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

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(54) **METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR  
CONSTRUCTING A NETWORKING  
DATABASE AND SYSTEM**

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(75) Inventors: **Andrew P. Weinreich; Mark R. Salamon; Shoshana Zilberberg; Nicole D. Berlyn; Leeann Mitchell; Cliff Rosen; Adam Seifer; Justin Green**, all of New York; **David Haber**, Great Neck; **David Samuels**, Atlantic Beach; **Ron Chibnik**, New York; **Scott Clifford**, East Moriches, all of NY (US); **Chandrasekhar Boddu**, Piscataway, NJ (US)

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(73) Assignee: **six degrees, inc.**, New York, NY (US)

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

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(21) Appl. No.: **08/785,559**

*Primary Examiner*—Wayne Amsbury

(22) Filed: **Jan. 17, 1997**

*Assistant Examiner*—Thu-Thao Haven

(51) **Int. Cl.**<sup>7</sup> ..... **G06F 17/30**

(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm*—Pennie & Edmonds LLP

(52) **U.S. Cl.** ..... **707/10; 707/130; 707/104; 345/333; 364/918**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

(58) **Field of Search** ..... 707/130, 10, 104, 707/511; 395/200; 370/407; 706/47, 60; 345/333; 358/402, 440, 444; 705/14; 434/350; 364/918

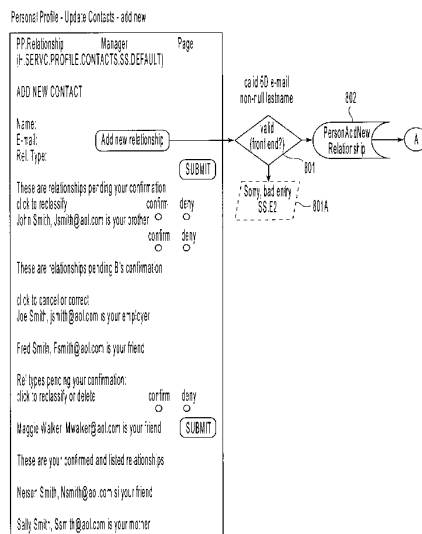
A networking database containing a plurality of records for different individuals in which individuals are connected to one another in the database by defined relationships. Each individual has the opportunity to define the relationship which may be confirmed or denied. E-mail messaging and interactive communication between individuals and a database service provider provide a method of constructing the database. The method includes having a registered individual identify further individuals and define therewith a relationship. The further individuals then, in turn, establish their own defined relationships with still other individuals. The defined relationships are mutually defined.

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**36 Claims, 33 Drawing Sheets**



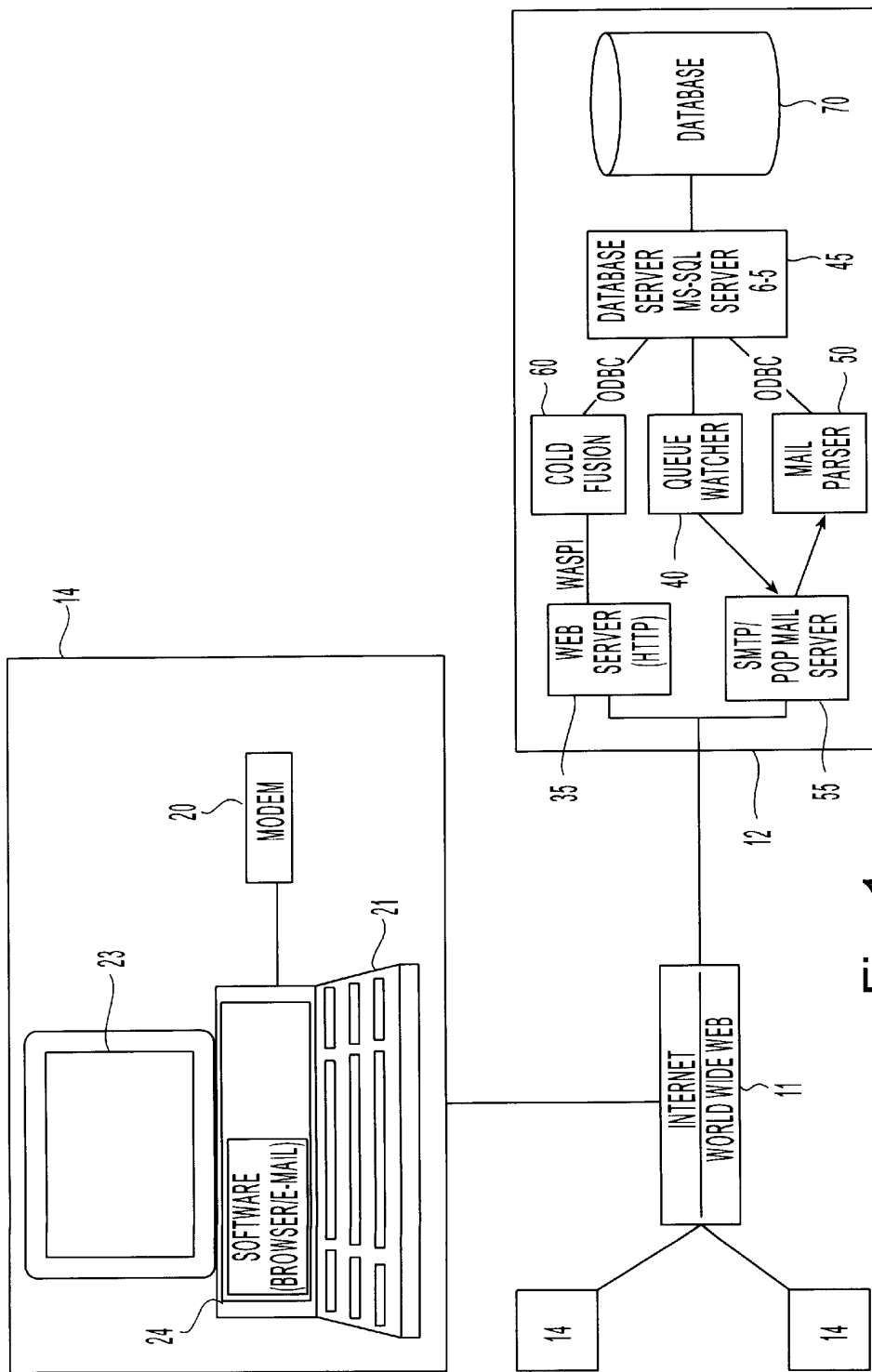


Fig. 1

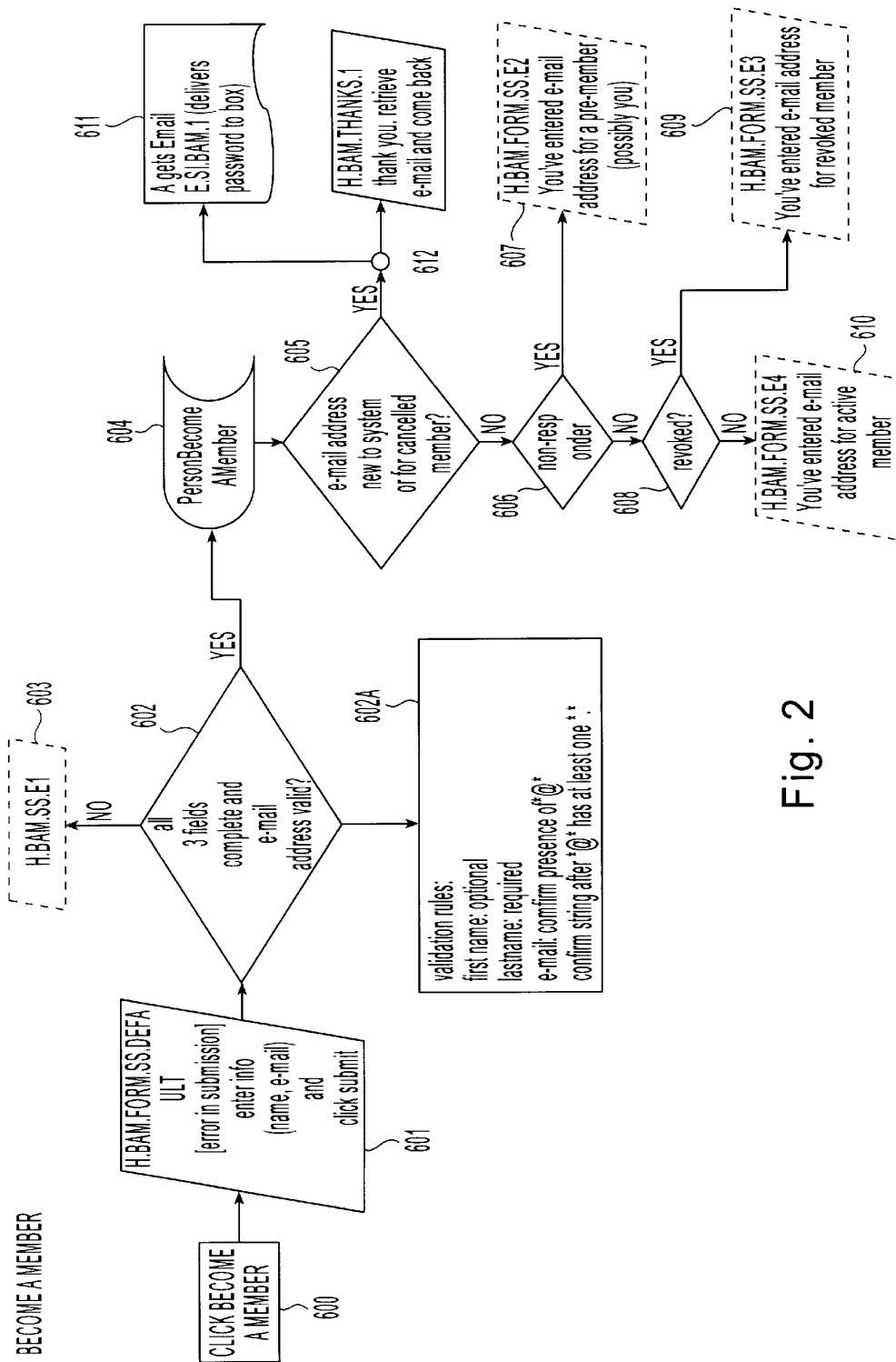


Fig. 2

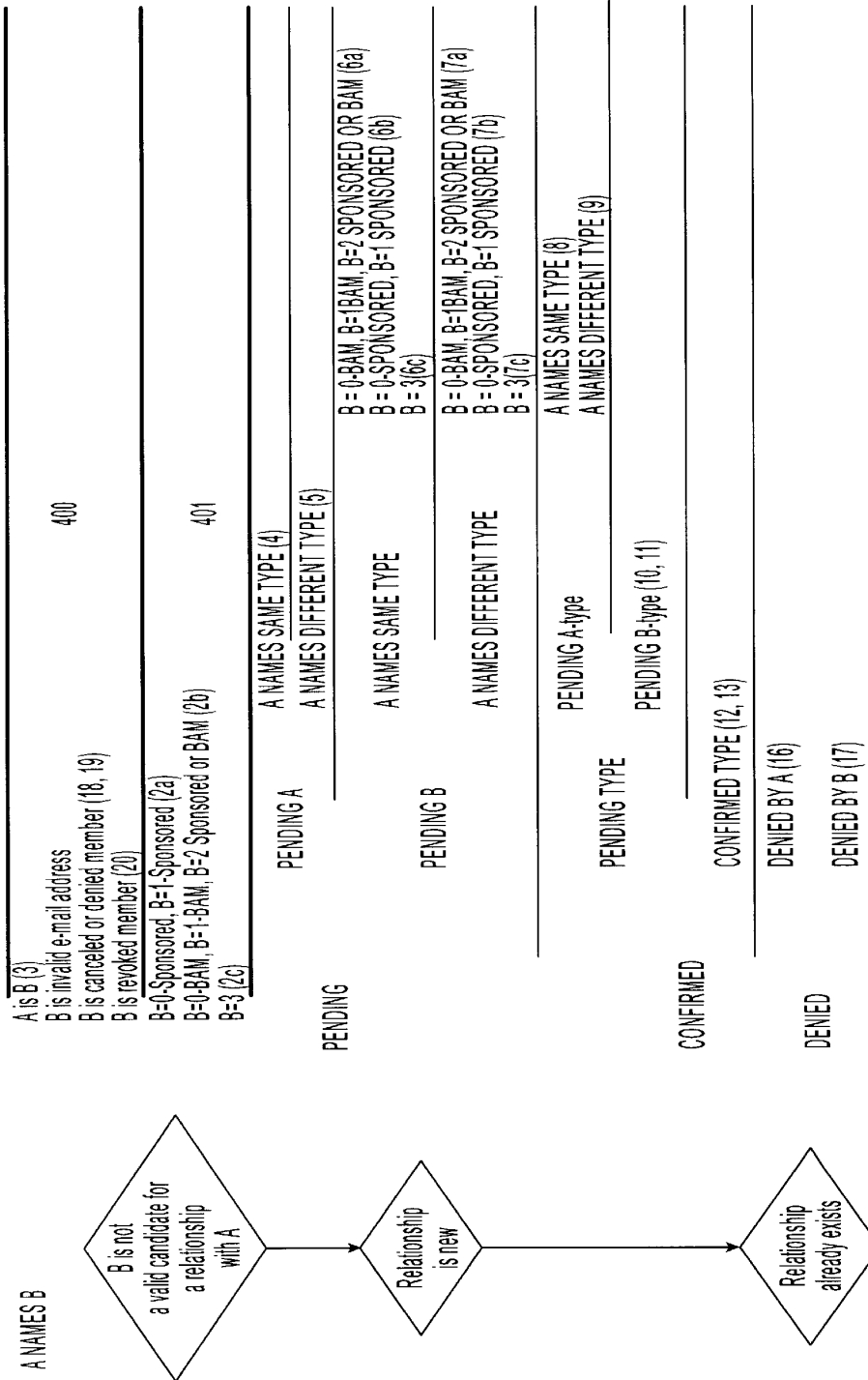


Fig. 3

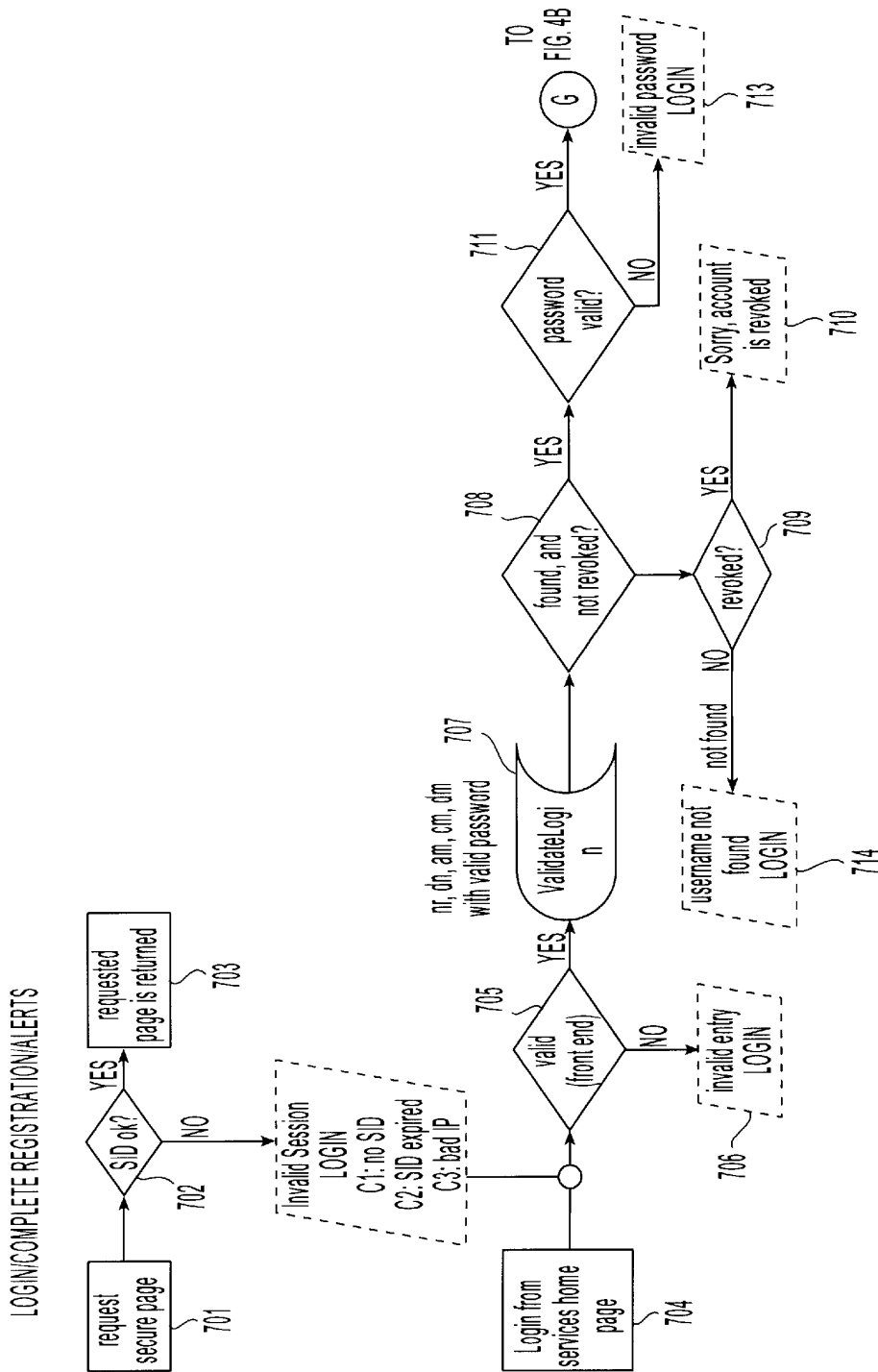


Fig. 4A

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