

In the Claims:

Please cancel claims 1-16 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please add the following new claims 17-35:

1 ~~17.~~ A method for facilitating communications among a plurality of host computers over a
2 network to implement a shared, interactive application, comprising the steps of:
3 (1) receiving a create message from one of the plurality of host computers, wherein
4 said create message specifies a message group to be created;
5 (2) receiving join messages from a first subset of the plurality of host computers,
6 wherein each of said join messages specifies said message group;
7 (3) receiving host messages from a second subset of said first subset of the
8 plurality of host computers belonging to said message group, wherein each of said messages
9 contains a payload portion and a portion that is used to identify said message group;
10 (4) aggregating said payload portions of said host messages received from said
11 second subset of the plurality of host computers to create an aggregated payload;
12 (5) forming an aggregated message using said aggregated payload; and
13 (6) transmitting said aggregated message to said first subset of the plurality of host
14 computers belonging to said message group;
15 ^{wherein} ~~whereby~~ said aggregated message keeps the shared, interactive application operating
16 consistently on each of said first subset of the plurality of host computers.

1 ~~18.~~ The method of claim ~~17~~, wherein the network is at least a portion of the Internet.

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19. A method for facilitating communications among a plurality of host computers over a network to implement a shared, interactive application, comprising the steps of:

- (1) receiving a create message from one of the plurality of host computers, wherein said create message specifies a message group to be created;
- (2) receiving join messages from a first subset of the plurality of host computers, wherein each of said join messages specifies said message group;
- (3) receiving host messages from a second subset of said first subset of the plurality of host computers belonging to said message group, wherein each of said messages contains a payload portion and a portion that is used to identify said message group;
- (4) aggregating said payload portions of said host messages received from said second subset of the plurality of host computers to create an aggregated message;
- (5) transmitting said aggregated message to said first subset of the plurality of host computers belonging to said message group;

wherein ^{wherein} ~~whereby~~ said aggregated message keeps the shared, interactive application operating consistently on each of said first subset of the plurality of host computers.

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20. The method of claim 19, wherein the network is at least a portion of the Internet.

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21. A method for facilitating communications among a plurality of host computers over a network to implement a shared, interactive application, comprising the steps of:

- (1) receiving a host message from one of the plurality of host computers belonging to a message group, wherein said host message contains a payload portion and a portion that is used to identify said message group;
- (2) forming a server message using said payload portion of said host message;
- (3) transmitting said server message to each of the plurality of host computers belonging to said message group; and
- (4) suppressing said server message such that said one of the plurality of host computers which originated said host message does not receive said server message;

wherein ^{wherein} ~~whereby~~ said server message keeps the shared, interactive application operating consistently on each of the plurality of host computers belonging to said message group.

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~~22.~~ ⁵ The method of claim ~~21~~, wherein the network is at least a portion of the Internet.

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~~23.~~ A method for facilitating communications among a plurality of host computers over a
2 network to implement a shared, interactive application, comprising the steps of:

3 (1) receiving messages from a subset of the plurality of host computers belonging
4 to a message group, wherein each of said messages contains a payload portion and a portion
5 that is used to identify said message group;

6 (2) aggregating said payload portions of said messages to create an aggregated
7 payload; and

8 (3) transmitting said aggregated message to each of the plurality of host computers
9 belonging to said message group;

10 ^{wherein}
~~whereby~~ said aggregated message keeps the shared, interactive application operating
11 consistently on each of the plurality of host computers belonging to said message group.

1 ⁸
~~24.~~ ⁷ The method of claim ~~23~~, wherein the network is at least a portion of the Internet.

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~~25.~~ ⁷ The method of claim ~~23~~, wherein step (3) is performed after pausing for a pre-
2 determined time interval.

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~~26.~~ ⁹ The method of claim ~~25~~, wherein said pre-determined time interval is equivalent to the
2 amount of time for the group messaging server to receive at least one message from each of
3 the plurality host computers belonging to said first message group.

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~~27.~~ ⁹ The method of claim ~~25~~, wherein said pre-determined time interval is a function of the
2 rate that said messages are received from said subset of the plurality of host computers
3 belonging to said first message group.

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1 ~~28.~~ A method for providing group messages to a plurality of host computers connected to
2 a group messaging server over a unicast wide area communication network, comprising the
3 steps of:

4 (1) communicating with the plurality of host computers using the unicast network
5 and maintaining a list of message groups, each message group containing at least one host
6 computer;

7 (2) receiving messages from a subset of the plurality of host computers, each host
8 computer in said subset belonging to a first message group, wherein each of said messages
9 contains a payload portion and a portion that is used to identify said first message group;

10 (3) aggregating said payload portions of said messages received from said subset
11 of the plurality of host computers to create an aggregated payload;

12 (4) forming an aggregated message using said aggregated payload; and

13 (5) transmitting said aggregated message to a recipient host computer belonging to
14 said first message group.

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1 ~~29.~~ The method of claim ~~28~~, wherein the unicast wide area communication network is at
2 least a portion of the Internet.

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1 ~~30.~~ The method of claim ~~28~~, wherein the unicast wide area communication network is at
2 least a portion of the Internet, and said group messaging server communicates with said
3 plurality of host computers using a session layer protocol.

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1 ~~31.~~ The method of claim ~~28~~, wherein step (3) is performed after pausing for a pre-
2 determined time interval.

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1 ~~32.~~ The method of claim ~~31~~, wherein said pre-determined time interval is equivalent to the
2 amount of time for the group messaging server to receive at least one message from each of
3 the plurality host computers belonging to said first message group.

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1 ~~33~~. The method of claim ~~31~~, wherein said pre-determined time interval is a function of the
2 rate that said messages are received from said subset of the plurality of host computers
3 belonging to said first message group.

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1 ~~34~~. A method for facilitating communications among a plurality of host computers over a
2 network to implement a shared, interactive application, comprising the steps of:

3 (1) receiving a host message from one of the plurality of host computers belonging
4 to a message group, wherein said host message contains a payload portion and a portion that
5 is used to identify said message group;

6 (2) forming a server message ^{by} using said payload portion of said host message; and

7 (3) transmitting said server message to each of the plurality of host computers ^{by}

8 belonging to said message group;

9 whereby said server message keeps the shared, interactive application operating
10 consistently on each of the plurality of host computers belonging to said message group.

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1 ~~35~~. The method of claim ~~34~~, wherein the network is at least a portion of the Internet.--

Added
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