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# United States Patent

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

[22] Filed: Sep. 3, 1996

[51] Int. Cl.<sup>6</sup> ..... 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

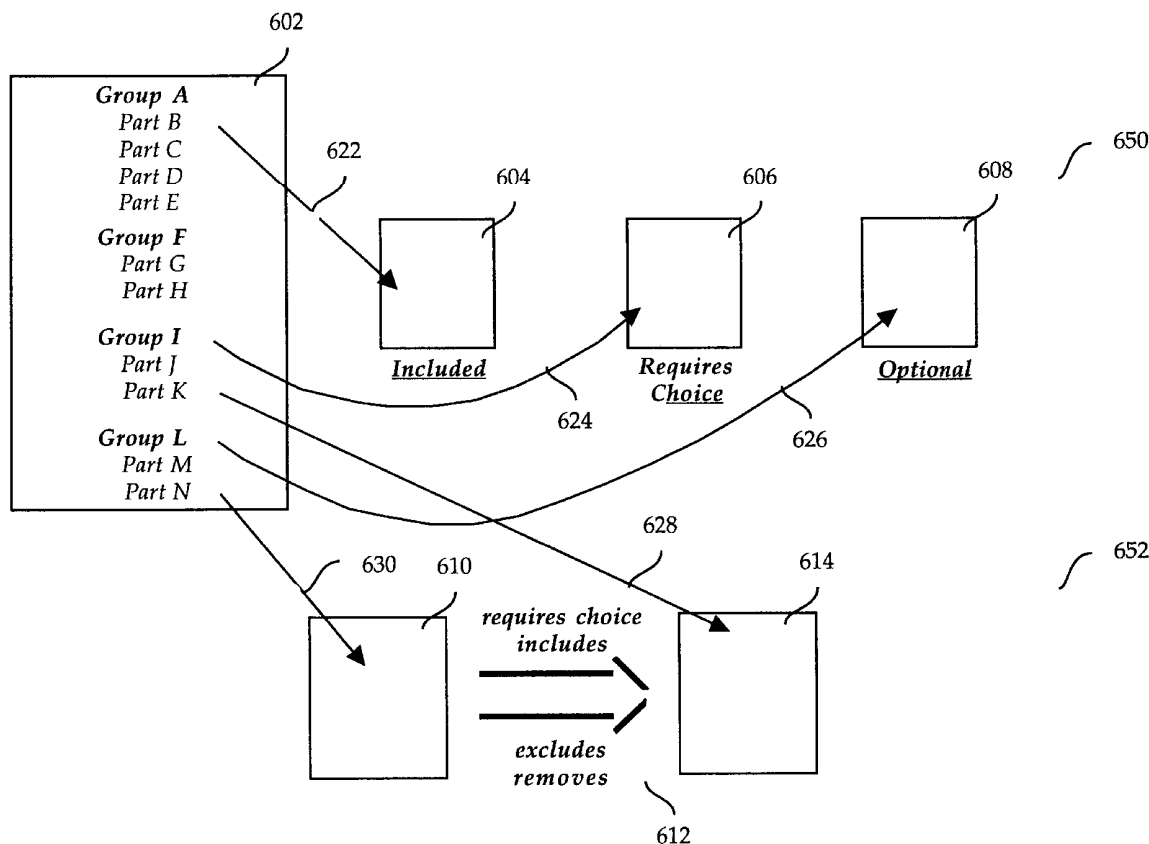
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The invention provides the ability to interactively select and configure a product among a set of related products based on availability and compatibility of features and options. It does not impose an order in the selection of products, features or 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.

85 Claims, 24 Drawing Sheets



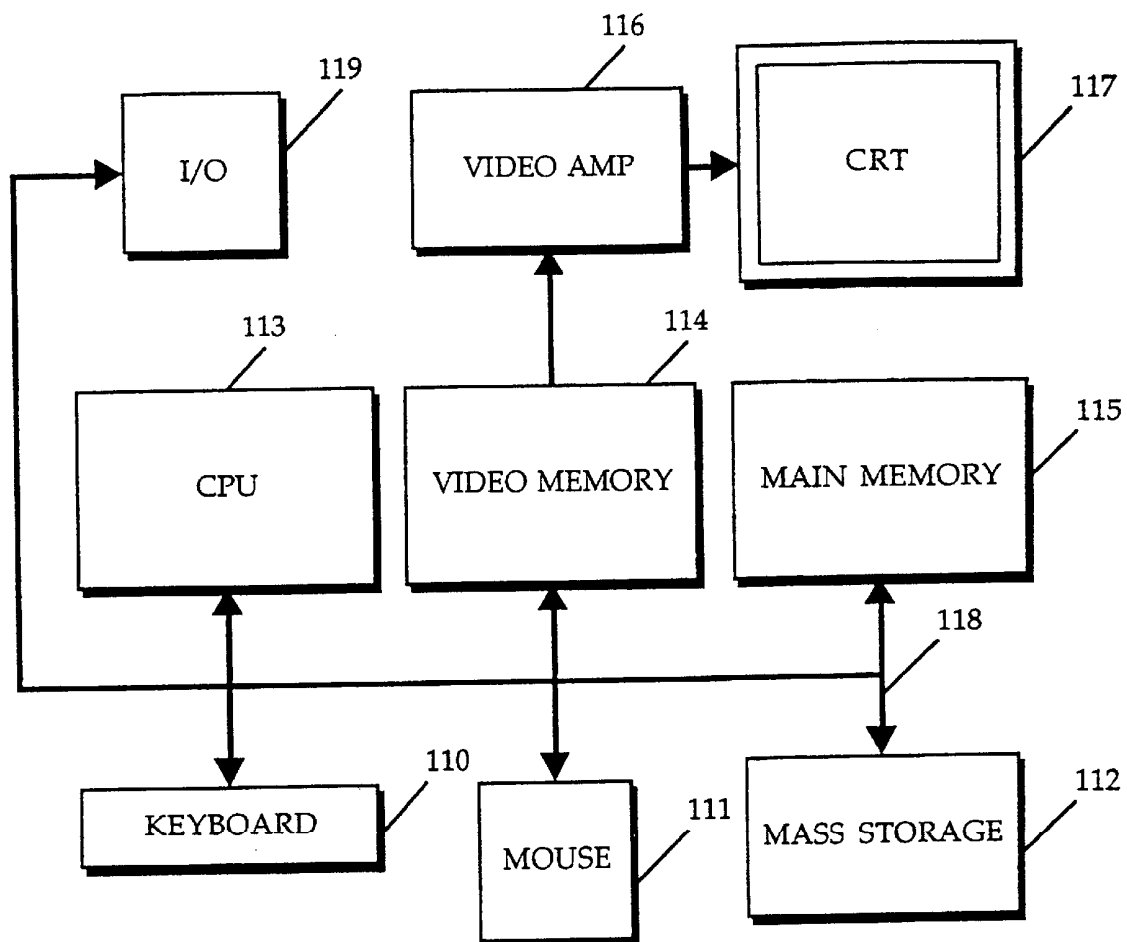


FIG. 1

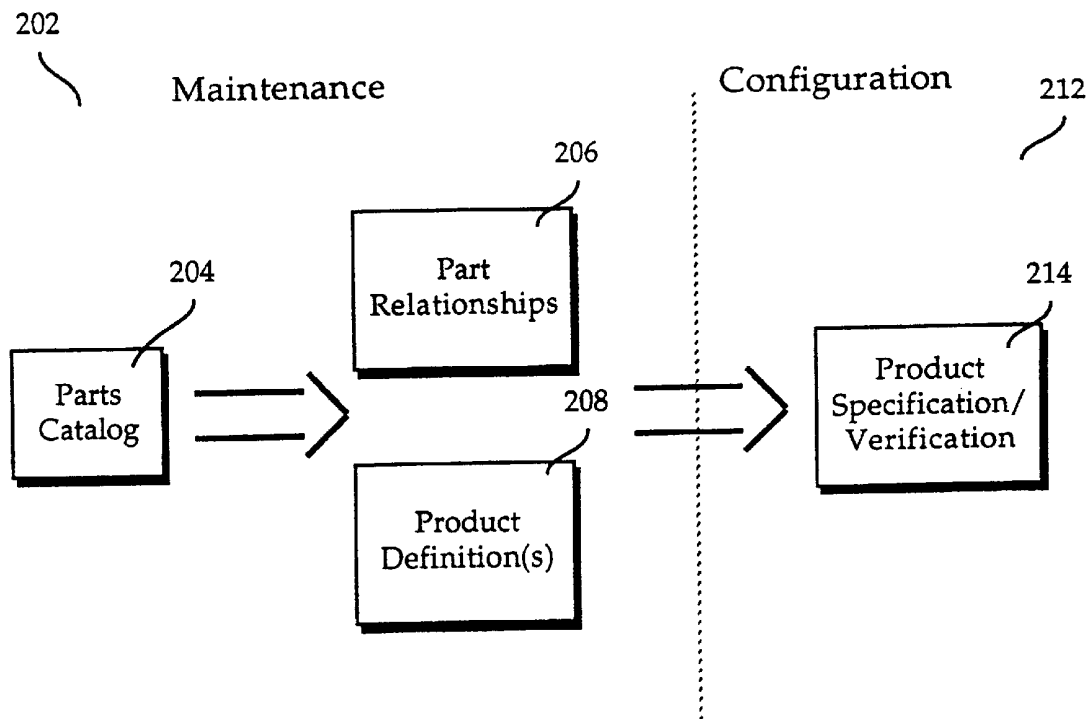


FIG. 2

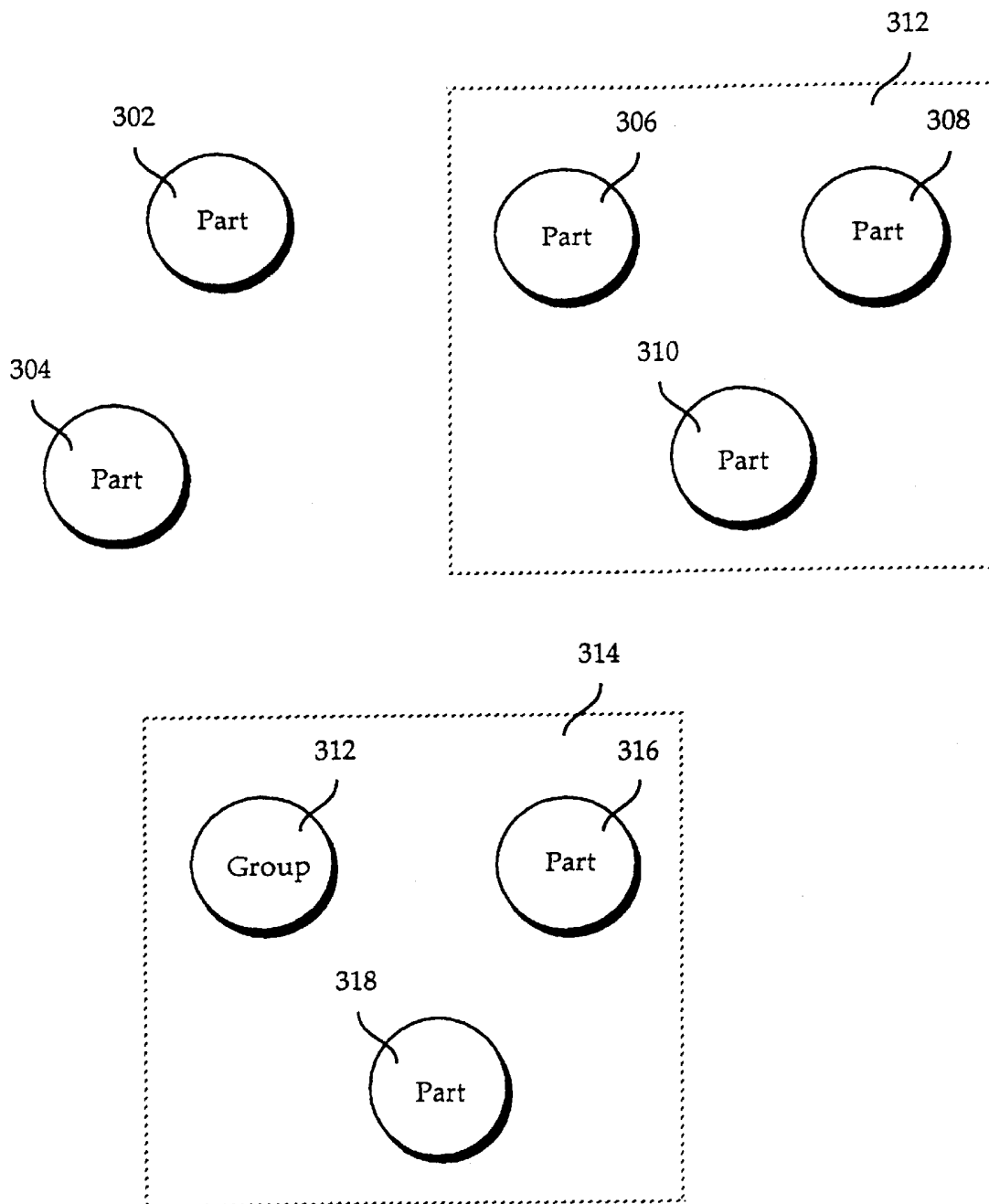


FIG. 3

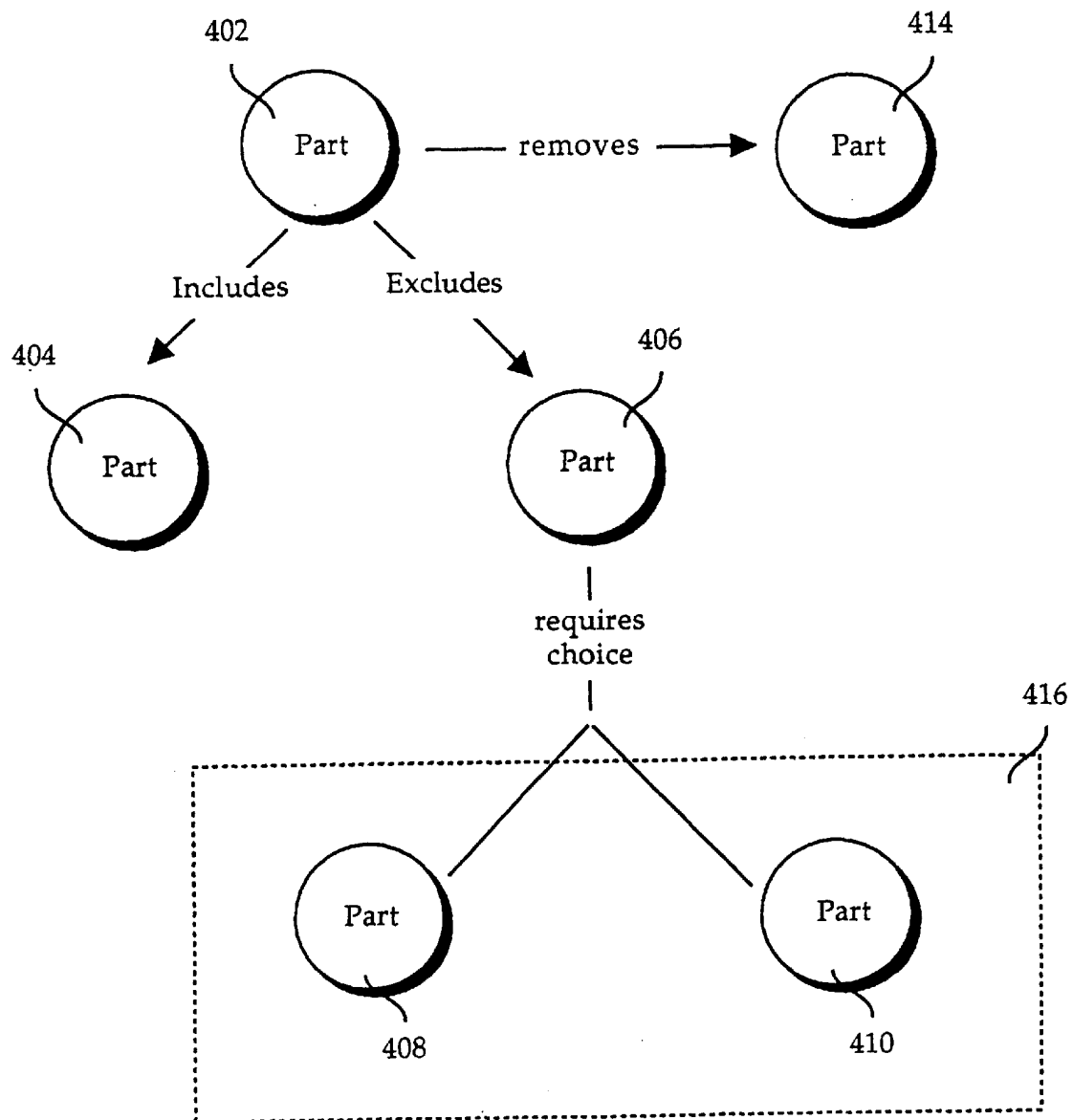


FIG. 4

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