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(54) **METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR DISTRIBUTING PICTURE MAIL TO A FRAME DEVICE COMMUNITY**

(75) Inventors: **Dean Schiller**, Glendale; **Paul Yanover**, Los Angeles, both of CA (US)

(73) Assignee: **Ceiva Logic, Inc.**, Burbank, CA (US)

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(58) Field of Search 345/302, 327, 345/719; 709/218, 215; 713/2; 707/500.1; 358/403

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Primary Examiner—Heather R. Herndon
Assistant Examiner—Jeffrey A. Rossi
(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm*—The Hecker Law Group

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A method and apparatus for distributing picture mail to a frame device community is described. The present invention comprises one or more interconnected frame devices. Each frame device has a display region (e.g. an LCD) surrounded with a border region modeled to resemble a traditional picture frame. The border region may be comprised of wood, plastic, or any other aesthetically pleasing compound. Each frame device is configured to connect to an interconnection fabric to periodically obtain image data from a centralized repository and then display that data according to criteria established by an authorized user. The data repository is populated with image data via the image collection process. In one or more embodiments of the invention, the user may specify filter criteria which establishes what network addresses (e.g. picture mail address) are authorized to populate the data repository. The filter criteria and other information such as the behavior characteristics of each frame device are established and/or managed via a picture box. The picture box resides on a server computer and may be obtained by the user upon demand.

17 Claims, 12 Drawing Sheets
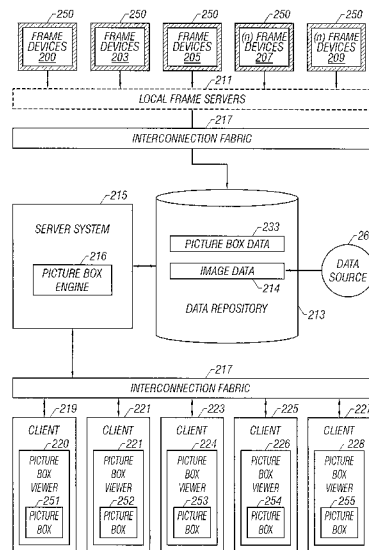
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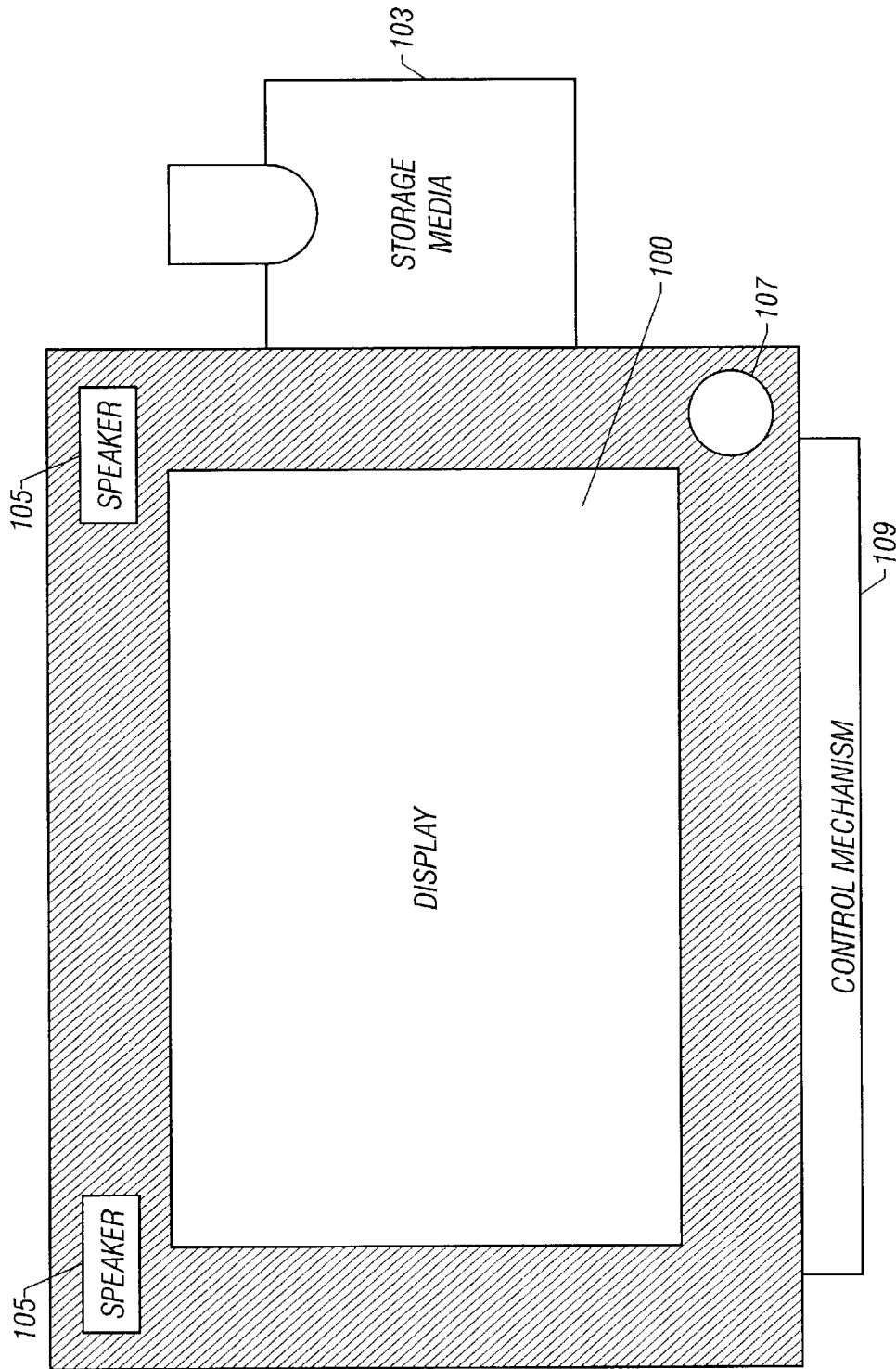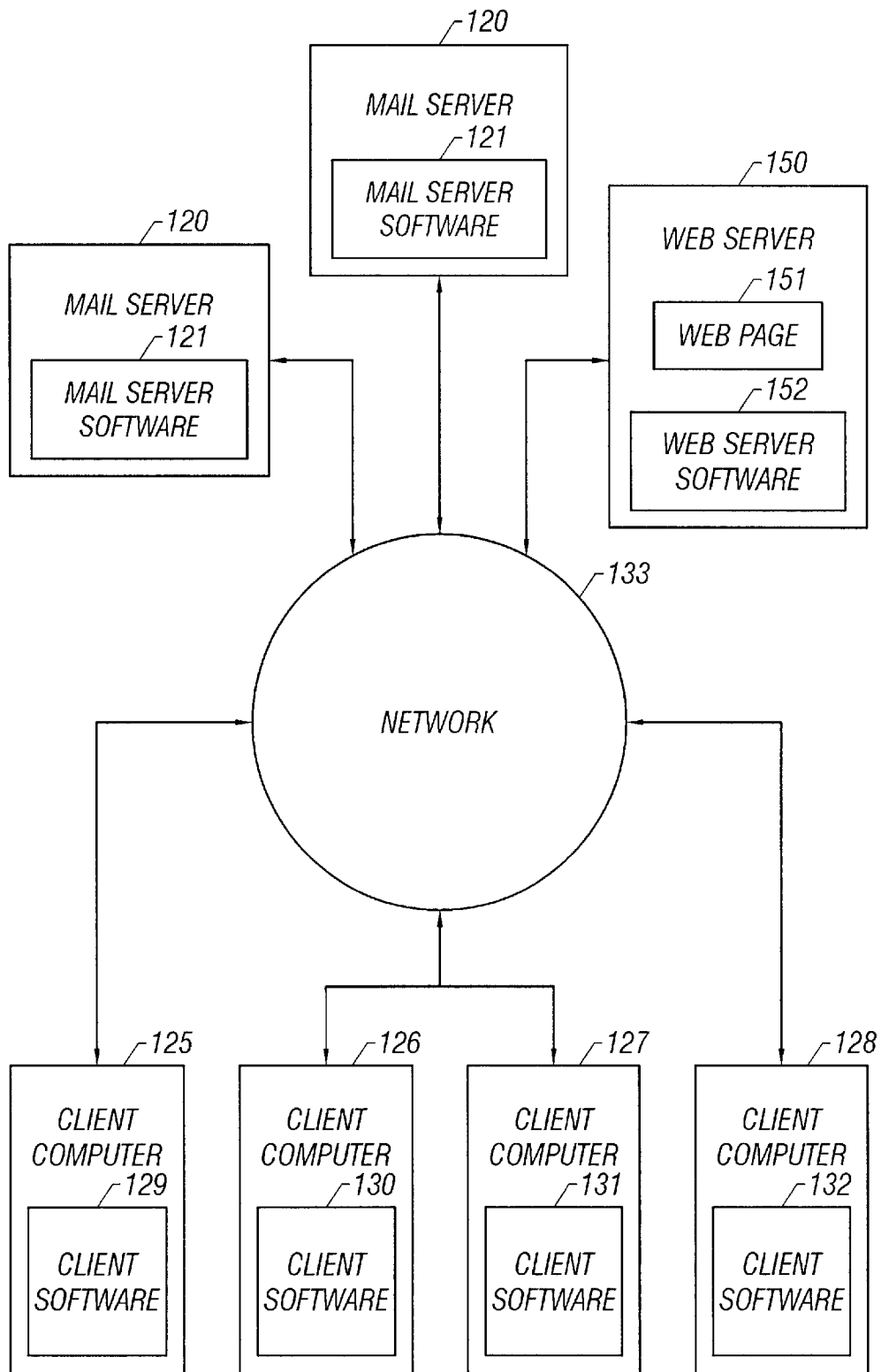
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FIGURE 1A
(Prior Art)

STORAGE MEDIA — 103

100

107

109

SPEAKER — 105

SPEAKER — 105

DISPLAY

CONTROL MECHANISM

FIGURE 1B
(Prior Art)

FIGURE 1C
(Prior Art)

DOCKET ALARM
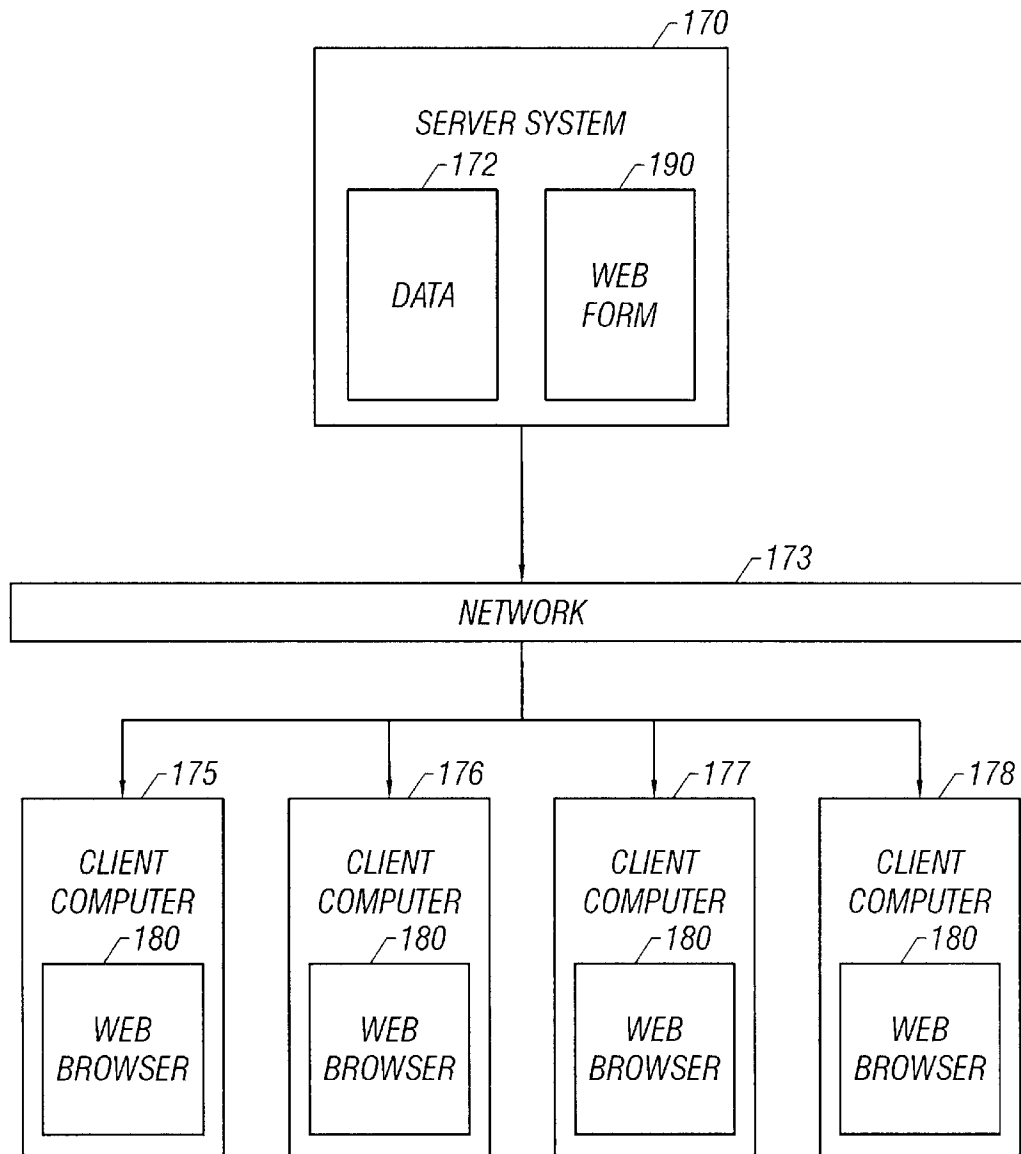
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