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(54) **SYSTEM, METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR CONNECTING USERS IN AN ONLINE COMPUTER SYSTEM BASED ON THEIR RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN SOCIAL NETWORKS**

Publication Classification

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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A method and apparatus for calculating, displaying and acting upon relationships in a social network is described. A computer system collects descriptive data about various individuals and allows those individuals to indicate other individuals with whom they have a personal relationship. The descriptive data and the relationship data are integrated and processed to reveal the series of social relationships connecting any two individuals within a social network. The pathways connecting any two individuals can be displayed. Further, the social network itself can be displayed to any number of degrees of separation. A user of the system can determine the optimal relationship path (i.e., contact pathway) to reach desired individuals. A communications tool allows individuals in the system to be introduced (or introduce themselves) and initiate direct communication.

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Path Calculation Process Flowchart

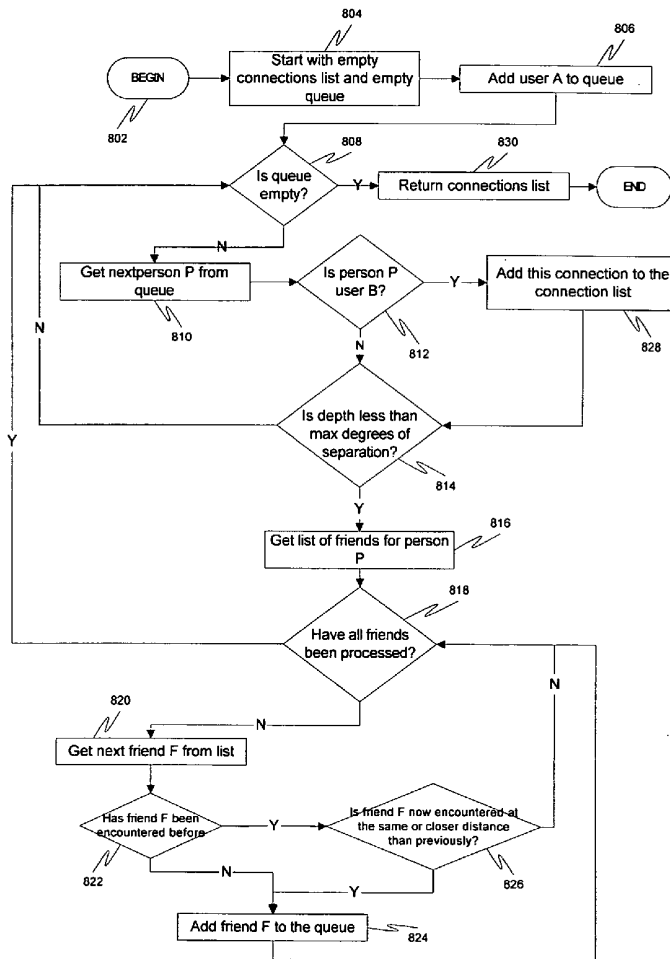


FIG. 1
System Diagram

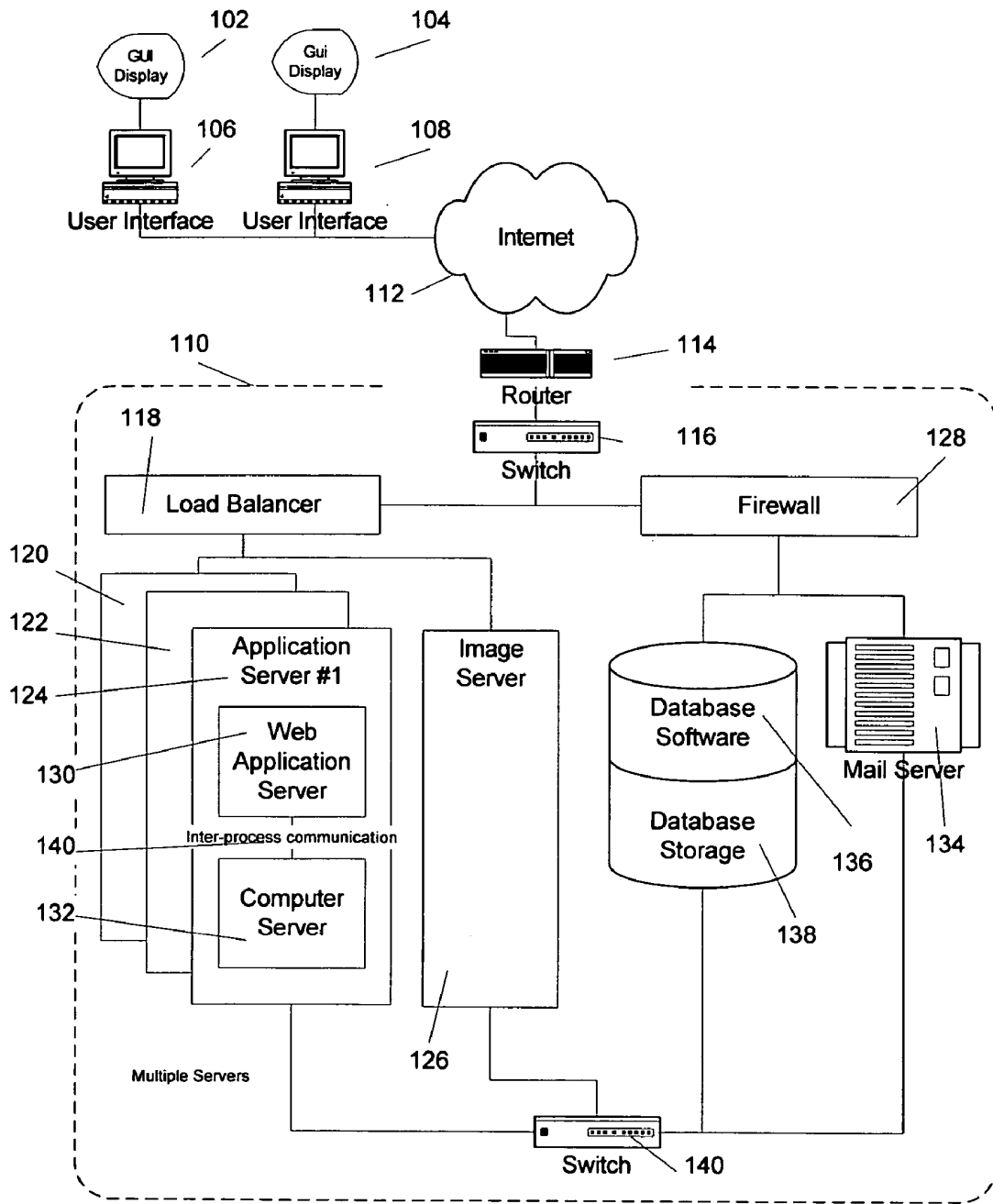


FIG. 2
Database

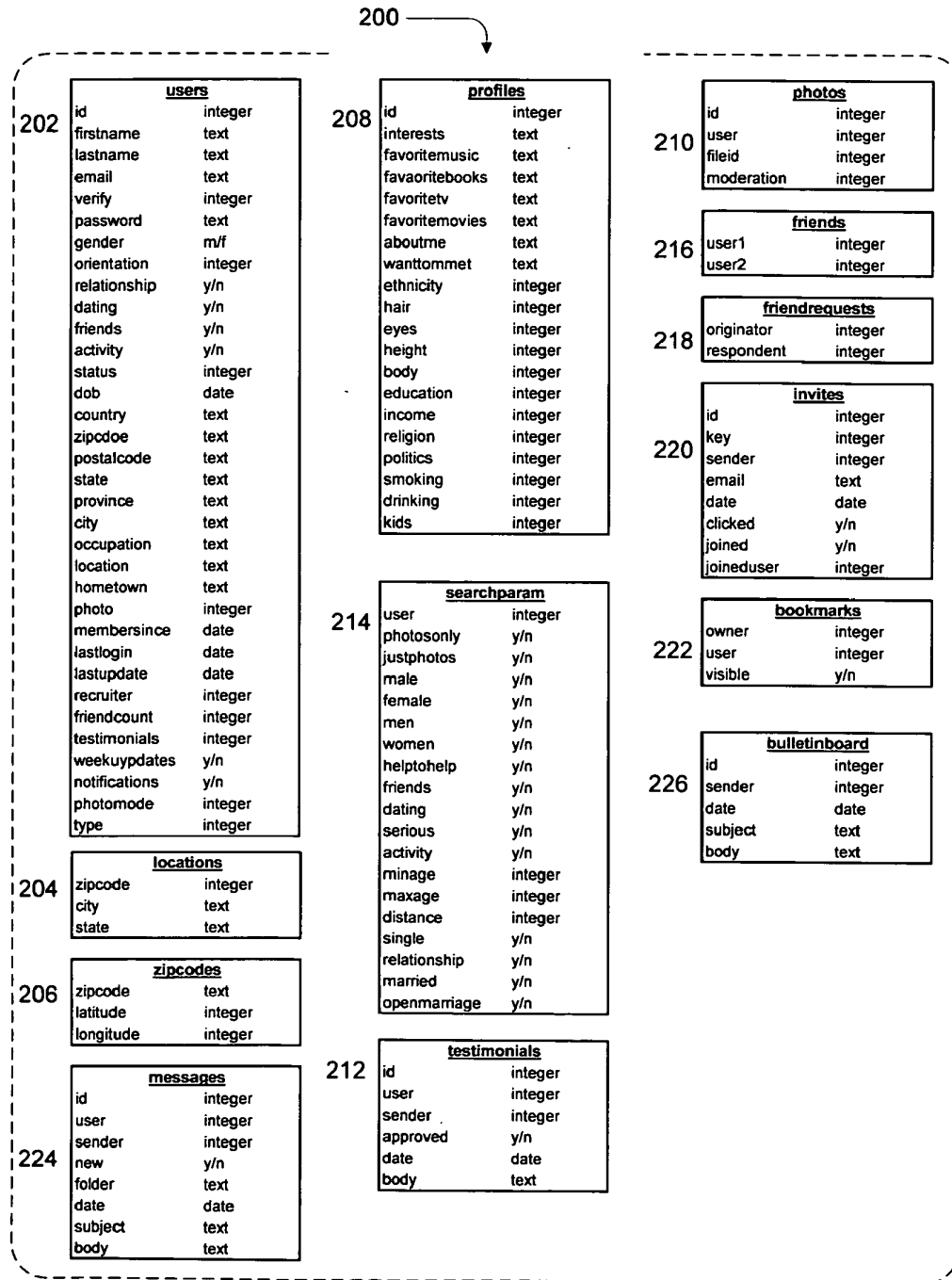
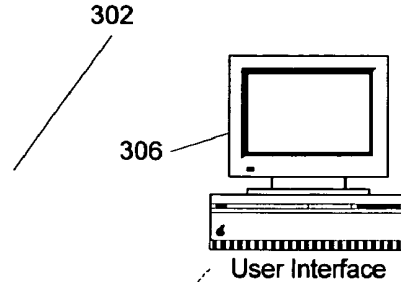


FIG. 3a
Data Collection Interface

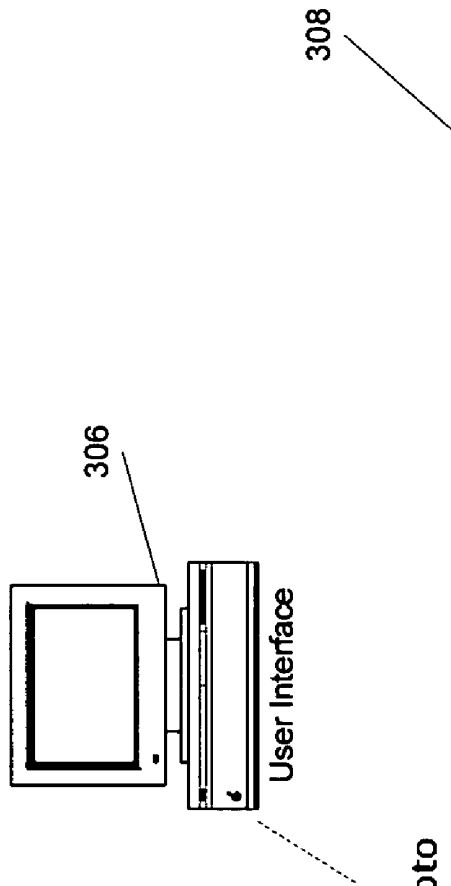
Email Address:	<input type="text"/>
Repeat Email Address:	<input type="text"/>
First Name:	<input type="text"/>
Last Name:	<input type="text"/>
Password:	<input type="text"/>
Repeat Password:	<input type="text"/>
Gender:	<input type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female
Interested in Meeting People for:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dating	<input type="radio"/> Men <input type="radio"/> Women
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Serious Relationship	<input type="radio"/> Men and Women
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Friends	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Activity Partners	
<input type="checkbox"/> Just Here to Help	



Did a friend refer you to Friendster? _____
 Friend's email address:
 (To automatically connect to your friend and your friend's friends.)

Status:	<input type="radio"/> Single/Divorced/Separated <input type="radio"/> In a Relationship <input type="radio"/> Married <input type="radio"/> Open Marriage
Date of Birth:	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
Country:	<input type="text"/>
Zip/Postal Code:	<input type="text"/> (U.S. & Canada Only)
Hometown:	<input type="text"/> (Where you grew up)
Occupation:	<input type="text"/>
Interests:	<input type="text"/> (Separate Interests with Commas)

FIG. 3b
Image Collection Interface



Upload a Photo

Your next step is to upload a photo, so people can recognize you.

(Your photos will only be visible to people in your **Personal Network**, not the general public.)

Upload New Photo:

You can upload a JPG, GIF, PNG, or BMP file. (Maximum size of 500k)
Do not upload photos containing children, pets, cartoons, celebrities, nudity, or copyrighted images. ([Photo Policy](#))

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