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United States Patent [19] Gupta et al.

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[54] **METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR MAINTAINING AND CONFIGURING SYSTEMS**

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[57] ABSTRACT

[21] Appl. No.: **707,187**

The invention provides the ability to interactively select and configure a product among a set of related products based on availability and compatibility of features and options. It does not impose an order in the selection of products, features or options; only valid selections can be made at any time. To create an electronic representation of the product information to achieve the above goal, the invention provides a framework for defining a systems by defining the components of the system using elements contained in a parts catalog and defining relationships between the components of a system. A configuration system validates a configuration using the system definition, the current state of the configuration and user input.

[22] Filed: **Sep. 3, 1996**

[51] **Int. Cl.⁶** **G06F 1/00**

[52] **U.S. Cl.** **364/468.09**; 364/488

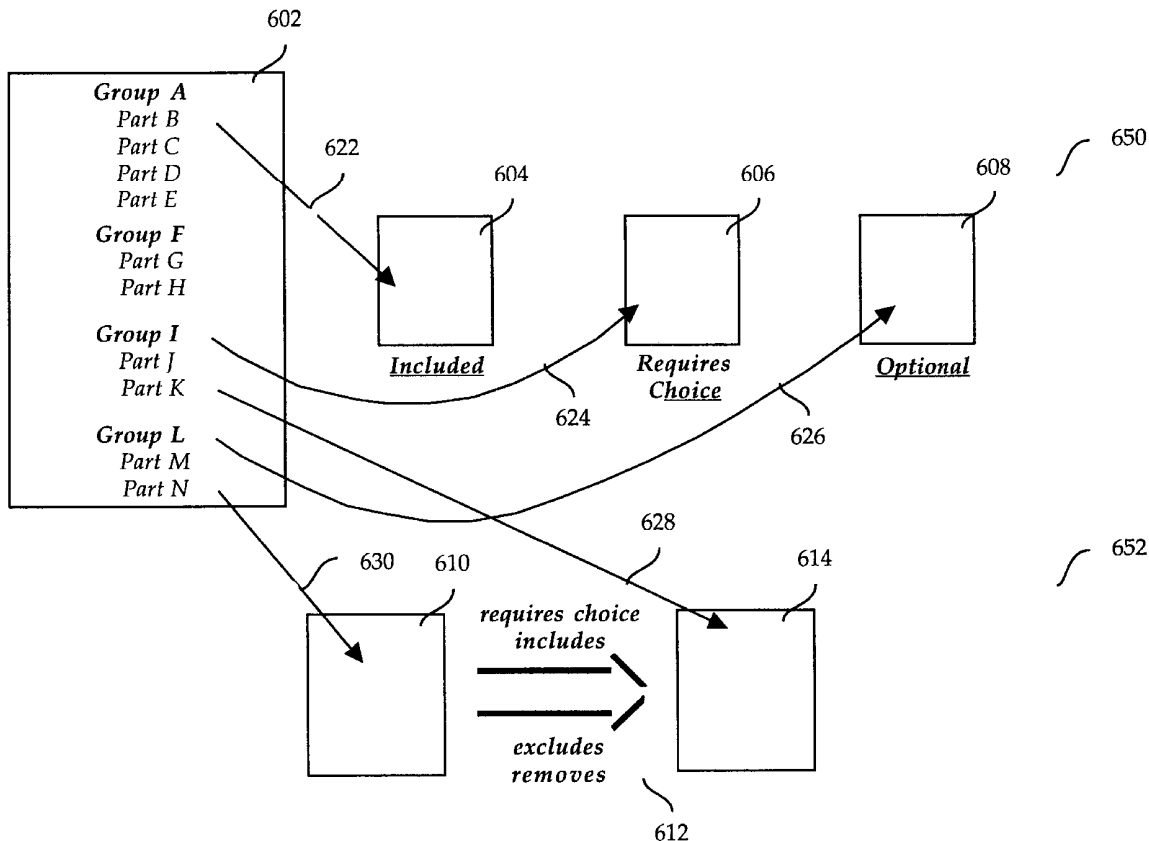
[58] **Field of Search** 364/468.09, 468.02, 364/468.03, 468.1, 488; 395/651

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85 Claims, 24 Drawing Sheets



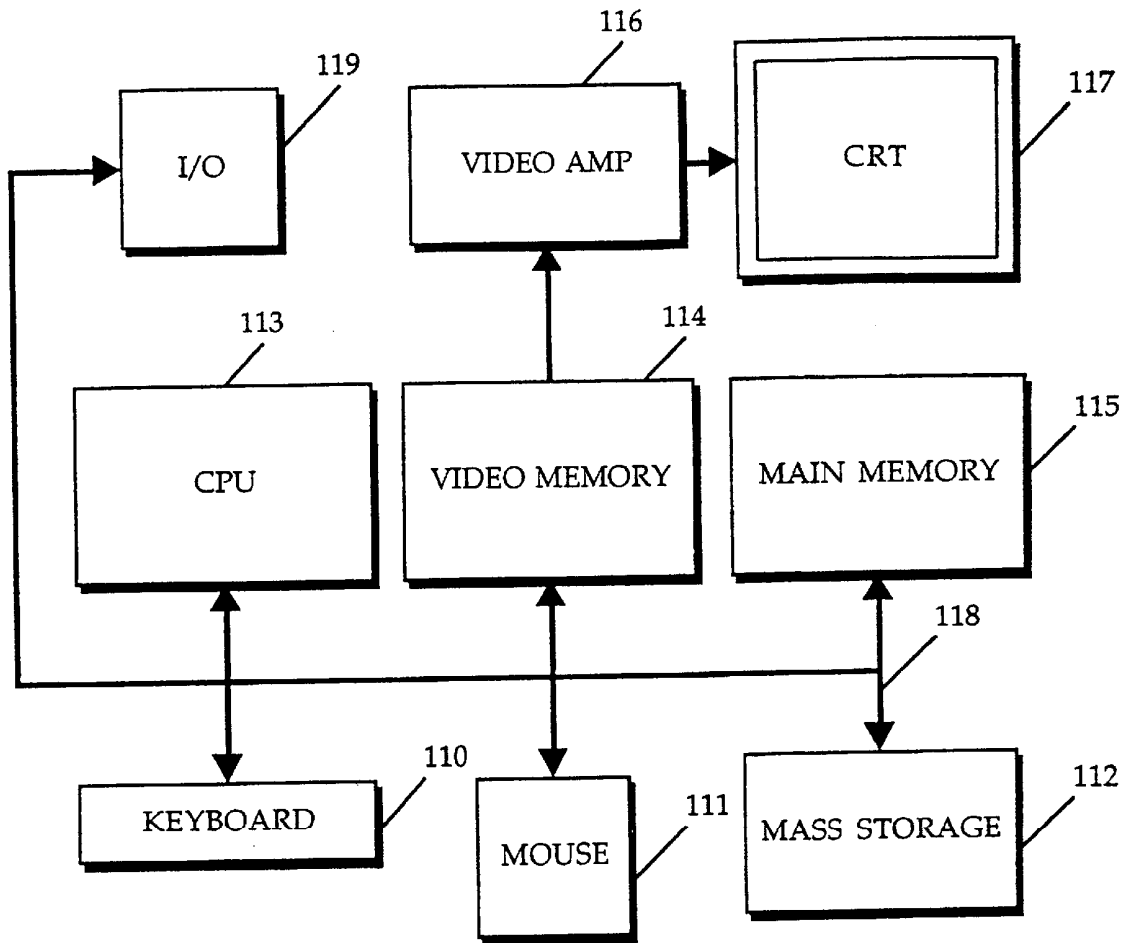


FIG. 1

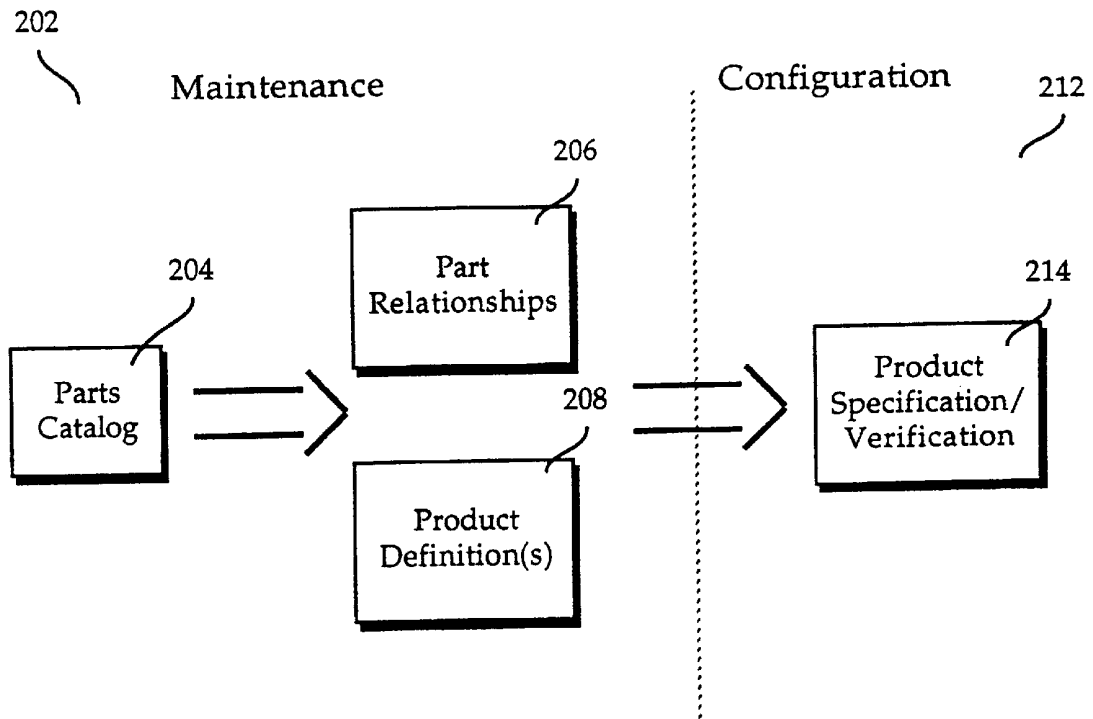


FIG. 2

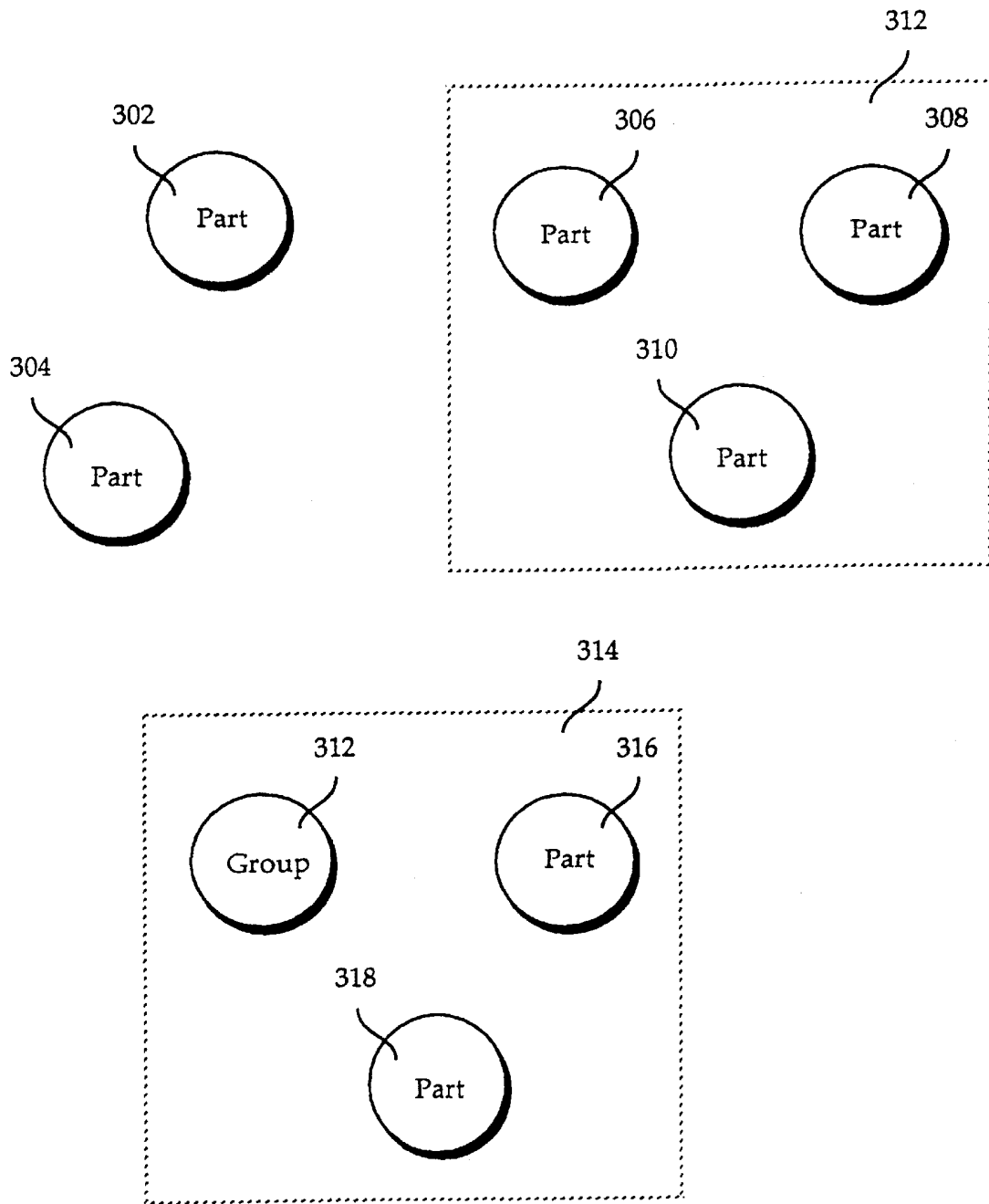


FIG. 3

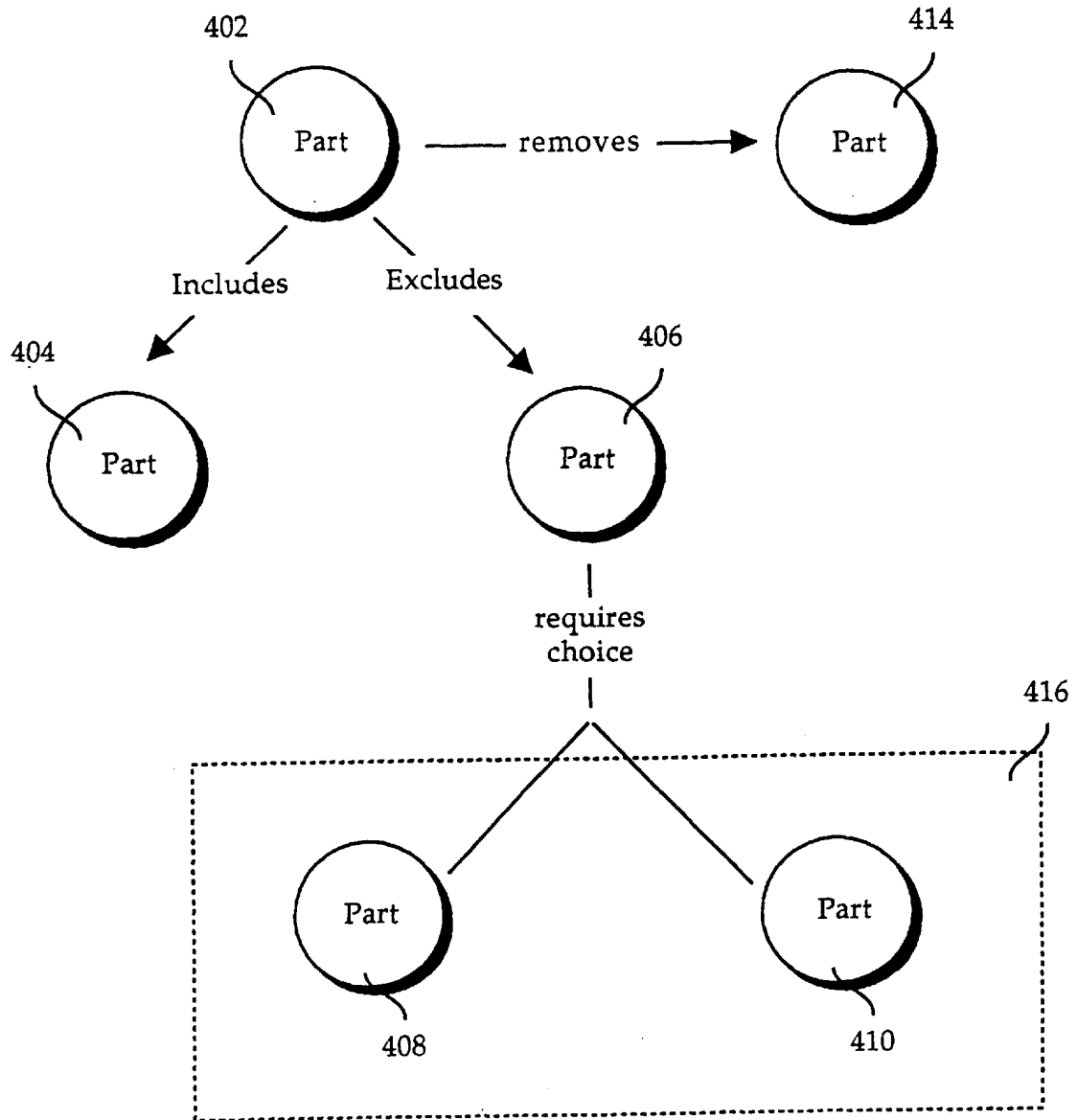


FIG. 4

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