



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

(10) **Patent No.: US 6,189,146 B1**
(45) **Date of Patent: Feb. 13, 2001**

(54) **SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR SOFTWARE LICENSING**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

(73) Assignee: **Microsoft Corporation**, Redmond, WA (US)

A software licensing system includes a license generator located at a licensing clearinghouse and at least one license server and multiple clients located at a company or entity. When a company wants a software license, it sends a purchase request (and appropriate fee) to the licensing clearinghouse. The license generator at the clearinghouse creates a license pack containing a set of one or more individual software licenses. To prevent the license pack from being copied and installed on multiple license servers, the license generator assigns a unique license pack ID to the license pack and associates the license pack ID with the particular license server in a master license database kept at the licensing clearinghouse. The license generator digitally signs the license pack and encrypts it with the license server's public key. The license server is responsible for distributing the software licenses from the license pack to individual clients. When a client needs a license, the license server determines the client's operating system platform and grants the appropriate license. To prevent an issued license from being copied from one client machine to another, the software license is assigned to a specific client by including a client ID within the license. The software license also has a license ID that is associated with the client ID in a database record kept at the license server. The license server digitally signs the software license and encrypts it using the client's public key. The license is stored locally at the client.

(*) Notice: Under 35 U.S.C. 154(b), the term of this patent shall be extended for 0 days.

(21) Appl. No.: **09/040,813**

(22) Filed: **Mar. 18, 1998**

(51) **Int. Cl.**⁷ **G06F 17/40**

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **717/11; 380/4; 380/25**

(58) **Field of Search** **395/712; 701/1; 380/3, 4, 30, 44, 25; 717/11**

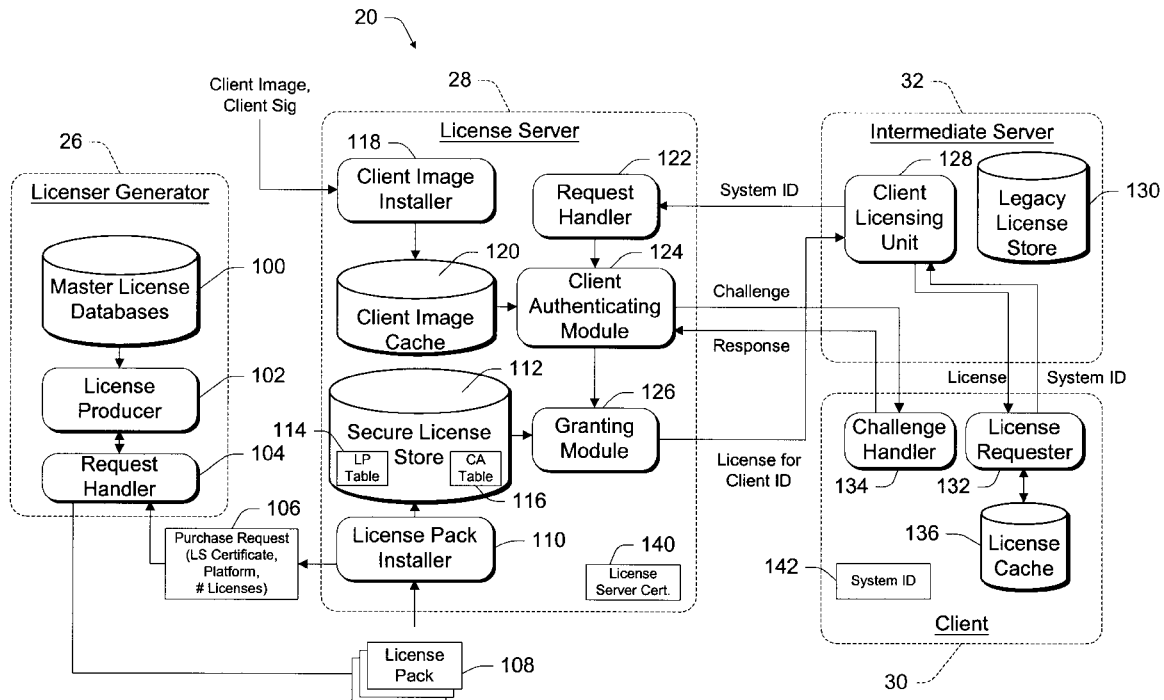
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20 Claims, 8 Drawing Sheets



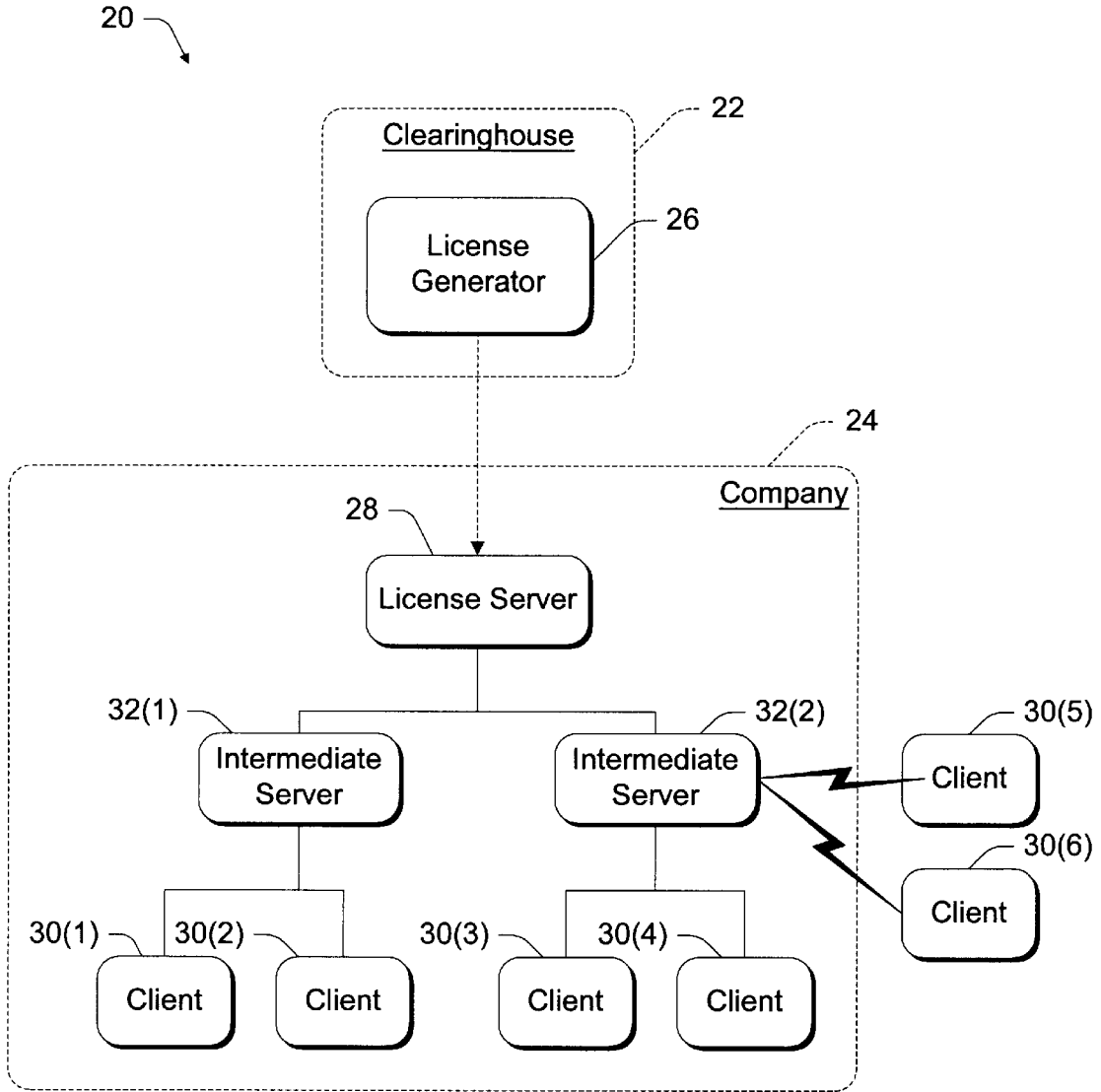
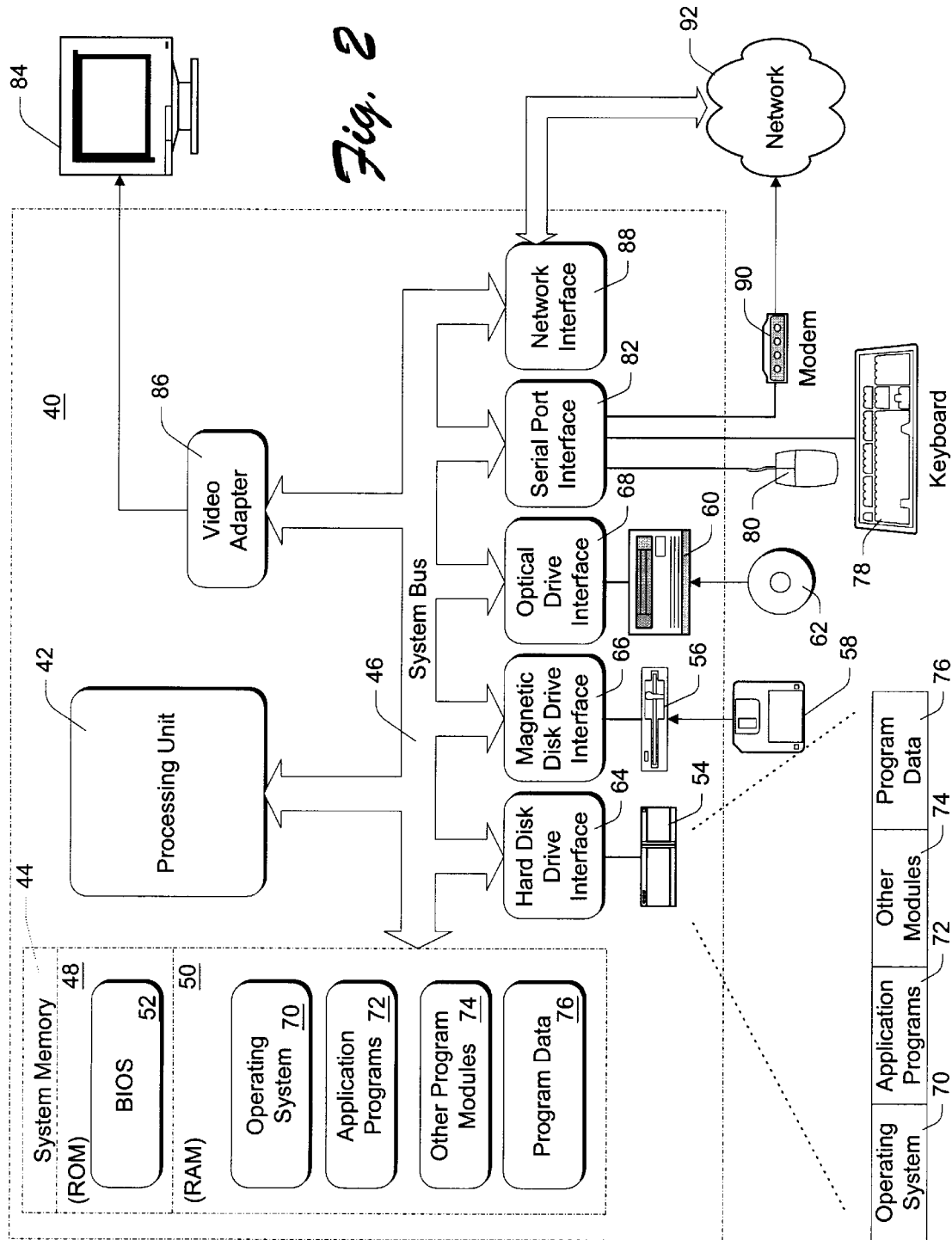


Fig. 1



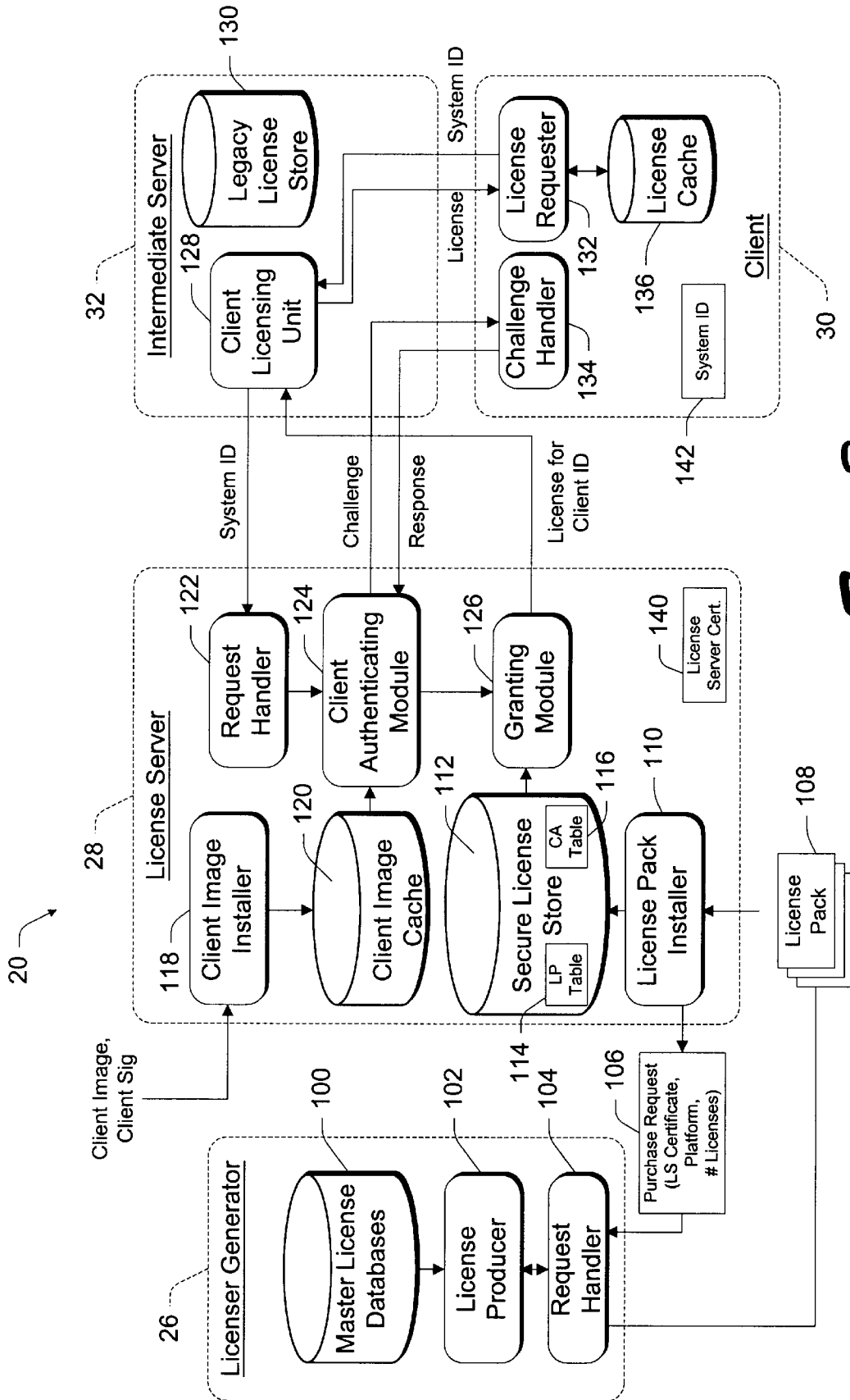


Fig. 3

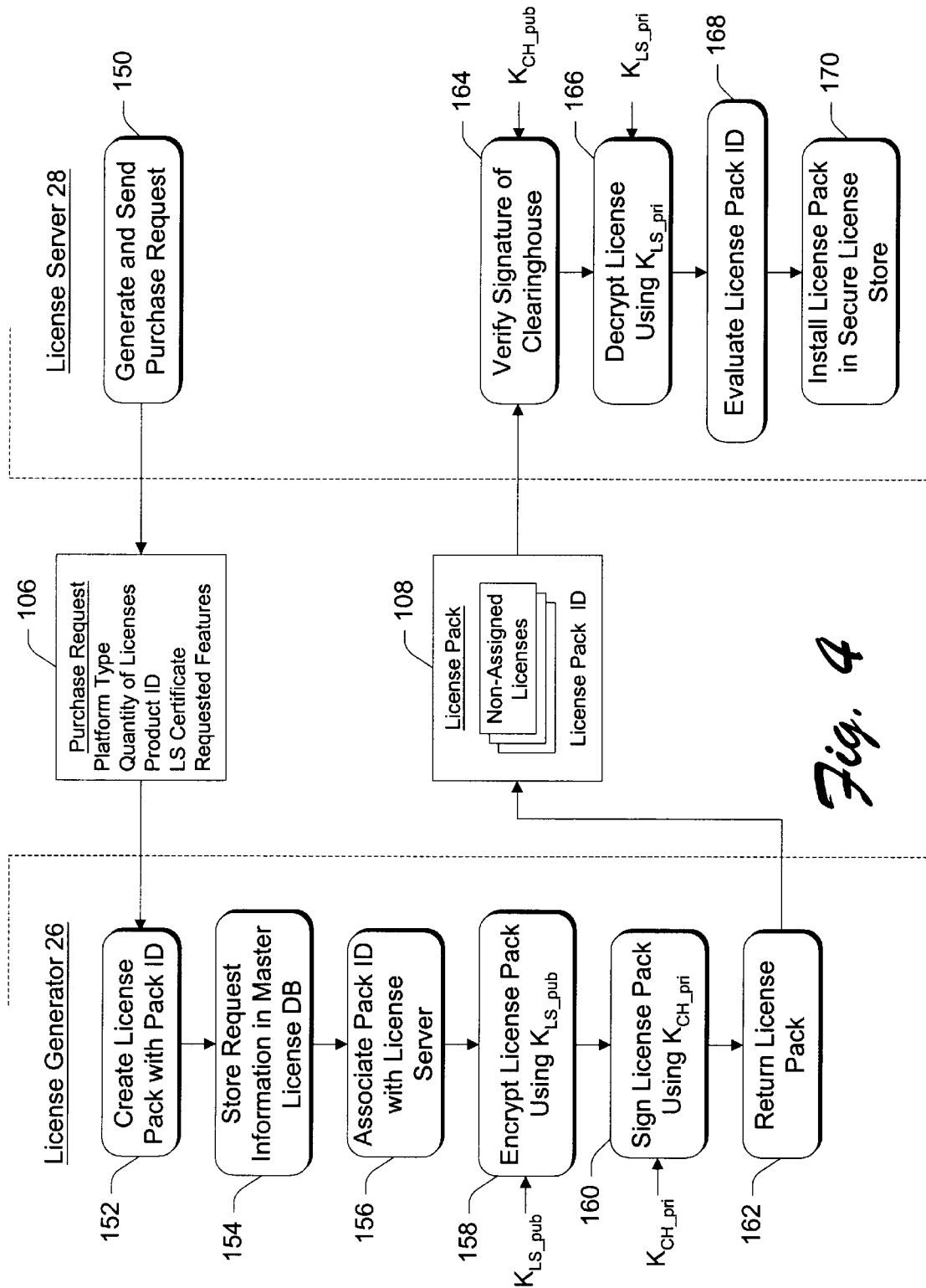


Fig. 4

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