437	Expert Report of Peter Kent Regarding Invalidity of the '135, '572, and '399 Patents; Civil Action No. 2-06CV-42 (DF); May 18, 2012.
	438	Select exhibits from Expert Report of Peter Kent Regarding Invalidity of the '135, '572, and '399 Patents; Civil Action No. 2-06CV-42 (DF); May 18, 2012.
	439	Selected pages from Incognito Café Web site describing Book Stacks Unlimited links partner program, 1996.
	440	Nexchange Merchant Internet Distributed Commerce Network Agreement, for Dunwoody Gourmet; September 1, 1998.
	441	MicroShops Business Plan, Century Technology Group, MicroShops, version 0.2, March 1998.
	442	Digital River, Inc. Dealer Agreement with Octal Publications Limited, January 1, 1997.
	443	Online Decision Strategies presentation to Syntellect Interactive Communications; 1996.
	444	Screenshots from a video clip dated March 31, 2012, of a Digital River employee showing certain archived webpages from www.ffg.com (December 31, 1996) and www.miramarsys.com (November 11, 1996) and reconstructions of pages served by Digital River for ForeFront and Miramar Systems, Inc.

Examiner: /Yogesh Garg/ Date Considered: 10/03/2013

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ALL REFERENCES CONSIDERED EXCEPT WHERE LINED THROUGH. /Y.G./

OTHER ART

Examiner Initials	Item	Author Title Date Pertinent Pages Etc.
	445	Screenshots from a video clip dated March 15, 2012, of a Digital River employee showing certain archived webpages from www.digfrontiers.com (November 2, 1996) and reconstructions of pages served by Digital River for Digital Frontiers.
	446	"Firm does placement"; St. Paul Pioneer Press; Tuesday, April 28, 1998.
	447	Output files of Web Whacker software used in the DR Secure Sales System; allegedly used with respect to certain 1996 websites; cited in Defendants' Amended Invalidity Contentions Pursuant to Local Rule 3-6; Civil Action No. 2-06CV-42 (DF); February 6, 2012.
	448	Archived webpage at http://ego.net/; December 22, 1997.
	449	Archived webpage at www2.travelnow.com; September 30, 1999.
	450	Archived webpage at www.newyorknews.com; February 4, 1998.
	451	Archived webpage at www.newyorknews.com; July 12, 1998.
	452	Archived webpage at www.newyorknews.com; February 19, 1999.
	453	Archived webpage at www2.travelnow.com; September 11, 1999.
	454	Archived webpage at www.travlang.com; February 27, 1997.
	455	Archived webpage at www.travelnow.com; May 12, 2000.
	456	Archived webpage at http://travel.yahoo.com; December 6, 1998.
	457	Archived webpage at www.statenislandonline.com; April 18, 1997.
	458	Archived webpage at www2.travelnow.com; November 13, 1999.
	459	The Sabre Group Holdings, Inc., SEC Form 10K for Fiscal Year 1996; March 31, 1997.
	460	The Sabre Group Holdings, Inc., SEC Form 10K for Fiscal Year 1997; March 30, 1998.
	461	The Sabre Group Holdings, Inc., SEC Form 10K for Fiscal Year 1998; March 19, 1999.
	462	"Netscape and The Sabre Group Launch Innovative Travel Booking Service on Netscape Netcenter; Travelocity Featured as Exclusive Travel Partner for Netcenter's Marketplace"; January 26, 1998.
	463	Yahoo! Media Relations press release, "Yahoo! and the Sabre Group Team Up to Bring Users Travel Booking Services"; November 10, 1997.
	464	Yahoo! Media Relations press release, "The Sabre Group Renews Contract Between Travelocity.com and Yahoo!"; January 24, 1999.

Examiner: /Yogesh Garg/ Date Considered: 10/03/2013

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Serial No.:	13/970,515
First Inventor:	Ross, D. Delano, Jr.
Filed:	08/19/2013
Art Unit:	3625 (in parent)
Examiner:	Garg, Y.C. (in parent)
Conf. No.:	2289

OTHER ART

Examiner Initials	Item	Author Title Date Pertinent Pages Etc.
	465	MEMORANDUM OPINION AND ORDER on Defendants' Renewed Motions for Judgment as a Matter of Law, and Digital River, Inc.'s Motion for New Trial; Civil Action No. 2:06-CV-00042 (DF); June 20, 2013.
	466	MEMORANDUM OPINION AND ORDER on DDR Holdings, LLC's Motion for Entry of Judgment; Civil Action No. 2:06-CV-00042 (DF); June 20, 2013.
	467	JUDGMENT in favor of DDR Holdings, LLC; Civil Action No. 2:06-CV-00042 (DF); June 20, 2013.
	468	Keech, Ellen S.; "Infonautics provides the Atlanta Journal and Constitution with full service archives"; PR Newswire, New York; February 25, 1997; hereinafter Infonautics was extracted from Proquest database on June 25, 2012.
	469	Joint Claim Construction and Prehearing Statement; Civil Action No. 2:06-CV-00042 (DF); filed September 9, 2011.
	470	Definitions of "hyperlink" and "link" from: Barron's Dictionary of Computer and Internet Terms; 7th Ed.; 2000; pp. 227, 273.
	471	Definition of "look and feel" from: PCMag.com encyclopedia; 2010.
	472	Definition of "third party" from: The Compact Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd Ed.; pg. 956; 1989.

Examiner: /Yogesh Garg/ Date Considered: 10/03/2013

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Index of Claims	Application/Control No.	Applicant(s)/Patent Under Reexamination
	13970515	ROSS ET AL.
	Examiner	**Art Unit**
	YOGESH C GARG	3625

✓	Rejected	-	Cancelled	N	Non-Elected	A	Appeal
=	Allowed	÷	Restricted	I	Interference	O	Objected

☐ Claims renumbered in the same order as presented by applicant ☐ CPA ☐ T.D. ☐ R.1.47

CLAIM		DATE								
Final	Original	10/03/2013								
	1	✓								

To: Louis@valuablepatents.com,donald@valuablepatents.com,shaelyn@valuablepatents.com
From: PAIR_eOfficeAction@uspto.gov
Cc: PAIR_eOfficeAction@uspto.gov
Subject: Private PAIR Correspondence Notification for Customer Number 26362

Oct 11, 2013 05:19:23 AM

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14301 North 87th Street, Suite 312
Scottsdale, AZ 85260
UNITED STATES

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Application	Document	Mailroom Date	Attorney Docket No.
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	892	10/11/2013	
	1449	10/11/2013	

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APPLICATION NUMBER	FILING OR 371(C) DATE	FIRST NAMED APPLICANT	ATTY. DOCKET NO./TITLE
13/970,515	08/19/2013	D. Delano Ross JR.	14-CON4

CONFIRMATION NO. 2289

POA ACCEPTANCE LETTER

26362
LOUIS J. HOFFMAN, P.C.
14301 North 87th Street, Suite 312
Scottsdale, AZ 85260

OC000000063640084

Date Mailed: 09/10/2013

NOTICE OF ACCEPTANCE OF POWER OF ATTORNEY

This is in response to the Power of Attorney filed 08/21/2013.

The Power of Attorney in this application is accepted. Correspondence in this application will be mailed to the above address as provided by 37 CFR 1.33.

/sfu/

Office of Data Management, Application Assistance Unit (571) 272-4000, or (571) 272-4200, or 1-888-786-0101

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APPLICATION NUMBER	FILING or 371(c) DATE	GRP ART UNIT	FIL FEE REC'D	ATTY.DOCKET.NO	TOT CLAIMS	IND CLAIMS
13/970,515	08/19/2013	3622	1600		1	1

CONFIRMATION NO. 2289

26362
LOUIS J. HOFFMAN, P.C.
14301 North 87th Street, Suite 312
Scottsdale, AZ 85260

FILING RECEIPT

OC000000063640388

Date Mailed: 09/10/2013

Receipt is acknowledged of this non-provisional patent application. The application will be taken up for examination in due course. Applicant will be notified as to the results of the examination. Any correspondence concerning the application must include the following identification information: the U.S. APPLICATION NUMBER, FILING DATE, NAME OF APPLICANT, and TITLE OF INVENTION. Fees transmitted by check or draft are subject to collection. Please verify the accuracy of the data presented on this receipt. **If an error is noted on this Filing Receipt, please submit a written request for a Filing Receipt Correction. Please provide a copy of this Filing Receipt with the changes noted thereon. If you received a "Notice to File Missing Parts" for this application, please submit any corrections to this Filing Receipt with your reply to the Notice. When the USPTO processes the reply to the Notice, the USPTO will generate another Filing Receipt incorporating the requested corrections**

Inventor(s)

D. Delano Ross JR., Peachtree Corners, GA;
Daniel D. Ross, Dunwoody, GA;
Joseph R. Michaels, Hephzibah, GA;
William R. May, Atlanta, GA;
Richard A. Anderson, Powder Springs, GA;

Applicant(s)

DDR HOLDINGS, LLC, Dunwoody, GA

Assignment For Published Patent Application

DDR HOLDINGS, LLC, Dunwoody, GA

Power of Attorney: The patent practitioners associated with Customer Number 26362

Domestic Priority data as claimed by applicant

This application is a CON of 12/906,979 10/18/2010 PAT 8515825
which is a CON of 11/343,464 01/30/2006 PAT 7818399
which is a CON of 10/461,997 06/11/2003 PAT 6993572
which is a CON of 09/398,268 09/17/1999 PAT 6629135
which claims benefit of 60/100,697 09/17/1998

Foreign Applications for which priority is claimed (You may be eligible to benefit from the **Patent Prosecution Highway** program at the USPTO. Please see http://www.uspto.gov for more information.) - None.
Foreign application information must be provided in an Application Data Sheet in order to constitute a claim to foreign priority. See 37 CFR 1.55 and 1.76.

If Required, Foreign Filing License Granted: 09/06/2013

The country code and number of your priority application, to be used for filing abroad under the Paris Convention, is **US 13/970,515**

Projected Publication Date: Request for Non-Publication Acknowledged

Non-Publication Request: Yes

Early Publication Request: No

Title

Methods of expanding commercial opportunities for internet websites through coordinated offsite marketing

Preliminary Class

705

Statement under 37 CFR 1.55 or 1.78 for AIA (First Inventor to File) Transition Applications: No

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Since the rights granted by a U.S. patent extend only throughout the territory of the United States and have no effect in a foreign country, an inventor who wishes patent protection in another country must apply for a patent in a specific country or in regional patent offices. Applicants may wish to consider the filing of an international application under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT). An international (PCT) application generally has the same effect as a regular national patent application in each PCT-member country. The PCT process **simplifies** the filing of patent applications on the same invention in member countries, but **does not result** in a grant of "an international patent" and does not eliminate the need of applicants to file additional documents and fees in countries where patent protection is desired.

Almost every country has its own patent law, and a person desiring a patent in a particular country must make an application for patent in that country in accordance with its particular laws. Since the laws of many countries differ in various respects from the patent law of the United States, applicants are advised to seek guidance from specific foreign countries to ensure that patent rights are not lost prematurely.

Applicants also are advised that in the case of inventions made in the United States, the Director of the USPTO must issue a license before applicants can apply for a patent in a foreign country. The filing of a U.S. patent application serves as a request for a foreign filing license. The application's filing receipt contains further information and guidance as to the status of applicant's license for foreign filing.

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Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, 5.11 & 5.15

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PATENT APPLICATION FEE DETERMINATION RECORD

Substitute for Form PTO-875

Application or Docket Number: 13/970,515

APPLICATION AS FILED - PART I

FOR	(Column 1) NUMBER FILED	(Column 2) NUMBER EXTRA	SMALL ENTITY RATE($)	SMALL ENTITY FEE($)	OR	OTHER THAN SMALL ENTITY RATE($)	OTHER THAN SMALL ENTITY FEE($)
BASIC FEE (37 CFR 1.16(a), (b), or (c))	N/A	N/A	N/A			N/A	280
SEARCH FEE (37 CFR 1.16(k), (i), or (m))	N/A	N/A	N/A			N/A	600
EXAMINATION FEE (37 CFR 1.16(o), (p), or (q))	N/A	N/A	N/A			N/A	720
TOTAL CLAIMS (37 CFR 1.16(i))	1 minus 20 =	*			OR	x 80 =	0.00
INDEPENDENT CLAIMS (37 CFR 1.16(h))	1 minus 3 =	*				x 420 =	0.00
APPLICATION SIZE FEE (37 CFR 1.16(s))	If the specification and drawings exceed 100 sheets of paper, the application size fee due is $310 ($155 for small entity) for each additional 50 sheets or fraction thereof. See 35 U.S.C. 41(a)(1)(G) and 37 CFR 1.16(s).						0.00
MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM PRESENT (37 CFR 1.16(j))							0.00
* If the difference in column 1 is less than zero, enter "0" in column 2.			TOTAL			TOTAL	1600

APPLICATION AS AMENDED - PART II

		(Column 1) CLAIMS REMAINING AFTER AMENDMENT		(Column 2) HIGHEST NUMBER PREVIOUSLY PAID FOR	(Column 3) PRESENT EXTRA	SMALL ENTITY RATE($)	SMALL ENTITY ADDITIONAL FEE($)	OR	OTHER THAN SMALL ENTITY RATE($)	OTHER THAN SMALL ENTITY ADDITIONAL FEE($)
AMENDMENT A	Total (37 CFR 1.16(i))	*	Minus	**	=	x =		OR	x =	
	Independent (37 CFR 1.16(h))	*	Minus	***	=	x =		OR	x =	
	Application Size Fee (37 CFR 1.16(s))									
	FIRST PRESENTATION OF MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM (37 CFR 1.16(j))							OR		
						TOTAL ADD'L FEE		OR	TOTAL ADD'L FEE	

		(Column 1) CLAIMS REMAINING AFTER AMENDMENT		(Column 2) HIGHEST NUMBER PREVIOUSLY PAID FOR	(Column 3) PRESENT EXTRA	SMALL ENTITY RATE($)	SMALL ENTITY ADDITIONAL FEE($)	OR	OTHER THAN SMALL ENTITY RATE($)	OTHER THAN SMALL ENTITY ADDITIONAL FEE($)
AMENDMENT B	Total (37 CFR 1.16(i))	*	Minus	**	=	x =		OR	x =	
	Independent (37 CFR 1.16(h))	*	Minus	***	=	x =		OR	x =	
	Application Size Fee (37 CFR 1.16(s))									
	FIRST PRESENTATION OF MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM (37 CFR 1.16(j))							OR		
						TOTAL ADD'L FEE		OR	TOTAL ADD'L FEE	

* If the entry in column 1 is less than the entry in column 2, write "0" in column 3.
** If the "Highest Number Previously Paid For" IN THIS SPACE is less than 20, enter "20".
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APPLICATION NUMBER	FILING OR 371(C) DATE	FIRST NAMED APPLICANT	ATTY. DOCKET NO./TITLE
13/970,515	08/19/2013	D. Delano Ross JR.	

CONFIRMATION NO. 2289

26362
LOUIS J. HOFFMAN, P.C.
14301 North 87th Street, Suite 312
Scottsdale, AZ 85260

NOTICE

OC000000063640389

Date Mailed: 09/10/2013

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Applicant is notified that the above-identified application contains the deficiencies noted below. No period for reply is set forth in this notice for correction of these deficiencies. However, if a deficiency relates to the inventor's oath or declaration, the applicant must file an oath or declaration in compliance with 37 CFR 1.63, or a substitute statement in compliance with 37 CFR 1.64, executed by or with respect to each actual inventor no later than the expiration of the time period set in the "Notice of Allowability" to avoid abandonment. See 37 CFR 1.53(f).

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A new inventor's oath or declaration that identifies this application (e.g., by Application Number and filing date) is required. The inventor's oath or declaration does not comply with 37 CFR 1.63 in that it:

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  - D. Delano Ross JR.
  - Daniel D. Ross
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Serial No.:	13/970,515
First Inventor:	Ross, D. Delano, Jr.
Filed:	08/19/2013
Art Unit:	3625 (in parent)
Examiner:	Garg, Y.C. (in parent)
Conf. No.:	2289

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Art Unit:	3625 (in parent)
Examiner:	Garg, Y.C. (in parent)
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_____	445	Screenshots from a video clip dated March 15, 2012, of a Digital River employee showing certain archived webpages from www.digfrontiers.com (November 2, 1996) and reconstructions of pages served by Digital River for Digital Frontiers.
_____	446	"Firm does placement"; St. Paul Pioneer Press; Tuesday, April 28, 1998.
_____	447	Output files of Web Whacker software used in the DR Secure Sales System; allegedly used with respect to certain 1996 websites; cited in Defendants' Amended Invalidity Contentions Pursuant to Local Rule 3-6; Civil Action No. 2-06CV-42 (DF); February 6, 2012.
_____	448	Archived webpage at http://ego.net/; December 22, 1997.
_____	449	Archived webpage at www2.travelnow.com; September 30, 1999.
_____	450	Archived webpage at www.newyorknews.com; February 4, 1998.
_____	451	Archived webpage at www.newyorknews.com; July 12, 1998.
_____	452	Archived webpage at www.newyorknews.com; February 19, 1999.
_____	453	Archived webpage at www2.travelnow.com; September 11, 1999.
_____	454	Archived webpage at www.travlang.com; February 27, 1997.
_____	455	Archived webpage at www.travelnow.com; May 12, 2000.
_____	456	Archived webpage at http://travel.yahoo.com; December 6, 1998.
_____	457	Archived webpage at www.statenislandonline.com; April 18, 1997.
_____	458	Archived webpage at www2.travelnow.com; November 13, 1999.
_____	459	The Sabre Group Holdings, Inc., SEC Form 10K for Fiscal Year 1996; March 31, 1997.
_____	460	The Sabre Group Holdings, Inc., SEC Form 10K for Fiscal Year 1997; March 30, 1998.
_____	461	The Sabre Group Holdings, Inc., SEC Form 10K for Fiscal Year 1998; March 19, 1999.
_____	462	"Netscape and The Sabre Group Launch Innovative Travel Booking Service on Netscape Netcenter; Travelocity Featured as Exclusive Travel Partner for Netcenter's Marketplace"; January 26, 1998.
_____	463	Yahoo! Media Relations press release, "Yahoo! and the Sabre Group Team Up to Bring Users Travel Booking Services"; November 10, 1997.
_____	464	Yahoo! Media Relations press release, "The Sabre Group Renews Contract Between Travelocity.com and Yahoo!"; January 24, 1999.

Examiner: _____ Date Considered: _____

EXAMINER: Initial if reference considered whether or not citation is in conformance with MPEP 609. Draw line through citation if not in conformance *and* not considered. Include copy of this form with next communication to applicant.

Serial No.:	13/970,515
First Inventor:	Ross, D. Delano, Jr.
Filed:	08/19/2013
Art Unit:	3625 (in parent)
Examiner:	Garg, Y.C. (in parent)
Conf. No.:	2289

OTHER ART

Examiner Initials	Item	Author Title Date Pertinent Pages Etc.
_____	465	MEMORANDUM OPINION AND ORDER on Defendants' Renewed Motions for Judgment as a Matter of Law, and Digital River, Inc.'s Motion for New Trial; Civil Action No. 2:06-CV-00042 (DF); June 20, 2013.
_____	466	MEMORANDUM OPINION AND ORDER on DDR Holdings, LLC's Motion for Entry of Judgment; Civil Action No. 2:06-CV-00042 (DF); June 20, 2013.
_____	467	JUDGMENT in favor of DDR Holdings, LLC; Civil Action No. 2:06-CV-00042 (DF); June 20, 2013.
_____	468	Keech, Ellen S.; "Infonautics provides the Atlanta Journal and Constitution with full service archives"; PR Newswire, New York; February 25, 1997; hereinafter Infonautics was extracted from Proquest database on June 25, 2012.
_____	469	Joint Claim Construction and Prehearing Statement; Civil Action No. 2:06-CV-00042 (DF); filed September 9, 2011.
_____	470	Definitions of "hyperlink" and "link" from: Barron's Dictionary of Computer and Internet Terms; 7th Ed.; 2000; pp. 227, 273.
_____	471	Definition of "look and feel" from: PCMag.com encyclopedia; 2010.
_____	472	Definition of "third party" from: The Compact Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd Ed.; pg. 956; 1989.

Examiner: _____ Date Considered: _____

EXAMINER: Initial if reference considered whether or not citation is in conformance with MPEP 609. Draw line through citation if not in conformance *and* not considered. Include copy of this form with next communication to applicant.

Electronic Acknowledgement Receipt

EFS ID:	16691395
Application Number:	13970515
International Application Number:	
Confirmation Number:	2289
Title of Invention:	Methods of expanding commercial opportunities for internet websites through coordinated offsite marketing
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	D Delano Ross
Customer Number:	26362
Filer:	Louis J. Hoffman/Donald Hertz
Filer Authorized By:	Louis J. Hoffman
Attorney Docket Number:	
Receipt Date:	26-AUG-2013
Filing Date:	
Time Stamp:	20:44:29
Application Type:	Utility under 35 USC 111(a)

Payment information:

Submitted with Payment	no

File Listing:

Document Number	Document Description	File Name	File Size(Bytes)/ Message Digest	Multi Part /.zip	Pages (if appl.)
1	Transmittal Letter	13-08-26-DDR-CON4-IDS_Cover.pdf	43748 ad23a82fb3aa066b7f2c3ee716b21af621038b87	no	1

Warnings:	
Information:	

2	Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) Form (SB08)	13-08-26-DDR-CON4-FORM_1449.pdf	230302 179dd15fa697be02f841be614905e3e52dfafbad	no	23

Warnings:	
Information:	
This is not an USPTO supplied IDS fillable form	
Total Files Size (in bytes):	274050

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New Applications Under 35 U.S.C. 111
If a new application is being filed and the application includes the necessary components for a filing date (see 37 CFR 1.53(b)-(d) and MPEP 506), a Filing Receipt (37 CFR 1.54) will be issued in due course and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the filing date of the application.

National Stage of an International Application under 35 U.S.C. 371
If a timely submission to enter the national stage of an international application is compliant with the conditions of 35 U.S.C. 371 and other applicable requirements a Form PCT/DO/EO/903 indicating acceptance of the application as a national stage submission under 35 U.S.C. 371 will be issued in addition to the Filing Receipt, in due course.

New International Application Filed with the USPTO as a Receiving Office
If a new international application is being filed and the international application includes the necessary components for an international filing date (see PCT Article 11 and MPEP 1810), a Notification of the International Application Number and of the International Filing Date (Form PCT/RO/105) will be issued in due course, subject to prescriptions concerning national security, and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the international filing date of the application.

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicants	:	Ross, D. Delano Jr. et al.	Art Unit	:	3625 *
Serial No.	:	13/970,515	Examiner	:	Garg, Y.C. *
Filing Date	:	08/19/2013	** In parent application S.N. 12/906,979*		
Title	:	Methods of expanding commercial opportunities for internet websites through coordinated offsite marketing			

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Filed via EFS – August 26, 2013

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Dear Sir:

Assignee discloses the references listed on form PTO-1449 attached to this document. All references listed were cited in parent application Serial No. 12/906,979, therefore, pursuant to Office Rules, copies of the references are not included.

If the Office has any questions, please feel free to contact applicant's undersigned attorney of record.

Respectfully submitted,

DDR HOLDINGS, LLC

by its attorney

Dated: August 26, 2013

/Louis J. Hoffman/
Louis J. Hoffman
Reg. No. 38,918

LOUIS J. HOFFMAN, P.C.
14301 North 87th Street
Suite 312
Scottsdale, Arizona 85260
(480) 948-3295

PTO/AIA/82A (07-13)
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TRANSMITTAL FOR POWER OF ATTORNEY TO ONE OR MORE REGISTERED PRACTITIONERS

NOTE: This form is to be submitted with the Power of Attorney by Applicant form (PTO/AIA/82B) to identify the application to which the Power of Attorney is directed, in accordance with 37 CFR 1.5, unless the application number and filing date are identified in the Power of Attorney by Applicant form. If neither form PTO/AIA/82A nor form PTO/AIA82B identifies the application to which the Power of Attorney is directed, the Power of Attorney will not be recognized in the application.

Application Number	13/970,515
Filing Date	08/19/2013
First Named Inventor	Ross, D. Delano, Jr.
Title	Methods of expanding commercial opportunities for internet websites through coordinated offsite marketing
Art Unit	3625 (in parent application)
Examiner Name	Garg, Yogesh C. (in parent application)
Attorney Docket Number	23-CON4

SIGNATURE of Applicant or Patent Practitioner

Signature	/Louis J. Hoffman/	Date (Optional)	08/21/2013
Name	Louis J. Hoffman	Registration Number	38918
Title (if Applicant is a juristic entity)			
Applicant Name (if Applicant is a juristic entity)			

NOTE: This form must be signed in accordance with 37 CFR 1.33. See 37 CFR 1.4(d) for signature requirements and certifications. If more than one applicant, use multiple forms.

☑ *Total of 1 forms are submitted.

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.131, 1.32, and 1.33. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.11 and 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 3 minutes to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. **SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**

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Doc Code: PA..
Document Description: Power of Attorney

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POWER OF ATTORNEY BY APPLICANT

I hereby revoke all previous powers of attorney given in the application identified in either the attached transmittal letter or the boxes below.

Application Number	Filing Date
13/970,515	08/19/2013

(Note: The boxes above may be left blank if information is provided on form PTO/AIA/82A.)

☑ I hereby appoint the Patent Practitioner(s) associated with the following Customer Number as my/our attorney(s) or agent(s), and to transact all business in the United States Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith for the application referenced in the attached transmittal letter (form PTO/AIA/82A) or identified above: 26362

OR

☐ I hereby appoint Practitioner(s) named in the attached list (form PTO/AIA/82C) as my/our attorney(s) or agent(s), and to transact all business in the United States Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith for the patent application referenced in the attached transmittal letter (form PTO/AIA/82A) or identified above. (Note: Complete form PTO/AIA/82C.)

Please recognize or change the correspondence address for the application identified in the attached transmittal letter to:

☑ The address associated with the above-mentioned Customer Number

OR

☐ The address associated with Customer Number:

OR

Firm or Individual Name					
Address					
City		State		Zip	
Country					
Telephone		Email			

I am the Applicant (if the Applicant is a juristic entity, list the Applicant name in the box):

DDR Holdings, LLC

☐ Inventor or Joint Inventor (title not required below)

☐ Legal Representative of a Deceased or Legally Incapacitated Inventor (title not required below)

☑ Assignee or Person to Whom the Inventor is Under an Obligation to Assign (provide signer's title if applicant is a juristic entity)

☐ Person Who Otherwise Shows Sufficient Proprietary Interest (e.g., a petition under 37 CFR 1.46(b)(2) was granted in the application or is concurrently being filed with this document) (provide signer's title if applicant is a juristic entity)

SIGNATURE of Applicant for Patent

The undersigned (whose title is supplied below) is authorized to act on behalf of the applicant (e.g., where the applicant is a juristic entity).

Signature		Date (Optional)	August 20, 2013
Name	Daniel D. Ross		
Title	Managing Director - DDR Holdings, LLC		

NOTE: Signature - This form must be signed by the applicant in accordance with 37 CFR 1.33. See 37 CFR 1.4 for signature requirements and certifications. If more than one applicant, use multiple forms.

☑ Total of 1 forms are submitted.

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.131, 1.32, and 1.33. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.11 and 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 3 minutes to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. **SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**

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STATEMENT UNDER 37 CFR 3.73(c)

Applicant/Patent Owner: DDR Holdings, LLC

Application No./Patent No.: 13/970,515 Filed/Issue Date: 08/19/2013

Titled: Methods of expanding commercial opportunities for internet websites through coordinated offsite marketing

DDR Holdings, LLC, a limited liability company

(Name of Assignee) (Type of Assignee, e.g., corporation, partnership, university, government agency, etc.)

states that, for the patent application/patent identified above, it is (choose **one** of options 1, 2, 3 or 4 below):

1. ☑ The assignee of the entire right, title, and interest.

2. ☐ An assignee of less than the entire right, title, and interest (check applicable box):

   ☐ The extent (by percentage) of its ownership interest is _____%. Additional Statement(s) by the owners holding the balance of the interest must be submitted to account for 100% of the ownership interest.

   ☐ There are unspecified percentages of ownership. The other parties, including inventors, who together own the entire right, title and interest are:

   Additional Statement(s) by the owner(s) holding the balance of the interest must be submitted to account for the entire right, title, and interest.

3. ☐ The assignee of an undivided interest in the entirety (a complete assignment from one of the joint inventors was made). The other parties, including inventors, who together own the entire right, title, and interest are:

   Additional Statement(s) by the owner(s) holding the balance of the interest must be submitted to account for the entire right, title, and interest.

4. ☐ The recipient, via a court proceeding or the like (*e.g.*, bankruptcy, probate), of an undivided interest in the entirety (a complete transfer of ownership interest was made). The certified document(s) showing the transfer is attached.

The interest identified in option 1, 2 or 3 above (not option 4) is evidenced by either (choose **one** of options A or B below):

A. ☐ An assignment from the inventor(s) of the patent application/patent identified above. The assignment was recorded in the United States Patent and Trademark Office at Reel _____, Frame _____, or for which a copy thereof is attached.

B. ☑ A chain of title from the inventor(s), of the patent application/patent identified above, to the current assignee as follows:

1. From: Intentors To: Nexchange Corporation

   The document was recorded in the United States Patent and Trademark Office at

   Reel 031040, Frame 0088, or for which a copy thereof is attached.

2. From: Nexchange Corporation To: Daniel D. Ross

   The document was recorded in the United States Patent and Trademark Office at

   Reel 031039, Frame 0301, or for which a copy thereof is attached.

This collection of information is required by37 CFR3.73(b). The information is required toobtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentialityis governed by35 U.S.C. 122and 37 CFR1.11 and1.14. Thiscollection is estimated to take 12 minutes to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submittingthe completed application form to the USPTO.Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent tothe Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS.**SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450**

If you need assistance in completing the form, call 1-800-PTO-9199 and select option 2.

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STATEMENT UNDER 37 CFR 3.73(c)

3. From: Daniel D. Ross To: DDR Holdings, LLC

The document was recorded in the United States Patent and Trademark Office at
Reel 031039, Frame 0322, or for which a copy thereof is attached.

4. From: _____ To: _____

The document was recorded in the United States Patent and Trademark Office at
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5. From: _____ To: _____

The document was recorded in the United States Patent and Trademark Office at
Reel _____, Frame _____, or for which a copy thereof is attached.

6. From: _____ To: _____

The document was recorded in the United States Patent and Trademark Office at
Reel _____, Frame _____, or for which a copy thereof is attached.

☐ Additional documents in the chain of title are listed on a supplemental sheet(s).

☑ ✓ As required by 37 CFR 3.73(c)(1)(i), the documentary evidence of the chain of title from the original owner to the assignee was, or concurrently is being, submitted for recordation pursuant to 37 CFR 3.11.

[NOTE: A separate copy (i.e., a true copy of the original assignment document(s)) must be submitted to Assignment Division in accordance with 37 CFR Part 3, to record the assignment in the records of the USPTO. See MPEP 302.08]

The undersigned (whose title is supplied below) is authorized to act on behalf of the assignee.

Signature	August 20, 2013 Date
Daniel D. Ross Printed or Typed Name	Managing Director - DDR Holdings, LLC Title or Registration Number

Electronic Acknowledgement Receipt

EFS ID:	16645995
Application Number:	13970515
International Application Number:	
Confirmation Number:	2289
Title of Invention:	Methods of expanding commercial opportunities for internet websites through coordinated offsite marketing
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	D Delano Ross
Customer Number:	26362
Filer:	Louis J. Hoffman/Donald Hertz
Filer Authorized By:	Louis J. Hoffman
Attorney Docket Number:	
Receipt Date:	21-AUG-2013
Filing Date:	
Time Stamp:	14:07:39
Application Type:	Utility under 35 USC 111(a)

Payment information:

Submitted with Payment	no

File Listing:

Document Number	Document Description	File Name	File Size(Bytes)/ Message Digest	Multi Part /.zip	Pages (if appl.)
1	Power of Attorney	13-08-20-DDR-CON4-Power_of_Attorney.pdf	1275072 3e788d4026f50986ef8750bea9ad8bdba3c9dd98	no	2

Warnings:	
Information:	

2	Assignee showing of ownership per 37 CFR 3.73.	13-08-20-DDR-CON4-Stmt_Ownership.pdf	641495 ace61fe252504b76c8d7df18e03c56de42bf5cef	no	2

Warnings:	
Information:	
Total Files Size (in bytes):	1916567

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New Applications Under 35 U.S.C. 111

If a new application is being filed and the application includes the necessary components for a filing date (see 37 CFR 1.53(b)-(d) and MPEP 506), a Filing Receipt (37 CFR 1.54) will be issued in due course and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the filing date of the application.

National Stage of an International Application under 35 U.S.C. 371

If a timely submission to enter the national stage of an international application is compliant with the conditions of 35 U.S.C. 371 and other applicable requirements a Form PCT/DO/EO/903 indicating acceptance of the application as a national stage submission under 35 U.S.C. 371 will be issued in addition to the Filing Receipt, in due course.

New International Application Filed with the USPTO as a Receiving Office

If a new international application is being filed and the international application includes the necessary components for an international filing date (see PCT Article 11 and MPEP 1810), a Notification of the International Application Number and of the International Filing Date (Form PCT/RO/105) will be issued in due course, subject to prescriptions concerning national security, and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the international filing date of the application.

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UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL

(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 CFR 1.53(b))

Attorney Docket No.	14-CON4
First Named Inventor	Ross, D. Delano, Jr.
Title	Methods of expanding commercial ...
Express Mail Label No.	n/a - filed via EFS

APPLICATION ELEMENTS

See MPEP chapter 600 concerning utility patent application contents.

1. ☐ **Fee Transmittal Form** (PTO/SB/17 or equivalent)
2. ☐ **Applicant asserts small entity status.** See 37 CFR 1.27
3. ☐ **Applicant certifies micro entity status.** See 37 CFR 1.29. Applicant must attach form PTO/SB/15A or B or equivalent.
4. ☑ **Specification** [*Total Pages* 56] Both the claims and abstract must start on a new page. *(See MPEP § 608.01(a) for information on the preferred arrangement)*
5. ☑ **Drawing(s)** (35 U.S.C. 113) [*Total Sheets* 24]
6. **Inventor's Oath or Declaration** [*Total Pages* 4] *(including substitute statements under 37 CFR 1.64 and assignments serving as an oath or declaration under 37 CFR 1.63(e))*
   a. ☐ Newly executed (original or copy)
   b. ☑ A copy from a prior application (37 CFR 1.63(d))
7. ☑ **Application Data Sheet** ** See note below.* See 37 CFR 1.76 (PTO/AIA/14 or equivalent)
8. **CD-ROM or CD-R** in duplicate, large table, or Computer Program (*Appendix*)
   ☐ Landscape Table on CD
9. **Nucleotide and/or Amino Acid Sequence Submission** (*if applicable, items a. – c. are required*)
   a. ☐ Computer Readable Form (CRF)
   b. ☐ Specification Sequence Listing on:
      i. ☐ CD-ROM or CD-R (2 copies); or
      ii. ☐ Paper
   c. ☐ Statements verifying identity of above copies

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Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

ACCOMPANYING APPLICATION PAPERS

10. ☐ **Assignment Papers** (cover sheet & document(s))
    Name of Assignee _____
11. ☐ **37 CFR 3.73(c) Statement** (*when there is an assignee*) ☐ **Power of Attorney**
12. ☐ **English Translation Document** (*if applicable*)
13. ☐ **Information Disclosure Statement** (PTO/SB/08 or PTO-1449)
    ☐ Copies of citations attached
14. ☑ **Preliminary Amendment**
15. ☐ **Return Receipt Postcard** (*MPEP § 503*) (*Should be specifically itemized*)
16. ☐ **Certified Copy of Priority Document(s)** (*if foreign priority is claimed*)
17. ☑ **Nonpublication Request** Under 35 U.S.C. 122(b)(2)(B)(i). Applicant must attach form PTO/SB/35 or equivalent.
18. ☐ **Other:** _____

***Note**: (1) Benefit claims under 37 CFR 1.78 and foreign priority claims under 1.55 **must** be included in an Application Data Sheet (ADS).
(2) For applications filed under 35 U.S.C. 111, the application must contain an ADS specifying the applicant if the applicant is an assignee, person to whom the inventor is under an obligation to assign, or person who otherwise shows sufficient proprietary interest in the matter. See 37 CFR 1.46(b).

19. CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS

☑ The address associated with Customer Number: 26362 **OR** ☐ Correspondence address below

Name					
Address					
City		State		Zip Code	
Country		Telephone		Email	

Signature	/Louis J. Hoffman/	Date	08/19/2013
Name (Print/Type)	Louis J. Hoffman	Registration No. (Attorney/Agent)	38918

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.53(b). The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.11 and 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 12 minutes to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. **SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**

If you need assistance in completing the form, call 1-800-PTO-9199 and select option 2.

METHODS OF EXPANDING COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERNET WEBSITES THROUGH COORDINATED OFFSITE MARKETING

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This is a continuation of application Serial No. 10/461,997, filed June 11, 2003, now U.S. Patent 6,993,572, which is a continuation of application Serial No. 09/398,268, filed September 17, 1999, now U.S. Patent 6,629,135, which claims the benefit of application Serial No. 60/100,697, filed September 17, 1998, which applications are hereby incorporated by reference.

BACKGROUND OF INVENTION

1. FIELD OF INVENTION

The invention relates to a system and method supporting commerce syndication. More specifically, the invention relates to a system and method for computer based information providers to receive outsourced electronic commerce facilities in a context sensitive, transparent manner.

2. DESCRIPTION OF PRIOR ART

The World Wide Web began as a simple interface to the Internet using HTML (hypertext markup language) as a means of linking documents together. This allowed a researcher, for example, to embed "active" references in his or her documents that, if selected, would enable the reader to review the source of the reference first-hand. Programmers quickly capitalized on this technology, creating "web sites" which reflected less staid purposes, laying the groundwork for the literal "web" of content and interactive applications that exists today. In the early stages, website programmers increased visitor traffic by placing "links" within their websites to other websites, usually related in content or function, in exchange for a reciprocal link. Additionally, directories of websites, such as Yahoo, and search engines, such as WebCrawler, began to appear in an attempt to organize the content of the Internet so that its users could create "custom links pages" related to specific topics.

In these early days, the Web was mostly trafficked by programmers and "techies," and a commune-type "share and share alike" mindset prevailed. As a result, people were happy to litter their sites with links, knowing that, odds were, others would do the same for them and the traffic gain/loss would probably balance out. So, despite the fact that by including and promoting a "links" page, website operators were effectively encouraging people to leave their website, link sharing developed into a standard practice.

Then, entrepreneurs and other business-oriented individuals came along and introduced capitalism to the Internet. Profit-oriented website operators began to seek visitors wherever they could find them, and opportunistic owners of popular sites began to realize that they had an increasingly scarce resource – visitors. Such website owners began to sell the links they had previously offered for free in the form of paid advertisements. Search engines and directories became increasingly popular for two main reasons. First, the number of websites was growing astronomically, so it was becoming harder for users to find what they wanted. Second, since reciprocal links were either going away or were being replaced by links exclusively to non-competing websites, search engines and directories were the only way to find multiple resources for a single topic.

Amid frantic efforts on the part of corporate websites to get noticed, the sale of banner ads blossomed into a large industry called Internet advertising. Thousands of websites created space for banner ads and called the space "inventory." At first, they priced ads as a print ad might be priced: by CPM, or cost per thousand "impressions" each ad made on website visitors. Over time this pricing model gave way to arrangements more favorable to advertisers such as Cost Per Click-through and Cost Per Inquiry (meaning the advertiser only needs to pay when a visitor sees a banner ad and clicks on it and completes an information request form on the advertiser's site).

Some of the most successful Internet commerce websites, led by online bookseller Amazon.com, have begun to take an even more results-driven approach to the purchase of banner ads. They have offered to pay only for ads that, when clicked, result in a product sale. To provide a stronger incentive than a simple banner ad, these companies let third-party website owners list a subset of their goods (e.g., 10 of Amazon.com's millions of books, selected by the website owner) and promote them as they choose within their websites. Initiatives such as these have come to be described as "affiliate programs", "associate programs" or "commission based advertising programs".

The benefits of affiliate programs are significant. To the website owner, they constitute revenue-generating web content without requiring an investment in product inventory or additional infrastructure. They also create new revenues without

necessarily reducing the website's available ad inventory. However, the greater benefit almost always accrues not to the affiliate, but to Amazon.com and other online stores. Not only do these sites benefit from the marketing resources of the affiliate operators, they are also able to lure the visitor traffic away from the affiliate. Once a visitor clicks on an affiliate ad and enters an online store, that visitor has left the affiliate's site and is gone. At best, affiliates are able to use "frames" to keep a shell of their own website around the vendor's site, but this is only a marginally effective solution. No alternatives have been able to address a fundamental drawback of the affiliate programs – the loss of the visitor to the vendor. At best, some Internet affiliate sales vendors have begun placing "return to referring website" links on their order confirmation screens, an approach that is largely ineffective. This limitation of an affiliate program restricts participation to less trafficked websites that are unconcerned about losing visitors. Meanwhile, search engines and directories continue to increase in their usefulness and popularity, while banner ads and old-style links continue their rapid loss of effectiveness and popular usage.

The present invention overcomes these limitation of present affiliate commerce systems and provides other benefits as will become clearer to those skilled in the art from the foregoing description.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The affiliate commerce system and method of the present invention represents a new paradigm of co-marketing on the Internet. Not only does the present invention provide its Hosts with the added value and incremental revenues of traditional affiliate programs, but the company also enables Hosts to control the customer experience before, during, and after the purchase transaction. At the same time, Merchants receive the same benefits as with older affiliate programs, i.e., increased marketing potential, incremental sales, and new customer relationships, but without the restrictive limitations of affiliate programs -- the loss of hard-won visitor traffic.

Additionally, the present invention can actually obviate the need for some merchants to invest in their own unique Internet presence. By using the present invention as their primary online sales channel, these Merchants can focus on product

development, production, and order fulfillment and leave the exploration of the Internet to experts. The resulting ongoing cost savings and operational efficiencies magnify the potential benefits of the Internet while reducing the initial costs.

According to the present invention the look and feel of each participating Host is captured and stored. Hosts may include links to selected products or product categories within pages residing on the Hosts' website. Upon actuation of such a link by a visitor of the Host website, a page is presented to the visitor incorporating a replica of the Host's look and feel directed to the sale of the selected products or product categories.

The look and feel of a host is captured and stored by receiving an identification of an example page of a target host. The identified page is retrieved. The look and feel elements of the page are identified, and these elements are stored for future use in generating outsourced transparent pages, pages served by a server other than the host but with the host's look and feel. Such pages give the viewer of the page the impression that she is viewing pages served by the host.

The links included by the host directed to the outsource provider need not be statically linked to a particular product or product category. Such links may direct the outsource provider to dynamically select content to serve within the host's look and feel. This content may be selected based upon a contextual analysis of the page which includes the link. Further, the dynamic content need not be limited to products or product categories but may include any content within the system's data store that is amenable to contextual correlation with content in the page containing the link.

A cost effective, scalable architecture may be used to serve dynamically constructed pages such as those served by the e-commerce outsource provider. This architecture includes three levels: a Web server layer, an application server layer and a database server layer.

The Web server layer provides a front end presentation layer for interacting with end users. This layer may consist of one or more interchangeable low cost server systems. Any request from an end user may be fielded by any system within the layer. The selected system can contact any application server within the application layer to provide processed data for use in responding to the end user request.

The application layer supports interacting with the database server level to acquire needed data and processing it prior to presentation by the Web server layer. As with the Web server layer, this layer may consist of one or more interchangeable low cost server systems. Any Web server system may submit a request to any application server. The application server includes processing functionality suitable for the types of pages to be dynamically constructed.

The database server layer supports low level management of data used in dynamic page construction. The data store across the one or more low cost server systems is seamlessly viewed as an integrated whole. As a consequence, any database server within the layer can field any request for data submitted by an application server.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 depicts a typical hardware architecture implementing the present invention.

FIG. 2 illustrates the software architecture of the Web server layer.

FIG. 3 illustrates the software architecture of the application server layer.

FIG. 4 is a flow chart of the pages and procedures in the host signup process.

FIG. 5 is a flow chart of the pages and procedures in the host account information maintenance process.

FIG. 6 is a flow chart of the pages and procedures in the host look and fee capture process.

FIG. 7 is a flow chart of the pages and procedures in the host link generation process.

FIG. 8 is a flow chart of the dynamic content selection and presentation process.

FIG. 9 is a screen capture of a Merchant Manager page in a preferred embodiment.

FIG 10 is a screen capture of a Host Manager page in a preferred embodiment.

FIGs 11 - 18 are screen captures of the page in a preferred embodiment of a look and feel capture process.

FIG. 19 is a screen capture of a typical e-commerce supported page served in a preferred embodiment.

FIG 20 is a screen capture of a System Manager page in a preferred embodiment.

FIG. 21 is a flow chart of the pages and procedures in the host view reports process.

FIG. 22 is a flow chart of the pages and procedures in the shopping process.

FIG. 23 is a flow chart of the pages and procedures in the merchant account maintenance process.

FIG. 24 is a flow chart of the pages and procedures in the merchant catalog maintenance process.

FIG. 25 is a flow chart of the pages and procedures in the merchant view reports process.

FIG. 26 is a flow chart of the pages and procedures in the merchant view hosts process.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

A preferred embodiment of the invention is now described in detail. Referring to the drawings, like numbers indicate like parts throughout the views. As used in the description herein and throughout the claims that follow, the meaning of "a," "an," and "the" includes plural reference unless the context clearly dictates otherwise. Also, as used in the description herein and throughout the claims that follow, the meaning of "in" includes "in" and "on" unless the context clearly dictates otherwise.

A typical embodiment of the present invention will include a data store including a look and feel description associated with a host website, a communications link to a visitor computer, and a processor. The processor performs the tasks of capturing a look and feel description associated with a host website, storing the captured look and feel description in the data store, providing the host website with a link that link correlates the host website with a commerce object for inclusion within a page on the host website and which, when activated, causes the processor to serve an e-commerce supported page via the communication link with a look and feel

corresponding to the captured look and feel description of the host website associated with the provided link and with content based on the commerce object associated with the provided link. The Internet serves as the communication link to visitor computers.

In a preferred embodiment as exhibited by FIG. 1, the duties of the processor are split among several computer systems **120a - 120c, 125a - 125d, 130a - 130b**. The data store may be implemented through a database system **130a - 130b, 135a - 135d**. The Internet **110** serves as the communication link to visitor computers **105a - 105f**. In this preferred embodiment, the system utilizes multiple inexpensive computer systems at every level of the architecture. Routing between levels will automatically distribute the load amongst the functioning computers. Increasing throughput becomes a matter of adding more computers, not scaling up the existing ones. This arrangement also provides fault tolerance since the failure of one server will not incapacitate the system as long as another server providing the same service is alive. This approach also permits the distribution of servers geographically. A router **115** may also provide further load balancing.

The tasks performed by the processor may utilize a variety of underlying software technology. In a preferred embodiment, the software architecture can be divided into 3 tiers: web server, application-server and database-server. Each tier is comprised of a number of software layers.

Web Server Tier

The Web Server tier accesses application functionality by calling a single "Request" Application Programming Interface (API). The API will take a Document Object Model (DOM) (as specified by W3C in http://www.w3.org/TR/REC-DOM-Level-1, which is expressly incorporated herein by reference in its entirety) object as a parameter and return a DOM object as the response. The request will be relayed to the application server tier where a dispatching method will unpack the request object, inspect it, invoke the desired method, and send back the response object. This approach means that new functionality becomes available as soon as the application server is upgraded. It is not necessary to develop a set of "stubs" that mirror the new API call. This is a major advantage because new functionality in the application tier can be exploited immediately simply by modifying the Active Server Page (ASP)

scripts. No web server resident Dynamic Link Libraries (DLLs) need to be upgraded so the server does not need to be shut down. The web server tier will typically run on server computers **120a - 120c** having a multitasking operating system such as Windows NT from Microsoft or other suitable operating system software. The Web Server tier contains the following layers as illustrated in FIG. 2:

- Web Server Software **210**. In a preferred embodiment, IIS by Microsoft is the server software. It supports serving side scripting using the VBScript scripting language.
- ASP Scripts **220**. All HTML content is rendered by ASP server scripts. The ASP scripting environment can interact with software modules written to Microsoft's COM specification.
- COM Adapters **230**. A set of COM wrappers provides the bridge between the ASP scripts and other elements of the system. The wrappers provide the necessary data conversions but do not contain any substantial functionality. The wrappers are not application specific.
- API Client Layer **240**. The API Client Layer consists of the very thin "request" API described above. This layer cooperates with the Object Cache layer. For example, before retrieving a catalog from the application layer, this layer may check to see if the requested catalog is already in the object cache.
- Object Cache **250**. The object cache contains the responses to previously submitted requests. All items in the cache are marked with an expiration time that is set at the time they are originally retrieved. The purpose of this layer is to reduce the load on the application tier.
- Remote Procedure Call Client **260**. The Remote Procedure Call Client provides connectivity to the application tier. It also provides request routing. In the event of application server failure, this client will automatically reconnect to a working server. This piece of software is not application dependent. In a preferred embodiment, the DBMS Component Server Client is the Objectstore Component Server Client (OCSC).

In a preferred embodiment, the Web server layer supports the following four Web interface modules. In a preferred embodiment, these modules are encoded with ASP to generate appropriate HTML and Javascript. The four modules are as follows:

1. Merchant Manager

The Merchant Manager is the "Control Center" for Merchants. This module allows the merchant to maintain their products, catalogs, contact information, track orders, process returns, run reports, etc.

A merchant representative must login before performing any system activities. Any valid merchant user will be able to perform all possible actions on the merchant to which it is related. Only registered merchants will have a valid account. An account for a merchant is established when the merchant registers with the system. A merchant representative may initiate registration via a web interface. The signup process must collect basic merchant information, including the information necessary to pay the merchant, and a password, which will be used to create a user account for the merchant. Once the merchant is approved (this may be automatic), the merchant will be sent an email containing a unique user id which can be used to login to the system.

When a representative logs in, she is taken directly to the Merchant Manager as seen in FIG. 9 and assigned a Merchant Session ID (Merchant SID). All pages within the merchant system must retrieve the MerchantSID from the HTTP request and validate it. If the session does not validate, the representative is taken back to the Login screen.

This module contains the following submodules:

- Account Information

A merchant representative will be able to maintain the basic merchant profile, which includes the information needed to pay the merchant, the merchant's password, and the merchant's shipping policy information. FIG. 23 depicts the pages and procedures in a typical merchant account maintenance process. The representative selects to maintain account information **2305** from the Merchant Manager page **2300** leading to the display of the a basic information modification page **2310**. Each modifiable information type could be altered through a designated page available through the basic information

page **2310**. Each such page could provide functionality to save any changes made to the particular page.

This sub-module allows a merchant to maintain the following types of information:

- Basic information **2310** – name, description, address, logo
- Contacts **2320** – for admin, finance, returns, support, order notification
- Product Defaults **2330** – price labels, unit of weight, display options
- Payment Info **2340** – check or ACH, payee info, bank info
- Shipping Option **2350** – by price, items, weight, other or NA
- Shipping Table **2360** – maintain shipping methods and prices
- Tax Schedule **2370** – set tax rate for states in which taxes are collected. This may be automated in the future.

- Products and Catalogs

Here the merchant can both maintain products and arrange them into catalogs. Example product attributes include:

- name
- description
- attributes - such as size, color, etc.
- price(s) – normal, sale, competitor's and the price can be set or changed by an attribute
- small image – used in most places
- large image – used for zoom-in in shopping

The merchant can also maintain their catalogs and categories. A catalog is the top level category. A merchant can have one or more catalogs. Each catalog will be presented to Hosts as a separate entity. However, it is still tied back to the merchant. The merchant logo can be assigned to the catalog or a different image selected.

A catalog is considered a commerce object. Further, a catalog is populated with product or product category commerce objects. An indicator for

dynamic selection of a product or product category may also be considered a commerce objects; however, such objects would not appear in a catalog.

Categories are then placed in the catalog(s). Categories can also be placed into other categories. A catalog or category can contain an infinite number of categories but really should be kept to less than 10 at any given level for presentation purposes. The bottom level categories contain products. The product node is actually a pointer to the product in the inventory table. This allows for a product to be placed into multiple categories.

A catalog, category or a product can be set to be inactive. If it is set as inactive, it will not be available to the hosts to browse or sell. It will also not be available to customers in the shopping area. If a catalog or category is set as inactive, then every item beneath it (categories or products) is also inactive.

A product also has a flag to indicate it is out of stock. When a product is no longer going to be sold by the merchant, it should be set to inactive. If the product is simply out of stock, thus temporarily unavailable, the out of stock flag should be used.

If a host has an existing link that points to an inactive or out of stock product or an inactive catalog or category, the customer will be taken to the first level above that is active. For example, if a customer clicks on a Link that points to coffee pot A, and coffee pot A has been set to inactive, the shopping page will display the entire coffee pot category (all the active coffee pots). If the coffee pot category was set to inactive, then the shopping page would go to the next level up (such as Kitchen Appliances). In this case the shopper will be given a message indicating the selected product or category is not available. If a host has a link associated with a dynamic selection indicator commerce object, the triggering of such a link will cause the dynamic selection of a product or product category.

FIG. 24 depicts pages and procedures used in a merchant catalog and product maintenance process. When a merchant representative logs into the system, she is presented with the merchant manager page **2300**. From this page, she may choose to proceed to the edit products and catalogs page **2400**. On this

page, she may elect to search for a product through entering criteria **2405**. She may elect to preview a particular product **2410** and, from the preview, view additional information associated with the particular product **2415**.

From the edit products and catalogs page **2400**, she may also choose to edit a particular product **2420** or edit by catalog or category **2442**. In editing a particular product **2420**, she may elect to save the information associated with the product **2422**, select a current attribute to edit **2424** leading to the attribute edit page **2430** or create a new attribute associated with the product **2426**. An attribute includes a collection of options such as sizes or colors. If she selects to add a new attribute **2426**, a new attribute creation page is presented **2428**. Upon creation of the new attribute, the new attribute is saved, and the representative proceeds to the attribute edit page **2430**. From this page, she may choose to save or cancel the current attribute edit **2435**.

If the representative chooses to edit by catalog or category **2442**, she is presented a page allowing selection of catalogs or categories **2440** through navigating the catalog/category hierarchies **2444**. Once a particular catalog or category is identified, she may edit it via a catalog/category edit page **2450**. After editing, the alterations are saved **2455** returning her to the catalog or category selection page **2440**.

- Reports

A merchant representative may request on-demand reports. Such reports include an account statement that details all payments to the merchant, and statistics about catalog visits and sales. Statistics can be correlated to hosts, links, products and time periods.

As illustrated in FIG. 25, a merchant representative begins at the Merchant Manager page **2300**. She selects the view reports option **2505** to view the report menu page **2510**. From the reports menu page **2510**, she may enter criteria **2514, 2518** leading respectively to a revenue summary page **2520** or a monthly statement page **2530**. From the monthly statement page **2530**, she may change criteria **2535** to view a revised monthly statement **2530** or return to the report menu **2510**. From the revenue summary page **2520**, she may select a

specific item **2525** for receiving a detailed revenue page **2550**, alter the criteria **2527** to receive a revised revenue summary **2520**, or return to the reports menu page **2510**. From the detailed revenue page **2550**, she may return to the revenue summary page **2520**.

The following reports are available for the merchants to track their results:

- Revenue Summary by Month

  This report provides sales and traffic information summarized by month. Data includes number of sessions, number of orders, gross and net sales, etc. Summarizes at the month level and allows 'Drill Down' to daily information.

- Revenue Summary by Host

  This report provides sales and traffic information summarized by host. Data includes number of sessions, number of orders, gross and net sales, etc.

- Revenue Summary by Product

  This report provides sales and traffic information summarized by Product. Data includes number of sessions, quantity in shopping cart and gross order amount.

All reports can be run as quick reports (this month, last month, this year, last year, all sales) or by inputting a specific date range.

- Order Tracking

A merchant representative can access a web interface that allows her to report the status of orders. This includes: reporting when the order was shipped, along with tracking information, and the status of all returned items.

The order tracking sub-module allows the merchant to manage all areas of an order. An order can have the following status:

- new – the order has been received and credit card information validated
- pending – the merchant has acknowledged the order, it is waiting to be shipped

- shipped – the merchant has shipped the order

An order can be shipped in multiple shipments. The merchant is credited for sales on shipped items.

The customer may also return part of an order or the entire order. The customer will obtain an RMA number (see the Shopping sub-module). All the merchant needs to do is acknowledge they have received the product back from the customer.

- Review Hosts

The Merchant Manager also allows the merchant to review which hosts have built links to that merchant's products. The merchant can also view the host web page containing such links.

A merchant representative will be able to review the list of hosts with which the merchant has a relationship. The merchant will have access to some basic information about the host, including at least one of the host's links, so that the host's look and feel can be evaluated.

In a preferred embodiment, a representative may review hosts through pages and procedures as depicted in FIG. 26. She begins at the Merchant Manager page **2300**. She selects the review hosts option to view the merchant-host relationship page **2600**. From this page, she may elect to view one of her products in the host's look and feel **2610** or view a list of links with the selected host that are directed to her commerce objects **2620**.

Automated interfaces can be introduced for merchants wishing to integrate their business systems with the functionality supported by the present inventions. Merchants can update their online catalogs, retrieve information on orders placed, and send order status updates back via automated interfaces. This integration is accomplished through the establishment and use of a standardized communication protocol.

In a preferred embodiment, merchants integrate by exchanging specially formatted XML documents over secure HTTP connections (i.e. HTTP over SSL). If the request is a query, the HTTP response will contain an XML document with the query results. Likewise, if the request is a command, the

response will be an XML document containing the success or failure of the command.

Automated requests and responses are XML documents as described by the W3C's XML 1.0 specification, which may be found at http://www.w3.org/TR/REC-xml and which is expressly incorporated herein by reference in its entirety. The XML specification only describes the syntax of an XML document, it does not place any restrictions on the content of the document. The content of requests and responses is described using a formal notation known as DCD (for Document Content Description). DCD's are described in a note that was submitted to the W3C by Microsoft and IBM. The DCD note can be viewed online at: http://www.w3.org/TR/NOTE-dcd and which is expressly incorporated herein by reference in its entirety. A specific DCD describes the format of a request or response in the same way that the SMTP specification describes the format of an email. Typical DCDs for Automated Interfaces may be accessed at the following URLS: http://automation.nexchange.net/dcd/ManageInventory.01.02.dcd.xml and http://automation.nexchange.net/dcd/ManageCatalog.01.02.dcd.xml, both documents are expressly incorporated herein by reference in their entirety.

All interfaces have the same basic structure. The table below illustrates the basic structure of Automated Interface requests and responses.

		<ManageOrders specification='http://www.nexchange.net/automated/xml/ManageOrders.01.01.dcd'>
HEADER		<RequestHeader>
		<Authentication username='xxx' password='xxx' scope='xxx' /> <Instructions OnFail='HALT'/>

	Response		<Receipt Processor='xxx' Date='xxx' Number='xxx'/> <ResponseSummary Status='SUCCESS'> Error Message Here </ResponseSummary>
			</RequestHeader>
BODY			<RequestBody>
	Query		<Command status='SUCCESS'>
			<QueryNewOrders />
		query	<QueryNewOrdersResponse> *Query Results Here* </QueryNewOrdersResponse>
			</Command>
	Operation		<Command status='SUCCESS'> <AcknowledgeOrder order_id='xxx' item_price_total='xxx'/> </Command>
			</RequestBody>
			</ManageOrders>

All responses contain the original request with status information and query results appended. The table above shows a response to a Manage Orders request. The response is divided into a header and a body section ("RequestHeader" & "RequestBody" respectively).

The RequestHeader element contains authentication information and global instructions. When the request is returned, the request header will also contain a receipt and a response summary. The authentication element carries the information needed to identify and authenticate the requesting party. The global instruction element contains instruction on how the request is to processed if an error is received. The remainder of the commands in the request can be processed or the request can be discontinued. In a response, the receipt element is added to the request header. Information in the receipt can be used to

recover the response. The response summary element contains a status code, which will be set to "SUCCESS" if all commands were completed successfully.

The RequestBody element contains one or more command elements. The exact content of a command element depends on the interface being used. When a command is submitted, its status attribute will always be "REQUESTED". When the command has been processed, the response will echo back the command with the status changed to "SUCCESS", "FAILURE" or "SKIP". In the case of a query command, the response will contain a query response in addition to the status.

If the request conforms to the DCD, the response will contain the original request with the status and query results embedded. The command status codes must be inspected to determine what has been done.

If the request did not conform to the specification, two possible error types can occur:

- XML Parsing Error
- DCD Validating Error

Errors are returned as NexError node. If a NexError is returned, the XML document has not been processed. The returned XML should always be examined for a NexError.

If the request document is not valid XML, an XML Parsing Error will be returned. A NexError node will be added around the entire document. It will look similar to the following:

```
<NexError Msg=" XML Parsing Error" ... >
  <XMLParseError errorcode=" " reason=" " line=" "
linepos=" ">
        offending section of document
  </XMLParseError>
</NexError>
```

The errorcode, reason, line and linepos will contain information explaining what the error is and the location in the file.

If the request document is valid XML but does not match the published Interface DCD, a DCD Validating Error will be returned. A NexError node will be added around the entire document. A DCDError node will be embedded in the document at the location of the error. It will look similar to the following:

```
<NexError Msg=" XML Validating Error" … >
  <XMLValidateError msg="Find the DCDError Node in the
document for detailed error information."/>
        … Valid Portion of document …
        <DCDError message=" ">
            offending section of document
        </DCDError>
        … Valid Portion of document …
  </ XMLValidateError >
</NexError>
```

The following is an example request attempt to add one new product and to update the price of an existing product.

```
<ManageInventory
specification='http://automation.nexchange.net/dcd/Manage
Inventory.01.02.dcd.xml'>
    <RequestHeader>
        <Authentication username='xxxxx'
     password='xxxx' scope='MNNN'/>
        <Instructions onfail='CONTINUE'/>
    </RequestHeader>
    <RequestBody>
        <Command status='REQUESTED'>
            <AddProductDef updateifexists='1'>
                <ProductDef
                    id='saw'
                    skumask='saw'
                    name='saw'
```

```
                description='A Circular Saw From Festo'
                 shortdescription='Festo Circular Saw'
                            info='no comment'

      image='http://216.0.58.242/rmtools/fw132saw.jpg'

    largeimage='http://216.0.58.242/rmtools/fw132saw.jpg
                                    '
                            usualprice='145.00'
                            saleprice='135.00'
                            compareprice='215.00'
                            salelabel='HOT PRICE'
                            instock='1'
                            commplan='default'
                        >
                            <AttributeDefList/>
                            <KeywordList/>
                        </ProductDef>
                    </AddProductDef>
                </Command>
                <Command status='REQUESTED'>
                    <UpdateProductDef
                        id='saw'
                image='http://216.0.58.242/rmtools/fw132saw.jpg
                                    '
                    />
                </Command>
            </RequestBody>
        </ManageInventory>
```

2. Host Manager

The Host Manager is the "Control Center" for Hosts. Here, a Host can track sales, design their store front, generate links to merchant products, get traffic/order reports, update account information, etc

For a host to gain access to the host manager system, the host must be registered. FIG. 4 depicts a flow chart for a typical registration process. A host representative may initiate contact **410** with the system via a web interface. The signup process must collect basic host information **420**, including the information necessary to pay the host a commission for purchases through his site, which is saved by the system **430**. Optionally, a click agreement containing terms of use **440** may be presented requiring agreement **444** to proceed. If at some point the representative elects to cancel **425, 458** or reject the use agreement **448**, he or she is returned to her point of entry **410**. The system may then request the representative to select a user identification and a password **450**. If the selected user identification is already in use **454**, the representative may be prompted to select a user identification **450**. The information associated with the host is stored **460**, and the representative may proceed to the host manager system page **470**.

When a host logs in, they are taken directly to the Host Manager, as seen in FIG. 10, and assigned a Host Session ID (Host SID). All pages within the host system must request the Host Sid and call the ValidateHostSessionID function. If the session does not validate, the user is taken back to the Login screen.

This module contains the following submodules:

- Account Information

This sub-module allows a host to maintain the following types of information:

  - Administrative Contact – name, address, phone
  - Payee Contact – name, address, phone, SSN
  - Site Information – site name, URL, description
  - Site Demographics – # of visitors, type of visitors, comments

A host representative will be able to maintain basic host information, including the information needed to pay the host, and the host's password. FIG. 5 depicts a flow chart of the pages and actions in a typical maintenance process.

The representative has previously logged into the system to reach the host manager system page **470**. From the host manager system, the representative selects to update her account **510** leading to a host information maintenance page **520**. The representative can modify host information and, then choose to save or cancel the modification **530**. In either case, the representative is returned to the host manger system page **470**.

- Store Front Design

The store front design is where the host's look and feel is captured. The look and feel is captured by selecting an example page the host, retrieving the sample page from the host, identifying the look and feel elements from the sample page and saving the identified look and feel elements. "Look and feel elements" include logos, colors, page layout, navigation systems, frames, 'mouse-over' effects, or other elements that are consistent through some or all of a Host's website. A typical system for accomplishing this task would include a data store for storing look and feel descriptions, a communication channel to the host whose look and feel is to be captured and a processor for executing the capture.

When a customer clicks on a host buying opportunity (link), the next page loaded will be a shopping page. However, this shopping page should retain the host's look and feel. This is accomplished by capturing the HTML text and images that comprise their look and feel and embed within it the shopping HTML content. Any relative URLs in the host look and feel may be changed to absolute URLs back to the host system.

In a preferred embodiment, there are five steps to a process capturing the host's look and feel, converting relative URLs to absolute URLs and validation of links.

A host representative will be able to capture host look and feel information and to update host look and feel information through recapture. FIG. 6 depicts a flow chart of the pages and actions in a typical look and feel capture process. The representative has previously logged into the system to reach the host manager system page **470**. From this page, the representative

selects to initiate host look and feel capture through a design storefront wizard **605**. An introduction page is presented explaining the process **610** from which the representative proceeds in the following manner:

- Base URL **615** – the URL used to convert relative links to absolute links, as seen in FIG. 11
- header **620** – the HTML to be rendered BEFORE the shopping html. Selection may be made by code, as seen in FIG. 12, by graphical point and click selection or other suitable selection method.
- footer **625** – the HTML to be rendered AFTER the shopping html. Selection may be made by code, as seen in FIG. 13, by graphical point and click selection or other suitable selection method.
- preview **630** – shows what the shopping page will look like (nothing has been captured yet). From this preview page **630**, as seen in FIG. 14, the representative may elect to return to earlier stage to perform a change **635**, **640** or **645** of base URL, header or footer respectively. The user may also have access to a preview **650** with example content included to demonstrate a typical page with both content and look and feel **680**, as seen in FIG. 15. From the generic preview page **630**, the representative may choose to continue **655** with finalizing the look and feel **660**.
- final check **660** - finalize the captured look and feel, as seen in FIG. 16, this page may allow validation of links and images and offer to save the captured look and feel. Once validation, if any has been performed, and the look and feel has been saved, the process completes **675**.
    - validation **665** – validate the link and image URLs in the header and footer HTML. FIG. 17 displays the screen capture of page that could be used to display validation progress.

- save **670** – Actually captures, processes and saves the storefront information. A completion page such as seen in FIG. 18 may be displayed.

For security reasons, javascript is accepted but applets are stripped out in the preferred embodiment.

- Link Generator

The Link Generator allows host to create and maintain the shopping opportunities that they can then place on their site. Each Link is assigned a unique Link ID. The Link ID identifies who the host is, who the merchant is, and what commerce object (catalog, category, product or dynamic selection) is linked to.

The first time a host builds a Link to a merchant's product, category or catalog, an approval of that host for that merchant may be made. Until the host is approved, they cannot see the Link ID that has been assigned to the newly created Link.

The code the host embeds on their web site is as follows:

```
<!-- BEGIN NEXCHANGE LINK -->
<!-- For more information go to http://www.nexchange.com -->
<!-- The following 2 lines MUST NOT BE CHANGED to ensure proper crediting -->
<IMG BORDER='0' SRC='http://www.nexchange.net/img.asp?LinkID=xxxx'>
<a href='http://www.nexchange.net/route.asp?LinkID=xxxx'>
<!-- Substitute your own text or image below -->
** YOUR TEXT OR IMAGE HERE **</a>
<!-- END NEXCHANGE LINK -->
```

There are several points to note here:

- The image src (img.asp) is actually an ASP program that returns a single transparent pixel. This is used to track impressions (how many times the link was displayed on the host site).
- The route.asp page is a page that routes the customer to the shopping page. As additional servers are added, this will become very important for load balancing.

- The 'xxxx' for the LinkID='xxxx' is the Link ID assigned to the Link in the Link Generator.

A host representative will be able to generate links to commerce objects. FIG. 7 depicts a flow chart of the pages and actions in a typical link generation process. The representative has previously logged into the system to reach the host manager system page **470**. From this page, the representative selects to generate links **705**, which transfers her to a page containing a list of all previously generated links for that host **710**.

From this page, the representative may choose among several options: view an existing link **722**, remove an existing link **735**, edit an existing link **728** or add a new link to either a merchant with whom a link already exists **720** or a merchant without an existing link **715**. In viewing an existing link **722**, the page containing the link may optionally displayed in a separate window **725**; as a consequence, the representative could continue to interact with the list of available links page **710** in the primary window. The representative could select a link for removal **735** and, upon removal, return to the list of links page **710**. The representative may choose to edit an existing link **728** leading to a link modification page **730**. After modifying the link, the new link information would be saved **740**, and the representative would return to the list of available links **710**.

In adding a new link, a distinction may be made whether a link is made to a merchant to whom the host has previously linked **720** or to a merchant to whom a previous link does not exist **715**. In the latter case, an extra optional step may be involved to approve the host with respect to the new merchant as part of the catalog selection process **745**. In other embodiments, such a distinction need not be made. In linking to a merchant to whom a previous link does exist **720**, a catalog may implicitly be selected. In either situation, the creation process continues by allowing the representative to choose a commerce object to associate with the link **750**. Such a commerce object will be a product, a product category, a catalog or an indication that a product, product category or catalog should be chosen dynamically. From this page, the representative may

go back to the catalog selection page **745** or proceed with setting link attributes **755** such as the destination upon return from the link (e.g. the point of departure into the e-commerce page or a destination designated by the representative). From this page **755**, the representative can return to the commerce object selection page **750** or continue forward with naming and saving the new link **760**. Upon completion of naming and saving page **760**, the link is saved to the system database **765**, and the representative is provided with a link to include within a page on the host website **770**. After cancellation at any time, or upon completion, the representative is returned to the list of available links page **710**.

Where a host representative chooses a dynamic indicator as the commerce object, the specific content will be chosen contextually based upon the content of the page that includes the link. In a preferred embodiment, keywords in the page are cross-reference with available catalogs, product categories and products to choose the appropriate content for the destination page associated with the link. FIG. 8 is a flow chart of the selection process in such a preferred embodiment.

A visitor is viewing the host page including a link associated with a dynamic selection commerce object **810**. The visitor activates the link. Receiving the activation, a determination is made as to whether content has previously been dynamically selected for the activated link **820**. If yes, a second determination is made as to whether the previously dynamically selected content is current **830**. If this is answered in the affirmative, a page is constructed with the previously dynamically selected content along with the look and feel associated with the host from which the link originated **840**.

If either determination is negative, the host page including the link is retrieved **850**. The page content is analyzed, and based upon the analysis, content for the link destination is selected **860**. The selected content is cached for potential future use **870**. Finally, a page is constructed with the dynamically selected content along with the look and feel associated with the host from which the link originated **840**. The analysis in **860** may take a variety of forms including, in a preferred embodiment, identification of marked keywords. In

another embodiment, keywords may be dynamically determined using word count statistics.

In a more elaborate system, the retrieval process might encompass not only the page containing the link but also other pages linked to the page of link origin. Keywords or word count analysis could be used to determine context based upon the aggregation of pages retrieved. In a further embodiment, differing weights could be given based upon the source of the keyword identified; keywords from the page of origin would have a greater weight than keywords derived from pages one link away.

- Reports

A valid host representative will have on-demand access to a report showing visits to their links and sales. The report will be scoped by date range. Visits can be summarized by merchant and by link. Sales can be summarized by merchant and by link.

As illustrated in FIG. 21, a host representative begins at the Host Manager page **470**. She selects the view reports option **2105** to view the report menu page **2110**. From the reports menu page **2110**, she may enter criteria **2114, 2118** leading respectively to a revenue summary page **2120** or a monthly statement page **2130**. From the monthly statement page **2130**, she may change criteria **2135** to view a revised monthly statement **2130** or return to the report menu **2110**. From the revenue summary page **2120**, she may select a specific item **2125** for receiving a detailed revenue page **2150**, alter the criteria **2127** to receive a revised revenue summary **2120**, or return to the reports menu page **2110**. From the detailed revenue page **2150**, she may return to the revenue summary page **2120**.

The following reports are available for the hosts to track their results:

- Revenue Summary by Month

  This report provides sales and traffic information summarized by month. Data includes number of sessions, number of orders, gross and net sales, etc. Allows 'Drill Down' to daily totals.

- Revenue Summary by Merchant

This report provides sales and traffic information summarized by merchant. Data includes number of sessions, number of orders, gross and net sales, etc.

- Revenue Summary by Link

This report provides sales and traffic information summarized by Link. Data includes number of sessions, number of orders, gross and net sales, etc.

3. Shopping

The shopping module is the part of the application that allows customers to find, search, select and buy a product. There is also a return product section accessible to the customer after the order has been placed.

Shopping is the part of the application that the general public will encounter. FIG. 19 displays a screen capture of a typical shopping page in a preferred embodiment. FIG. 22 depicts pages and procedures in a shopping process as implemented in a preferred embodiment.

The customer was on a host site and saw a link to buy something created via the Link generator **2200**. When he or she clicks on the link, he or she is taken to the shopping page parameterized with the Link ID **2210**. If an error occurs during this transition, the visitor is routed to a link error page **2205**.

A variety of generic information may be available from any shopping page within the system. Such information could include information about the e-commerce outsource provider **2222**, information about the merchant offering the current commerce object **2224**, information about an involved party's privacy policy **2226**, or information about an involved party's security policy **2228**.

Customers will be able to browse a merchant's catalogue and place items in their shopping cart **2212**. When the customer is ready to checkout **2260**, the system will acquire payment information **2262** and shipping information **2264** from the user, confirm this information **2266**, and execute the transaction. The receipt including a URL that can be used to track the order status (e.g. - it could be bookmarked) will be displayed to the customer **2268**. By visiting the URL provided upon checkout from the

shopping experience, the customer can check the status of their order, initiate returns, and check on their return status.

This module contains the following submodules:

- Session

Each time a new shopping session is started, a customer session is created for the shopper. This Customer Session is assigned a Session ID (SID). All pages within the shopping system must request the SID and call the ValidateSessionID function. At any time if a session error occurs, a session error page **2215** may be presented.

Unlike the merchant and host sessions, the shopping session is persistent. The session information retained is what the customer has placed in the cart and if they have checked out. The SID is also written back to the customers browser as a cookie. If a customer returns to the Shopping page an attempt will be made to use the last session they had. It will only be reused if the ALL of the following are true:

  - The host the customer is coming from now is the same host as in the previous session
  - The merchant for the current link is the same as the merchant in the previous session
  - The previous session was not "Checked Out"
  - The session is not older than a certain age.

- Product Search and Selection

The main shopping page begins at the entry point that the host used to build the Link. This can be to a specific product, a category of products, a category of sub-categories, a complete catalog or a dynamically selected destination. However, no matter what entry point was chosen, the customer can navigate to every item contained in the merchant catalog used for the Link serving as the customer's entry point to the shopping. The customer may browse the catalog **2230** or search for a specific product or product category **2240**.

- Shopping Cart

The Shopping Cart is the main information saved in a customer session. As a customer places products in the shopping cart, we retain information such as:

- name of the product
- price of the product
- any attributes (size, color, etc)
- host commission rate
- merchant revenue percent

This information must be stored redundantly in the shopping cart because the price, name, etc may change later and the values at the time of purchase need to be retained. The shopping cart interface also allows the shopper to remove a product and/or change the quantity through a view shopping cart page **2250**.

- Check Out

The check out process is separated into two distinct pieces.

- Order Capture
- Credit Validation

Order capture is the process of obtaining the customers billing and shipping information and creating a pending order. The credit card information is checked to make sure it is a valid number for the card type but it is not actually processed with a credit card authorization service (i.e. CyberCash). The order is accepted, assigned an order id and the customer is given an on screen and email confirmation. The pending order has a status of new.

The credit validation process happens sometime after the order capture has occurred. The customer's billing information is sent to the authorization service. The pending order now has the status of authorized.

If the card is validated, the order is accepted and placed into the TheOrder table. The pending order has a status of accepted. If the billing information fails validation, the pending order status is set to rejected and an email is sent to the customer informing that the credit card information could not be validated.

4. System Manager

The System Manager is the "Control Center" for administrators. The administrator can monitor the day-to-day activities and status of the system. When an administrator logs in, he or she is taken directly to the System Manager and assigned a Nexchange Session ID (NexchangeSID). All pages within the System Manager system must request the NexchangeSID and call the ValidateNexchangeSessionID function. If the session does not validate, the user is taken back to the Login screen. Access to administration functions will require authentication using the name and password for a valid administration account.

The home/main page of the System Manager provides a quick summary of the current system status; a screen capture of a typical main page in a preferred embodiment is seen in FIG. 20. This summary includes pending orders, orders, host statistics, merchant statistics and an unattended orders list.

An administrator will be able to configure a hosts or merchant's payment policy. This includes specifications for any holdbacks, and a method for calculating commission/payment. At the request of a merchant, an administrator will be able to configure the system to reject all shopping traffic from a particular host-merchant arrangement. The host and merchant contacts will be notified via email. An administrator will also be able to activate or deactivate a host. The system will reject shopping traffic from inactive hosts. When a host's status is changed, the host contact will be notified via email. An administrator will configure the system to enforce system-wide policies. System-wide policies include the number of days allowed for returns.

The system will periodically run an audit process and report on situations of concern. For example, an audit could search for orders that have not been serviced for a certain period of time. The system may also report on possible security situations such as an inordinate number of account lockout incidents.

This module contains the following submodules:

- Utilities

  The following utilities are available:

  - List Pending Orders

- List Orders
- List Rejected Orders
- List Returns

- Host

The following actions are available:

- List Promos
- List Hosts
- Maintain Host Tiers
- Host with Pending Merchants

- Merchant

The following actions are available:

- List Merchants
- Copy a Category
- Find Category Links
- Add a New Merchant
- Maintain Brands

Application Server Tier

The business functionality is provided via "application servers". An application server will consist of one or more of the business modules, wrapped with an appropriate middleware adapter. This arrangement allows delivery of services via many different mechanisms. For example, if it becomes desirable to serve some functions to a Java client, a Java Remote Method Invocation (RMI) version of an application server could be built. The new server could be developed rapidly because only an RMI "wrapper" would need to be developed, while the application logic would be reused. In a preferred embodiment, this layer consists of a set of core C++ software modules that encapsulate business functions.

The Application Server tier may run on one or more application server computers. The application servers are stateless. This means that, for two application servers serving the same functionality, "one is as good as another". In the event of failure, a client's requests may be handled by a different server than before the failure. Since it does not matter which server services a request, routing is greatly simplified.

The stateless server approach also provides excellent fault tolerance since all application servers can back each other up. Use of a combination of "sticky routing" and caching to significantly ameliorate any detrimental performance implications of the stateless approach, while preserving most of the benefit. Once a client begins using a particular service, the system will show a preference for routing future requests from that client to the same server. The servers maintain a cache recently used data and will only access the database if the desired item cannot be used in cache. Since the routing is sticky, the client's data will often be in cache, and in many cases, no database access will be required. Should the client be routed to a new server, the session data can be retrieved from the database as occurs in the "vanilla" stateless model. In a preferred embodiment, the functionality of this layer utilizes one or more low cost server systems **125a - 125d** running a suitable operating system such as Microsoft Windows NT. This tier is also composed of several software layers as illustrated in FIG. 3:

- Remote Procedure Call Server **310**. This software provides connectivity to the Web Server layer and is not application dependent. In a preferred embodiment, this software layer is the Objectstore Component Server.
- Application Logic **320**. This software encapsulates the business functionality. The design of this software layer and the various application servers is more fully described below.
- Virtual Database **330**. The virtual database layer allows the application data to be distributed across multiple Database servers while insulating the application layer from the physical storage configuration. The virtual database contains a table that maps object types to physical databases. All database objects or records of a given type are distributed across the permissible databases. Databases can be added while the system is live to permit expansion onto new servers. Overburdened databases can be closed to prevent assignment of new data to them. Databases can be moved to different physical servers. All stored objects are referenced by a handle which is unaffected by the physical location of the referenced data. The virtual database layer also permits a collection of objects distributed across multiple servers to be indexed and searched.

- DBMS Client **340**. This software provides access to data stored in the databases. In a preferred embodiment, the DBMS client is Object Design's Objectstore client. All Objectstore clients contain a cache of recently used database pages. An optimistic locking scheme is used to ensure cache consistency. The caching scheme is very effective in the present invention because it is optimized for many readers and few writers.

In a preferred embodiment, the application server layer includes the following eight application servers:

1. Cashier - Collects checkout information: billing info, shipping preferences, etc.

The Cashier server is analogous to a cashier in a "bricks and mortar" store. The cashier's responsibilities are listed below:

- Collecting Information Necessary To Complete a Sale. This information will include billing information, shipping address(s) and preferred shipping methods. In some cases, the information to be collected may depend on the contents of the order. The cashier will also access the appropriate merchant policy information to assist in determining what data should be collected.
- Providing an Itemized Account of the Total. Upon receiving the necessary data, the cashier will compute the applicable taxes, shipping charges, etc, and provide an itemized account of the order total.
- Execute the Sale. Upon request, the cashier will execute the sale. A copy of the relevant information will be sent to the credit processor. When the credit processor approves the orders, the cashier will break the customer's order into individual merchant orders and forward them to the Merchants' Order Tracking server. The cashier will also post a record to the Ledger at this time.

2. Catalog - Houses product hierarchies. Conducts product searches.

The catalog is an arrangement of product information. The catalog server supports a hierarchical browsing mode and various searching functions. Its responsibilities are listed below:

- Retrieve a catalog upon request. The catalog will include all content for a shopping experience. For products, the information will include the product description, price and options.

- Retrieve a list of products matching a query. This will initially support simple keyword searching, but may be expanded to more sophisticated searching techniques.

3. Credit Processor - Conducts card validation and fraud screening.

The credit processor takes a candidate order and performs card authorization and fraud screening. The card processor cooperates with the order tracker to keep the status of the order updated.

- Perform Credit Card Authorization. Contact the card processing vendor and authorize the card. Retrieve the Address Verification System (AVS) code for use in fraud screening.
- Perform Fraud Screening. The system performs a fraud screening analysis based on the following factors: dollar amount of the order, AVS code, whether the billing and shipping address match, and whether the email address given is a free e-mail account.

4. Notifier - Sends messages.

The Notifier keeps track of who wants to be notified of what and how they should be notified. The notifier receives notification of various system events and takes the appropriate course of action. The appropriate course of action will depend upon the event and the party to be notified. For example, a merchant that does a high volume of sales and is already integrated with the system may not wish to receive email notification of every order.

5. Ledger - Records and reports on all financial events.

The Ledger is a record of all financial events. The ledger contains interfaces for posting events and interfaces querying and inspecting the ledger. Responsibilities include:

- Post an Order Event. The order event happens when the shopper confirms an order.
- Post a Sale Event. The sale event occurs when a merchant marks the last item in an order shipped.
- Post an Return Merchandise Authorization (RMA) Open Event/Post an RMA Completed Event/Post an RMA Canceled Event

- Post a Journal Entry. This interface will be used to record non-standard events. The posted ledger entries must collectively have an equal number of debits and credits.

6. Order Tracker - Records and reports on order status.

This is the repository of order information. The order tracker includes a cashier's interface for creating a new order, a Merchant's interface for keeping the order status updated, and a Customer Service interface for checking on the status of the order and making relevant annotations.

- Query Order Status. This method is used by purchaser to check on the status of a pending order.
- Ship Order. This method is used by a merchant to document the parceling of an order into shipments.

7. Shopping Cart - Holds products that have been selected for purchase.

The shopping cart is simply a collection of Inventory Reservation documents that represent the items that have been selected by the shopper. The shopping cart includes methods for adding and removing Inventory Reservations and for inspecting the contents of the cart.

8. Warehouse - Inventory availability information. Product configuration interfaces.

The Warehouse represents a collection of physical items that are in stock. Responsibilities of the Warehouse are listed below:

- Provide Information on Stock Levels of a Particular Item/Order Items Having Low Inventory Levels. This is an advanced capability by which inventory may be dynamically reserved from a merchant, based on the current inventory levels.
- Provide Information on Product Configuration Options. The warehouse will provide a blank Inventory Reservation document that will specify all of the product's configuration options.
- Issue Reservations Against Inventory. A shopper will fill out an Inventory Reservation (which includes all configuration options) and submit it to the warehouse. If the item, as configured, is available, the reservation will be issued. This will serve to reserve the inventory for a fixed period of time.

Database Server Tier

Finally, the Database server tier is composed of a single software layer. This layer is responsible for low level manipulation of the data in the one or more databases. This tier may consist of multiple database servers. Using multiple servers is a major advantage for obvious reasons. The system's database chores can be distributed to many different servers. In a preferred embodiment, the database server is Object Design's Objectstore server. Objectstore supports a "warm failover" mode which allows a backup server to take over automatically if the primary should fail. An Microsoft SQL server is also used in the preferred embodiment to maintain financial records although properly configured another DBMS such as Objectstore or a commercially available accounting package could provide capability suitable for financial record keeping.

The foregoing discussion describes the primary actors interacting with a system according to the present invention. After identifying these actors, typical transaction flows through the system are presented.

There are three main parties in the outsourced e-commerce relationship, excluding the end consumer. These parties include Merchants, Hosts, and the e-commerce outsource provider. This folds into two parties where one party plays the dual role of Host and Merchant.

Merchants

Merchants are the producers, distributors, or resellers of the goods to be sold through the outsource provider. The primary responsibilities of a Merchant are to:

- Maintain an up-to-date catalog within the system including all products that are available for sale in storefronts served by the outsource provider
- Create approval standards for passively recruited Host applicants based upon website profiles and target audience characteristics
- Fulfill all orders received from the e-commerce outsource provider
- Provide assistance to outsource provider regarding promotional strategies. This can be accomplished by supplying marketing literature and materials, as well as any sales incentives. The Merchant *owns* the marketing literature and materials, and may access and modify these items as necessary.

- Provide service and support to customers generated via the outsource e-commerce provider
- Maintain internal records of orders filled through the outsource provider and process payments from the outsource provider for these orders
- Inform the e-commerce outsource provider of any backlogs, fulfillment delays, product changes, or other significant situations

Hosts

A Host is the operator of a website that engages in Internet commerce by incorporating one or more link to the e-commerce outsource provider into its web content. The responsibilities of a Host are to:

- Use the outsource provider Host Manager service bureau to select the Merchants and products that will be offered from the Host's website
- Promote transactions through the e-commerce outsource provider hosted by the website
- Regularly review the Merchant offerings for which they have been approved in order to take advantage of new products and to review sales and promotional strategies made available to them by the Merchant

E-commerce Outsource Provider

The role of outsource provider is to:

- Develop and maintain the outsource provider service bureau – the systems and software which provide the platform for e-commerce support services
- Identify and recruit target Host websites and monitor/manage these relationships
- Create customer-transparent Host processing "pages" on a secure server to receive order and payment information
- Create, maintain, and update the "look & feel capture" process through which consumers are able to shop in a Merchant-controlled storefront within the design and navigational context of the Host website, preserving the ownership of the visit experience by the Host
- Authorize credit card transactions (in most cases)
- Process credit card payments for orders received (in most cases)

- Pay periodic commissions to Hosts for orders shipped during a prior period
- Transmit orders to Merchants
- Pay Merchants for orders filled
- Manage the commission structure for Merchant-Host relationships to maximize sales and revenues
- Screen and approve Host applications
- Support and monitor the merchandise return/refund process and other customer service functions

This following describes the order entry and settlement process from the initial promotion on a Host website all the way through to fulfillment, payment processing, commission payment, and Merchant payment.

Order Placement, Fulfillment, and Settlement Overview

The overall transaction process is very straightforward. The following is a list of the steps involved in receiving and processing an order request.

a) A customer visits a Host website and, through contextually relevant content, becomes interested in a product offered.

b) The customer selects the item(s) that she wishes to purchase by clicking a product image, banner-style link, or text link, or other offer format taking her to a dynamically generated web pages which retain the look and feel of the referring Host and are served by the e-commerce outsource provider.

c) The customer browses through the products offered, indicating which items are to be purchased and in what quantities via forms on-screen. Selected items appear within the shopping cart at the top of the shopping interface. The user remains on the product screen without ever being involuntarily removed to a detailed shopping cart-only screen, representing a significant enhancement over most shopping cart technology in place today. When all desired products are selected, the customer initiates the checkout procedure, never leaving the Host website.

d) The secure checkout interface appears, still consistent in look and feel with the Host's referring website. The customer completes the order form, provides all billing and shipping information required, confirms the items selected for purchase, and remits credit card information for payment processing.

e) Assuming the payment method is authorized, the customer is returned to another section of the Host's website, possibly just returning to the page in which the offer was placed, as determined by the Host.

f) The e-commerce outsource provider passes the order to the Merchant in real time. The credit card may be charged at this point or upon confirmation of shipment.

g) The Merchant receives and logs the order.

h) The Merchant then assembles and ships the order to the customer, keeping the outsource provider apprised of the order status.

i) Periodically, the outsource provider will remit payment to the Merchant for that period's filled orders.

j) Periodically, the outsource provider will remit payment to Hosts for all commissions earned in the prior period.

Host Process Flow

The process flow for a prospect to become a Host and be fully able to endorse/promote/offer Merchant products is as follows:

a) Hosts are recruited from three sources: direct recruiting, in which the Host prospect is identified by and approached by an e-commerce outsource provider representative; passive recruiting, in which the Host has been referred to the outsource provider by other Hosts, relevant meta-sites (sites that contain lists of and links to other sites/services), or other sources; and Host Agent recruits, in which a specialized third party Agent identifies and approaches Host prospects. In many cases, the use of online signup forms and brochures may be a factor in recruitment.

b) Prospect completes the Host application form (except where preapproved), providing information about the type of website(s) operated by the Host, some traffic statistics about these websites and general visitor demographics, and complete contact information. The prospect also selects an outsource provider system user ID and password which will later be used to access the system, retrieve important Hosting information and programming, and modify the custom materials in the outsource provider transaction processing engine.

c) The application is received and the information therein is reviewed, and the application is either approved or rejected (unless this is a preapproved Host). If

approved, the Host's ID and password are activated, and an automated message is sent to the new Host informing them of their approval. This message will also contain instructions for accessing the e-commerce outsource provider system, setting up their links to the outsource provider, and inserting outsource provider data into their website(s). Preapproved Hosts will be immediately able to access this system upon submission of their application.

d) Host accesses e-commerce outsource provider system to begin the step-by-step setup process. The Host first identifies a page from their own website which will provide the look and feel to be replicated. Following this, the Host configures product selections for each of its approved Merchants and downloads product images, text, and CGI/HTML code for their own website. Host then completes changes to website and activates new content. Hosts are free to promote their use of the outsource provider as they feel is suitable to the product at any time and with any frequency, subject to reasonable limitations.

e) Hosts will be able to access real-time reports about transaction volume including number of users, average purchase amount per user, number of purchases on specified days or within specified date ranges. Hosts can create customized reports to determine conversion rates, top selling products, commissions earned, paid, and due, and other pertinent information. This information can be leveraged by the e-commerce outsource provider and the Host to improve the efficacy of targeted marketing efforts on the Host's website.

Internal System Transaction Flow

The e-commerce outsource provider system acts as a clearinghouse for all orders. The system maintains a real-time interface with a credit card authorization and processing service and a robust database engine which is able to process transactions, record all transaction activities, generate reports used for commission payments and auditing of Merchant invoices, and track order status. The transaction flow for the outsource provider service bureau is directly related to the structure of the underlying database.

This flow can be described as follows:

a) Customer, visiting Host, activates link to commerce object within context of Host's website. This activation is typically accomplished by clicking on a hyperlink of some kind within a webpage of the Host's website.

b) The e-commerce outsource provider launches new storefront featuring specific products or product category for Merchant, as determined by Host, with the look and feel of the Host's site. The user is not made aware of the fact that this shopping experience is taking place on an outsourced server.

c) As customer browses through featured items in the Merchant's catalog, the outsource provider serves additional pages while maintaining the look and feel of the Host. The system maintains a dynamic record of customers activities including products reviewed, items selected for purchase (placed into shopping cart), and time spent shopping. The e-commerce outsource provider uses a highly reliable and accurate tracking technology throughout the shopping experience.

d) Upon checkout, the system processes customer billing, shipping, and order information via secure (encrypted) data transmission (unless the consumer opts for non-encrypted transmission). This process includes an order confirmation process and a process by which a non-approved credit card transaction may be corrected and resubmitted.

e) Upon approval, the outsource provider performs several simultaneous functions:

- Thank you screen is displayed to customer
- Customer is prompted to "continue" browsing Host's website.
- E-mail confirmation is sent to customer detailing order information, fulfillment process, customer service terms and procedures, and other relevant information.
- Order is transmitted to the Merchant electronically, via e-mail or direct link to order entry system.
- Order is logged into transaction database and logged by system in conjunction with Host referral information.
- Host is notified that a sale has been made and commission dollars have been earned.

The second part of the e-commerce outsource provider service bureau transaction process pertains to reconciliation and settlement with the Merchants.

a) Orders are transmitted to each Merchant as received and are logged into the system for future reference and reporting.

b) Periodically, the outsource provider will pay each Merchant for orders processed during the prior period. Payment will be driven by shipped orders as recorded within the system. Merchants can view their accumulated sales within the system at any time during the period, and historical information will be available as well.

The final part of the e-commerce outsource provider Service Bureau transaction process pertains to the payment of commissions to Hosts.

c) Periodically, the e-commerce outsource provider will calculate the accumulated commissions due to each Host from the prior period's results. Hosts will be able to review their earnings on a real-time basis at any point during a period.

d) The outsource provider will then pay each Host the appropriate commission amount via electronic payment or check along with a copy of the transactions and total report for the period being settled.

Merchant Transaction Flow

Each Merchant will be required to fulfill every order received through the e-commerce outsource provider within a designated time frame. Merchants must also be able to track certain information regularly and accurately. Merchants will be monitored to ensure timely fulfillment in order to provide the best quality customer service.

The steps of the Merchants transaction flow after they have been established within the system are as follows:

a) The designated recipient of orders within the Merchant organization will check for new orders at least on a daily basis, if not more frequently. Orders are received by the Merchant via e-mail or other electronic notification, including automated direct input to legacy order management systems owned or operated by the Merchant. These orders include all pertinent customer data required for fulfillment of each order. Merchants may also view all orders online, sorted by date, status (new/viewed), or other criteria, and download orders in bulk form directly from the outsource provider.

b) After receiving the order, the Merchant will ship the order to the Customer within a reasonable time period for the type of merchandise ordered. Merchant will have the

ability to modify the shipping status of the orders within the system. Merchants are obligated to provide timely shipping of their products. If any item ordered is out of stock or discontinued, the Merchant must update their catalog on the e-commerce outsource provider immediately and notify any affected customers immediately via e-mail or regular mail. Orders should be processed according to whatever internal process flow has been established by the Merchant.

c) Upon receipt of payment for the prior month's orders, the Merchant is responsible for reconciling the amount remitted with their own fulfillment records. Any disputes should be addressed by accessing the Merchant interface and querying/updating records.

The embodiments described above are given as illustrative examples only. It will be readily appreciated that many deviations may be made from the specific embodiment disclosed in this specification without departing from the invention. Accordingly, the scope of the invention is to be determined by the claims below rather than being limited to the specifically described embodiment above.

1. A process of creating and displaying Internet web pages comprising:

(a) computer storing indicia describing the appearance of a set of one or more visually perceptible elements, which elements are displayed, along with primary content, on web browsers accessing a first web page, and which set of elements suggest a source of the first web page; and

(b) using the computer-stored indicia to cause the display of a second web page on web browsers of computer users who indicate interest in a buying opportunity by following a selectable navigation link from the first web page leading to the second web page;

(c) wherein said second web page contains the set of visually perceptible elements along with content describing at least one commerce object;

(d) wherein the second web page apart from the commerce objects has a distinctive overall appearance corresponding to a distinctive overall appearance of the first web page apart from its primary content;

(e) wherein a first owner controls the primary content of the first web page and a second owner controls the content of the second web page and the information displayed on the second web page about the commerce object;

(f) wherein said at least one commerce object pertains to an opportunity to purchase an offering of a merchant, which is neither the first nor the second owner; and

(g) wherein the first and second owners have contracted with each other to share revenue generated as a result of computer users purchasing from the merchant as a result of visiting the second web page.

2. The process of claim 1 wherein computer storing indicia comprises computer storing indicia describing the appearance of a set of elements that suggests a source of the first web page by being consistent across a set of web pages, including the first web page, which set constitutes some or all of a website of the first owner.

3. The process of claim 1 wherein computer-storing indicia comprises storing HTML code and images.

4. The process of claim 1 wherein the set of visually perceptible elements derived from the indicia comprises the appearance of the top and left side of the first web page.

5. The process of claim 1 wherein the set of visually perceptible elements derived from the indicia comprises the appearance of the header and footer of the first web page.

6. The process of claim 1 wherein the set of visually perceptible elements includes a set of navigational links, used on the first web page, each of which links, when activated, causes a browser to display a select page of a website of the first owner.

7. The process of claim 1 wherein the set of visually perceptible elements includes a logo identifying the first owner.

8. The process of claim 1 wherein the set of visually perceptible elements includes all of the following:

(a) a logo identifying the first owner;

(b) a color scheme used on the first web page;

(c) a page layout used on the first web page; and

(d) a set of navigational links, used on the first web page, each of which links, when activated causes a browser to display a select page of a website of the first owner.

9. The process of claim 1 wherein causing the display of the second web page comprises causing the display of the second web page on browsers of computer users who click the link.

10. The process of claim 9 wherein causing the display of the second web page comprises causing said display without any action by the computer user other than clicking the link.

11. The process of claim 1 wherein the commerce object is a catalog having a multitude of merchant offerings and wherein the second web page contains one or more selectable navigation links connecting a hierarchical set of additional second web pages, each pertaining to a subset of the offerings in the catalog.

12. The process of claim 1 wherein the commerce object is a set of product categories and wherein the second web page further comprises a display accepting input of search parameters that can be used to search for products within the product categories.

13. The process of claim 1 wherein the second web page apart from the commerce objects has a distinctive overall appearance essentially matching the distinctive overall appearance of the first web page apart from its primary content.

14. The process of claim 1 wherein the merchant offerings is a type of goods.

15. The process of claim 1 wherein having a contract providing for sharing of revenue comprises having a contract that provides for the second owner to pay a commission to the first owner on account of purchases of merchant offerings on the second web page by computer users who followed the link from the first web page to the second web page.

16. The process of claim 1 further comprising directing computer users' web browsers to one or more third web pages providing a checkout procedure that includes collection of payment information, in response to the computer users' selection of the commerce object, indicating a desire to purchase the merchant's offering to which the commerce object on the second web page pertains.

17. The process of claim 16 wherein the one or more third web pages, apart from information displayed about the checkout procedure, have an overall appearance corresponding to an overall appearance of the first web page apart from its primary content.

18. The process of claim 1 further comprising forwarding to the merchant order information relating to computer users who select the commerce object on the second web page, indicating a desire to purchase the merchant's offering to which the commerce object pertains.

19. The process of claim 1 wherein:

(a) computer storing indicia comprises computer storing HTML code and images describing the appearance of a set of elements that suggests a source

of the first web page by being consistent across a set of web pages, including the first web page, which set constitutes some or all of a website of the first owner;

(b) causing the display of the second web page comprises causing the display of the second web page on browsers of computer users who click the link;

(c) the second web page apart from the commerce objects has a distinctive overall appearance essentially matching the distinctive overall appearance of the first web page apart from its primary content;

(d) the commerce object is a catalog having a multitude of merchant offerings;

(e) the second web page contains one or more selectable navigation links connecting a hierarchical set of additional second web pages, each pertaining to a subset of the offerings in the catalog; and

(f) having a contract providing for sharing of revenue comprises having a contract that provides for the second owner to pay the first owner on account of purchases of merchant offerings on the second web page by computer users who followed the link from the first web page to the second web page.

20. The process of claim 19 wherein the commerce object is a set of product categories and wherein the second web page further comprises a display accepting input of search parameters that can be used to search for products within the product categories.

21. The process of claim 1 wherein using the computer-stored indicia to cause the display of a second web page comprises displaying on the second web page information about a plurality of commerce objects.

22. The process of claim 21 wherein the contract between the first and second owners requires the second owner to maintain a commerce object database containing information about a multitude of commerce objects and to provide information from that database for display on the second web page.

23. The process of claim 22 wherein the second owner further has contracts with a plurality of merchants to include in the commerce object database data

concerning the merchant's offerings for sale to computer users viewing the second web site.

24. The process of claim 23 further comprising, in response to an indication received from the browser of a computer user displaying the second web page of a desire to purchase a merchant offering identified in the information about the commerce object displayed on the second web page, and pursuant to the contract between the first and second owner and the contracts between the second owner and the merchants, capturing billing information from the browser and arranging for that computer user to be charged for the identified offering.

25. The process of claim 24 wherein arranging for a computer user to be charged comprises arranging to divide revenue from the charge among the merchant, the first owner, and the second owner, pursuant to the contract between the first and second owners and the contracts between the second owner and the merchants.

26. The process of claim 25 wherein using the computer-stored indicia to cause the display of a second web page comprises serving the second web page from a server controlled by the second owner.

27. The process of claim 25 wherein the indicia describing the appearance of a set of one or more visually distinctive elements found on a first web page are stored in an indicia database.

28. The process of claim 27 wherein both the commerce object database and the indicia database are maintained by the second owner and stored on the same computer system.

29. The process of claim 27 wherein the commerce object is a set of product categories and wherein the second web page further comprises a display accepting input of search parameters that can be used to search for products within the product categories.

30. The process of claim 29 wherein both the commerce object database and the indicia database are maintained by the second owner and stored on the same computer system.

31. The process of claim 30 wherein using the computer-stored indicia to cause the display of a second web page comprises serving the second web page from a server controlled by the second owner.

32. A method of offering supplemental commercial opportunities to a web page owner comprising:

(a) maintaining a computer database of information about a multitude of commerce objects;

(b) contracting with a owner that controls a first web page to display on the first web page, along with other content on that page, a user-selectable navigation link leading to a second web page; and

(c) under contract with that owner, causing the second web page to be displayed on web browsers of computer users who activate the selectable navigation link on the first web page;

(d) wherein the commerce objects pertain to an opportunity to purchase an offering of a third-party merchant; and

(e) wherein causing the second web page to be displayed comprises causing to be displayed on the second web page (i) a set of one or more visually perceptible elements also displayed on the first web page that suggest a source of the first web page, along with (ii) information from the computer database about at least one of the multitude of commerce objects, with the consequence that the second web page apart from the displayed information about the commerce objects has a distinctive overall appearance corresponding to a distinctive overall appearance of the first web page;

whereby the method reduces the likelihood that viewers of the first web page will not resume viewing either the first web page or pages that are part of a web site containing the first web page after viewing the information available through the second web page.

33. The method of claim 32 wherein the set of visually perceptible elements comprises the appearance of the top and left side of the first web page.

34. The method of claim 32 wherein the set of visually perceptible elements comprises the appearance of the header and footer of the first web page.

35. The method of claim 32 wherein the set of visually perceptible elements includes a set of navigational links, used on the first web page, each of which links, when activated, causes a browser to display a select page of a website of the controlling owner.

36. The method of claim 32 wherein the set of visually perceptible elements includes a logo identifying the controlling owner.

37. The method of claim 32 wherein computer storing indicia comprises computer storing indicia describing the appearance of a set of elements that suggests a source of the first web page by being consistent across a set of web pages, including the first web page, which set constitutes some or all of a website of the controlling owner.

38. The method of claim 32 wherein the commerce object is a set of product categories and wherein causing the second web page to be displayed further comprises causing to be displayed on the second web page an input field accepting search parameters that can be used to search for products within the product categories.

39. The method of claim 32 wherein causing the second web page to be displayed further comprises displaying on the second web page information about a plurality of commerce objects.

40. The method of claim 39 further comprising contracting with a plurality of merchants having offerings for sale to include, in the computer database of information about the commerce objects, information concerning the merchants' offerings.

41. The method of claim 40 further comprising, in response to an indication received from the browser of a computer user displaying the second web page of a desire to purchase an offering identified in the information about the commerce object displayed on the second web page, and under contracts with the controlling owner and the merchants, capturing billing information from the browser and arranging for that computer user to be charged for the identified offering.

42. The method of claim 41 wherein arranging for a computer user to be charged comprises arranging to provide shares of revenue from the charge to each of (a) the merchant providing the identified offering, and (b) the controlling owner.

43. The method of claim 42 wherein causing the second web page to be displayed comprises controlling a server to cause it to serve the second web page.

44. The method of claim 42 further comprising the preliminary act of storing indicia describing the appearance of the set of one or more visually distinctive elements in a indicia database, and wherein causing to be displayed on the second web page the set of one or more visually perceptible elements comprises loading the indicia from the indicia database and displaying the second web page in accordance with the indicia.

45. The method of claim 44 further comprising storing both the computer database of information about the commerce objects and the indicia database on the same computer system.

46. The method of claim 44 wherein the commerce object is a set of product categories and wherein causing the second web page to be displayed further comprises causing to be displayed on the second web page an input field accepting search parameters that can be used to search for products within the product categories.

47. The method of claim 46 further comprising storing both the computer database of information about the commerce objects and the indicia database on the same computer system.

48. The method of claim 47 wherein causing the second web page to be displayed comprises controlling a server to cause it to serve the second web page.

49. The method of claim 32 wherein the commerce object is a catalog having a multitude of merchant offerings and wherein the second web page contains one or more selectable navigation links connecting a hierarchical set of additional second web pages, each pertaining to a subset of the offerings in the catalog.

50. The method of claim 32 further comprising directing computer users' web browsers to one or more third web pages providing a checkout procedure that includes collection of payment information, in response to the computer users' selection of the commerce object, indicating a desire to purchase the merchant's offering to which the commerce object on the second web page pertains.

51. The method of claim 50 wherein the one or more third web pages, apart from information displayed about the checkout procedure, have an overall appearance

corresponding to an overall appearance of the first web page apart from its primary content.

52. The method of claim 32 further comprising forwarding to the merchant order information relating to computer users who select the commerce object on the second web page, indicating a desire to purchase the merchant's offering to which the commerce object pertains.

53. The method of claim 32 wherein contracting to display a second web page comprises having a contract providing for sharing of revenue with the owner of the first web page on account of purchases of merchant offerings on the second web page by computer users who followed the link from the first web page to the second web page.

54. The method of claim 32 wherein:

(a) contracting to display the second web site comprises agreeing to computer store HTML code and images describing the appearance of a set of elements that suggests a source of the first web page by being consistent across a set of web pages, including the first web page, which set constitutes some or all of a website of the owner;

(b) the second web page apart from the commerce objects has a distinctive overall appearance essentially matching the distinctive overall appearance of the first web page apart from said other content;

(c) the commerce object is a catalog having a multitude of merchant offerings;

(d) the second web page contains one or more selectable navigation links connecting a hierarchical set of additional second web pages, each pertaining to a subset of the offerings in the catalog; and

(e) contracting to display a second web page comprises having a contract providing for sharing of revenue with the controlling owner on account of purchases of merchant offerings on the second web page by computer users who followed the link from the first web page to the second web page.

55. A method of generating additional revenue from a web page through supplemental commercial opportunities offered off-site comprising:

(a) causing to be displayed on a first web page, along with other content of that page, a user-selectable navigation link to a second web page; and

(b) contracting with a owner that maintains a computer database of information about a multitude of commerce objects to cause the second web page to be displayed on web browsers of computer users who activate the selectable navigation link on the first web page, which second web page is programmed to display:

(i) a set of one or more visually perceptible elements also displayed on the first web page that suggest a source of the first web page, and

(ii) information from the computer database about at least one of the multitude of commerce objects, which displayed commerce objects provide the computer user whose browser is displaying the second web page an opportunity to purchase an offering of a third-party merchant;

with the consequence that the second web page apart from the displayed information about the commerce objects has a distinctive overall appearance corresponding to a distinctive overall appearance of the first web page;

whereby the method reduces the likelihood that viewers of the first web page will not resume viewing either the first web page or pages that are part of a web site containing the first web page as a result of viewing the supplemental information on the second web page.

56. The method of claim 55 wherein the set of visually perceptible elements comprises the appearance of the top and left side of the first web page.

57. The method of claim 55 wherein the set of visually perceptible elements comprises the appearance of the header and footer of the first web page.

58. The method of claim 55 further comprising maintaining a multi-page website including the first web page, wherein the first web page includes a set of navigational links to other pages of the multi-page website, and wherein the set of

visually perceptible elements includes the set of navigational links, each of which links, when activated from the second web page, causes a browser to display respective linked pages of the multi-page website.

59. The method of claim 58 wherein the set of visually perceptible elements includes an identifying logo.

60. The method of claim 59 wherein the set of visually perceptible elements further includes a color scheme and page layout used on the first web page.

61. The method of claim 55 wherein the commerce object is a set of product categories and wherein contracting to cause the second web page to be displayed further comprises contracting to cause to be displayed on the second web page an input field accepting search parameters that can be used to search for products within the product categories.

62. The method of claim 61 wherein contracting to cause the second web page to be displayed further comprises contracting to cause to be displayed on the second web page information about a plurality of commerce objects.

63. The method of claim 62 wherein the owner maintaining the database has contracts with a plurality of merchants to include, in the computer database containing information about the commerce objects, information concerning the commerce objects related to said merchants' offerings.

64. The method of claim 63 wherein contracting to cause the second web page to be displayed further comprises agreeing to a term under which the owner maintaining the database, in response to an indication received from the browser of a computer user displaying the second web page of a desire to purchase a offering identified in the information about the commerce object displayed on the second web page, will arrange to capture billing information from the browser and cause that computer user to be charged for the identified offering.

65. The method of claim 64 wherein contracting to cause the second web page to be displayed comprises agreeing to receive a portion of the revenue received from the charge to the computer user.

66. The method of claim 65 wherein contracting with a owner maintaining the database to cause the second web page to be displayed on web browsers of computer users who activate the selectable navigation link on the first web page comprises contracting to have the owner maintaining the database serve the second web page.

67. The method of claim 66 wherein the commerce object is a set of product categories and wherein contracting to cause the second web page to be displayed further comprises contracting to cause to be displayed on the second web page an input field accepting search parameters that can be used to search for products within the product categories.

68. The method of claim 55 wherein the commerce object is a catalog having a multitude of merchant offerings and wherein the second web page contains one or more selectable navigation links connecting a hierarchical set of additional second web pages, each pertaining to a subset of the offerings in the catalog.

69. The method of claim 68 wherein contracting with the owner maintaining the database comprises arranging to receive from the owner a share of revenue from purchases of merchant offerings on the second web page by computer users who followed the link from the first web page to the second web page.

70. The method of claim 69 wherein contracting with the owner maintaining the database further comprises arranging with the owner (a) to direct computer users' web browsers to one or more third web pages providing a checkout procedure that includes collection of payment information, in response to the computer users' selection of the commerce object, indicating a desire to purchase the merchant's offering to which the commerce object on the second web page pertains, wherein the one or more third web pages, apart from information displayed about the checkout procedure, have an overall appearance corresponding to an overall appearance of the first web page, and (b) to forward to the merchant order information relating to computer users who select the commerce object on the second web page, indicating a desire to purchase the merchant's offering to which the commerce object pertains.

ABSTRACT

An e-commerce outsourcing system and method provides hosts with transparent, context-sensitive e-commerce supported pages. The look and feel of a target host is captured for future use. The host is provided with one or more links for inclusion within a page on the host website that correlates with a selected commerce object, which may be contextually related to material in the page. The commerce object can be a product, a product category, or a dynamic selection indicator. Upon activation of the provided link, a visitor computer is served with a page with the look and feel of the host website and with content based upon the associated commerce object. Where the commerce object is a dynamic selection indicator, the content is selected at the time of activation based upon an analysis of the page containing the activated link.

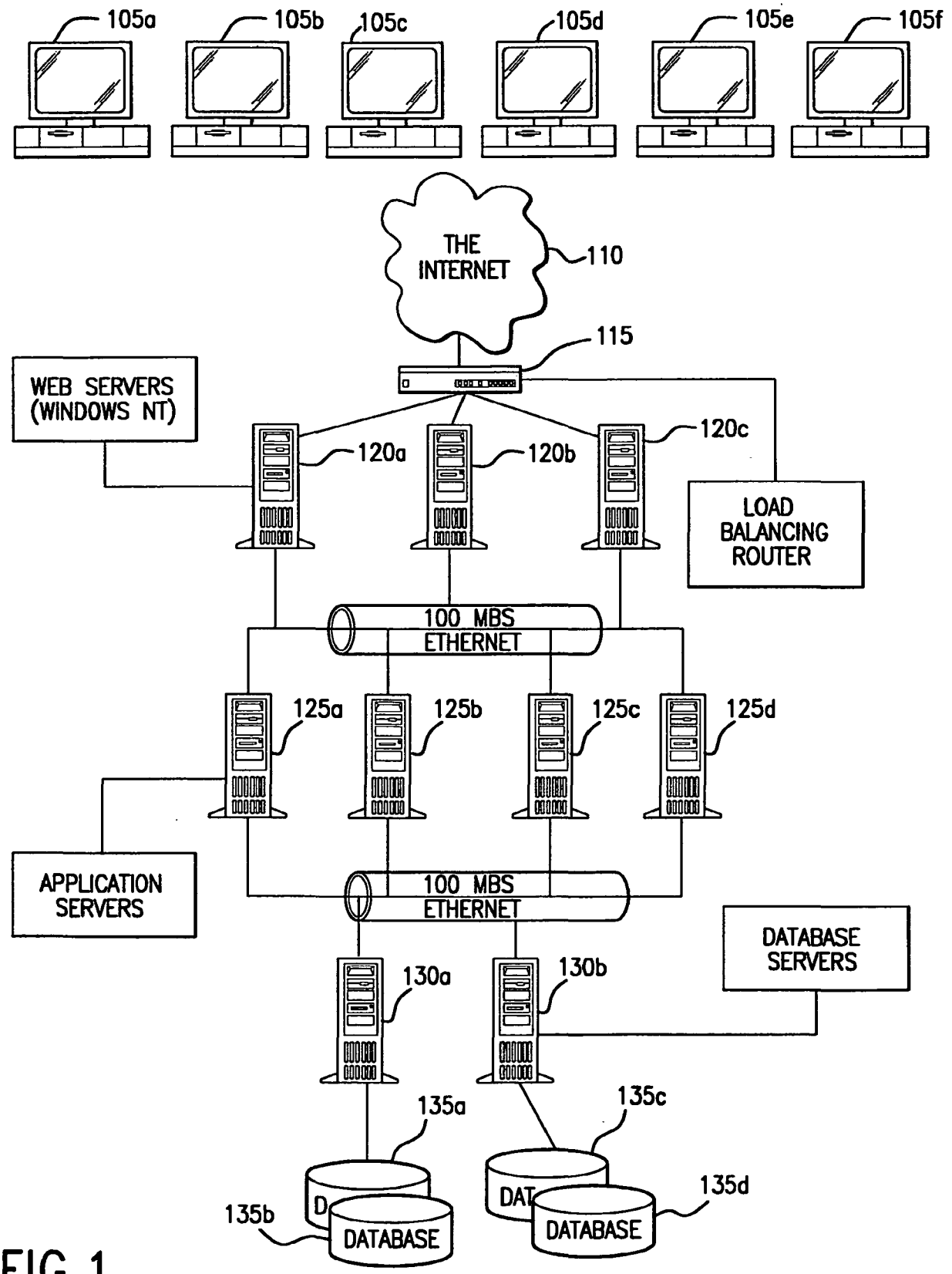

105a
105b
105c
105d
105e
105f
THE INTERNET
110
115
WEB SERVERS (WINDOWS NT)
120a
120b
120c
LOAD BALANCING ROUTER
100 MBS ETHERNET
125a
125b
125c
125d
APPLICATION SERVERS
100 MBS ETHERNET
DATABASE SERVERS
130a
130b
135a
135c
135b
DATABASE
DATABASE
135d

FIG.1

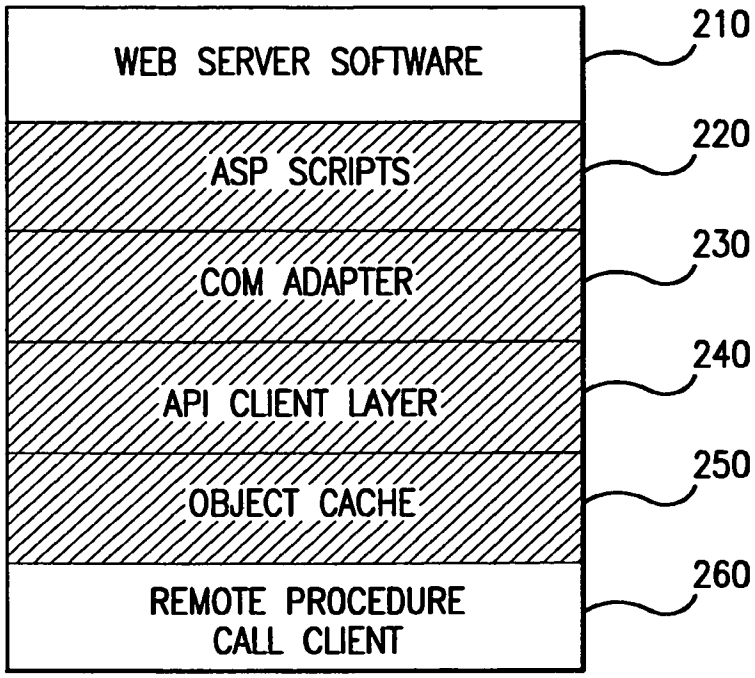

WEB SERVER SOFTWARE
210
ASP SCRIPTS
220
COM ADAPTER
230
API CLIENT LAYER
240
OBJECT CACHE
250
REMOTE PROCEDURE CALL CLIENT
260

FIG.2

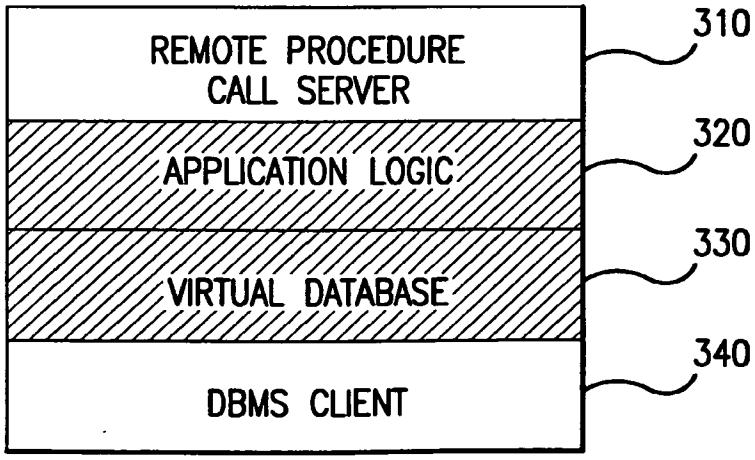

REMOTE PROCEDURE CALL SERVER
310
APPLICATION LOGIC
320
VIRTUAL DATABASE
330
DBMS CLIENT
340

FIG.3

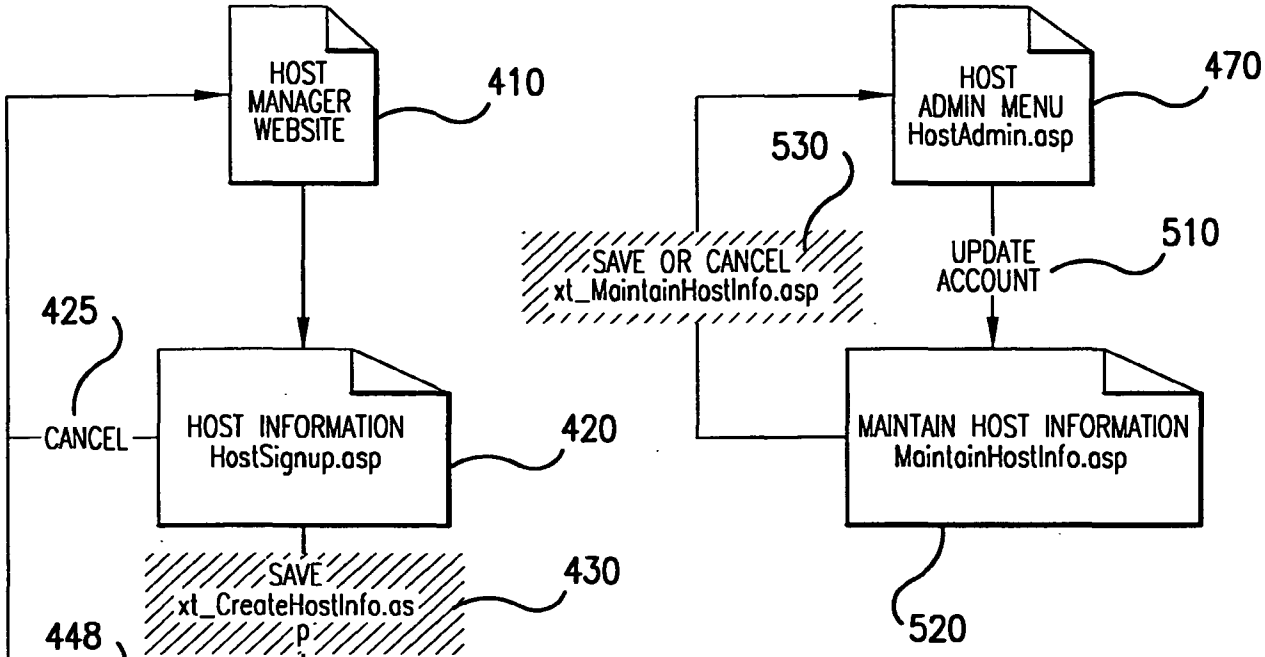

HOST ADMIN MENU
HostAdmin.asp
470
530
SAVE OR CANCEL
xt_MaintainHostInfo.asp
UPDATE ACCOUNT
510
MAINTAIN HOST INFORMATION
MaintainHostInfo.asp
520

FIG.5

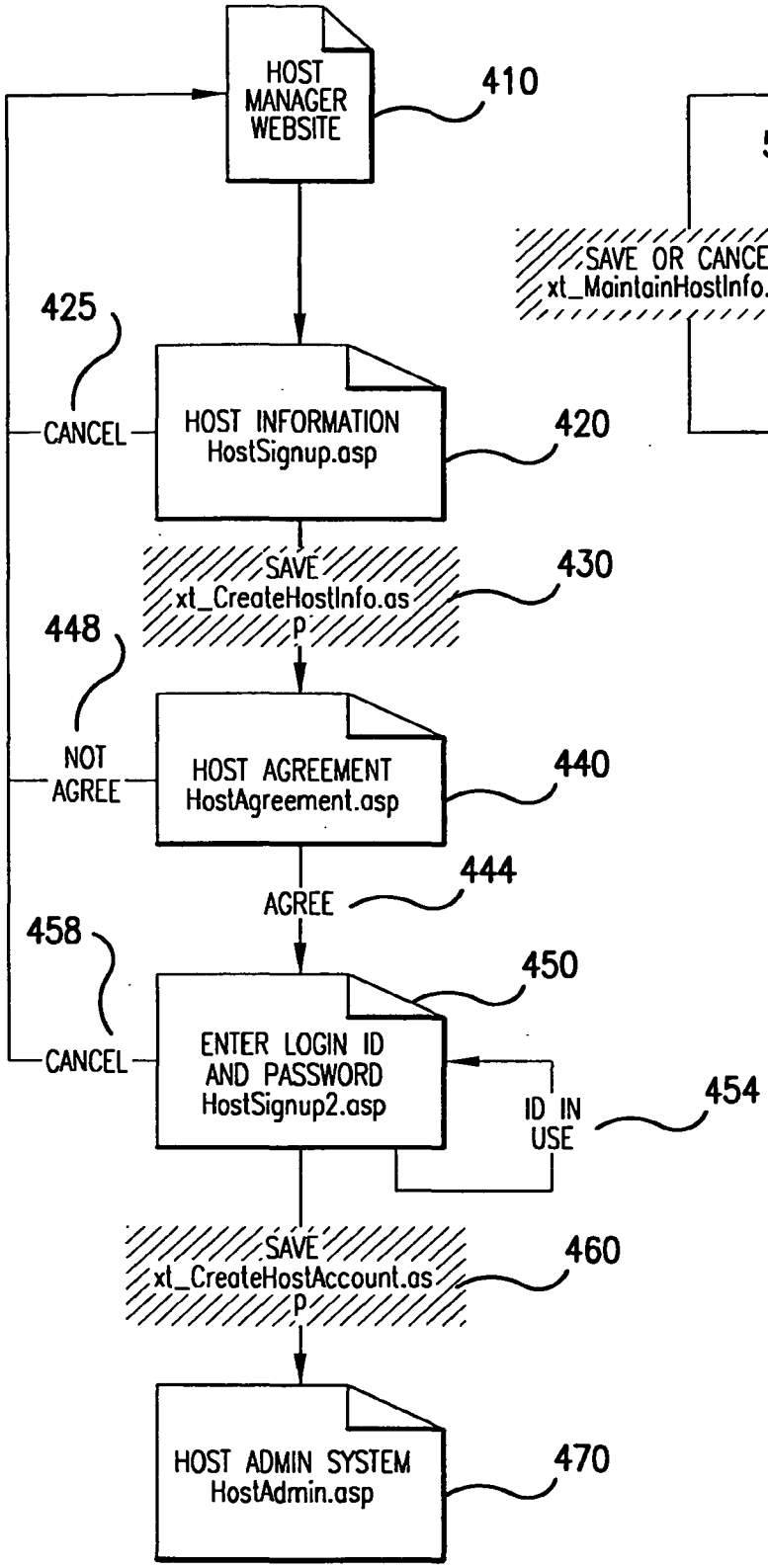

HOST MANAGER WEBSITE
410
425
CANCEL
HOST INFORMATION
HostSignup.asp
420
SAVE
xt_CreateHostInfo.asp
430
448
NOT AGREE
HOST AGREEMENT
HostAgreement.asp
440
AGREE
444
458
CANCEL
ENTER LOGIN ID AND PASSWORD
HostSignup2.asp
450
ID IN USE
454
SAVE
xt_CreateHostAccount.asp
460
HOST ADMIN SYSTEM
HostAdmin.asp
470

FIG.4

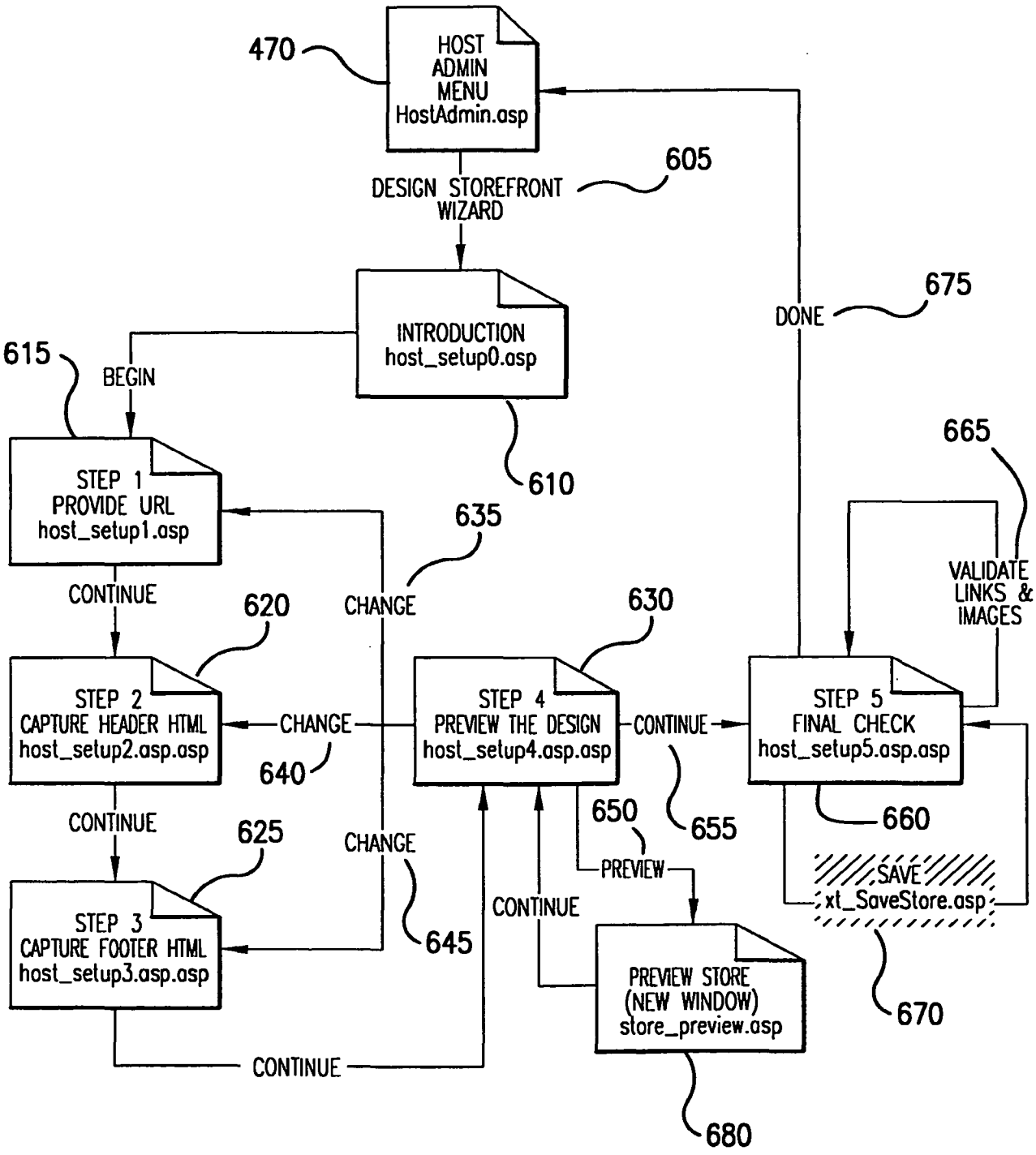

470
HOST ADMIN MENU HostAdmin.asp
605
DESIGN STOREFRONT WIZARD
675
DONE
INTRODUCTION host_setup0.asp
615
BEGIN
610
665
STEP 1 PROVIDE URL host_setup1.asp
635
CHANGE
VALIDATE LINKS & IMAGES
CONTINUE
620
630
STEP 2 CAPTURE HEADER HTML host_setup2.asp.asp
CHANGE
STEP 4 PREVIEW THE DESIGN host_setup4.asp.asp
CONTINUE
STEP 5 FINAL CHECK host_setup5.asp.asp
640
655
660
CONTINUE
625
650
CHANGE
PREVIEW
SAVE xt_SaveStore.asp
STEP 3 CAPTURE FOOTER HTML host_setup3.asp.asp
CONTINUE
645
PREVIEW STORE (NEW WINDOW) store_preview.asp
670
CONTINUE
680

FIG.6

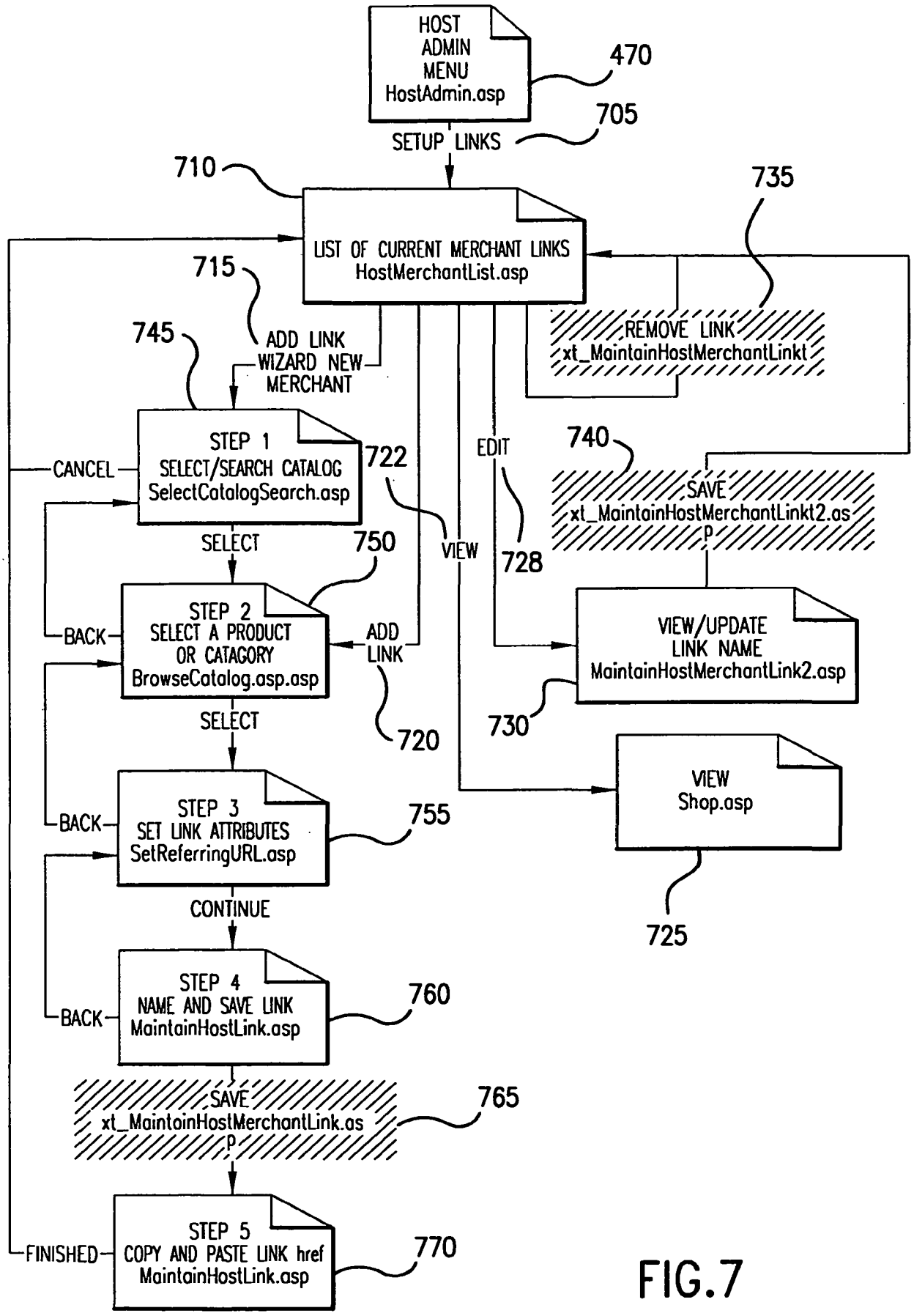

HOST ADMIN MENU HostAdmin.asp
470
SETUP LINKS
705
710
LIST OF CURRENT MERCHANT LINKS HostMerchantList.asp
735
715
ADD LINK WIZARD NEW MERCHANT
745
REMOVE LINK xt_MaintainHostMerchantLinkt
STEP 1 SELECT/SEARCH CATALOG SelectCatalogSearch.asp
CANCEL
722
EDIT
740
SAVE xt_MaintainHostMerchantLinkt2.asp
SELECT
750
VIEW
728
STEP 2 SELECT A PRODUCT OR CATAGORY BrowseCatalog.asp.asp
BACK
ADD LINK
VIEW/UPDATE LINK NAME MaintainHostMerchantLink2.asp
730
720
SELECT
VIEW Shop.asp
STEP 3 SET LINK ATTRIBUTES SetReferringURL.asp
BACK
755
725
CONTINUE
STEP 4 NAME AND SAVE LINK MaintainHostLink.asp
BACK
760
SAVE xt_MaintainHostMerchantLink.asp
765
STEP 5 COPY AND PASTE LINK href MaintainHostLink.asp
FINISHED
770

FIG.7

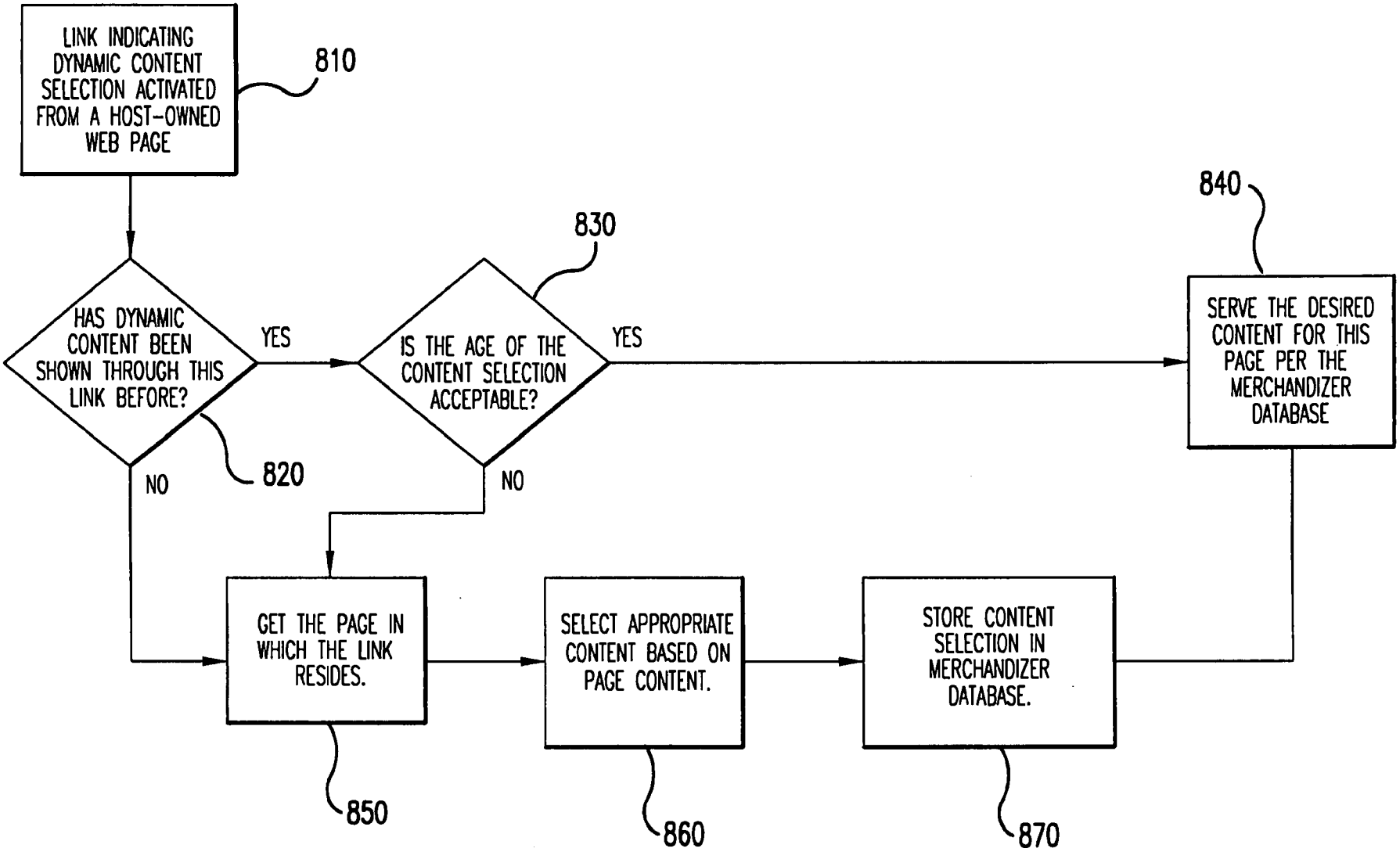

LINK INDICATING DYNAMIC CONTENT SELECTION ACTIVATED FROM A HOST-OWNED WEB PAGE
810
HAS DYNAMIC CONTENT BEEN SHOWN THROUGH THIS LINK BEFORE?
YES
820
NO
IS THE AGE OF THE CONTENT SELECTION ACCEPTABLE?
830
YES
NO
SERVE THE DESIRED CONTENT FOR THIS PAGE PER THE MERCHANDIZER DATABASE
840
GET THE PAGE IN WHICH THE LINK RESIDES.
850
SELECT APPROPRIATE CONTENT BASED ON PAGE CONTENT.
860
STORE CONTENT SELECTION IN MERCHANDIZER DATABASE.
870

FIG.8

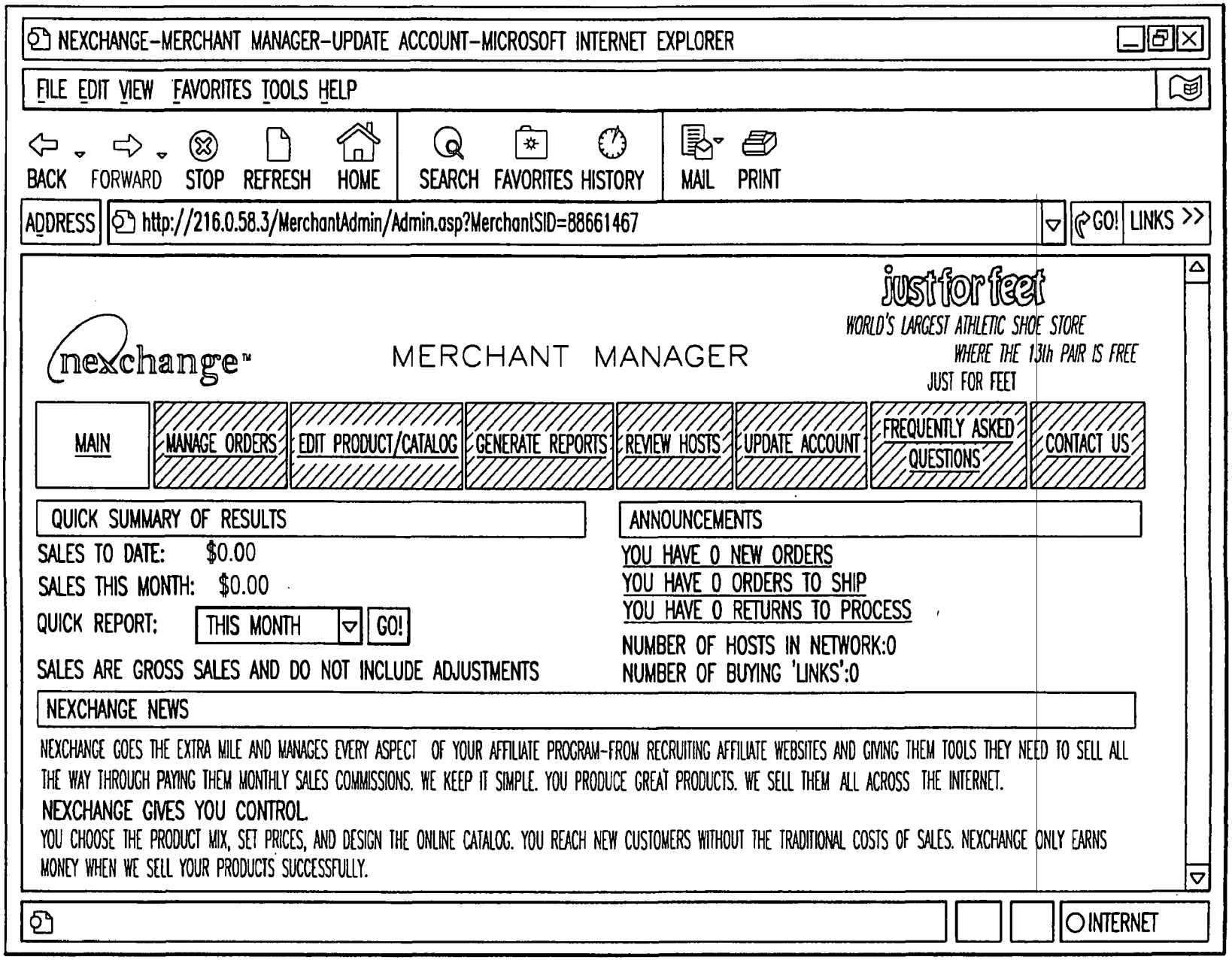

NEXCHANGE-MERCHANT MANAGER-UPDATE ACCOUNT-MICROSOFT INTERNET EXPLORER
FILE EDIT VIEW FAVORITES TOOLS HELP
BACK FORWARD STOP REFRESH HOME SEARCH FAVORITES HISTORY MAIL PRINT
ADDRESS http://216.0.58.3/MerchantAdmin/Admin.asp?MerchantSID=88661467
GO! LINKS >>
nexchange™
MERCHANT MANAGER
just for feet
WORLD'S LARGEST ATHLETIC SHOE STORE
WHERE THE 13th PAIR IS FREE
JUST FOR FEET
MAIN
MANAGE ORDERS
EDIT PRODUCT/CATALOG
GENERATE REPORTS
REVIEW HOSTS
UPDATE ACCOUNT
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
CONTACT US
QUICK SUMMARY OF RESULTS
SALES TO DATE: $0.00
SALES THIS MONTH: $0.00
QUICK REPORT: THIS MONTH GO!
SALES ARE GROSS SALES AND DO NOT INCLUDE ADJUSTMENTS
ANNOUNCEMENTS
YOU HAVE 0 NEW ORDERS
YOU HAVE 0 ORDERS TO SHIP
YOU HAVE 0 RETURNS TO PROCESS
NUMBER OF HOSTS IN NETWORK:0
NUMBER OF BUYING 'LINKS':0
NEXCHANGE NEWS
NEXCHANGE GOES THE EXTRA MILE AND MANAGES EVERY ASPECT OF YOUR AFFILIATE PROGRAM-FROM RECRUITING AFFILIATE WEBSITES AND GIVING THEM TOOLS THEY NEED TO SELL ALL THE WAY THROUGH PAYING THEM MONTHLY SALES COMMISSIONS. WE KEEP IT SIMPLE. YOU PRODUCE GREAT PRODUCTS. WE SELL THEM ALL ACROSS THE INTERNET.
NEXCHANGE GIVES YOU CONTROL.
YOU CHOOSE THE PRODUCT MIX, SET PRICES, AND DESIGN THE ONLINE CATALOG. YOU REACH NEW CUSTOMERS WITHOUT THE TRADITIONAL COSTS OF SALES. NEXCHANGE ONLY EARNS MONEY WHEN WE SELL YOUR PRODUCTS SUCCESSFULLY.
INTERNET

FIG.9

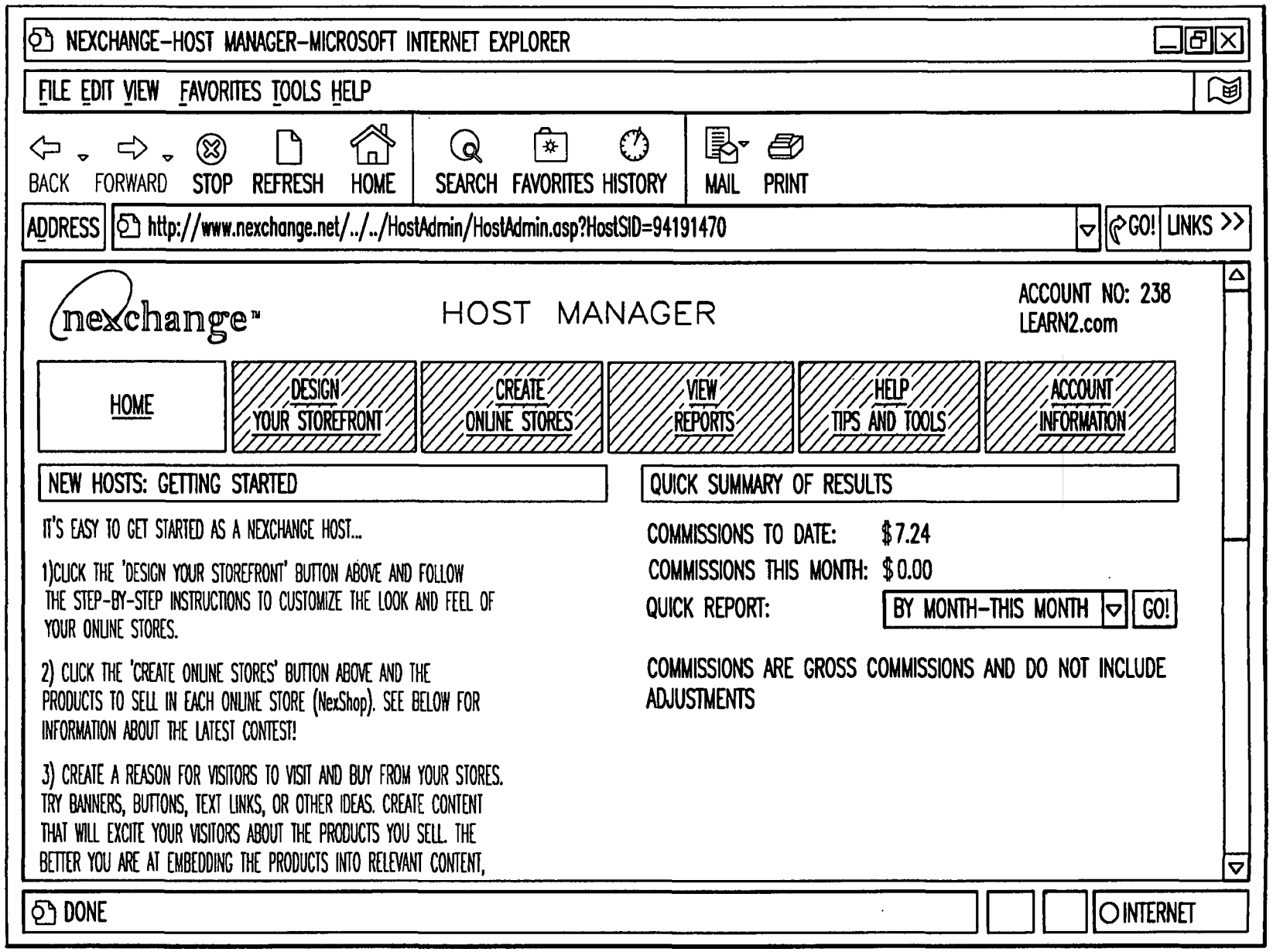

NEXCHANGE-HOST MANAGER-MICROSOFT INTERNET EXPLORER
FILE EDIT VIEW FAVORITES TOOLS HELP
BACK FORWARD STOP REFRESH HOME SEARCH FAVORITES HISTORY MAIL PRINT
ADDRESS http://www.nexchange.net/../../HostAdmin/HostAdmin.asp?HostSID=94191470
GO! LINKS >>
nexchange™
HOST MANAGER
ACCOUNT NO: 238
LEARN2.com
HOME
DESIGN YOUR STOREFRONT
CREATE ONLINE STORES
VIEW REPORTS
HELP TIPS AND TOOLS
ACCOUNT INFORMATION
NEW HOSTS: GETTING STARTED
IT'S EASY TO GET STARTED AS A NEXCHANGE HOST...
1)CLICK THE 'DESIGN YOUR STOREFRONT' BUTTON ABOVE AND FOLLOW THE STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS TO CUSTOMIZE THE LOOK AND FEEL OF YOUR ONLINE STORES.
2) CLICK THE 'CREATE ONLINE STORES' BUTTON ABOVE AND THE PRODUCTS TO SELL IN EACH ONLINE STORE (NexShop). SEE BELOW FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE LATEST CONTEST!
3) CREATE A REASON FOR VISITORS TO VISIT AND BUY FROM YOUR STORES. TRY BANNERS, BUTTONS, TEXT LINKS, OR OTHER IDEAS. CREATE CONTENT THAT WILL EXCITE YOUR VISITORS ABOUT THE PRODUCTS YOU SELL. THE BETTER YOU ARE AT EMBEDDING THE PRODUCTS INTO RELEVANT CONTENT,
QUICK SUMMARY OF RESULTS
COMMISSIONS TO DATE: $7.24
COMMISSIONS THIS MONTH: $0.00
QUICK REPORT: BY MONTH-THIS MONTH GO!
COMMISSIONS ARE GROSS COMMISSIONS AND DO NOT INCLUDE ADJUSTMENTS
DONE
INTERNET

FIG.10

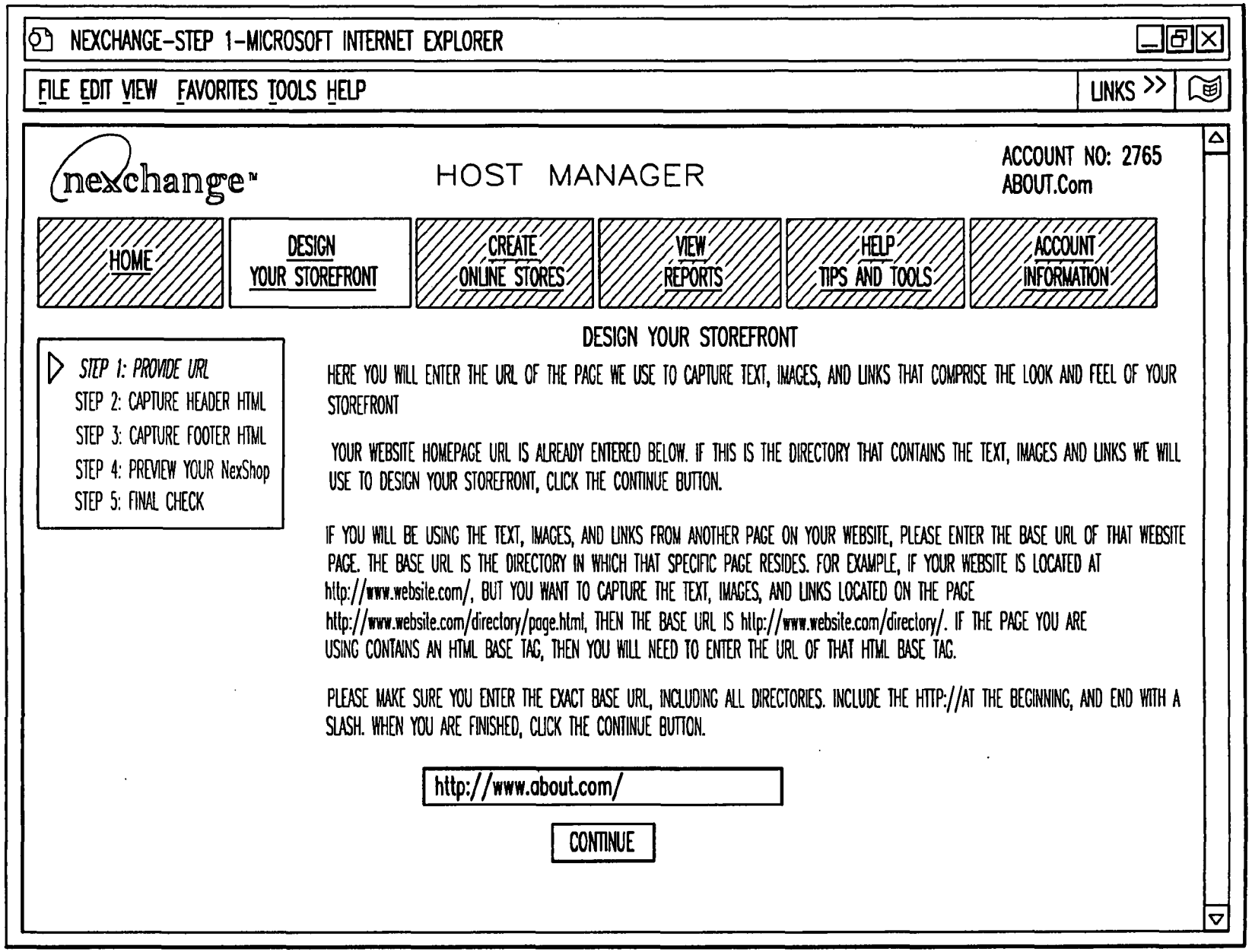

NEXCHANGE-STEP 1-MICROSOFT INTERNET EXPLORER
FILE EDIT VIEW FAVORITES TOOLS HELP
LINKS >>
nexchange™
HOST MANAGER
ACCOUNT NO: 2765
ABOUT.Com
HOME
DESIGN YOUR STOREFRONT
CREATE ONLINE STORES
VIEW REPORTS
HELP TIPS AND TOOLS
ACCOUNT INFORMATION
STEP 1: PROVIDE URL
STEP 2: CAPTURE HEADER HTML
STEP 3: CAPTURE FOOTER HTML
STEP 4: PREVIEW YOUR NexShop
STEP 5: FINAL CHECK
DESIGN YOUR STOREFRONT
HERE YOU WILL ENTER THE URL OF THE PAGE WE USE TO CAPTURE TEXT, IMAGES, AND LINKS THAT COMPRISE THE LOOK AND FEEL OF YOUR STOREFRONT
YOUR WEBSITE HOMEPAGE URL IS ALREADY ENTERED BELOW. IF THIS IS THE DIRECTORY THAT CONTAINS THE TEXT, IMAGES AND LINKS WE WILL USE TO DESIGN YOUR STOREFRONT, CLICK THE CONTINUE BUTTON.
IF YOU WILL BE USING THE TEXT, IMAGES, AND LINKS FROM ANOTHER PAGE ON YOUR WEBSITE, PLEASE ENTER THE BASE URL OF THAT WEBSITE PAGE. THE BASE URL IS THE DIRECTORY IN WHICH THAT SPECIFIC PAGE RESIDES. FOR EXAMPLE, IF YOUR WEBSITE IS LOCATED AT http://www.website.com/, BUT YOU WANT TO CAPTURE THE TEXT, IMAGES, AND LINKS LOCATED ON THE PAGE http://www.website.com/directory/page.html, THEN THE BASE URL IS http://www.website.com/directory/. IF THE PAGE YOU ARE USING CONTAINS AN HTML BASE TAG, THEN YOU WILL NEED TO ENTER THE URL OF THAT HTML BASE TAG.
PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU ENTER THE EXACT BASE URL, INCLUDING ALL DIRECTORIES. INCLUDE THE HTTP://AT THE BEGINNING, AND END WITH A SLASH. WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED, CLICK THE CONTINUE BUTTON.
http://www.about.com/
CONTINUE

FIG.11

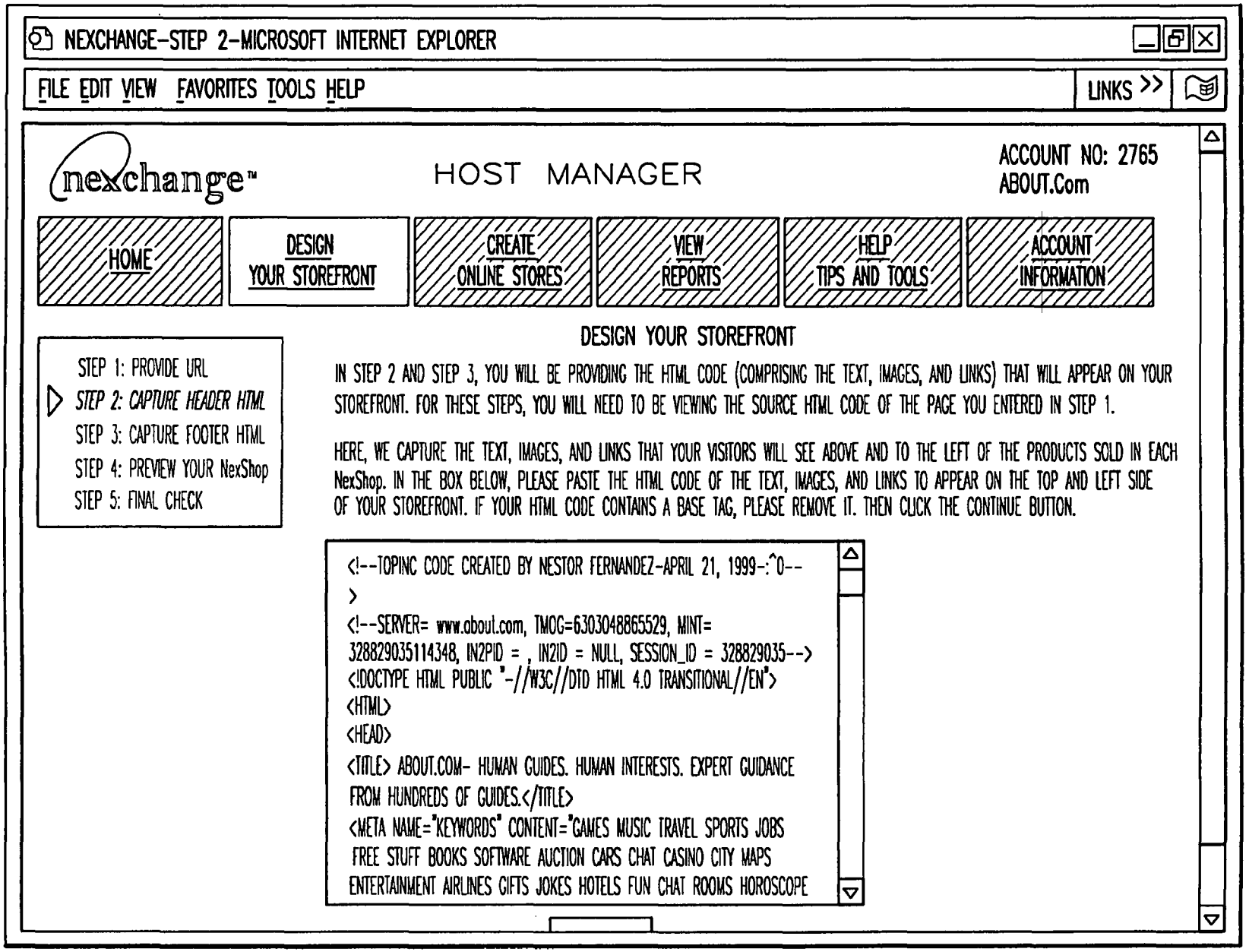
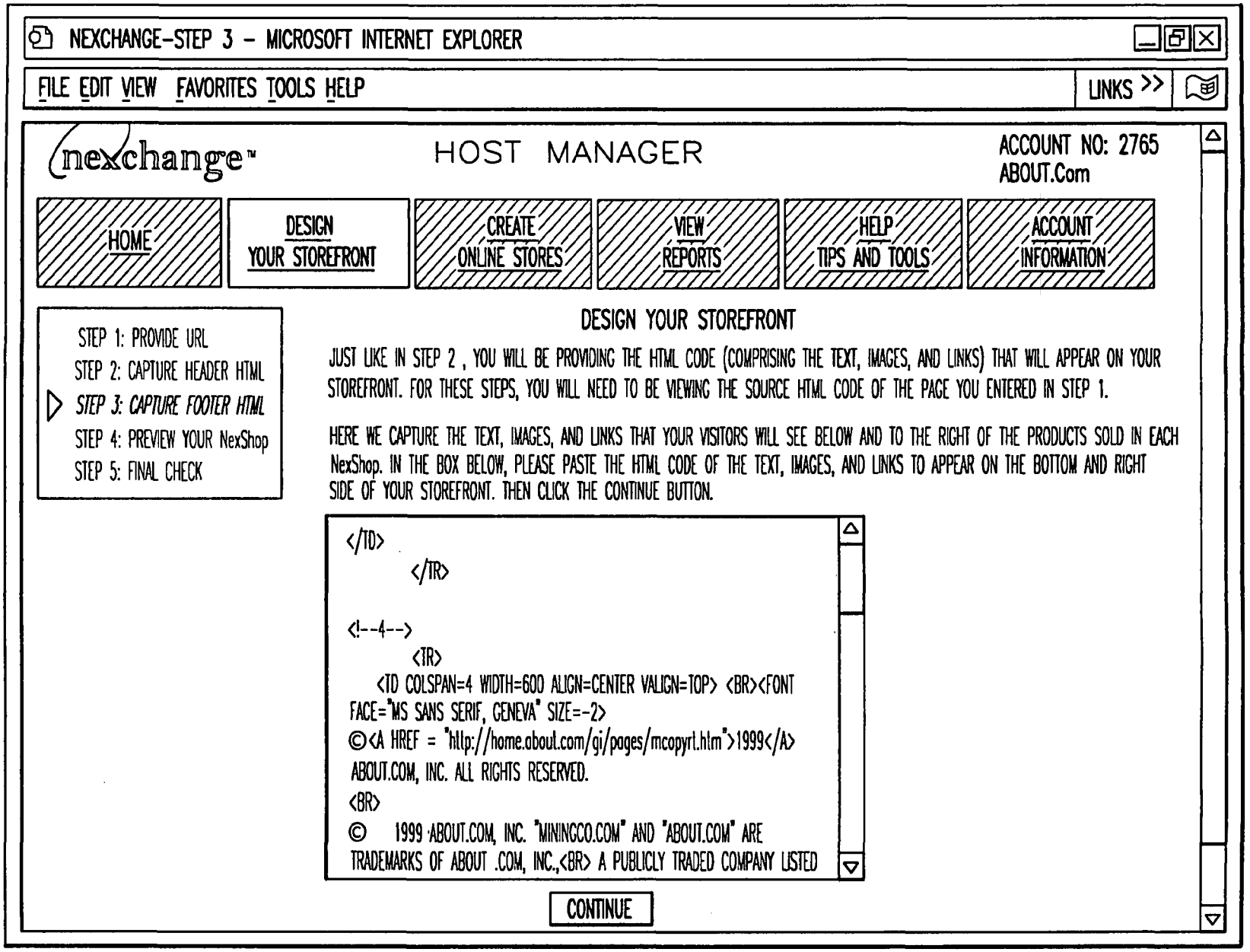

NEXCHANGE-STEP 2-MICROSOFT INTERNET EXPLORER
FILE EDIT VIEW FAVORITES TOOLS HELP
LINKS >>
nexchange™
HOST MANAGER
ACCOUNT NO: 2765
ABOUT.Com
HOME
DESIGN YOUR STOREFRONT
CREATE ONLINE STORES
VIEW REPORTS
HELP TIPS AND TOOLS
ACCOUNT INFORMATION
STEP 1: PROVIDE URL
STEP 2: CAPTURE HEADER HTML
STEP 3: CAPTURE FOOTER HTML
STEP 4: PREVIEW YOUR NexShop
STEP 5: FINAL CHECK
DESIGN YOUR STOREFRONT
IN STEP 2 AND STEP 3, YOU WILL BE PROVIDING THE HTML CODE (COMPRISING THE TEXT, IMAGES, AND LINKS) THAT WILL APPEAR ON YOUR STOREFRONT. FOR THESE STEPS, YOU WILL NEED TO BE VIEWING THE SOURCE HTML CODE OF THE PAGE YOU ENTERED IN STEP 1.
HERE, WE CAPTURE THE TEXT, IMAGES, AND LINKS THAT YOUR VISITORS WILL SEE ABOVE AND TO THE LEFT OF THE PRODUCTS SOLD IN EACH NexShop. IN THE BOX BELOW, PLEASE PASTE THE HTML CODE OF THE TEXT, IMAGES, AND LINKS TO APPEAR ON THE TOP AND LEFT SIDE OF YOUR STOREFRONT. IF YOUR HTML CODE CONTAINS A BASE TAG, PLEASE REMOVE IT. THEN CLICK THE CONTINUE BUTTON.
<!--TOPINC CODE CREATED BY NESTOR FERNANDEZ-APRIL 21, 1999-:^0--
>
<!--SERVER= www.about.com, TMOG=6303048865529, MINT=
328829035114348, IN2PID = , IN2ID = NULL, SESSION_ID = 328829035-->
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.0 TRANSITIONAL//EN">
<HTML>
<HEAD>
<TITLE> ABOUT.COM- HUMAN GUIDES. HUMAN INTERESTS. EXPERT GUIDANCE
FROM HUNDREDS OF GUIDES.</TITLE>
<META NAME="KEYWORDS" CONTENT="GAMES MUSIC TRAVEL SPORTS JOBS
FREE STUFF BOOKS SOFTWARE AUCTION CARS CHAT CASINO CITY MAPS
ENTERTAINMENT AIRLINES GIFTS JOKES HOTELS FUN CHAT ROOMS HOROSCOPE

FIG.12


NEXCHANGE-STEP 3 - MICROSOFT INTERNET EXPLORER
FILE EDIT VIEW FAVORITES TOOLS HELP
LINKS >>
nexchange™
HOST MANAGER
ACCOUNT NO: 2765
ABOUT.Com
HOME
DESIGN YOUR STOREFRONT
CREATE ONLINE STORES
VIEW REPORTS
HELP TIPS AND TOOLS
ACCOUNT INFORMATION
STEP 1: PROVIDE URL
STEP 2: CAPTURE HEADER HTML
STEP 3: CAPTURE FOOTER HTML
STEP 4: PREVIEW YOUR NexShop
STEP 5: FINAL CHECK
DESIGN YOUR STOREFRONT
JUST LIKE IN STEP 2 , YOU WILL BE PROVIDING THE HTML CODE (COMPRISING THE TEXT, IMAGES, AND LINKS) THAT WILL APPEAR ON YOUR STOREFRONT. FOR THESE STEPS, YOU WILL NEED TO BE VIEWING THE SOURCE HTML CODE OF THE PAGE YOU ENTERED IN STEP 1.
HERE WE CAPTURE THE TEXT, IMAGES, AND LINKS THAT YOUR VISITORS WILL SEE BELOW AND TO THE RIGHT OF THE PRODUCTS SOLD IN EACH NexShop. IN THE BOX BELOW, PLEASE PASTE THE HTML CODE OF THE TEXT, IMAGES, AND LINKS TO APPEAR ON THE BOTTOM AND RIGHT SIDE OF YOUR STOREFRONT. THEN CLICK THE CONTINUE BUTTON.
</TD>
</TR>
<!--4-->
<TR>
<TD COLSPAN=4 WIDTH=600 ALIGN=CENTER VALIGN=TOP>
<FONT FACE="MS SANS SERIF, GENEVA" SIZE=-2>
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 A PUBLICLY TRADED COMPANY LISTED
CONTINUE

FIG.13

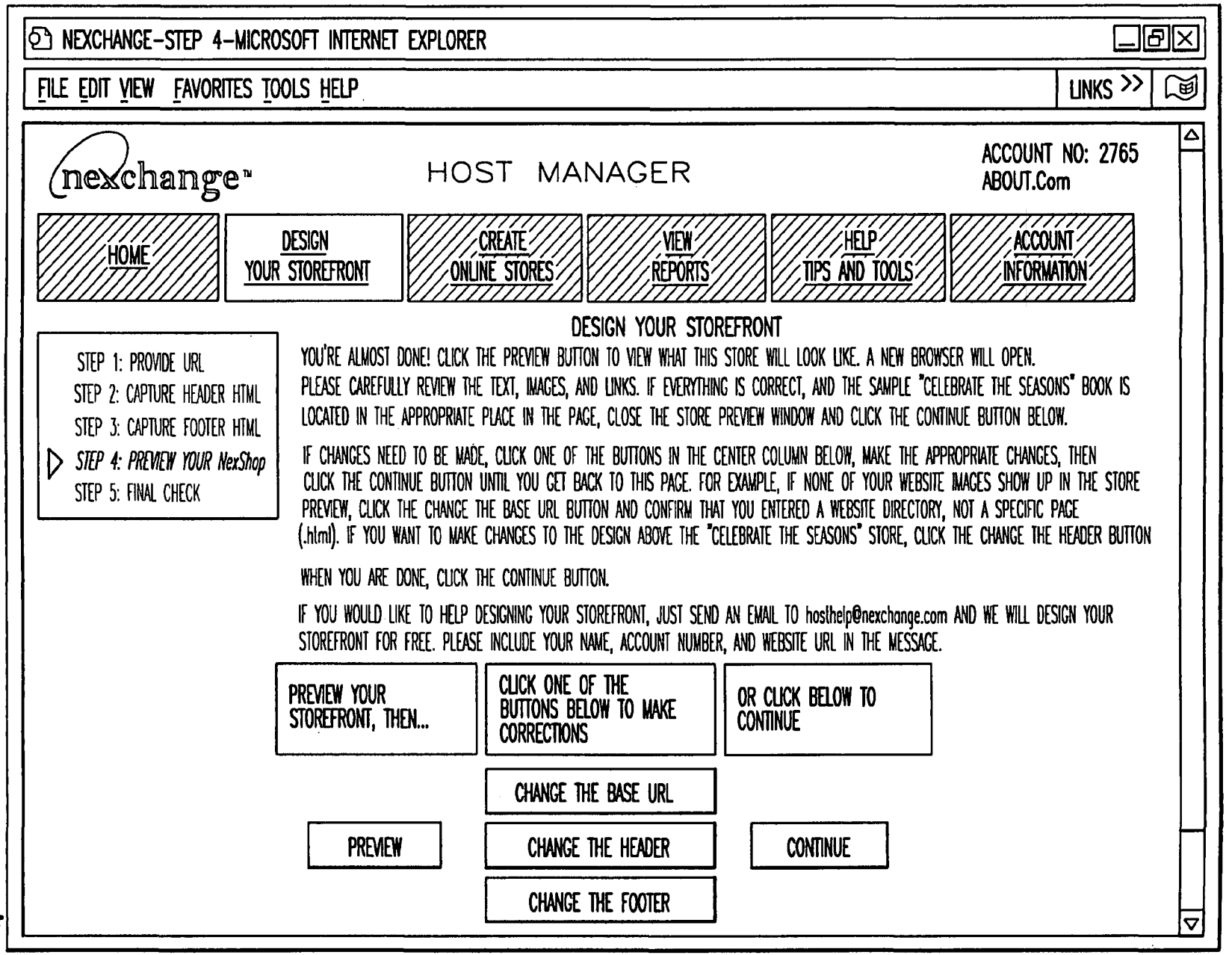
NEXCHANGE-STEP 4-MICROSOFT INTERNET EXPLORER
FILE EDIT VIEW FAVORITES TOOLS HELP
LINKS >>
nexchange™
HOST MANAGER
ACCOUNT NO: 2765
ABOUT.Com
HOME
DESIGN YOUR STOREFRONT
CREATE ONLINE STORES
VIEW REPORTS
HELP TIPS AND TOOLS
ACCOUNT INFORMATION
STEP 1: PROVIDE URL
STEP 2: CAPTURE HEADER HTML
STEP 3: CAPTURE FOOTER HTML
STEP 4: PREVIEW YOUR NexShop
STEP 5: FINAL CHECK
DESIGN YOUR STOREFRONT
YOU'RE ALMOST DONE! CLICK THE PREVIEW BUTTON TO VIEW WHAT THIS STORE WILL LOOK LIKE. A NEW BROWSER WILL OPEN. PLEASE CAREFULLY REVIEW THE TEXT, IMAGES, AND LINKS. IF EVERYTHING IS CORRECT, AND THE SAMPLE "CELEBRATE THE SEASONS" BOOK IS LOCATED IN THE APPROPRIATE PLACE IN THE PAGE, CLOSE THE STORE PREVIEW WINDOW AND CLICK THE CONTINUE BUTTON BELOW.
IF CHANGES NEED TO BE MADE, CLICK ONE OF THE BUTTONS IN THE CENTER COLUMN BELOW, MAKE THE APPROPRIATE CHANGES, THEN CLICK THE CONTINUE BUTTON UNTIL YOU GET BACK TO THIS PAGE. FOR EXAMPLE, IF NONE OF YOUR WEBSITE IMAGES SHOW UP IN THE STORE PREVIEW, CLICK THE CHANGE THE BASE URL BUTTON AND CONFIRM THAT YOU ENTERED A WEBSITE DIRECTORY, NOT A SPECIFIC PAGE (.html). IF YOU WANT TO MAKE CHANGES TO THE DESIGN ABOVE THE "CELEBRATE THE SEASONS" STORE, CLICK THE CHANGE THE HEADER BUTTON
WHEN YOU ARE DONE, CLICK THE CONTINUE BUTTON.
IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HELP DESIGNING YOUR STOREFRONT, JUST SEND AN EMAIL TO hosthelp@nexchange.com AND WE WILL DESIGN YOUR STOREFRONT FOR FREE. PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR NAME, ACCOUNT NUMBER, AND WEBSITE URL IN THE MESSAGE.
PREVIEW YOUR STOREFRONT, THEN...
CLICK ONE OF THE BUTTONS BELOW TO MAKE CORRECTIONS
OR CLICK BELOW TO CONTINUE
CHANGE THE BASE URL
PREVIEW
CHANGE THE HEADER
CONTINUE
CHANGE THE FOOTER

FIG.14

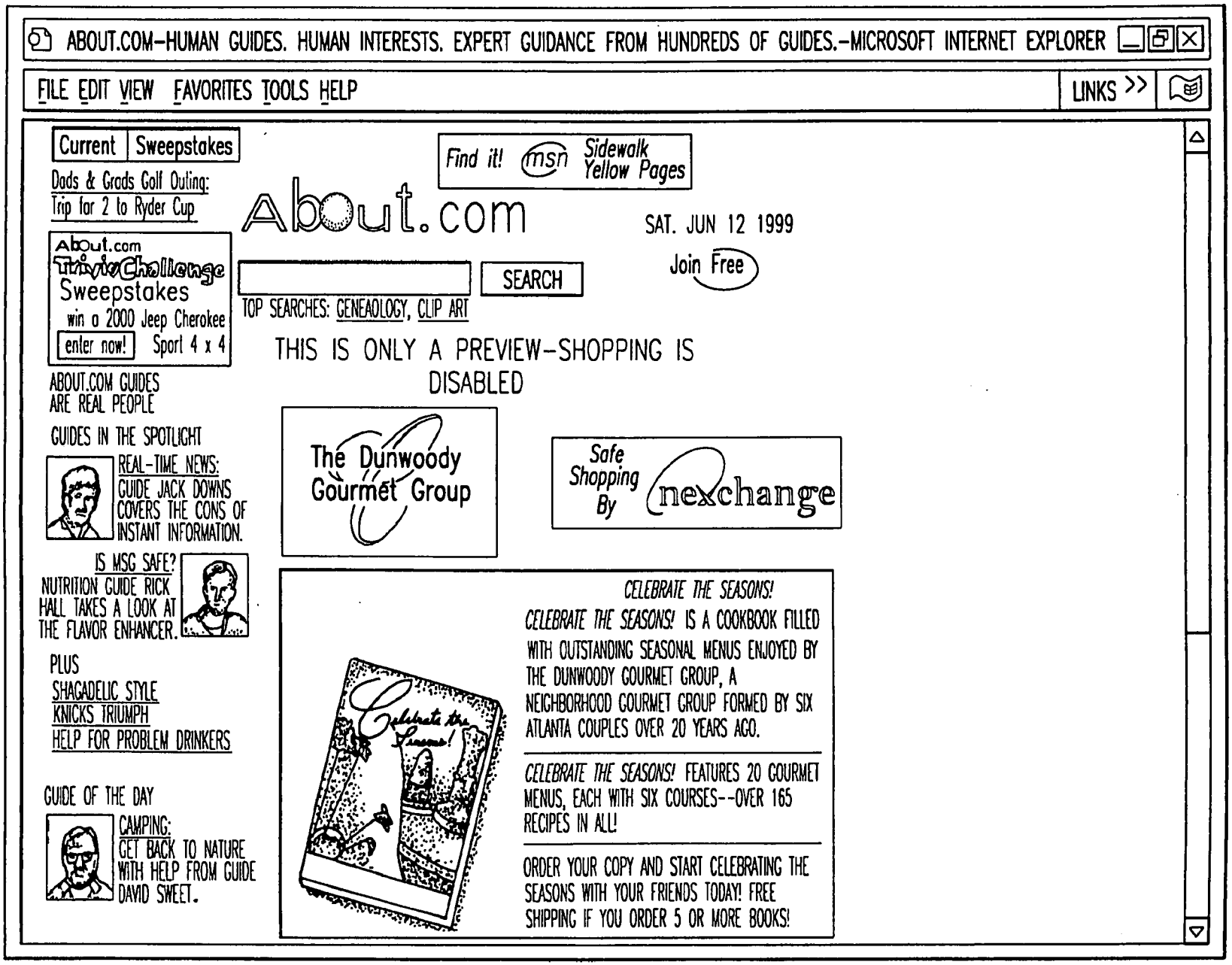
ABOUT.COM-HUMAN GUIDES. HUMAN INTERESTS. EXPERT GUIDANCE FROM HUNDREDS OF GUIDES.-MICROSOFT INTERNET EXPLORER
FILE EDIT VIEW FAVORITES TOOLS HELP
LINKS >>
Current
Sweepstakes
Dads & Grads Golf Outing: Trip for 2 to Ryder Cup
About.com TriviaChallenge Sweepstakes win a 2000 Jeep Cherokee Sport 4 x 4
enter now!
ABOUT.COM GUIDES ARE REAL PEOPLE
GUIDES IN THE SPOTLIGHT
REAL-TIME NEWS: GUIDE JACK DOWNS COVERS THE CONS OF INSTANT INFORMATION.
IS MSG SAFE? NUTRITION GUIDE RICK HALL TAKES A LOOK AT THE FLAVOR ENHANCER.
PLUS
SHAGADELIC STYLE
KNICKS TRIUMPH
HELP FOR PROBLEM DRINKERS
GUIDE OF THE DAY
CAMPING: GET BACK TO NATURE WITH HELP FROM GUIDE DAVID SWEET.
Find it! msn Sidewalk Yellow Pages
About.com
SAT. JUN 12 1999
Join Free
SEARCH
TOP SEARCHES: GENEAOLOGY, CLIP ART
THIS IS ONLY A PREVIEW-SHOPPING IS DISABLED
The Dunwoody Gourmet Group
Safe Shopping By nexchange
CELEBRATE THE SEASONS!
CELEBRATE THE SEASONS! IS A COOKBOOK FILLED WITH OUTSTANDING SEASONAL MENUS ENJOYED BY THE DUNWOODY GOURMET GROUP, A NEIGHBORHOOD GOURMET GROUP FORMED BY SIX ATLANTA COUPLES OVER 20 YEARS AGO.
CELEBRATE THE SEASONS! FEATURES 20 GOURMET MENUS, EACH WITH SIX COURSES--OVER 165 RECIPES IN ALL!
ORDER YOUR COPY AND START CELEBRATING THE SEASONS WITH YOUR FRIENDS TODAY! FREE SHIPPING IF YOU ORDER 5 OR MORE BOOKS!

FIG.15

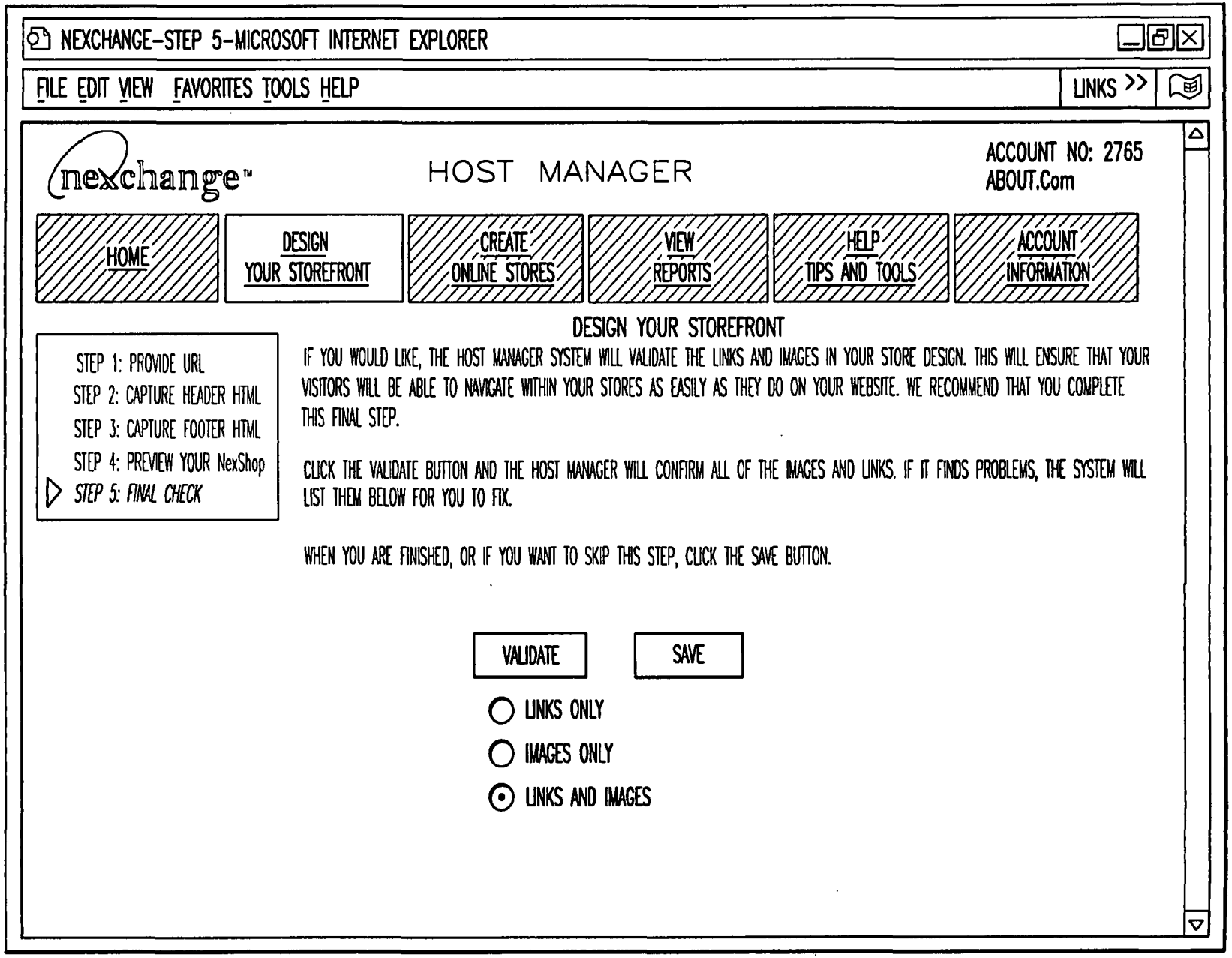
NEXCHANGE-STEP 5-MICROSOFT INTERNET EXPLORER
FILE EDIT VIEW FAVORITES TOOLS HELP
LINKS >>
nexchange™
HOST MANAGER
ACCOUNT NO: 2765
ABOUT.Com
HOME
DESIGN YOUR STOREFRONT
CREATE ONLINE STORES
VIEW REPORTS
HELP TIPS AND TOOLS
ACCOUNT INFORMATION
DESIGN YOUR STOREFRONT
STEP 1: PROVIDE URL
STEP 2: CAPTURE HEADER HTML
STEP 3: CAPTURE FOOTER HTML
STEP 4: PREVIEW YOUR NexShop
STEP 5: FINAL CHECK
IF YOU WOULD LIKE, THE HOST MANAGER SYSTEM WILL VALIDATE THE LINKS AND IMAGES IN YOUR STORE DESIGN. THIS WILL ENSURE THAT YOUR VISITORS WILL BE ABLE TO NAVIGATE WITHIN YOUR STORES AS EASILY AS THEY DO ON YOUR WEBSITE. WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU COMPLETE THIS FINAL STEP.
CLICK THE VALIDATE BUTTON AND THE HOST MANAGER WILL CONFIRM ALL OF THE IMAGES AND LINKS. IF IT FINDS PROBLEMS, THE SYSTEM WILL LIST THEM BELOW FOR YOU TO FIX.
WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED, OR IF YOU WANT TO SKIP THIS STEP, CLICK THE SAVE BUTTON.
VALIDATE
SAVE
LINKS ONLY
IMAGES ONLY
LINKS AND IMAGES

FIG.16

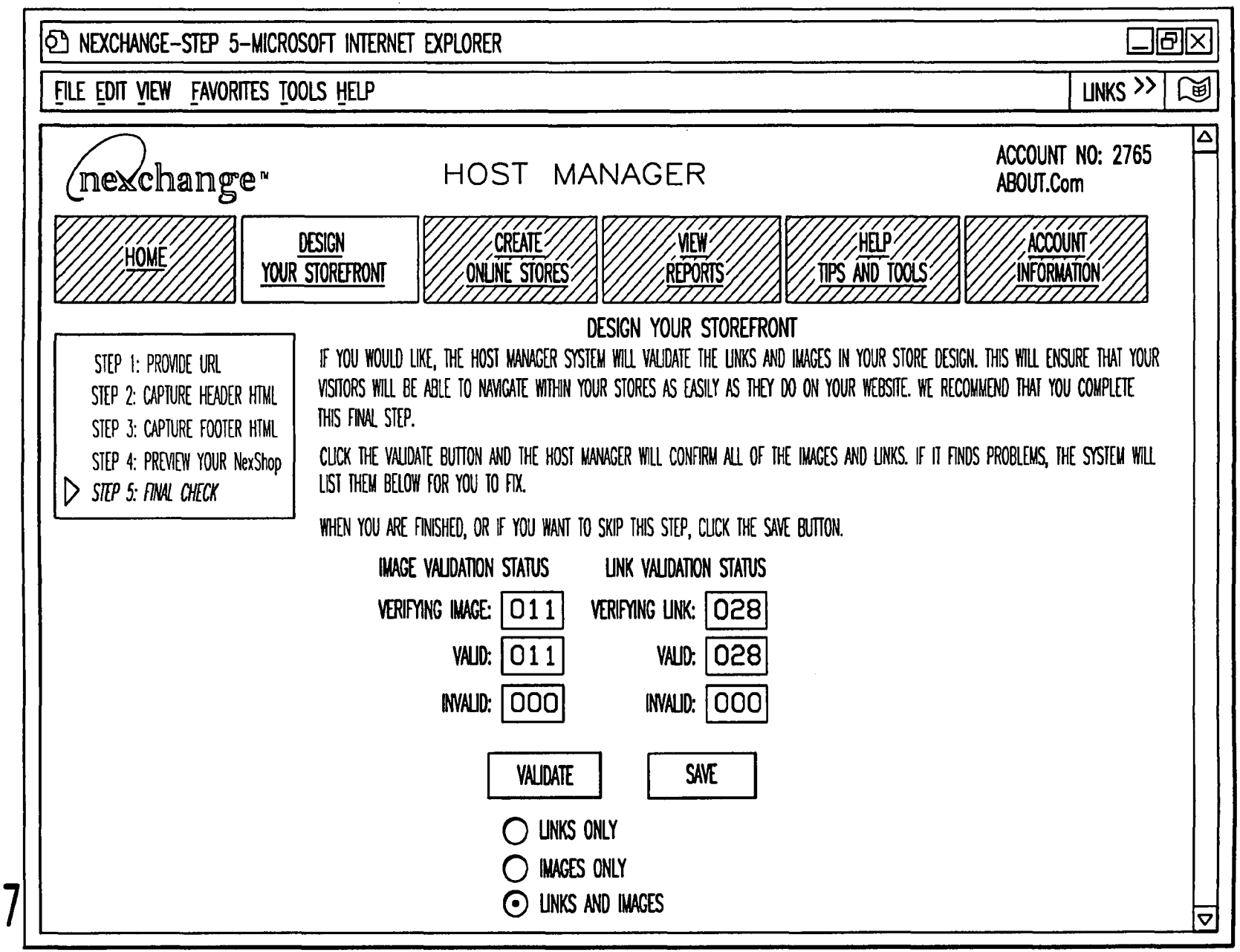
NEXCHANGE-STEP 5-MICROSOFT INTERNET EXPLORER
FILE EDIT VIEW FAVORITES TOOLS HELP
LINKS >>
nexchange™
HOST MANAGER
ACCOUNT NO: 2765
ABOUT.Com
HOME
DESIGN YOUR STOREFRONT
CREATE ONLINE STORES
VIEW REPORTS
HELP TIPS AND TOOLS
ACCOUNT INFORMATION
STEP 1: PROVIDE URL
STEP 2: CAPTURE HEADER HTML
STEP 3: CAPTURE FOOTER HTML
STEP 4: PREVIEW YOUR NexShop
STEP 5: FINAL CHECK
DESIGN YOUR STOREFRONT
IF YOU WOULD LIKE, THE HOST MANAGER SYSTEM WILL VALIDATE THE LINKS AND IMAGES IN YOUR STORE DESIGN. THIS WILL ENSURE THAT YOUR VISITORS WILL BE ABLE TO NAVIGATE WITHIN YOUR STORES AS EASILY AS THEY DO ON YOUR WEBSITE. WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU COMPLETE THIS FINAL STEP.
CLICK THE VALIDATE BUTTON AND THE HOST MANAGER WILL CONFIRM ALL OF THE IMAGES AND LINKS. IF IT FINDS PROBLEMS, THE SYSTEM WILL LIST THEM BELOW FOR YOU TO FIX.
WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED, OR IF YOU WANT TO SKIP THIS STEP, CLICK THE SAVE BUTTON.
IMAGE VALIDATION STATUS
LINK VALIDATION STATUS
VERIFYING IMAGE: 011
VERIFYING LINK: 028
VALID: 011
VALID: 028
INVALID: 000
INVALID: 000
VALIDATE
SAVE
LINKS ONLY
IMAGES ONLY
LINKS AND IMAGES

FIG.17

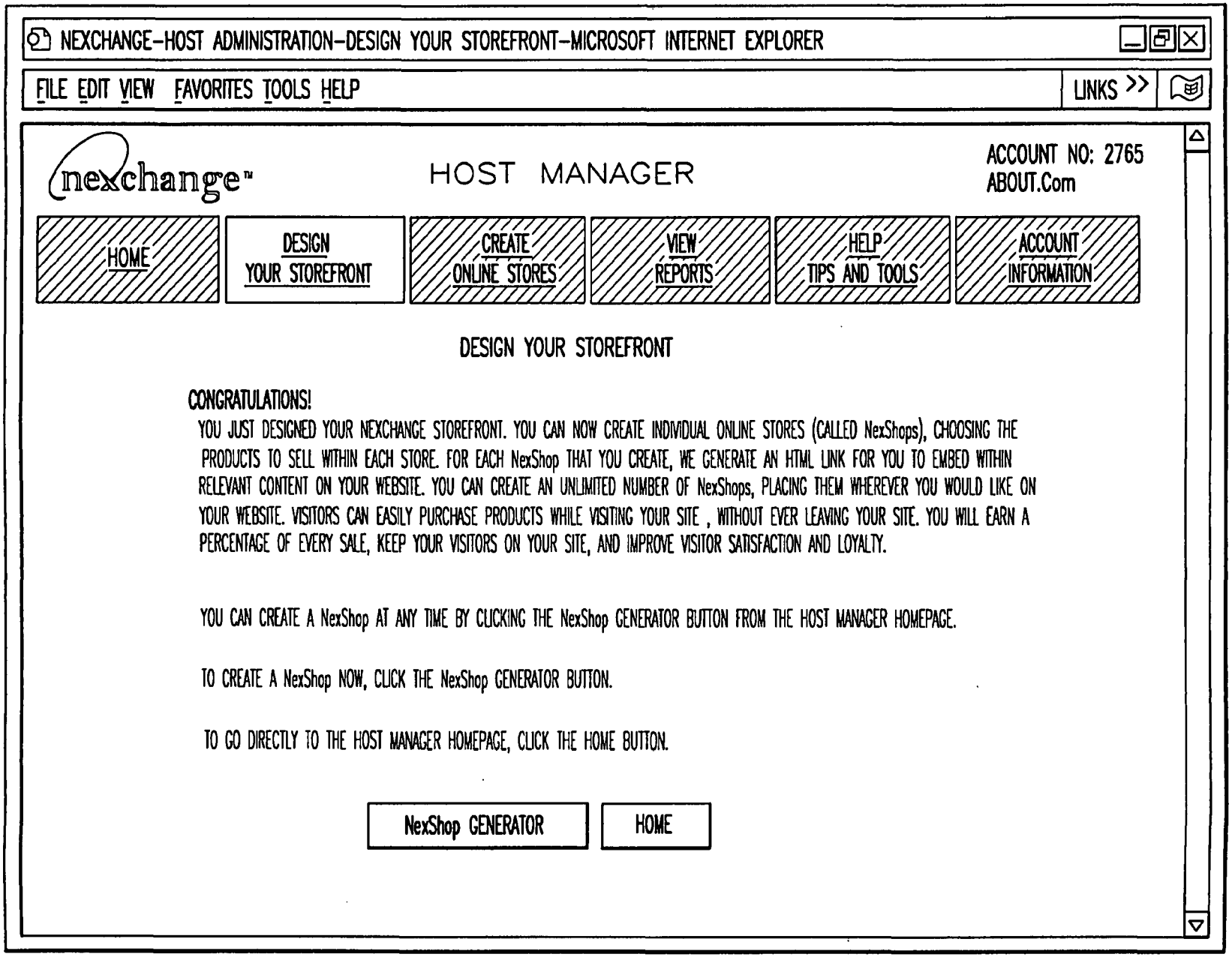
NEXCHANGE-HOST ADMINISTRATION-DESIGN YOUR STOREFRONT-MICROSOFT INTERNET EXPLORER
FILE EDIT VIEW FAVORITES TOOLS HELP
LINKS >>
nexchange™
HOST MANAGER
ACCOUNT NO: 2765
ABOUT.Com
HOME
DESIGN YOUR STOREFRONT
CREATE ONLINE STORES
VIEW REPORTS
HELP TIPS AND TOOLS
ACCOUNT INFORMATION
DESIGN YOUR STOREFRONT
CONGRATULATIONS!
YOU JUST DESIGNED YOUR NEXCHANGE STOREFRONT. YOU CAN NOW CREATE INDIVIDUAL ONLINE STORES (CALLED NexShops), CHOOSING THE PRODUCTS TO SELL WITHIN EACH STORE. FOR EACH NexShop THAT YOU CREATE, WE GENERATE AN HTML LINK FOR YOU TO EMBED WITHIN RELEVANT CONTENT ON YOUR WEBSITE. YOU CAN CREATE AN UNLIMITED NUMBER OF NexShops, PLACING THEM WHEREVER YOU WOULD LIKE ON YOUR WEBSITE. VISITORS CAN EASILY PURCHASE PRODUCTS WHILE VISITING YOUR SITE , WITHOUT EVER LEAVING YOUR SITE. YOU WILL EARN A PERCENTAGE OF EVERY SALE, KEEP YOUR VISITORS ON YOUR SITE, AND IMPROVE VISITOR SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY.
YOU CAN CREATE A NexShop AT ANY TIME BY CLICKING THE NexShop GENERATOR BUTTON FROM THE HOST MANAGER HOMEPAGE.
TO CREATE A NexShop NOW, CLICK THE NexShop GENERATOR BUTTON.
TO GO DIRECTLY TO THE HOST MANAGER HOMEPAGE, CLICK THE HOME BUTTON.
NexShop GENERATOR
HOME

FIG.18

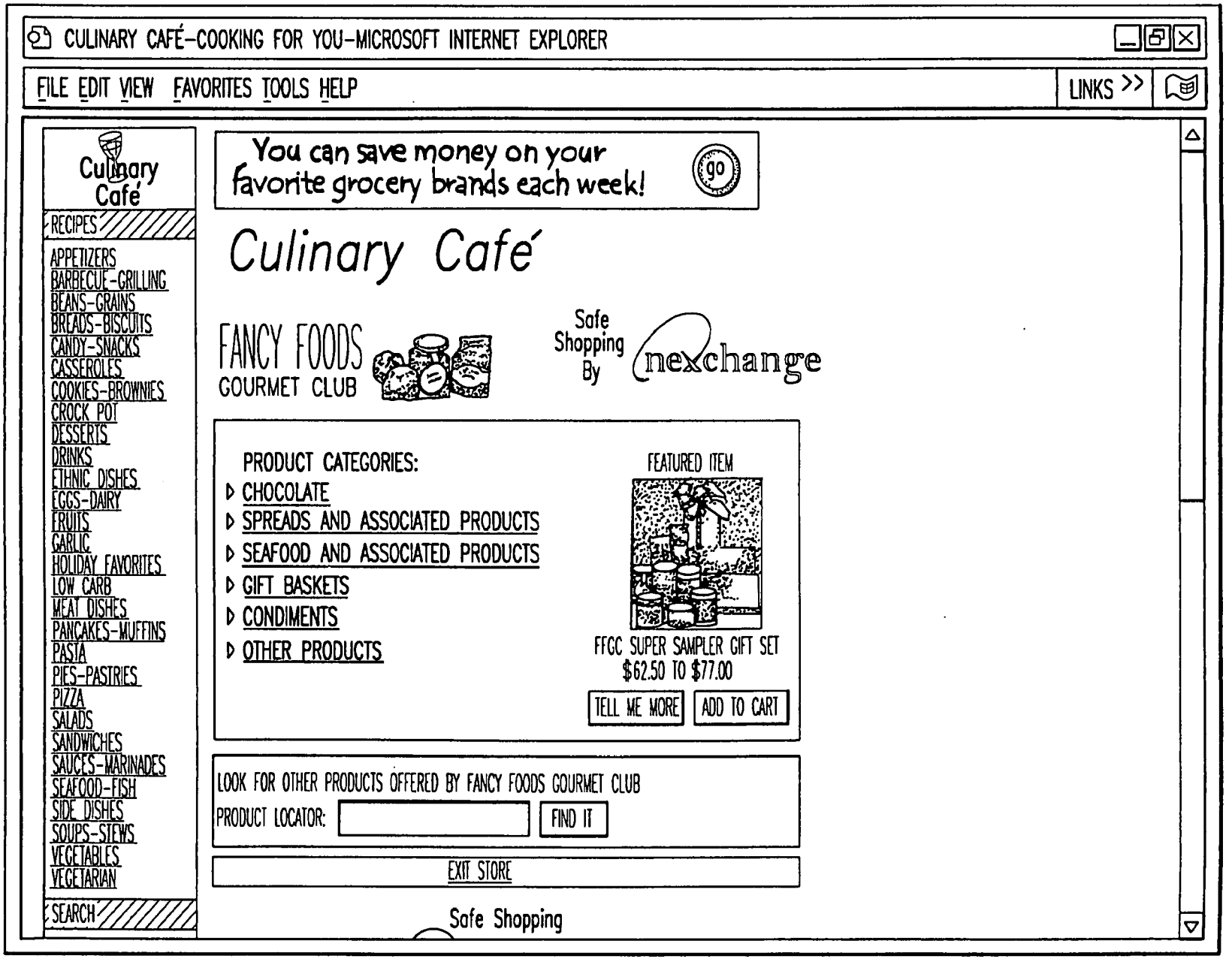
CULINARY CAFÉ–COOKING FOR YOU–MICROSOFT INTERNET EXPLORER
FILE EDIT VIEW FAVORITES TOOLS HELP
LINKS >>
Culinary Café
RECIPES
APPETIZERS
BARBECUE-GRILLING
BEANS-GRAINS
BREADS-BISCUITS
CANDY-SNACKS
CASSEROLES
COOKIES-BROWNIES
CROCK POT
DESSERTS
DRINKS
ETHNIC DISHES
EGGS-DAIRY
FRUITS
GARLIC
HOLIDAY FAVORITES
LOW CARB
MEAT DISHES
PANCAKES-MUFFINS
PASTA
PIES-PASTRIES
PIZZA
SALADS
SANDWICHES
SAUCES-MARINADES
SEAFOOD-FISH
SIDE DISHES
SOUPS-STEWS
VEGETABLES
VEGETARIAN
SEARCH
You can save money on your favorite grocery brands each week!
go
Culinary Café
FANCY FOODS GOURMET CLUB
Safe Shopping By nexchange
PRODUCT CATEGORIES:
CHOCOLATE
SPREADS AND ASSOCIATED PRODUCTS
SEAFOOD AND ASSOCIATED PRODUCTS
GIFT BASKETS
CONDIMENTS
OTHER PRODUCTS
FEATURED ITEM
FFGC SUPER SAMPLER GIFT SET
$62.50 TO $77.00
TELL ME MORE
ADD TO CART
LOOK FOR OTHER PRODUCTS OFFERED BY FANCY FOODS GOURMET CLUB
PRODUCT LOCATOR:
FIND IT
EXIT STORE
Safe Shopping

FIG.19

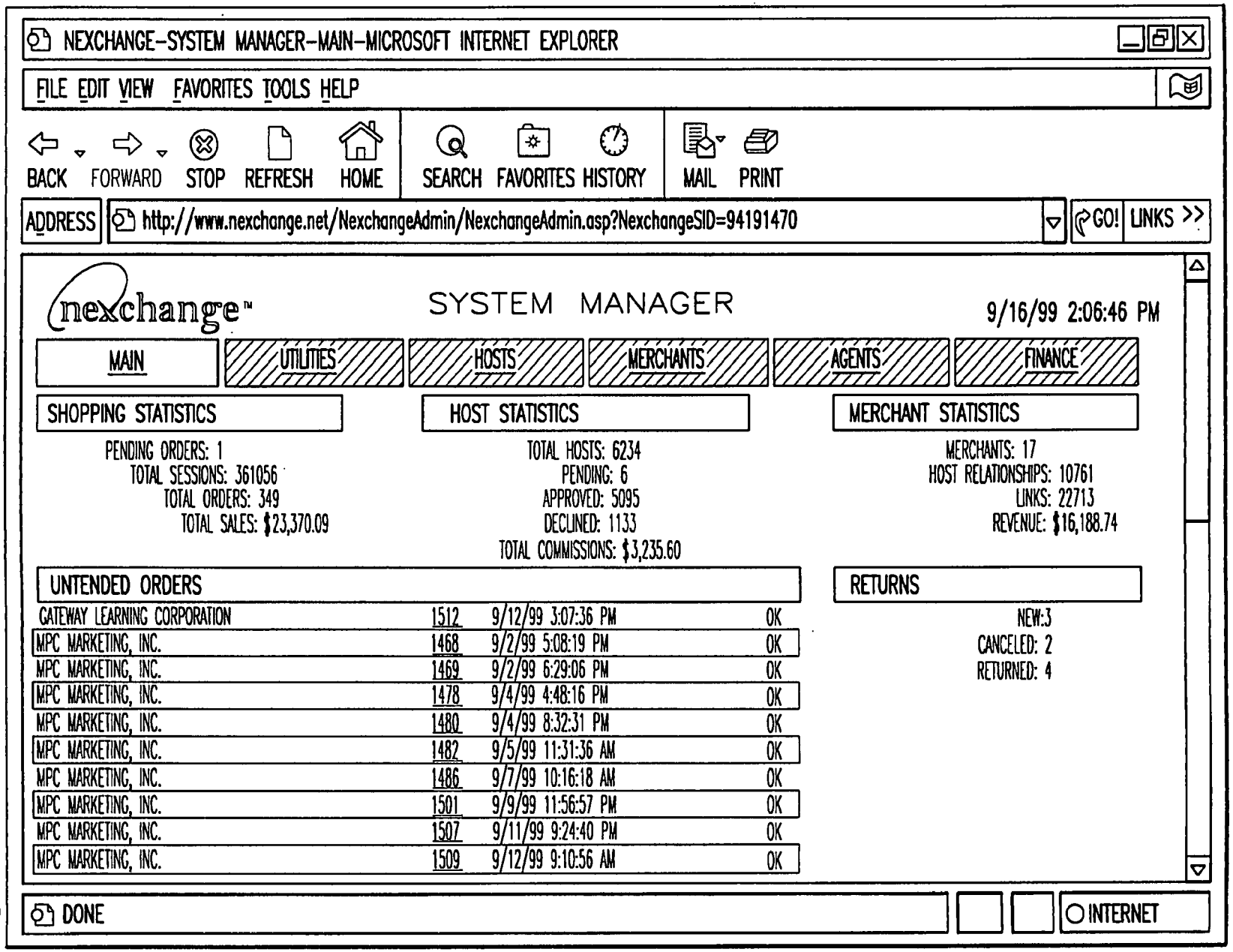
NEXCHANGE-SYSTEM MANAGER-MAIN-MICROSOFT INTERNET EXPLORER
FILE EDIT VIEW FAVORITES TOOLS HELP
BACK FORWARD STOP REFRESH HOME SEARCH FAVORITES HISTORY MAIL PRINT
ADDRESS http://www.nexchange.net/NexchangeAdmin/NexchangeAdmin.asp?NexchangeSID=94191470
GO! LINKS >>
nexchange™
SYSTEM MANAGER
9/16/99 2:06:46 PM
MAIN UTILITIES HOSTS MERCHANTS AGENTS FINANCE
SHOPPING STATISTICS
PENDING ORDERS: 1
TOTAL SESSIONS: 361056
TOTAL ORDERS: 349
TOTAL SALES: $23,370.09
HOST STATISTICS
TOTAL HOSTS: 6234
PENDING: 6
APPROVED: 5095
DECLINED: 1133
TOTAL COMMISSIONS: $3,235.60
MERCHANT STATISTICS
MERCHANTS: 17
HOST RELATIONSHIPS: 10761
LINKS: 22713
REVENUE: $16,188.74
UNTENDED ORDERS
GATEWAY LEARNING CORPORATION 1512 9/12/99 3:07:36 PM OK
MPC MARKETING, INC. 1468 9/2/99 5:08:19 PM OK
MPC MARKETING, INC. 1469 9/2/99 6:29:06 PM OK
MPC MARKETING, INC. 1478 9/4/99 4:48:16 PM OK
MPC MARKETING, INC. 1480 9/4/99 8:32:31 PM OK
MPC MARKETING, INC. 1482 9/5/99 11:31:36 AM OK
MPC MARKETING, INC. 1486 9/7/99 10:16:18 AM OK
MPC MARKETING, INC. 1501 9/9/99 11:56:57 PM OK
MPC MARKETING, INC. 1507 9/11/99 9:24:40 PM OK
MPC MARKETING, INC. 1509 9/12/99 9:10:56 AM OK
RETURNS
NEW:3
CANCELED: 2
RETURNED: 4
DONE
INTERNET

FIG.20

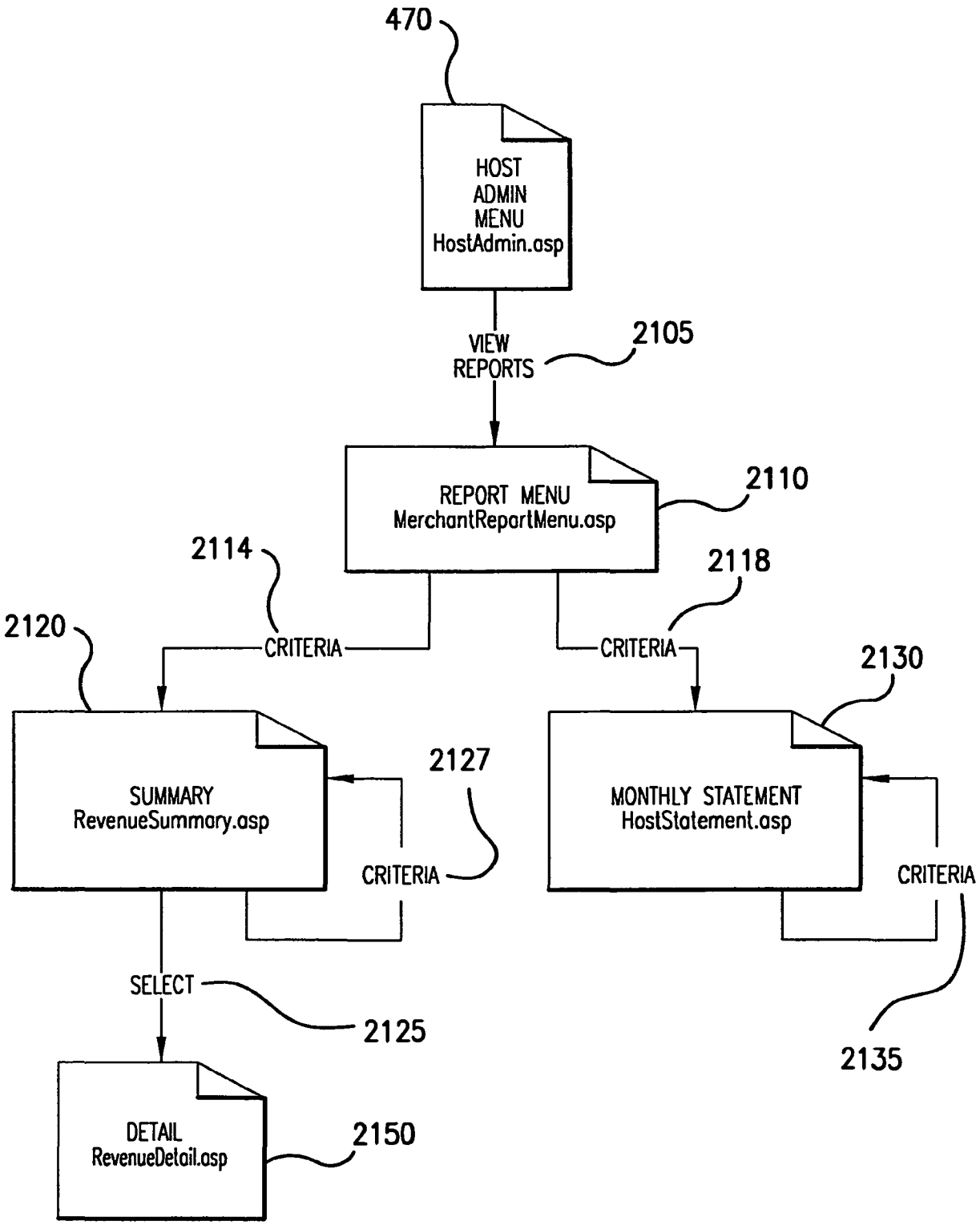
470
HOST
ADMIN
MENU
HostAdmin.asp
VIEW
REPORTS
2105
REPORT MENU
MerchantReportMenu.asp
2110
2114
2118
2120
CRITERIA
CRITERIA
2130
SUMMARY
RevenueSummary.asp
2127
MONTHLY STATEMENT
HostStatement.asp
CRITERIA
CRITERIA
SELECT
2125
2135
DETAIL
RevenueDetail.asp
2150

FIG.21

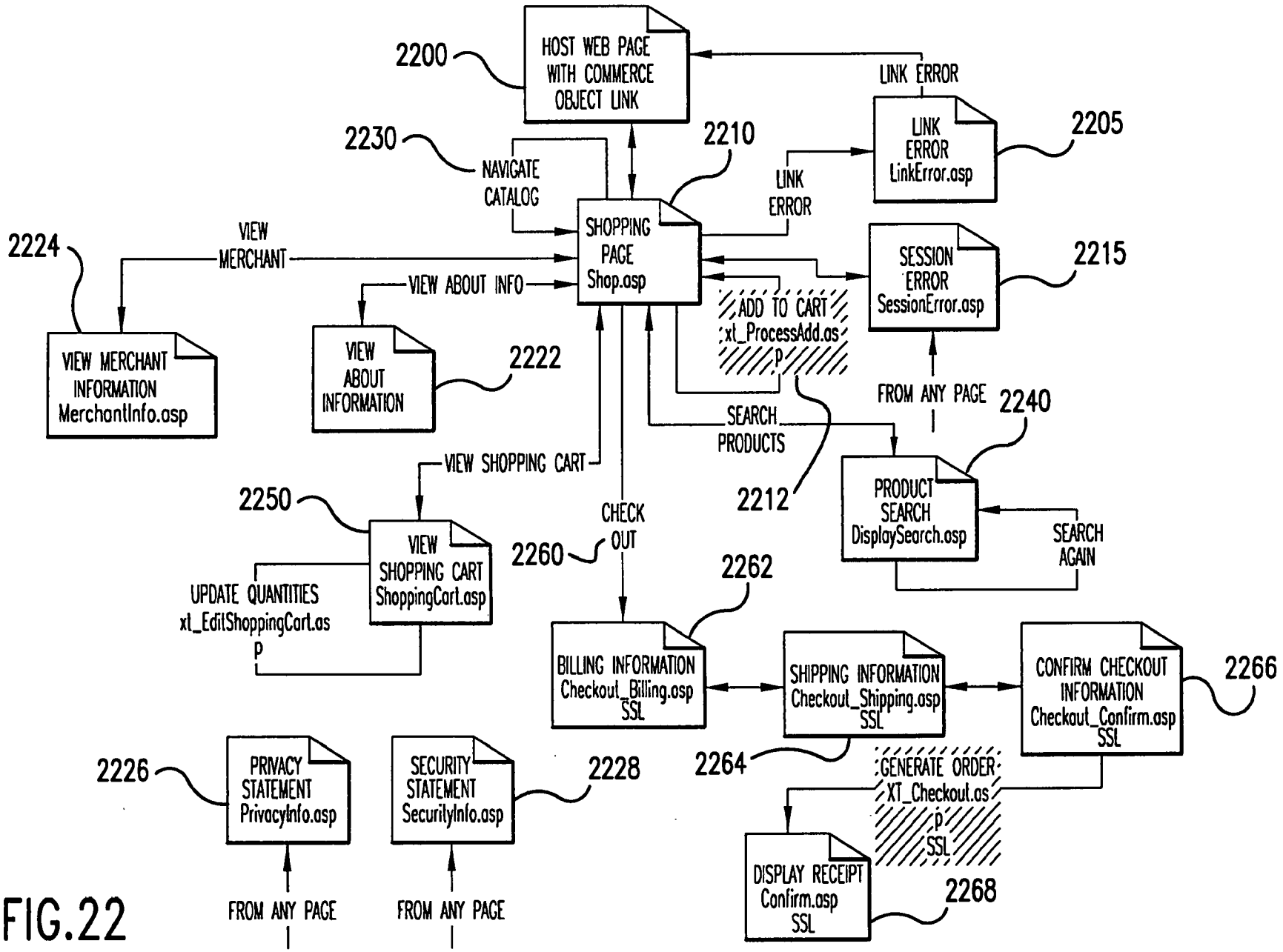
2200
HOST WEB PAGE WITH COMMERCE OBJECT LINK
LINK ERROR
LINK ERROR LinkError.asp
2205
2230
NAVIGATE CATALOG
2210
LINK ERROR
SHOPPING PAGE Shop.asp
2224
VIEW MERCHANT
VIEW ABOUT INFO
SESSION ERROR SessionError.asp
2215
ADD TO CART xt_ProcessAdd.asp
VIEW MERCHANT INFORMATION MerchantInfo.asp
VIEW ABOUT INFORMATION
2222
FROM ANY PAGE
2240
SEARCH PRODUCTS
2212
VIEW SHOPPING CART
2250
PRODUCT SEARCH DisplaySearch.asp
SEARCH AGAIN
CHECK OUT
2260
VIEW SHOPPING CART ShoppingCart.asp
UPDATE QUANTITIES xt_EditShoppingCart.asp
2262
BILLING INFORMATION Checkout_Billing.asp SSL
SHIPPING INFORMATION Checkout_Shipping.asp SSL
CONFIRM CHECKOUT INFORMATION Checkout_Confirm.asp SSL
2266
2226
PRIVACY STATEMENT PrivacyInfo.asp
SECURITY STATEMENT SecurityInfo.asp
2228
2264
GENERATE ORDER XT_Checkout.asp SSL
DISPLAY RECEIPT Confirm.asp SSL
2268
FROM ANY PAGE
FROM ANY PAGE

FIG.22

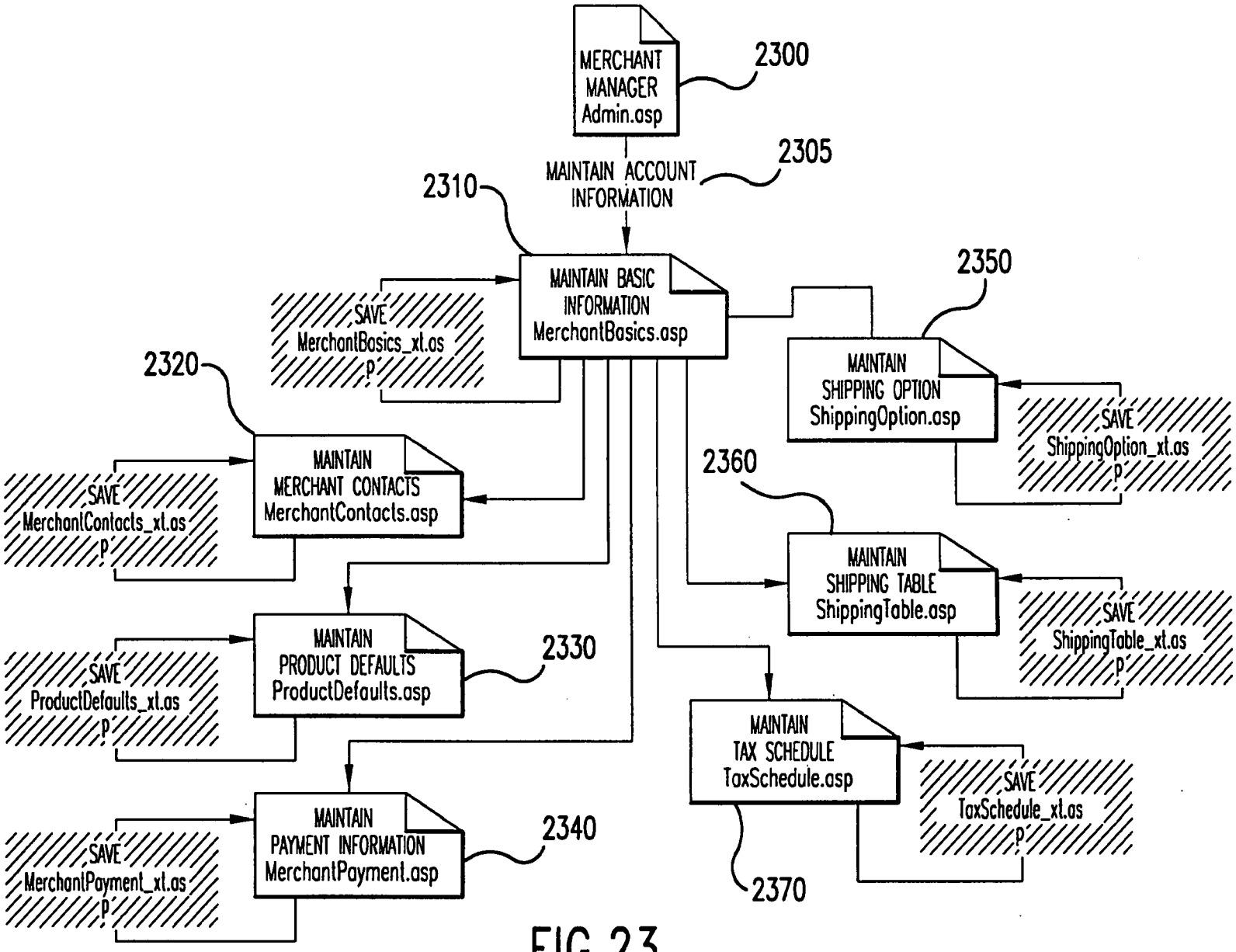
MERCHANT MANAGER Admin.asp
2300
MAINTAIN ACCOUNT INFORMATION
2305
2310
MAINTAIN BASIC INFORMATION MerchantBasics.asp
SAVE MerchantBasics_xt.asp
2320
MAINTAIN MERCHANT CONTACTS MerchantContacts.asp
SAVE MerchantContacts_xt.asp
MAINTAIN PRODUCT DEFAULTS ProductDefaults.asp
2330
SAVE ProductDefaults_xt.asp
MAINTAIN PAYMENT INFORMATION MerchantPayment.asp
2340
SAVE MerchantPayment_xt.asp
2350
MAINTAIN SHIPPING OPTION ShippingOption.asp
SAVE ShippingOption_xt.asp
2360
MAINTAIN SHIPPING TABLE ShippingTable.asp
SAVE ShippingTable_xt.asp
MAINTAIN TAX SCHEDULE TaxSchedule.asp
SAVE TaxSchedule_xt.asp
2370

FIG.23

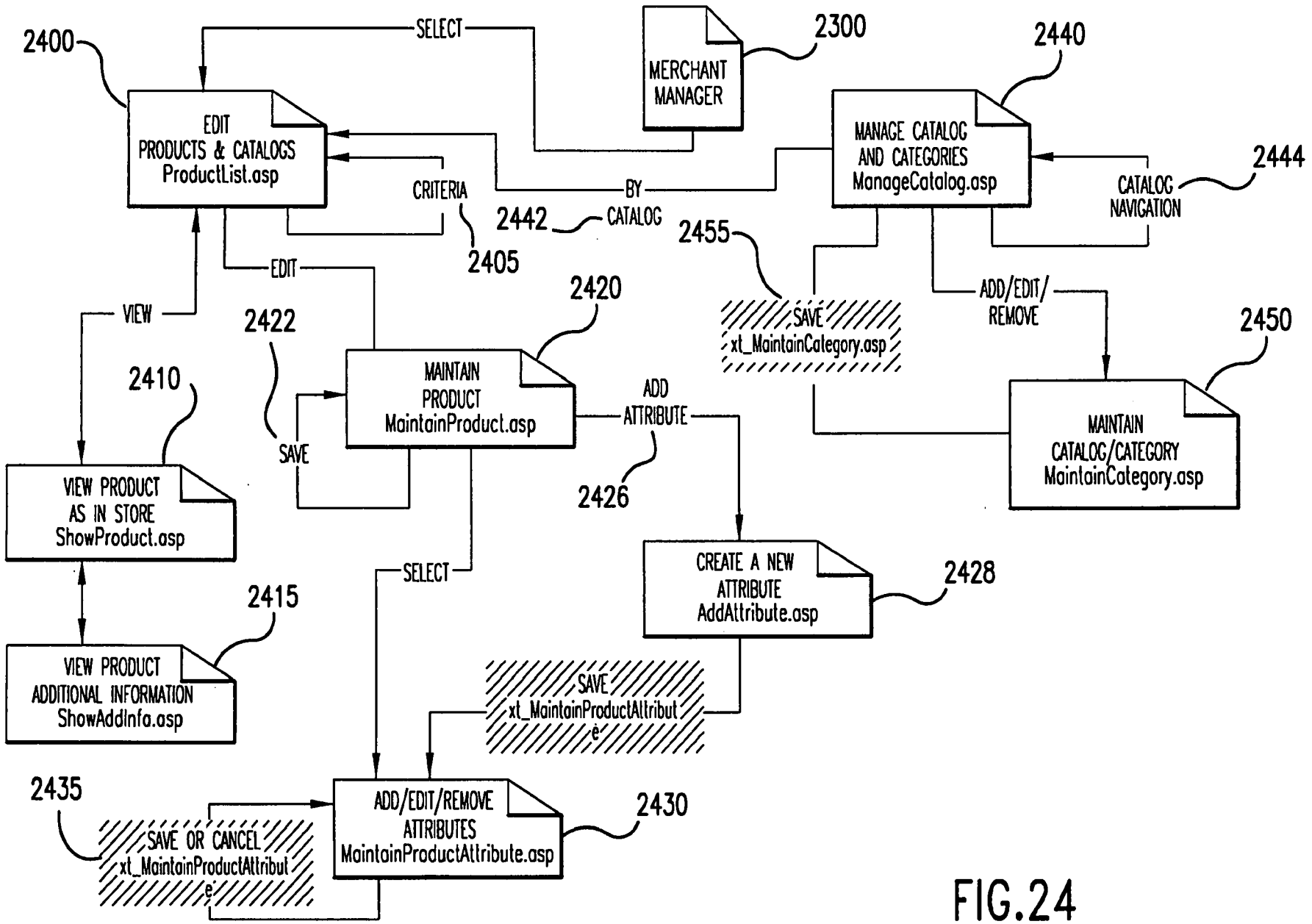
2400
SELECT
MERCHANT MANAGER
2300
2440
EDIT PRODUCTS & CATALOGS ProductList.asp
MANAGE CATALOG AND CATEGORIES ManageCatalog.asp
CRITERIA
BY
CATALOG NAVIGATION
2444
2442
CATALOG
2405
2455
EDIT
VIEW
2420
2422
SAVE xt_MaintainCategory.asp
ADD/EDIT/ REMOVE
2450
2410
MAINTAIN PRODUCT MaintainProduct.asp
ADD ATTRIBUTE
SAVE
2426
MAINTAIN CATALOG/CATEGORY MaintainCategory.asp
VIEW PRODUCT AS IN STORE ShowProduct.asp
SELECT
CREATE A NEW ATTRIBUTE AddAttribute.asp
2428
2415
VIEW PRODUCT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ShowAddInfo.asp
SAVE xt_MaintainProductAttribute
2435
ADD/EDIT/REMOVE ATTRIBUTES MaintainProductAttribute.asp
2430
SAVE OR CANCEL xt_MaintainProductAttribute

FIG.24

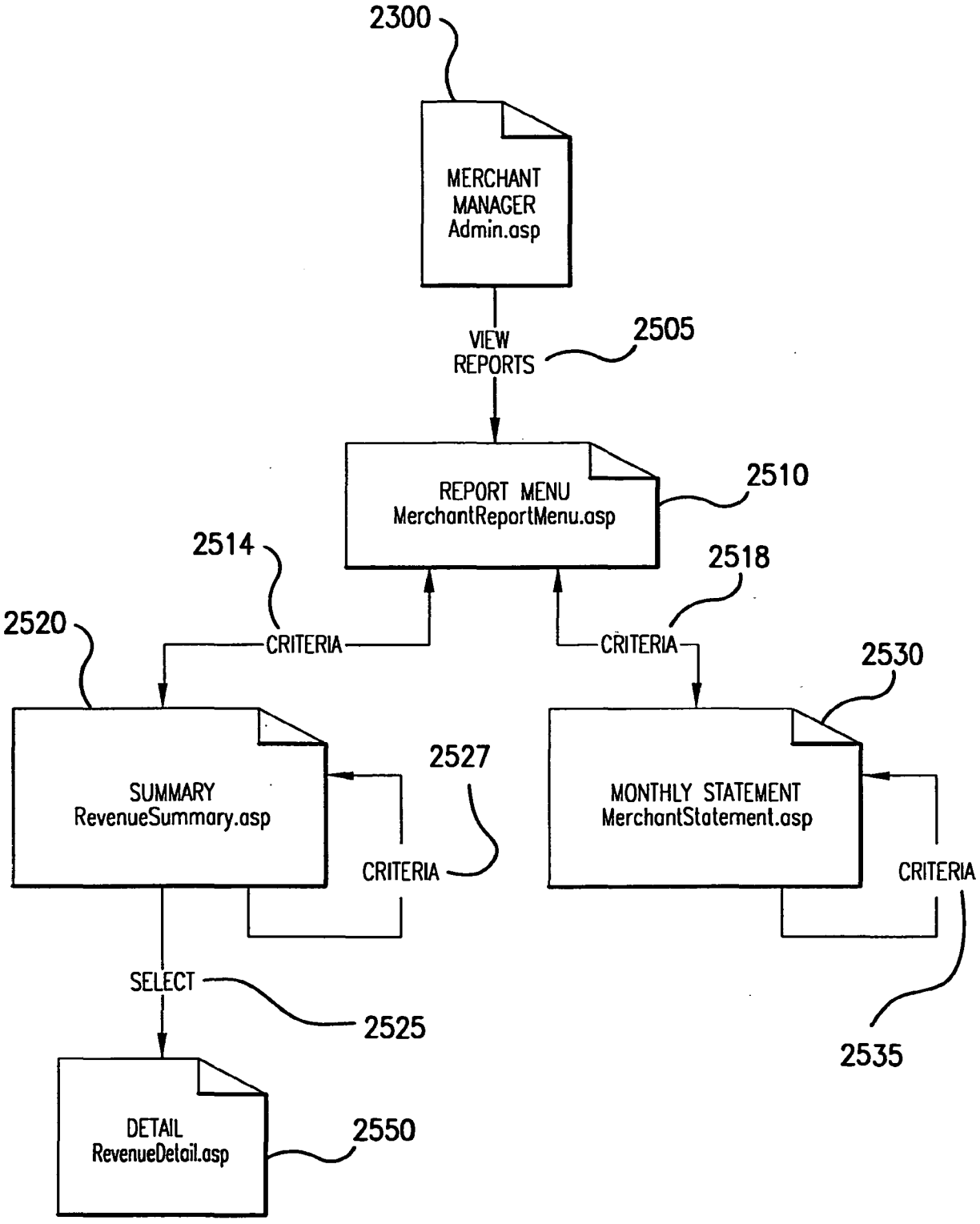
2300
MERCHANT MANAGER Admin.asp
VIEW REPORTS
2505
REPORT MENU MerchantReportMenu.asp
2510
2514
CRITERIA
2518
CRITERIA
2520
SUMMARY RevenueSummary.asp
2527
CRITERIA
2530
MONTHLY STATEMENT MerchantStatement.asp
CRITERIA
SELECT
2525
2535
DETAIL RevenueDetail.asp
2550

FIG.25

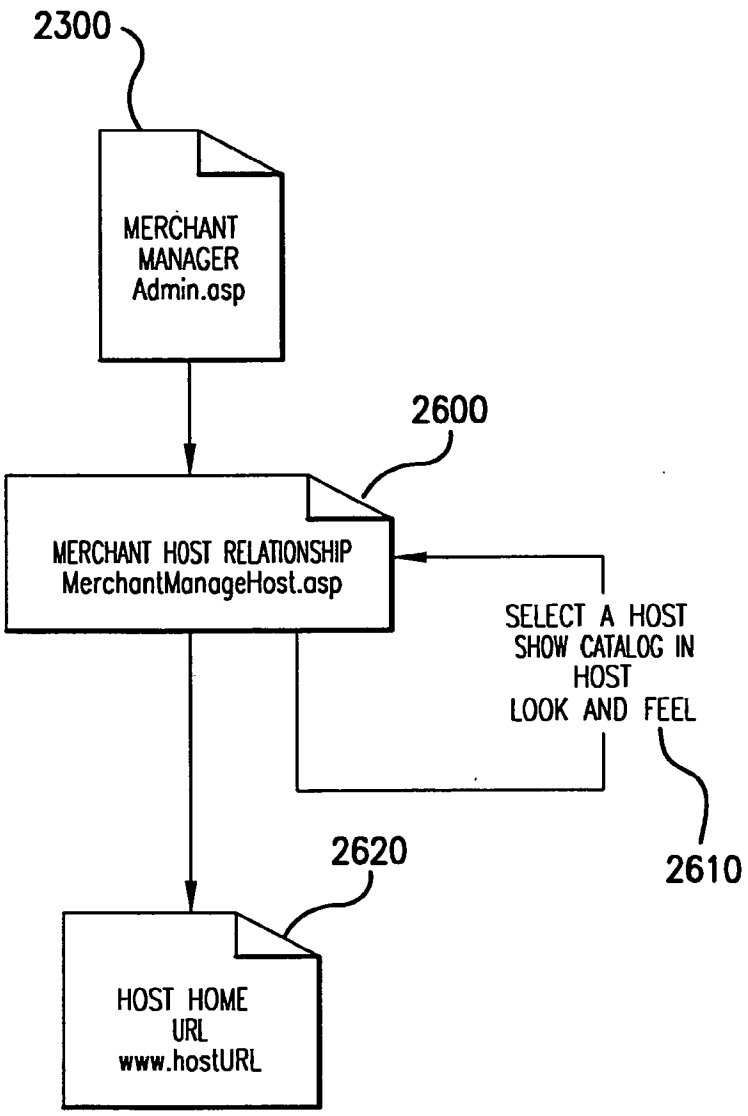
2300
MERCHANT MANAGER Admin.asp
2600
MERCHANT HOST RELATIONSHIP MerchantManageHost.asp
SELECT A HOST SHOW CATALOG IN HOST LOOK AND FEEL
2610
2620
HOST HOME URL www.hostURL

FIG.26

DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR PATENT APPLICATION

(X) Original () Supplemental () Substitute () PCT

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

I believe I am an original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled **"AFFILIATE COMMERCE SYSTEM AND METHOD"**, which is described and claimed in the specification

(check one) [] which is attached hereto, or
[X] which was filed on September 17, 1999, as United States Application No. 09/398,268 and with amendments through (if applicable), or
[] in International Application No. PCT/, filed , and as amended on (if applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose all information known by me to be material to the patentability of the claims of this application in accordance with Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, §1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code §119 (a)-(d) or §365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or §365(a) of any PCT international application which designated at least one country other than the United States of America, listed below and have also identified below, by checking the box, any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate, or of any PCT international application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed:

PRIOR FOREIGN APPLICATIONS: (ENTER BELOW IF APPLICABLE)			PRIORITY CLAIMED (MARK APPROPRIATE BOX BELOW)	
APP. NUMBER	COUNTRY	DAY/MONTH/YEAR FILED	YES	NO

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, § 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below.

APPLICATION NUMBER	FILING DATE
60/100,697	September 17, 1998

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, §120 of any United States application(s) listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, §112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose all information known by me to be material to the patentability of the claims of this application as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, §1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application:

APPLICATION SERIAL NO.	FILING DATE	STATUS (MARK APPROPRIATE COLUMN BELOW)		
		PATENTED	PENDING	ABANDONED

I hereby appoint the following attorneys and/or agent(s) to prosecute this application and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith:

William H. Needle	Reg. No. 26,209	Jacqueline M. Hutter	Reg. No. P-44,792
Sumner C. Rosenberg	Reg. No. 28,753	Matthew D. Josephic	Reg. No. 43,699
David G. Perryman	Reg. No. 33,428	David S. Kerven	Reg. No. 43,712
Mitchell A. Katz	Reg. No. 33,919	Lori L. Kerber	Reg. No. 41,113
Gregory J. Kirsch	Reg. No. 35,572	Janice A. Kimpel	Reg. No. 42,734
Gwendolyn D. Spratt	Reg. No. 36,016	Tina W. McKeon	Reg. No. 43,791
Nagendra Setty	Reg. No. 38,300	Mary L. Miller	Reg. No. 39,303
D. Andrew Floam	Reg. No. 34,597	Mark A. Murphy	Reg. No. 42,915
William R. Johnson	Reg. No. 32,875	Lance D. Reich	Reg. No. 42,097
Allan G. Altera	Reg. No. 40,274	Lisa A. Samuels	Reg. No. 43,080
Bryan W. Bockhop	Reg. No. 39,613	Clark G. Sullivan	Reg. No. 36,942
John L. Capone	Reg. No. 41,656	Lawrence A. Villanueva	Reg. No. 43,968
Kean J. DeCarlo	Reg. No. 39,954	Mitchell G. Weatherly	Reg. No. 40,864
LaVonda R. DeWitt	Reg. No. 40,396	Tim T. Xia	Reg. No. P-45,242

Address all telephone calls to Gregory J. Kirsch at telephone no. (404) 688-0770.

Address all correspondence to:

Gregory J. Kirsch, Esq.
NEEDLE & ROSENBERG, P.C.
Suite 1200, The Candler Building
127 Peachtree Street, N.E.
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-1811

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

Full name of first inventor: D. Delano Ross, Jr.

Inventor's signature: _____ Date: 11/22/99

Residence: 1040 Vinebrook Lane, Alpharetta, Georgia 30005

Post Office Address: 1040 Vinebrook Lane, Alpharetta, Georgia 30005

Citizenship: U.S.A.

Full name of second inventor: Daniel D. Ross

Inventor's signature: _____ Date: 11/22/99

Residence: 1859 Tennille Court, Dunwoody, Georgia 30338

Post Office Address: 1859 Tennille Court, Dunwoody, Georgia 30338

Citizenship: U.S.A.

Full name of third inventor: Joseph R. Michaels

Inventor's signature: _____ Date: 11/22/99

Residence: 4660 East Forest Peak, Marietta, Georgia 30066

Post Office Address: 4660 East Forest Peak, Marietta, Georgia 30066

Citizenship: U.S.A.

Full name of fourth inventor: William R. May

Inventor's signature: _____ Date: Nov. 22, 1999

Residence: 1394 Emory Road, N.E., Atlanta, Georgia 30306

Post Office Address: 1394 Emory Road, N.E., Atlanta, Georgia 30306

Citizenship: U.S.A.

Full name of fifth inventor: Richard A. Anderson

Inventor's signature: _____ Date: Nov 22 1999

Residence: 4893 Country Cove Way, Powder Springs, Georgia 30127

Post Office Address: 4893 Country Cove Way, Powder Springs, Georgia 30127

Citizenship: U.S.A.

Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it contains a valid OMB control number.

Application Data Sheet 37 CFR 1.76	Attorney Docket Number	
	Application Number	
Title of Invention	Methods of expanding commercial opportunities for internet websites through coordinated offsite marketing	

The application data sheet is part of the provisional or nonprovisional application for which it is being submitted. The following form contains the bibliographic data arranged in a format specified by the United States Patent and Trademark Office as outlined in 37 CFR 1.76.
This document may be completed electronically and submitted to the Office in electronic format using the Electronic Filing System (EFS) or the document may be printed and included in a paper filed application.

Secrecy Order 37 CFR 5.2

☐ Portions or all of the application associated with this Application Data Sheet may fall under a Secrecy Order pursuant to 37 CFR 5.2 (Paper filers only. Applications that fall under Secrecy Order may not be filed electronically.)

Inventor Information:

Inventor 1 Remove

Legal Name

Prefix	Given Name	Middle Name	Family Name	Suffix
Mr.	D	Delano	Ross	Jr.

Residence Information (Select One) ◉ US Residency ○ Non US Residency ○ Active US Military Service

City	Peachtree Corners	State/Province	GA	Country of Residence i	US

Mailing Address of Inventor:

Address 1	5012 Audley Lane		
Address 2			
City	Peachtree Corners	State/Province	GA
Postal Code	30092	Country i	US

Inventor 2 Remove

Legal Name

Prefix	Given Name	Middle Name	Family Name	Suffix
Mr.	Daniel	D	Ross	

Residence Information (Select One) ◉ US Residency ○ Non US Residency ○ Active US Military Service

City	Dunwoody	State/Province	GA	Country of Residence i	US

Mailing Address of Inventor:

Address 1	c/o DDR Holdings, LLC		
Address 2	1859 Tennille Court		
City	Dunwoody	State/Province	GA
Postal Code	30338	Country i	US

Inventor 3 Remove

Legal Name

Prefix	Given Name	Middle Name	Family Name	Suffix
Mr.	Joseph	R	Michaels	

Residence Information (Select One) ◉ US Residency ○ Non US Residency ○ Active US Military Service

Application Data Sheet 37 CFR 1.76	Attorney Docket Number	
	Application Number	
Title of Invention	Methods of expanding commercial opportunities for internet websites through coordinated offsite marketing	

City	Hephzibah	State/Province	GA	Country of Residence i	US

Mailing Address of Inventor:

Address 1	1878 Hephzibah Keysville Road		
Address 2			
City	Hephzibah	State/Province	GA
Postal Code	30815	Country i	US

Inventor 4 Remove

Legal Name

Prefix	Given Name	Middle Name	Family Name	Suffix
Mr.	William	R	May	

Residence Information (Select One) (•) US Residency ( ) Non US Residency ( ) Active US Military Service

City	Atlanta	State/Province	GA	Country of Residence i	US

Mailing Address of Inventor:

Address 1	1394 Emory Road NE		
Address 2			
City	Atlanta	State/Province	GA
Postal Code	30306	Country i	US

Inventor 5 Remove

Legal Name

Prefix	Given Name	Middle Name	Family Name	Suffix
Mr.	Richard	A	Anderson	

Residence Information (Select One) (•) US Residency ( ) Non US Residency ( ) Active US Military Service

City	Powder Springs	State/Province	GA	Country of Residence i	US

Mailing Address of Inventor:

Address 1	4190 Defoors Farm Drive		
Address 2			
City	Powder Springs	State/Province	GA
Postal Code	30127	Country i	US

All Inventors Must Be Listed - Additional Inventor Information blocks may be generated within this form by selecting the **Add** button. Add

Correspondence Information:

Enter either Customer Number or complete the Correspondence Information section below.
For further information see 37 CFR 1.33(a).

☐ **An Address is being provided for the correspondence Information of this application.**

Application Data Sheet 37 CFR 1.76	Attorney Docket Number	
	Application Number	
Title of Invention	Methods of expanding commercial opportunities for internet websites through coordinated offsite marketing	

Customer Number	26362		
Email Address	louis@valuablepatents.com	Add Email	Remove Email
Email Address	donald@valuablepatents.com	Add Email	Remove Email
Email Address	shaelyn@valuablepatents.com		Remove Email

Application Information:

Title of the Invention	Methods of expanding commercial opportunities for internet websites through coordinated offsite marketing		
Attorney Docket Number		**Small Entity Status Claimed** ☐	
Application Type	Nonprovisional		
Subject Matter	Utility		
Total Number of Drawing Sheets (if any)	24	**Suggested Figure for Publication (if any)**	

Publication Information:

☐ Request Early Publication (Fee required at time of Request 37 CFR 1.219)

☒ **Request Not to Publish.** I hereby request that the attached application not be published under 35 U.S.C. 122(b) and certify that the invention disclosed in the attached application **has not and will not** be the subject of an application filed in another country, or under a multilateral international agreement, that requires publication at eighteen months after filing.

Representative Information:

Representative information should be provided for all practitioners having a power of attorney in the application. Providing this information in the Application Data Sheet does not constitute a power of attorney in the application (see 37 CFR 1.32).
Either enter Customer Number or complete the Representative Name section below. If both sections are completed the customer Number will be used for the Representative Information during processing.

Please Select One:	◉ Customer Number	○ US Patent Practitioner	○ Limited Recognition (37 CFR 11.9)
Customer Number	26362		

Domestic Benefit/National Stage Information:

This section allows for the applicant to either claim benefit under 35 U.S.C. 119(e), 120, 121, or 365(c) or indicate National Stage entry from a PCT application. Providing this information in the application data sheet constitutes the specific reference required by 35 U.S.C. 119(e) or 120, and 37 CFR 1.78.

Prior Application Status	Pending		Remove
Application Number	Continuity Type	Prior Application Number	Filing Date (YYYY-MM-DD)
	Continuation of	12906979	2010-10-18
Prior Application Status	Patented		Remove

Application Data Sheet 37 CFR 1.76	Attorney Docket Number	
	Application Number	
Title of Invention	Methods of expanding commercial opportunities for internet websites through coordinated offsite marketing	

Application Number	Continuity Type	Prior Application Number	Filing Date (YYYY-MM-DD)	Patent Number	Issue Date (YYYY-MM-DD)
12906979	Continuation of	11343464	2006-01-30	7818399	2010-10-19
Prior Application Status	Patented			Remove	
Application Number	Continuity Type	Prior Application Number	Filing Date (YYYY-MM-DD)	Patent Number	Issue Date (YYYY-MM-DD)
11343464	Continuation of	10461997	2003-06-11	6993572	2006-01-31
Prior Application Status	Patented			Remove	
Application Number	Continuity Type	Prior Application Number	Filing Date (YYYY-MM-DD)	Patent Number	Issue Date (YYYY-MM-DD)
10461997	Continuation of	09398268	1999-09-17	6629135	2003-09-30
Prior Application Status	Expired			Remove	

Application Number	Continuity Type	Prior Application Number	Filing Date (YYYY-MM-DD)
09398268	non provisional of	60100697	1998-09-17

Additional Domestic Benefit/National Stage Data may be generated within this form by selecting the **Add** button. Add

Foreign Priority Information:

This section allows for the applicant to claim priority to a foreign application. Providing this information in the application data sheet constitutes the claim for priority as required by 35 U.S.C. 119(b) and 37 CFR 1.55(d). When priority is claimed to a foreign application that is eligible for retrieval under the priority document exchange program (PDX) [i] the information will be used by the Office to automatically attempt retrieval pursuant to 37 CFR 1.55(h)(1) and (2). Under the PDX program, applicant bears the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that a copy of the foreign application is received by the Office from the participating foreign intellectual property office, or a certified copy of the foreign priority application is filed, within the time period specified in 37 CFR 1.55(g)(1).

Remove

Application Number	Country [i]	Filing Date (YYYY-MM-DD)	Access Code [i] (if applicable)

Additional Foreign Priority Data may be generated within this form by selecting the **Add** button. Add

Application Data Sheet 37 CFR 1.76	Attorney Docket Number	
	Application Number	
Title of Invention	Methods of expanding commercial opportunities for internet websites through coordinated offsite marketing	

Statement under 37 CFR 1.55 or 1.78 for AIA (First Inventor to File) Transition Applications

☐ This application (1) claims priority to or the benefit of an application filed before March 16, 2013 and (2) also contains, or contained at any time, a claim to a claimed invention that has an effective filing date on or after March 16, 2013.
NOTE: By providing this statement under 37 CFR 1.55 or 1.78, this application, with a filing date on or after March 16, 2013, will be examined under the first inventor to file provisions of the AIA.

Authorization to Permit Access:

☐ Authorization to Permit Access to the Instant Application by the Participating Offices

If checked, the undersigned hereby grants the USPTO authority to provide the European Patent Office (EPO), the Japan Patent Office (JPO), the Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO), the World Intellectual Property Office (WIPO), and any other intellectual property offices in which a foreign application claiming priority to the instant patent application is filed access to the instant patent application. See 37 CFR 1.14(c) and (h). This box should not be checked if the applicant does not wish the EPO, JPO, KIPO, WIPO, or other intellectual property office in which a foreign application claiming priority to the instant patent application is filed to have access to the instant patent application.

In accordance with 37 CFR 1.14(h)(3), access will be provided to a copy of the instant patent application with respect to: 1) the instant patent application-as-filed; 2) any foreign application to which the instant patent application claims priority under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d) if a copy of the foreign application that satisfies the certified copy requirement of 37 CFR 1.55 has been filed in the instant patent application; and 3) any U.S. application-as-filed from which benefit is sought in the instant patent application.

In accordance with 37 CFR 1.14(c), access may be provided to information concerning the date of filing this Authorization.

Applicant Information:

Providing assignment information in this section does not substitute for compliance with any requirement of part 3 of Title 37 of CFR to have an assignment recorded by the Office.

Application Data Sheet 37 CFR 1.76	Attorney Docket Number	
	Application Number	
Title of Invention	Methods of expanding commercial opportunities for internet websites through coordinated offsite marketing	

Applicant 1 Remove

If the applicant is the inventor (or the remaining joint inventor or inventors under 37 CFR 1.45), this section should not be completed. The information to be provided in this section is the name and address of the legal representative who is the applicant under 37 CFR 1.43; or the name and address of the assignee, person to whom the inventor is under an obligation to assign the invention, or person who otherwise shows sufficient proprietary interest in the matter who is the applicant under 37 CFR 1.46. If the applicant is an applicant under 37 CFR 1.46 (assignee, person to whom the inventor is obligated to assign, or person who otherwise shows sufficient proprietary interest) together with one or more joint inventors, then the joint inventor or inventors who are also the applicant should be identified in this section.

Clear

(•) Assignee	( ) Legal Representative under 35 U.S.C. 117	( ) Joint Inventor
( ) Person to whom the inventor is obligated to assign.	( ) Person who shows sufficient proprietary interest	

If applicant is the legal representative, indicate the authority to file the patent application, the inventor is:

Name of the Deceased or Legally Incapacitated Inventor :

If the Applicant is an Organization check here. [X]

Organization Name	DDR HOLDINGS, LLC

Mailing Address Information:

Address 1	1859 Tennille Court		
Address 2			
City	Dunwoody	**State/Province**	GA
Country [i]	US	Postal Code	30338
Phone Number	(770) 395-9410	Fax Number	
Email Address			

Additional Applicant Data may be generated within this form by selecting the Add button. Add

Assignee Information including Non-Applicant Assignee Information:

Providing assignment information in this section does not subsitute for compliance with any requirement of part 3 of Title 37 of CFR to have an assignment recorded by the Office.

Assignee 1

Complete this section if assignee information, including non-applicant assignee information, is desired to be included on the patent application publication . An assignee-applicant identified in the "Applicant Information" section will appear on the patent application publication as an applicant. For an assignee-applicant, complete this section only if identification as an assignee is also desired on the patent application publication.

Remove

If the Assignee is an Organization check here. [ ]

PTO/AIA/14 (03-13)
Approved for use through 01/31/2014. OMB 0651-0032
U.S. Patent and Trademark Office; U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
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Application Data Sheet 37 CFR 1.76	Attorney Docket Number	
	Application Number	
Title of Invention	Methods of expanding commercial opportunities for internet websites through coordinated offsite marketing	

Prefix	**Given Name**	Middle Name	**Family Name**	Suffix

Mailing Address Information:

Address 1	
Address 2	

City		**State/Province**	
Country i		Postal Code	
Phone Number		Fax Number	
Email Address			

Additional Assignee Data may be generated within this form by selecting the Add button. Add

Remove

Signature:

NOTE: This form must be signed in accordance with 37 CFR 1.33. See 37 CFR 1.4 for signature requirements and certifications

Signature	/Louis J. Hoffman/			Date (YYYY-MM-DD)	2013-08-19
First Name	Louis	Last Name	Hoffman	Registration Number	38918

Additional Signature may be generated within this form by selecting the Add button. Add

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.76. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 23 minutes to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application data sheet form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. **SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**

Privacy Act Statement

The Privacy Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-579) requires that you be given certain information in connection with your submission of the attached form related to a patent application or patent. Accordingly, pursuant to the requirements of the Act, please be advised that: (1) the general authority for the collection of this information is 35 U.S.C. 2(b)(2); (2) furnishing of the information solicited is voluntary; and (3) the principal purpose for which the information is used by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office is to process and/or examine your submission related to a patent application or patent. If you do not furnish the requested information, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office may not be able to process and/or examine your submission, which may result in termination of proceedings or abandonment of the application or expiration of the patent.

The information provided by you in this form will be subject to the following routine uses:

1. The information on this form will be treated confidentially to the extent allowed under the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552) and the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a). Records from this system of records may be disclosed to the Department of Justice to determine whether the Freedom of Information Act requires disclosure of these records.

2. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, in the course of presenting evidence to a court, magistrate, or administrative tribunal, including disclosures to opposing counsel in the course of settlement negotiations.

3. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to a Member of Congress submitting a request involving an individual, to whom the record pertains, when the individual has requested assistance from the Member with respect to the subject matter of the record.

4. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to a contractor of the Agency having need for the information in order to perform a contract. Recipients of information shall be required to comply with the requirements of the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552a(m).

5. A record related to an International Application filed under the Patent Cooperation Treaty in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the International Bureau of the World Intellectual Property Organization, pursuant to the Patent Cooperation Treaty.

6. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to another federal agency for purposes of National Security review (35 U.S.C. 181) and for review pursuant to the Atomic Energy Act (42 U.S.C. 218(c)).

7. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the Administrator, General Services, or his/her designee, during an inspection of records conducted by GSA as part of that agency's responsibility to recommend improvements in records management practices and programs, under authority of 44 U.S.C. 2904 and 2906. Such disclosure shall be made in accordance with the GSA regulations governing inspection of records for this purpose, and any other relevant (i.e., GSA or Commerce) directive. Such disclosure shall not be used to make determinations about individuals.

8. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the public after either publication of the application pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 122(b) or issuance of a patent pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 151. Further, a record may be disclosed, subject to the limitations of 37 CFR 1.14, as a routine use, to the public if the record was filed in an application which became abandoned or in which the proceedings were terminated and which application is referenced by either a published application, an application open to public inspections or an issued patent.

9. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to a Federal, State, or local law enforcement agency, if the USPTO becomes aware of a violation or potential violation of law or regulation.

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicants	:	Ross, D. Delano Jr. et al.	Art Unit	:	3625 *
Serial No.	:	_____	Examiner	:	Garg, Yogesh C. *
Filing Date	:	08/19/2013	** In parent application S.N. 12/906,979*		
Title	:	Methods of expanding commercial opportunities for internet websites through coordinated offsite marketing			

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Filed via EFS – August 19, 2013

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Dear Sir:

Assignee requests entry of the following amendments as part of this continuation application.

- **Amendments to the Specification** begin on page 2.
- **Amendments to the Claims** begin on page 3.
- **Remarks** begin on page 4.

AMENDMENTS

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the first paragraph on page 1 as follows:

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation of application Serial No. 12/906,979, filed October 18, 2010, which is a continuation of application Serial No. 11/343,464, filed January 30, 2006, now U.S. Patent 7,818,399, which is a continuation of application Serial No. 10/461,997, filed June 11, 2003, now U.S. Patent 6,993,572, which is a continuation of application Serial No. 09/398,268, filed September 17, 1999, now U.S. Patent 6,629,135, which claims the benefit of application Serial No. 60/100,697, filed September 17, 1998, which applications are hereby incorporated by reference.

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Original) A process of creating and displaying Internet web pages comprising:

(a) computer storing indicia describing the appearance of a set of one or more visually perceptible elements, which elements are displayed, along with primary content, on web browsers accessing a first web page, and which set of elements suggest a source of the first web page; and

(b) using the computer-stored indicia to cause the display of a second web page on web browsers of computer users who indicate interest in a buying opportunity by following a selectable navigation link from the first web page leading to the second web page;

(c) wherein said second web page contains the set of visually perceptible elements along with content describing at least one commerce object;

(d) wherein the second web page apart from the commerce objects has a distinctive overall appearance corresponding to a distinctive overall appearance of the first web page apart from its primary content;

(e) wherein a first owner controls the primary content of the first web page and a second owner controls the content of the second web page and the information displayed on the second web page about the commerce object;

(f) wherein said at least one commerce object pertains to an opportunity to purchase an offering of a merchant, which is neither the first nor the second owner; and

(g) wherein the first and second owners have contracted with each other to share revenue generated as a result of computer users purchasing from the merchant as a result of visiting the second web page.

Claims 2-70 (Cancelled).

REMARKS

The amendments to the specification are being made to update only the related applications section and hence do not contain any "new matter."

Assignee cancels all but twenty claims filed in the parent application to avoid excess claims fees and plans to file a Supplemental Preliminary Amendment as soon as possible to present new claims for prosecution in this application.

Please feel free to telephone the undersigned if it would in any way advance prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,
DDR HOLDINGS, LLC
by its attorney

Dated: August 19, 2013

/Louis J. Hoffman/
Louis J. Hoffman
Reg. No. 38,918

LOUIS J. HOFFMAN, P.C.
14301 North 87th Street
Suite 312
Scottsdale, Arizona 85260
(480) 948-3295

PTO/SB/35 (07-09)
Approved for use through 07/31/2012. OMB 0651-0031
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NONPUBLICATION REQUEST UNDER 35 U.S.C. 122(b)(2)(B)(i)

First Named Inventor	Ross, D. Delano, Jr.
Title	Methods of expanding commercial opportunities for internet websites through coordinated offsite marketing
Attorney Docket Number	23-CON4

I hereby certify that the invention disclosed in the attached application **has not and will not be** the subject of an application filed in another country, or under a multilateral international agreement, that requires publication at eighteen months after filing.

I hereby request that the attached application not be published under 35 U.S.C. 122(b).

/Louis J. Hoffman/ — Signature

08/19/2013 — Date

Louis J. Hoffman — Typed or printed name

38918 — Registration Number, if applicable

(480) 948-3295 — Telephone Number

This request must be signed in compliance with 37 CFR 1.33(b) and submitted with the application **upon filing.**

Applicant may rescind this nonpublication request at any time. If applicant rescinds a request that an application not be published under 35 U.S.C. 122(b), the application will be scheduled for publication at eighteen months from the earliest claimed filing date for which a benefit is claimed.

If applicant subsequently files an application directed to the invention disclosed in the attached application in another country, or under a multilateral international agreement, that requires publication of applications eighteen months after filing, the applicant **must** notify the United States Patent and Trademark Office of such filing within forty-five (45) days after the date of the filing of such foreign or international application. **Failure to do so will result in abandonment of this application (35 U.S.C. 122(b)(2)(B)(iii)).**

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.213(a). The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.11 and 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 6 minutes to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. **SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**

If you need assistance in completing the form, call 1-800-PTO-9199 (1-800-786-9199) and select option 2.

Electronic Patent Application Fee Transmittal

Application Number:	
Filing Date:	
Title of Invention:	Methods of expanding commercial opportunities for internet websites through coordinated offsite marketing
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	D. Delano Ross, Jr.
Filer:	Louis J. Hoffman/Donald Hertz
Attorney Docket Number:	23-CON4

Filed as Large Entity

Utility under 35 USC 111(a) Filing Fees

Description	Fee Code	Quantity	Amount	Sub-Total in USD($)
Basic Filing:				
Utility application filing	1011	1	280	280
Utility Search Fee	1111	1	600	600
Utility Examination Fee	1311	1	720	720
Pages:				
Claims:				
Miscellaneous-Filing:				
Petition:				
Patent-Appeals-and-Interference:				

Description	Fee Code	Quantity	Amount	Sub-Total in USD($)
Post-Allowance-and-Post-Issuance:				
Extension-of-Time:				
Miscellaneous:				
			Total in USD ($)	**1600**

Electronic Acknowledgement Receipt

EFS ID:	16627562
Application Number:	13970515
International Application Number:	
Confirmation Number:	2289
Title of Invention:	Methods of expanding commercial opportunities for internet websites through coordinated offsite marketing
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	D. Delano Ross, Jr.
Customer Number:	26362
Filer:	Louis J. Hoffman/Donald Hertz
Filer Authorized By:	Louis J. Hoffman
Attorney Docket Number:	23-CON4
Receipt Date:	19-AUG-2013
Filing Date:	
Time Stamp:	20:24:56
Application Type:	Utility under 35 USC 111(a)

Payment information:

Submitted with Payment	yes
Payment Type	Credit Card
Payment was successfully received in RAM	$1600
RAM confirmation Number	6119
Deposit Account	
Authorized User	

File Listing:

Document Number	Document Description	File Name	File Size(Bytes)/ Message Digest	Multi Part /.zip	Pages (if appl.)

1	Transmittal of New Application	13-08-19-DDR-CON4-AppTrans.pdf	216448 0572e8de46885357280a336076b8c5fba3d6cc20	no	1
Warnings:					
Information:					
2		Parent_Specification.pdf	3214446 7ada7c35e3955f395bd8caf71dac004be4fa9394	yes	56
	Multipart Description/PDF files in .zip description				
	Document Description		**Start**	**End**	
	Specification		1	43	
	Claims		44	55	
	Abstract		56	56	
Warnings:					
Information:					
3	Drawings-only black and white line drawings	Drawings.pdf	927791 02ad9e30078846238d30d7f0a9ccec8e4a0c0839	no	24
Warnings:					
Information:					
4	Oath or Declaration filed	Declaration-copy_from_parent.pdf	210968 9e4090b4b4a8fa6d61951d197a0a1e9214e0db94	no	4
Warnings:					
Information:					
5	Application Data Sheet	13-08-19-DDR-CON4-ADS.pdf	1506196 4bc1f2c11073f6041a8ee0bb815bbb907e38f630	no	8
Warnings:					
Information:					
6	Preliminary Amendment	13-08-19-DDR-CON4-Prelim_Amend.pdf	67835 197d4edc742bf224f7803be7860cf6123f24aa20	no	4
Warnings:					
Information:					
7	Nonpublication request from applicant.	13-08-19-DDR-CON4-NonpubReq.pdf	138678 8c9ed06c921212ebefb9f2846adc8242018960ae	no	1
Warnings:					
Information:					

8	Fee Worksheet (SB06)	fee-info.pdf	32976 333e50b44fd57b9a5826d9f1010634c719e67c90	no	2

Warnings:	
Information:	
Total Files Size (in bytes):	6315338

This Acknowledgement Receipt evidences receipt on the noted date by the USPTO of the indicated documents, characterized by the applicant, and including page counts, where applicable. It serves as evidence of receipt similar to a Post Card, as described in MPEP 503.

New Applications Under 35 U.S.C. 111

If a new application is being filed and the application includes the necessary components for a filing date (see 37 CFR 1.53(b)-(d) and MPEP 506), a Filing Receipt (37 CFR 1.54) will be issued in due course and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the filing date of the application.

National Stage of an International Application under 35 U.S.C. 371

If a timely submission to enter the national stage of an international application is compliant with the conditions of 35 U.S.C. 371 and other applicable requirements a Form PCT/DO/EO/903 indicating acceptance of the application as a national stage submission under 35 U.S.C. 371 will be issued in addition to the Filing Receipt, in due course.

New International Application Filed with the USPTO as a Receiving Office

If a new international application is being filed and the international application includes the necessary components for an international filing date (see PCT Article 11 and MPEP 1810), a Notification of the International Application Number and of the International Filing Date (Form PCT/RO/105) will be issued in due course, subject to prescriptions concerning national security, and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the international filing date of the application.

PTO/SB/06 (09-11)
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PATENT APPLICATION FEE DETERMINATION RECORD Substitute for Form PTO-875	Application or Docket Number 13/970,515	Filing Date 08/19/2013	☐ To be Mailed

ENTITY: ☒ LARGE ☐ SMALL ☐ MICRO

APPLICATION AS FILED – PART I

FOR	(Column 1) NUMBER FILED	(Column 2) NUMBER EXTRA	RATE ($)	FEE ($)
☐ BASIC FEE (37 CFR 1.16(a), (b), or (c))	N/A	N/A	N/A	
☐ SEARCH FEE (37 CFR 1.16(k), (i), or (m))	N/A	N/A	N/A	
☐ EXAMINATION FEE (37 CFR 1.16(o), (p), or (q))	N/A	N/A	N/A	
TOTAL CLAIMS (37 CFR 1.16(i))	minus 20 =	*	X $ =	
INDEPENDENT CLAIMS (37 CFR 1.16(h))	minus 3 =	*	X $ =	
☐ APPLICATION SIZE FEE (37 CFR 1.16(s))	If the specification and drawings exceed 100 sheets of paper, the application size fee due is $310 ($155 for small entity) for each additional 50 sheets or fraction thereof. See 35 U.S.C. 41(a)(1)(G) and 37 CFR 1.16(s).			
☐ MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM PRESENT (37 CFR 1.16(j))				
* If the difference in column 1 is less than zero, enter "0" in column 2.			TOTAL	

APPLICATION AS AMENDED – PART II

AMENDMENT

08/19/2013	(Column 1) CLAIMS REMAINING AFTER AMENDMENT		(Column 2) HIGHEST NUMBER PREVIOUSLY PAID FOR	(Column 3) PRESENT EXTRA	RATE ($)	ADDITIONAL FEE ($)
Total (37 CFR 1.16(i))	* 1	Minus	** 20	= 0	X $80 =	0
Independent (37 CFR 1.16(h))	* 1	Minus	***3	= 0	X $420 =	0
☐ Application Size Fee (37 CFR 1.16(s))						
☐ FIRST PRESENTATION OF MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM (37 CFR 1.16(j))						
					TOTAL ADD'L FEE	0

AMENDMENT

	(Column 1) CLAIMS REMAINING AFTER AMENDMENT		(Column 2) HIGHEST NUMBER PREVIOUSLY PAID FOR	(Column 3) PRESENT EXTRA	RATE ($)	ADDITIONAL FEE ($)
Total (37 CFR 1.16(i))	*	Minus	**	=	X $ =	
Independent (37 CFR 1.16(h))	*	Minus	***	=	X $ =	
☐ Application Size Fee (37 CFR 1.16(s))						
☐ FIRST PRESENTATION OF MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM (37 CFR 1.16(j))						
					TOTAL ADD'L FEE	

* If the entry in column 1 is less than the entry in column 2, write "0" in column 3.
** If the "Highest Number Previously Paid For" IN THIS SPACE is less than 20, enter "20".
*** If the "Highest Number Previously Paid For" IN THIS SPACE is less than 3, enter "3".
The "Highest Number Previously Paid For" (Total or Independent) is the highest number found in the appropriate box in column 1.

LDRC
/PAMELA ROGERS/

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