UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

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BEFORE THE PATENT TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

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META PLATFORMS, INC.,
Petitioner,

v.

ANGEL TECHNOLOGIES GROUP LLC,
Patent Owner.

———————

IPR2023-00057
Patent 8,954,432 B2

———————

Before MIRIAM L. QUINN, SHARON FENICK, and
MICHAEL T. CYGAN, *Administrative Patent Judges*.

FENICK, *Administrative Patent Judge*.

DECISION
Granting Institution of *Inter Partes* Review
35 U.S.C. § 314

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background and Summary

Meta Platforms, Inc. ("Petitioner") filed a Petition (Paper 1, "Pet.") requesting *inter partes* review of claims 1–8 ("challenged claims") of U.S. Patent No. 8,954,432 B2 (Ex. 1001, "the '432 patent"). Angel Technologies Group LLC ("Patent Owner") filed a Preliminary Response (Paper 9, "Prelim. Resp."). With our prior authorization (Ex. 1036), Petitioner filed a Preliminary Reply (Paper 14, "Prelim. Reply") and Patent Owner filed a Preliminary Sur-reply (Paper 15, "Prelim. Sur-reply").

An *inter partes* review may be instituted only if "the information presented in the petition . . . and any [preliminary] response . . . shows that there is a reasonable likelihood that the petitioner would prevail with respect to at least 1 of the claims challenged in the petition." 35 U.S.C. § 314(a) (2018). For the reasons below, Petitioner has established a reasonable likelihood that it would prevail in showing the unpatentability of at least one of the challenged claims. Accordingly, we institute an *inter partes* review of the challenged claims on all grounds raised in the Petition.

B. Real Parties in Interest

Petitioner identifies itself and Instagram, LLC as the real parties in interest, and notes that it was formerly known as Facebook, Inc. Pet. 2.

Patent Owner identifies only itself as a real party in interest. Paper 4 (Patent Owner's Mandatory Notices), 2.

C. Related Matters

Petitioner and Patent Owner identify *Angel Technologies Group LLC v. Facebook, Inc. and Instagram LLC*, No. 2:21-cv-08459 (C.D. Cal.) as a related case. Pet. 2; Paper 4, 2. Petitioner notes that an appeal of this case has been filed with the Federal Circuit. Pet. 2–3.

Petitioner and Patent Owner additionally identify IPR2023-00058 (challenging claims of U.S. Patent 9,959,291 B2); IPR2023-00059 (challenging claims of U.S. Patent 10,417,275 B2); and IPR2023-00060 (challenging claims of U.S. Patent 10,628,480 B2) as pending related *inter partes* review requests. *Id.* at 3; Paper 4, 2.

D.   The '432 Patent

The '432 patent is titled "Users Tagging Users in Photos Online" and relates to using computer(s) and a communication network for storing and sharing images such as photographs and permitting the identification of objects such as persons within the photos. Ex. 1001, codes (54), (57), 1:11–17. The '432 patent issued from an application filed November 15, 2001, and claims priority to a provisional application, No. 60/248,994 (Ex. 2017) ("the '994 provisional"), filed on November 15, 2000. *Id.* at codes (22), (60), 1:4–6; Ex. 2017.

The '432 patent describes, as part of the prior art, websites that allow users to organize digital photographs into online photo albums that can be accessed by other users. Ex. 1001, 1:25–61. However, the '432 patent describes disadvantages or limitations to these prior art albums, among others these include: (1) no ability for users to identify individuals or objects in photos; (2) text captions or descriptions cumbersome and possibly vague; (3) no search capabilities for searching for photos of specific individuals; and (4) no ability to associate descriptive terms identifying an object or individual in a photo with a specific area of the photo. *Id.* at 1:62–2:23, 2:37–63, 3:8–12; 3:17–26.

The '432 patent describes a system in which databases are used to store information to provide users access to upload, view, and access images, information about objects or people, and information about

relationships between users and images. *Id.* at 5:26–41, 6:59–7:37. The
'432 patent specification describes that the information can be stored in one
or more databases. *Id.* at 6:61–63. "For instance, the system may utilize a
users database 230, Identifications database 240, and Images database 250 as
depicted in FIG. 2." *Id.* at 6:63–65. Figure 2, reproduced below, is a
schematic diagram of the databases according to one embodiment of the
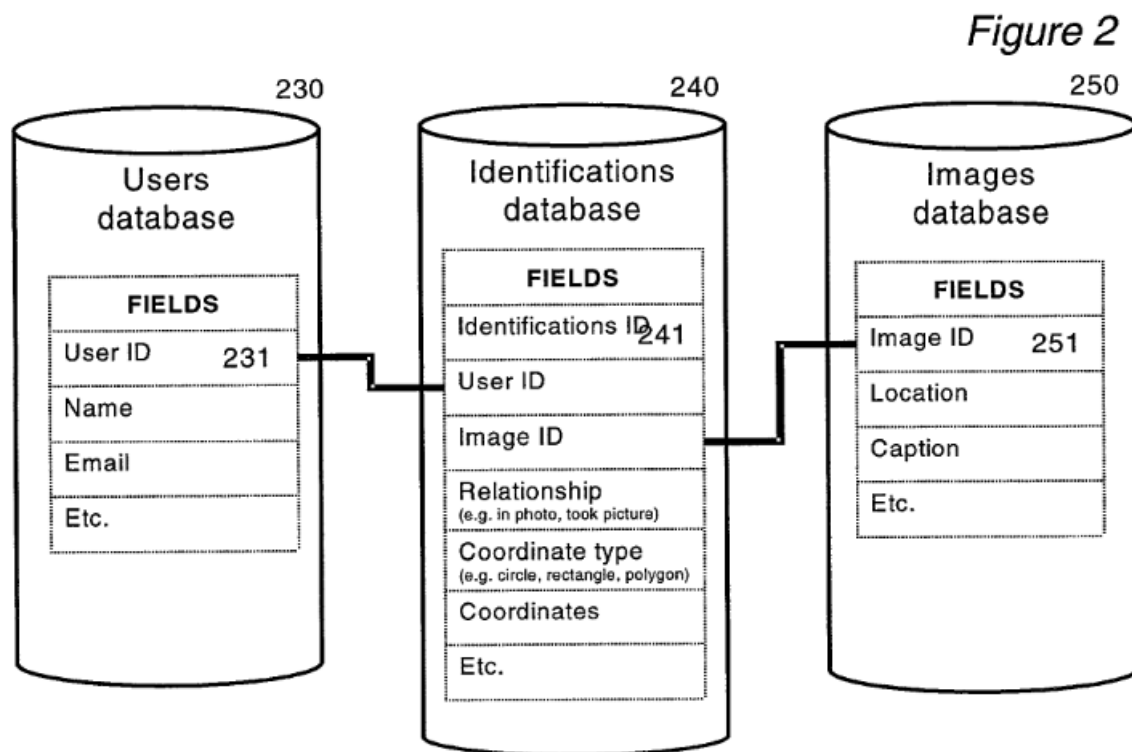invention. *Id.* at 4:31–32.

Figure 2

Figure 2 depicts users database 230, identifications database 240, and
images database 250, with the fields used in each database, and shows that
identifications database 240 links information in users database 230 with
information in images database 250. *Id.* at 6:63–7:36.

Users database 230 stores information about people or other objects
identified within images. *Id.* at 6:66–7:1. The information can relate to
users who access the system, and may include a user identifier unique to a
user or the user's client computer system and other information relating to

the user, including name, e-mail address, home page address, and a list of contacts. *Id.* at 6:66–7:5, 9:12–18. Users may enter other users as contacts. *Id.* at 9:18–28.

Images database 250 receives and stores image data, and may include a photo identifier and the location of the image file on the network, in addition to descriptive information such as a caption or date taken. *Id.* at 7:8–25, 9:29–41.

Identifications database 240 receives, stores, and provides information about relationships between users and photos, for example by linking information in users database 230 with information in images database 250. *Id.* at 7:25–36, 7:58–8:10, 8:34–44, 9:41–44. The location of the person in the photo may also be specified in the identifications database. *Id.* at 7:62–8:10. Web pages that permit users to identify people or other objects within photos are presented to obtain identifying information. *Id.* at 9:60–67, 11:38–41. The location of a user in an image may also be captured in such a page. *Id.* at 11:46–12:3. Figure 4, reproduced below, is an example of such an "identifying page." *Id.* at 10:1–2.
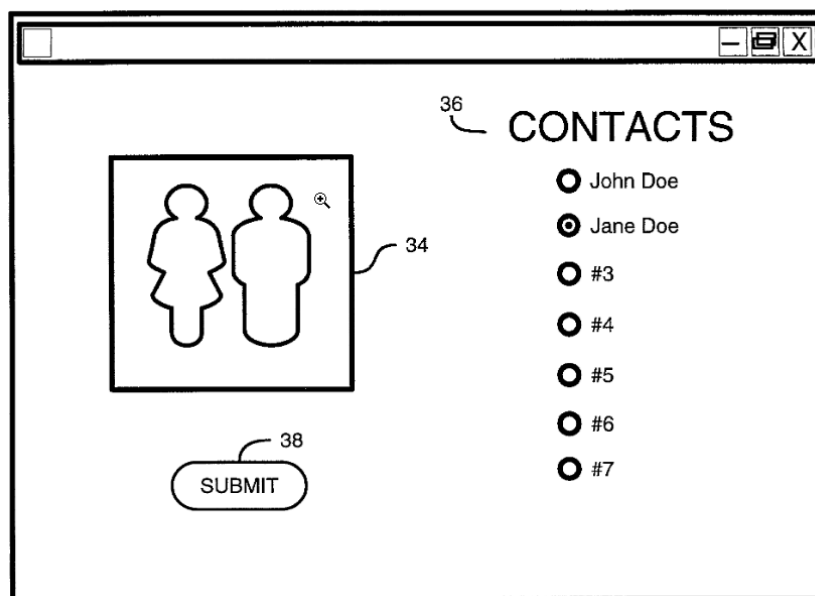
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