

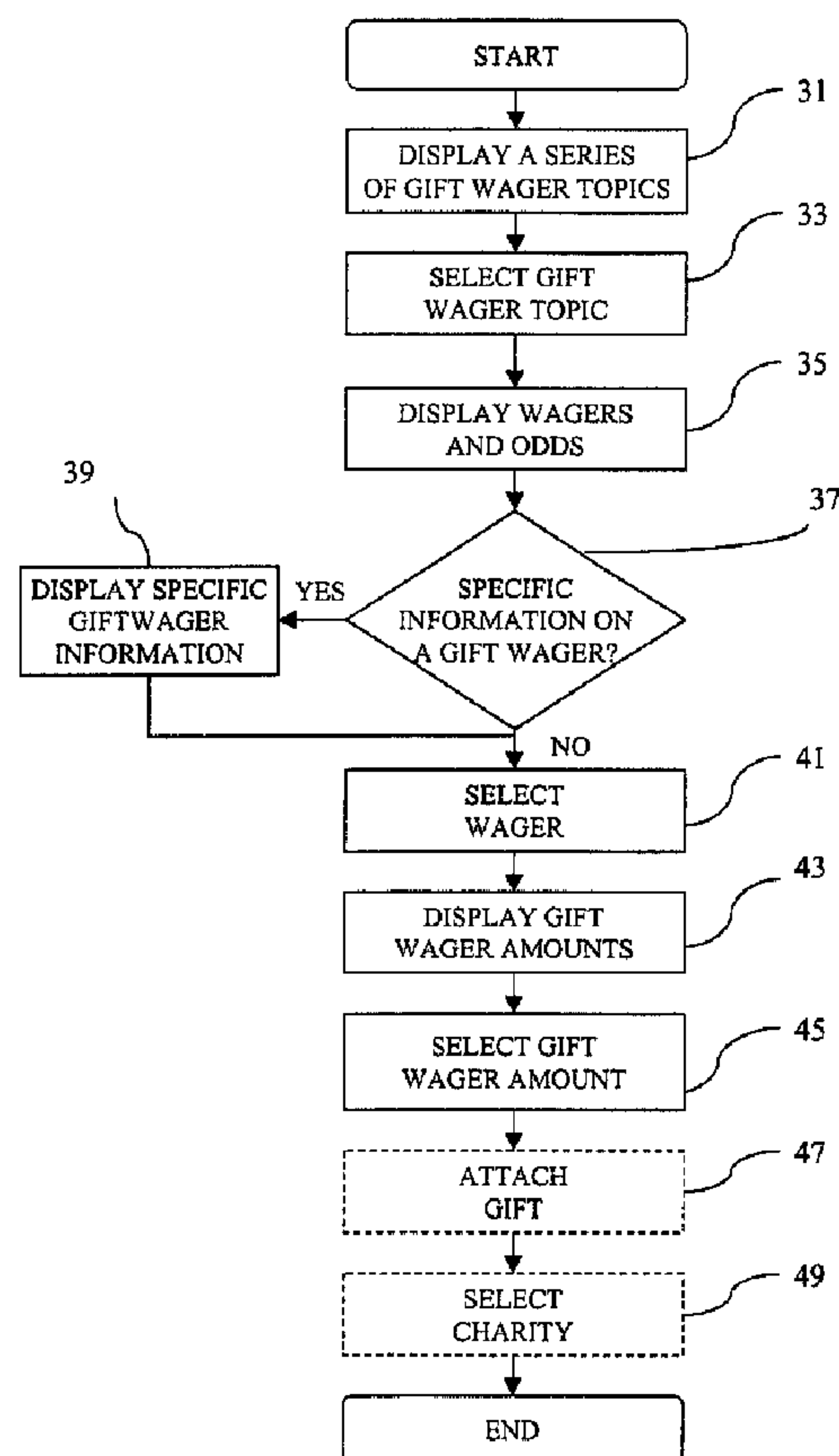


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A wager is placed by a first user for a second user, through a wager server. The wager is composed from a selection of events and associated odds. The wager is tracked by the wager server. Once an outcome of the wager is determined, the wager server



(57) **Abrégé(suite)/Abstract(continued):**

notifies the second user. If the outcome is positive, the second user is provided the winnings of the wager, while the first user receives no monetary reward from the wager.

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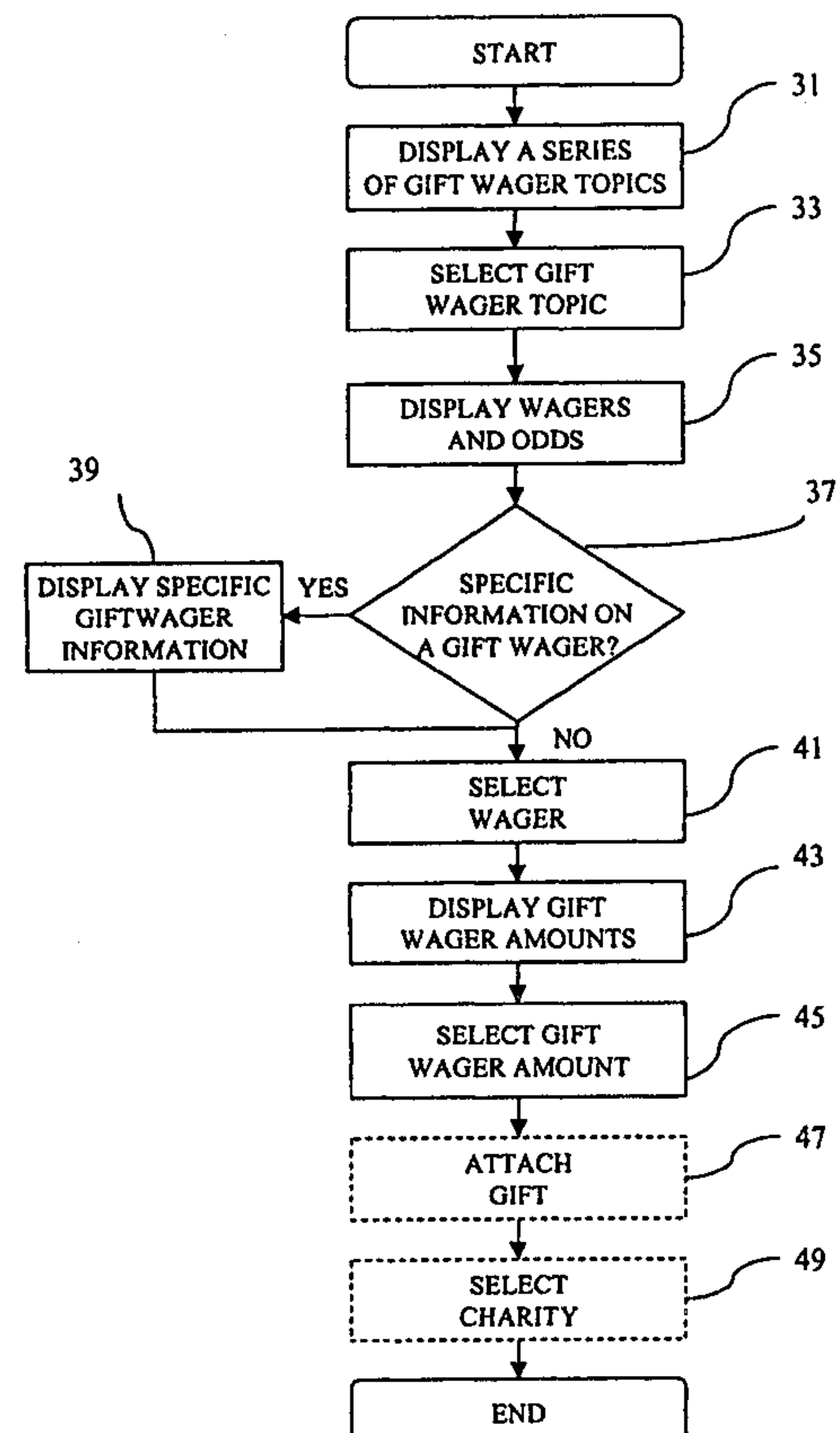
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(54) Title: METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR PROVIDING ELECTRONICALLY PLACED WAGERS FOR ANOTHER

(57) Abstract

A wager is placed by a first user for a second user, through a wager server. The wager is composed from a selection of events and associated odds. The wager is tracked by the wager server. Once an outcome of the wager is determined, the wager server notifies the second user. If the outcome is positive, the second user is provided the winnings of the wager, while the first user receives no monetary reward from the wager.



**METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR PROVIDING ELECTRONICALLY
PLACED WAGERS FOR ANOTHER**

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to electronic wagering systems and methods, and more particularly, to a system and method of creating and placing wagers as a gift by a first user using an electronic wager server such that any winnings are received by a second user, the intended recipient of the gift.

The expansion of electronic devices, such as personal computers and cellular phones, into the homes, offices, and thus "day to day" lives of the average consumers has also expanded and opened multiple and diverse avenues in entertainment and business. For instance, with the growing acceptance and maturing of the personal computer and along with it, communication media such as the satellite television and the Internet, electronic shopping has become commonplace and especially convenient for consumers. Hence, finding and ordering a gift has become even easier. However, providing a gift that is different and entertaining is not easily found.

Wagering, risking something, such as a sum of money, on an outcome of an uncertain event, is often entertaining. However, in traditional wagering environments, money is wagered by an individual on an outcome of a particular event and based on the wager and the outcome of the particular event, the individual is given or paid a particular amount of money or loses the money wagered. Therefore, the entertainment or enjoyment of the wager is usually isolated to the individual wagerer and any other persons that happen to be around the wagerer at the time. Therefore, even through the use of blossoming communication media providing a worldwide market for both consumers and retailers, the entertainment of the wager is usually shared by one individual, the wagerer.

Providing the individual to share the wagering experience to another individual may well benefit both the individual setting up the wager and the other individual.

U.S. Patent No. 5,442,567 filed on August 15, 1995 and issued to Small describes a greeting card dispensing apparatus in which a customer is able to personalize a greeting card and include an associated gift. (See column 1, lines 9-11.) Gift possibilities include wagers on the recipient's favorite sport's theme, gift certificates to department stores, etc., or even money in the form of money orders. Virtually any gift which can be evidenced by an electronically generated personalized printout and be generated and combined with, or printed directly on, a personalized card from the kiosk. (See column 2, lines 12-20.) International Patent Application No. WO99/01188 by Walker, et al. filed on January 14, 1999 describes a system including a central controller providing a game of chance and operated by a game provider and a user computer that communicates with the central controller via the Internet. (See page 10, lines 29-33.) The central controller includes a game database in which each record corresponds to one

1 game played by one player. (See page 15, lines 6-10). Many of the features provided by the present invention are not described by the documents of Walker or Small.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

5 The present invention provides an electronic wagering system in which a user or consumer, a gift giver, is able to create or select a bet or wager as a gift for another person, a gift recipient. The gift recipient is then notified of the gift giver's gift, the wager, and provided any winnings resulting from the wager.

10 In accordance with one aspect of the invention, a method that provides a gift wager by a first user to a second user and the method comprises composing a gift wager by a first user through a communication media, the gift wager including a particular event and a payoff associated to an outcome of the particular event. The method further comprises obtaining contact information regarding a second user, notifying the second user that a gift wager has been composed by the first user prior to the outcome of the particular event, and providing result data
15 to the second user in response to the outcome of the particular event.

In another aspect of the invention, an electronic wager system is provided to provide a gift wager by a first user to a second user. The electronic wagering system includes communication means providing a conduit to receive input from a first user concerning a gift wager for a second user, the gift wager pertaining to a wager, a particular event, and contact data concerning a
20 second user and computer means storing the gift wager from the first user and tracking the particular event, the computer means sending result data to the second user prior in response to an outcome of the particular event.

In another aspect of the invention, an electronic wager system includes a first user computer utilized by a first user and coupled to a first communication medium, a second user
25 computer utilized by a second user and coupled to a second communication medium, and a wager server coupled to the first communication medium and the second communication medium. The wager server includes a memory storage in which at least one wager record is stored in the memory storage, the at least one wager record pertaining to a predetermined event, and a wager engine configured to receive information from the first user computer to compose the at least one
30 wager record, to determine an outcome of the predetermined event and to transmit information regarding the outcome of the predetermined event to the second user computer.

Many of the attendant features of this invention will be more readily appreciated as the same becomes better understood by reference to the following detailed description considered in connection with the accompanying drawings.

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DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 illustrates a block diagram of one embodiment of the electronic wagering system;
FIG. 2 illustrates a flow diagram of an operational overview of the electronic wagering

1 system of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 illustrates a block diagram of one embodiment of a wager server of the electronic wagering system of FIG. 1;

5 FIG. 4 illustrates a flow diagram of a process of creating a wager by a wager construction module of the wager server of FIG. 3;

FIG. 5 illustrates a flow diagram of a process of notifying a gift recipient and/or a gift giver concerning the outcome of the gift wager by an outcome tracking module of the wager server of FIG. 3; and

10 FIG. 6 illustrates a flow diagram of a process of accessing winnings provided for a gift wager by a gift recipient by the outcome tracking module of the wager server of FIG. 3.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

15 FIG. 1 illustrates a block diagram of one embodiment of the electronic wagering system of the present invention. A user computer 11 is linked, telephonically including ISDN lines, ADSL lines and DSL lines, wireless connections, such as radio frequency transmissions and satellite transmissions, or via any other communication methods, to a number of other computers. These other computers include a wager server 13. The wager server 13, in one embodiment, is
20 a web and database server providing administrative and other functions for the electronic wagering system. In a preferred embodiment, the wager server is a computing device having computer memory storage devices and network interface cards and operating under a UNIX operating system.

The user computer 11 may comprise a personal computer (PC), an engineering
25 workstation, a palm computer, a cellular phone, a large mainframe computer, or any other system capable of supporting Internet and/or other types of communication media and display functions.

Alternatively, a television equipped with a digital or analog set top box or a separate access terminal is used to connect to the Internet and/or the wager server. The separate access terminal includes cellular phones, wireless modems and other phone modems providing
30 connection to the Internet and/or the wager server over a telephone network. Similarly, access to the Internet can be through television cables or satellite delivery systems. Various other devices can be used to provide access to the Internet or send an E-mail to the wager server. In another embodiment, the gift giver uses a cellular, "land-line", or wireless telephone which communicates with a telephone network or cellular network to access the wager server or a
35 customer representative with access to the wager server. The description of the particular devices and access is exemplary and is not intended to be limiting in any sense.

In a preferred embodiment, the user computer 11 may be a low cost machine specially designed for Internet browsing. The user computer includes various application programs,

1 including a Web browser. The Web browser retrieves information from Web servers, such as
the wager server, for display on the user's computer display terminal. The Web browser obtains
a copy of the requested material from the wager server when a user, via the user computer,
5 requests information from a wager server. The Web browser uses hypertext transfer protocol
(HTTP) as a protocol for communicating over the Internet with the wager server. Standard
TCP/IP is utilized as a protocol to communicate between the user computer and the wager server,
and generally according to the Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP), SMTP being a TCP/IP
protocol that operates at layers 5-7 of the Open Systems Interconnection (OSI) model. Web
browsers are widely commercially available, and include Internet Explorer, available from
10 Microsoft Corporation and Navigator, available from Netscape, and others. Both Internet
Explorer and Navigator are suitable web browsers for use in conjunction with the present
invention, with Navigator Version 4.0 and Internet Explorer Version 4.0 being the preferred
versions.

15 In one embodiment, the wager server 13 is coupled to a mass storage device, such as a
hard disk drive, a redundant array of independent disks (RAID) or a group of disks, also known
as "just a bunch of disks" (JBOD). The mass storage device hosts at least one database, a gift
wager database 15, that contains information about wagers placed for others. The wager server
is configured to access the gift wager database to store and retrieve information for the gift wager
database. The information contained in the gift wager database including information about
20 wagers placed for others is in the form of a series of records.

In one embodiment, the series of records include a gift giver record, a gift wager record
and a gift recipient record. The gift giver record includes, for example, a gift giver profile
including his or her e-mail address, home and/or business addresses, home and/or business
numbers, an unique identification number, a history of past gift wagers, and so on. The gift giver
25 profile can contain preferences such as preferred styles of bets, particular themes of wagers, and
other similar types of information. Likewise, the gift recipient record includes a gift recipient
profile including, for example, his or her e-mail address, home and/or business addresses, and
home and/or business numbers, an unique identification number, a history of past gift wagers
received, and so on.

30 The gift wager record, in one embodiment, includes pointers or logical links to an
associated gift giver and gift recipient records, such as address to the records or unique
identification numbers for each record. The gift wager record includes, for example, dates when
the gift or bet was made, when the winnings were or will be paid, when the outcome of the wager
happened or will happen, how much and to which charity will some of the winnings will go to
35 and so on. Other information included in the gift wager record can include what theme is related
to the gift wager, how much is or was the wager for, what are the odds of the wager and so on.

FIG. 2 illustrates a flow diagram of an operational overview of the electronic wagering
system illustrated in FIG. 1. In step 21, a gift giver through the user computer 11 accesses wager

1 server 13. In step 23, the gift giver selects a gift wager. In step 25, the gift giver provides
 information about him or herself. In one embodiment the information provided about the gift
 giver includes the name, address, phone number and payment information, e.g., a credit card
 number of the gift giver. In step 27, the gift giver provides information about a gift recipient.
 5 With the gift wager prepared, the wager server, in step 29, notifies the gift recipient that a gift
 wager has been made. In step 30, the wager server periodically determines if the outcome of the
 gift wager has been determined. Once the wager server in step 30 determines that the outcome
 of the gift wager has been determined then the wager server notifies the gift recipient and/or the
 gift giver regarding the outcome and winnings, if any, of the gift wager and then process ends.

10 FIG. 3 illustrates a block diagram of one embodiment of the wager server in FIG. 1. The
 wager server is configured to provide bi-directional communication between the user computer
 of the gift giver and the wager server. The wager server includes a wager interface 201 for
 receiving wager requests from the gift giver to allow gift givers to inform the wager server that
 they wish to compose a wager to be given away. The wager interface can be a Web page, an E-
 15 mail, a customer service representative or a customized or standard software interface with access
 to the wager server, or an automated or interactive attendant telephone switching system. In one
 embodiment, the wager interface requests information from the gift giver through a series of
 displays, user-interface windows or screens, e-mails, text prompts, voice prompts, web pages,
 or various other forms of user interfaces. In a preferred embodiment, the gift giver accesses the
 20 wager interface through a web page of the wager server utilizing an Internet connection.

When a gift giver accesses the wager server, in one embodiment, the wager server greets
 the gift giver by providing an introduction web page to the user computer of the gift giver to
 direct the gift giver through the process of creating a gift wager. As shown in FIG. 3, the wager
 server includes a registration module 203. The registration module allows gift givers to enter
 25 specific personal information pertaining to the gift giver.

In one embodiment, when the gift giver supplies the appropriate information to the
 registration module 203, the wager server creates a gift giver record. The registration module
 requests personal information from the gift giver regarding specific information about the gift
 giver, such as contact information and other information to populate or develop some or all of
 30 a gift giver record. In one embodiment, a form is provided by the registration module for the gift
 giver to provide personal information. The information is generally returned as part of a URL
 string, although other methods are also possible. The creation of forms and the reception of
 information from users by servers are well known methods to Web site developers.

In one embodiment, a gift giver record is populated or developed by the gift giver "logging
 35 in", e.g., using a name or identification number and/or a password, to the wager server. As such,
 the registration module 203 is able to access an old record from the gift wager database about the
 gift giver and thereby develop the gift giver record. In one embodiment, the registration module
 203 downloads a "cookie" file to the user computer, such that personal contact information

1 pertaining to the user remains persistent and thus permits the user to navigate between the wager
server and the multitude of other web sites and/or web servers without having to re-enter the
user's personal or identification information.

5 As further shown in FIG. 3, the wager server further includes wager construction module
205 and outcome tracking module 207. The wager construction module 205 requests information
from the gift giver or provides the gift giver a series of prompts or questions to develop a gift
wager. In one embodiment, the wager construction module 205 provides the gift giver a
predetermined selection of gift wagers. In one embodiment, the wager construction module
10 provides the gift giver a selection of topics or categories grouping a series of bets, such as bets
on particular events such as sports, weather reports, e.g., if it will rain in Los Angeles on a
particular day, and so on. The wager construction module also provides selections of odds, bet
amounts or stakes, and other types of information to the gift giver to create the gift wager.
Optionally, the wager construction module also provides a selection of messages to be attached
to gift wager, such as an E-mail, a simple text message, or an electronic greeting card.
15 Additionally, the wager construction module, in one embodiment, further provides the option of
attaching a tangible gift, such as flowers or candy.

In one embodiment, the wager construction module accesses a gift and message server.
The gift and message server, in one embodiment, is a computing device, such as a server,
workstation, or personal computer. In one embodiment, the gift and message server and the
20 wager server are one in the same and/or the outcome database is included with the gift wager
database. The gift and message server provides information to the wager construction module
to direct the gift giver through the process of selecting or creating a gift and/or message, and
attaching the gift and/or message, such as an electronic greeting card, E-mail or another type of
communicate.

25 The gift and message server prepares the message and gift for viewing by the gift giver
and eventually the gift recipient, and stores the viewable message and gift in a gift and message
viewing storage. In one embodiment, the gift and/or message are stored as records in the gift
wager database and linked to or associated with the gift wager record for the gift wager created
by the wager construction module.

30 In one embodiment, the wager construction module of the wager server releases control
to the gift and message server to direct the gift giver through the gift and/or message selection
process. Once, the gift giver completes the gift and/or message selection process, the gift and
message server releases control back to the wager server. In one embodiment, the gift and/or
message selection process begins with the gift giver being provided a selection of topics of
35 different types of gifts and/or messages. In one embodiment, the series of topics provided relate
to the gift wager, holidays or special occasions, or other types of common interests.

The gift and message server provides a selection of gifts, such as candies, flowers,
perfume or other types of retail items, and messages, such as electronic or conventional greeting

1 cards, postcards, voice mails, and other types of correspondence, based on the topic chosen. The
gift giver is provided an option to customize the gift or message, such as adding or modifying the
specific greeting on the message or color of the gift. The gift and message server also provides
an option to preview the message or gift in which the gift and message server displays the
5 message or gift. The gift giver is also provided the option to attach additional gifts and messages.
In one embodiment, the gift and message server provides a verification stage for the gift giver
to verify the previously provided information. If the gift giver wishes to change any information
provided, gifts or messages attached, the gift and/or message selection process is repeated. The
gift and message server then attaches the gifts and/or messages to the gift wager, by associating
10 or adding the information about the gifts and/or messages to the gift wager record in the gift
wager database. Once the gift and/or message selection process ends, the gift and message server
releases control back to the wager server, e.g., the wager construction module.

The wager construction module 205 also requests information about the gift recipient,
such as contact information and other information to populate or develop some or all of a gift
15 recipient record. In one embodiment, a gift recipient record is populated or developed by the gift
giver selecting, browsing or searching for a name, nickname, or another identifying mark for the
gift recipient as provided by the wager server in an address book or another type of contact list.
Therefore, the wager construction module 205 with the information gathered from the gift giver
is able to populate or develop a gift wager record with links to the gift giver record, information
20 identifying the gift giver, and the gift recipient record, information identifying the gift recipient.

FIG. 4 illustrates a flow diagram of one embodiment of the wager construction module
205 of FIG. 3, creating a gift wager. In step 31, the wager construction module provides a series
of topics or categories of different gift wagers along with a series of specific gift wagers. In one
embodiment, the series of topics provided relate to, sporting events, weather reports, or other
25 similar outcome-based programming. In step 33, the gift giver selects a gift wager topic. In step
35, the wager construction module in response to the gift wager topic being selected displays a
selection of wagers and odds associated with the wagers displayed.

In step 37, if the gift giver wants specific information on a particular gift wager, then, if
available, the wager construction module provides or displays a description of a specific gift
30 wager to the user computer in step 39. For example, a display, voice message, web page and the
like could provide a description of a specific gift wager including the odds and other specific
information. In another example, a display, voice message, web page and the like could provide
a description of how to obtain information about a specific gift wager including the odds and
other specific information. If the gift giver does not want specific information on a particular gift
35 wager or if no specific information is available, then the gift giver selects a wager in step 41. The
wager construction module then displays a range of gift wager amounts for selection by a gift
giver in step 43. In one embodiment, the gift wager amounts range from ten dollars to a hundred
dollars. Alternatively, in step 43 and 45, the gift giver selects or inputs a specific gift wager

1 amount.

5 In step 47, the gift giver is given a choice to attach a gift and/or a message to the gift
wager to be sent to the gift recipient (optional). Also, optionally, in step 49, the gift giver is
given a choice by the wager server to choose a charity and then the process ends. The charity
chosen receives a portion of the gift wager amount selected by the gift giver in step 45. Upon
completion of the process, the wager construction module in one embodiment, creates or
populates a wager record based on the information gathered through the process described and
stores the wager record in the gift wager database.

10 In one embodiment, the wager server provides a verification stage for the gift giver to
verify the previously provided or selected information by the gift giver or wager server
concerning, for example, the gift giver, the gift wager and/or the gift recipient. If the gift giver
wishes to change the information provided, the wager server provides the gift giver an option to
re-input or modify the provided or selected information otherwise the process ends.

15 Referring back to FIG. 3, in one embodiment, the outcome tracking module 207 requests
information from the gift giver about how the gift wager should be transmitted to the gift
recipient. In another embodiment, the outcome tracking module 207 is configured to transmit
the information about the gift wager to the gift recipient via a predetermined manner. In one
embodiment, notification information about the gift wager can be transmitted via E-mail. Thus,
the outcome tracking module is able to notify the gift recipient that a wager, any attached
20 messages and/or gifts for the gift recipient has been made by a gift giver. Similarly, in one
embodiment, the outcome tracking module is configured to provide additional information, via
E-mail, pertaining to details required to access additional information about the gift wager or
winnings associated with the gift wager from the wager server.

25 In a preferred embodiment, the E-mail, provided to the gift recipient by the outcome
tracking module 207, includes a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) designating a specific location
of information on the Internet. The URL is a string expression representing a location identifier
on the Internet or on a local Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) computer
system. The location identifier generally specifies the location of a server on the Internet, the
directory on the server where specific files containing information are found, and the names of
30 the specific files containing information. Certain default rules apply so that the specific file
names, and even the directory containing the specific files, need not be specified. Thus, the user
may enter the URL on the user's computer in conjunction with execution of the browser software
to obtain the desired information from a particular Web server to view the gift wager created,
attached gifts and/or messages.

35 In another embodiment, the gift wager notification and access information can be
transmitted via a voice mail message or by a customer representative over a telephone network.
In one embodiment, the outcome tracking module triggers an automated telephone system to
place a telephone call to the gift recipient providing notification and access information about

1 the gift wager, attached gifts and/or messages or providing a link, such as a number to contact
 or an web address to access in order to obtain notification and access information about the gift
 wager, attached gifts and/or messages, through, for example, an automated voice recording.

5 In other embodiments, the outcome tracking module 207 provides pager and/or cellular
 phone messaging or notifications, such as numeric and alphanumeric messages, voice mails,
 Internet connection messaging, such as instant messages and/or banner advertising, or specific
 propriety or public service provider connections, such as electronic programing guide providers
 through, for example, a vertical blanking interval in a television signal, or specific advertising
 by Internet service providers, and various other forms of electronic transmission and
 10 communications is utilized to provide notification and/or access information about the gift wager,
 attached gifts and/or messages or providing a pointer or link to access and obtain notification and
 access information about the gift wager, attached gifts and/or messages. In another embodiment,
 the notification and/or access information about the gift wager, attached gifts and/or messages
 is provided via mail, delivery service, or another non-electronic method of transmission.

15 Furthermore, in most cases, the gift wager placed by the gift giver for the gift recipient has
 not matured. In other words, the outcome is yet to be determined. In this case, reminder
 communications, such as E-mails, voice messages and the like and the other forms of
 communication described above for the notification and access information, are sent to the gift
 recipient by the outcome tracking module to periodically inform or to check the outcome of the
 20 gift wager. Using the name and password provided to the gift recipient as described above, the
 gift recipient at a later time, is able to periodically check the status of the gift wager.
 Additionally or in the alternative, an outcome communication, such as an E-mail, voice message,
 and the like and the other forms of communication described above for the notification and
 access information, is sent to the gift recipient and/or gift giver once the gift wager has matured.

25 Furthermore, in one embodiment, a receipt is sent, via the above-mentioned forms of
 communication described for the notification, access, reminder, and outcome information, to the
 gift giver containing information about the gift wager created by the wager construction module
 205. In one embodiment, the information provided includes the type of gift wager and the
 amount charged to the gift giver's credit card and/or other payment type information. Once, the
 30 gift recipient accesses and/or views the gift wager, a received notification is sent by the outcome
 tracking module 207 to the gift giver to notify the gift giver that the gift wager created has been
 accessed and/or viewed by the gift recipient.

35 In one embodiment, the outcome tracking module 207 determines if the outcome of the
 gift wager has been established by checking an outcome database that includes status records.
 The status records include information about a particular event or events, such as a football game,
 total number of rushing yardage by a particular team in the football game, and so on, the
 outcome(s) or final result(s) of the particular event(s) and the like. The status records could
 further include pointers or links or unique identification number to various gift wager records

1 created in the gift wager database. In one embodiment, gift wager records include links or unique
identification numbers to the various status records.

5 In one embodiment, the status records are managed and updated manually by an
authorized administrator of the outcome database. In another embodiment, the status records are
managed by a status server. The status server, in one embodiment, is a computing device, such
as a server, workstation, or personal computer. The status server is coupled to a mass storage
device, such as a hard disk drive, a RAID or a JBOD. The mass storage device hosts the outcome
database. In one embodiment, the status server and the wager server are one in the same and/or
the outcome database is included with the gift wager database. Also, the mass storage device
10 coupled to the status server could be the same mass storage device coupled to the wager server.

In another embodiment, the status server is a service or content provider containing a
digital feed of real-time and/or periodically updated information concerning events relevant to
one or more gift wagers. The service provider could include a news service, a sports news
service and the like. In another embodiment, the final results of the events for each status record
15 could be updated manually as the information becomes available.

FIG. 5 illustrates a flow diagram of one embodiment of the outcome tracking module 207
of FIG. 3, notifying a gift recipient and/or a gift giver concerning the outcome of a gift wager.
In step 71, the outcome tracking module receives information pertaining the outcome of a
particular event, such as a final score of a football game. In another embodiment, the outcome
20 tracking module periodically searches the outcome database for the outcome of a particular event.
In step 73, the outcome tracking module searches the gift wager database to locate the gift wager
record or records that pertain to the particular event in which an outcome has been determined.
In step 75, if the outcome tracking module search finds the gift wager record or records, the
outcome tracking module extracts the associated gift recipient information in step 77. In one
25 embodiment, the gift wager record or records include links to associated gift recipient records
containing gift recipient information. Also, in step 77, the outcome tracking module notifies the
associated gift recipient or gift recipients with result data pertaining to the outcome of the
particular event and thus associate gift wager(s).

Optionally, in step 79, the outcome tracking module also extracts the associated gift giver
30 information. In one embodiment, the gift wager record or records include links to associated gift
giver records containing gift giver information. Thus, also, in step 79, the outcome tracking
module notifies the associated gift giver or gift giver with result data pertaining to the outcome
of the particular event and thus associate gift wager(s). If, in step 75, the outcome tracking
module search does not find a gift wager record pertaining to the particular event in step 71, the
35 process ends. Thus, once the outcome of the gift wager is determined, the gift recipient and/or
the gift giver is notified of the outcome, whether the outcome is favorable or unfavorable.

If the determined outcome of the gift wager is favorable, e.g., the bet is that team A will
win game Y and team A does win game Y, then the wager server determines the winnings or

1 payoff owed to the gift recipient. The outcome tracking module 207 determines the winnings
based on predetermined odds associated with the gift wager or other similar predetermined tables
or calculations to assess the winnings. The gift recipient is provided the winnings of the gift
wager in various ways. In one embodiment, the gift recipient is sent a check or other similar
5 types of payment via mail for the amount of winnings of the gift wager. In one embodiment, the
gift recipient is provided information about how to obtain the winnings of the gift wager via mail,
E-mail, voice message(s), similar forms of communication as described above for the notification
and access information, or other similar forms of communication.

10 In one embodiment, the wager server or the status server creates and sends an E-mail to
the gift recipient notifying the gift recipient of his/her winnings and providing the gift recipient
a unique winning identification number. In one embodiment, the unique winning identification
number is linked or associated with the gift recipient record, the gift giver record and the gift
wager record in the gift wager database. Using this unique winning identification number to
15 identify the gift recipient and/or the gift wager to the wager server or status server, the gift
recipient can provide further contact information in order for the gift recipient to receive his/her
winnings.

20 In a preferred embodiment, the wager server creates and sends an E-mail to the gift
recipient notifying the gift recipient of his/her winnings and providing the gift recipient a winning
URL identifying unique internet location and including a unique winning identification number.
Using the winning URL, the gift recipient is able to access the wager server that is configured
to recognize the unique winning identification number included in the winning URL. Upon
recognition of the unique identification number, the wager server retrieves the gift wager record
from the gift wager database that is associated with the unique identification number to provide
additional information or options in order for the gift recipient to receive his/her winnings.

25 In one embodiment, the gift recipient is provided a coupon, voucher, or certificate in
which the gift recipient must redeem at a specified location and/or time to receive the winnings
of the gift wager. In one embodiment, the gift recipient is provided a certificate or credit in
which the gift recipient can use to purchase various products or services at various business
establishments. In one embodiment, the gift recipient is provided electronic cash or electronic
30 credit in which the gift recipient can use to purchase various products or services at various on-
line business establishments. In one embodiment, the gift recipient is provided credit with the
electronic wagering system. Thus, the gift recipient may then use the credit to create a gift
wager, such that the gift recipient now becomes the gift giver.

35 Also, if a charity was previously selected by the gift giver, all or a portion of the winnings,
as previously indicated by the gift giver, are set aside for the selected charity. As with the gift
recipient, all or a portion of the winnings for the charity are similarly provided to the selected
charity. In one embodiment, periodic payments such as monthly or bi-monthly payments are
made to the selected charity in which all winnings for all the gift wagers made during a

1 predetermined period are paid in one lump sum. All the various ways described above to provide
the winnings of the gift wager to the gift recipient and/or the selected charity, can be performed
via mail, E-mail, voice messages, similar forms of communication as described above for the
notification and access information, other types of electronic communication and so forth.
5 Furthermore, the described manners in which the winnings of the gift wager are provided are
similarly used to provide the attached gifts and/or messages to the gift recipient.

FIG. 6 illustrates a flow diagram of one embodiment of a gift recipient obtaining the
winnings of a gift wager. In step 51, the gift recipient accesses the wager server or the status
server. In one embodiment, the gift recipient accesses the wager or status server using the
10 winning URL. In another embodiment, the gift recipient accesses the wager or status server
using a login procedure by providing the wager or status server a unique identification number
or a name and password. As described above, the unique identification number or name and
password could be provided previously by the wager or status server upon notifying the gift
recipient about the outcome and winnings of the gift wager by the outcome tracking module 207.

15 In one embodiment, once the gift recipient accesses the wager or status server, the wager
server searches the gift wager database to retrieve the gift wager record pertaining to the gift
wager and the associated gift giver and gift recipient records. The wager server extracts the
contact information of the gift giver from the gift giver record. Using the contact information
of the gift giver, such as an E-mail address, the wager server notifies the gift giver, such as
20 sending an access notification E-mail, that the gift recipient has accessed the gift wager for
obtaining more information or to obtain winnings as a result of the gift wager.

In step 53, the gift recipient selects a way of obtaining the winnings, for instance, as a
credit or certificate, a check mailed to the gift recipient and the like. In one embodiment, the
form of the winnings, e.g., a credit or certificate, is predetermined. In step 55, the wager or status
25 server determines if the gift recipient needs to provide information such as an address, phone
number, and the like to receive the winnings. If the wager or status server determines that the
gift recipient needs to provide information, then in step 57, the wager or status server requests
and receives the required information from the gift recipient. However, if the wager or status
server determines that the gift recipient does not need to provide any information or after the gift
30 recipient provides the requested information, then the winnings of the gift wager are prepared and
sent to the gift recipient, in step 59, and then the process ends.

In one embodiment, the wager interface, the registration module, the outcome tracking
module and other functions of the wager server comprise programs in the C or C++ programming
language or scripts in the PERL (Version 5.0) programming language. C and C++ compilers,
35 PERL interpreters and the C, C++ and PERL programming languages, and the uses thereof, are
well known and often used by Web and software developers. Furthermore, even though the
wager interface, the registration module, and the outcome tracking modules are described as
separate items, all the modules could be combined as a single program or hardwired in the wager

1 server, separately or as one. Also, although a gift giver, gift wager, gift recipient and wager
server are described in a singular sense, one skilled in the art would recognize that two or more
gift givers, gift wagers, gift recipients, and wager servers and any combination thereof, e.g., a
single gift giver, a single gift wager, three gift recipients and two wager servers, could be
5 included in the present invention and likewise each could be provided separately.

Accordingly, the present invention provides a system and method of creating and placing
wagers as a gift by a first user using a wager server such that any winnings are received by a
second user, the intended recipient of the gift. Although this invention has been described in
certain specific embodiments, many additional modifications and variations would be apparent
10 to those skilled in the art. It is therefore to be understood that this invention may be practiced
otherwise than is specifically described. Thus, the present embodiments of the invention should
be considered in all respects as illustrative and not restricted, the scope of the invention to be
indicated by the appended claims rather than the foregoing description.

CLAIMS

1. A method of providing a gift wager by a first user to a second user, the method comprising:

composing a gift wager by a first user through a communication media, the gift wager including a particular event and a payoff associated to an outcome of the particular event;

obtaining contact information regarding a second user;

notifying the second user that a gift wager has been composed by the first user prior to the outcome of the particular event; and

providing result data to the second user in response to the outcome of the particular event.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising identifying the first user through a first user computer 11 coupled to the communication media, the first user providing payment information for the gift wager composed.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein composing a gift wager by a first user further includes:

selecting a wager from a plurality of predetermined wagers, the plurality of predetermined wagers having a plurality of events associated with a plurality of odds; and

storing information about the first user identified as a first user record, the second user identified as a second user record, and the wager selected as a wager record in a gift wager database 15 coupled to the communication media; and

associating the first user record and the second user record with the wager record.

4. The method of claim 3 further comprising:

determining the outcome of the particular event by manual input; and

retrieving the wager record that corresponds to the outcome of the particular event determined.

5. The method of claim 4 further comprising:

retrieving results pertaining to the outcome of the particular event from a digital feed having information concerning outcomes for a plurality of events including the particular event; and

retrieving the wager record that corresponds to the outcome of the particular event determined.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein providing result data includes extracting contact information of the second user from the second user record associated with the wager record retrieved and notifying the second user concerning the outcome of the particular event

1 determined, utilizing the contact information extracted.

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7. The method of claim 6 further comprising providing result data to the first user in response to the outcome of the particular event.

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8. The method of claim 7 wherein providing result data includes extracting contact information of the second user from the second user record associated with the wager record retrieved and notifying the second user concerning the outcome of the particular event determined, utilizing the contact information extracted.

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9. The method of claim 8 further comprising calculating the payoff associated with the gift wager based on the outcome of the particular event, odds associated with the outcome of the particular event and the amount of money wagered.

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10. The method of claim 9 further comprising attaching a gift with the gift wager composed.

11. The method of claim 10 further comprising providing a message with the gift wager composed.

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12. The method of claim 11 wherein the result data further includes providing access information to the second user to obtain winnings associated with the outcome of the particular event.

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14. The method of claim 12 wherein the access information provided further provides information to the second user to obtain gifts attached with the gift wager composed.

15. The method of claim 11 wherein the message provided includes an electronic greeting card.

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16. The method of claim 13 wherein the communication media is an internet connection.

1 17. An electronic wagering system to provide a gift wager by a first user to a second
user comprising:

 communication means providing a conduit to receive input from a first user concerning
a gift wager for a second user, the gift wager pertaining to a wager, a particular event, and contact
5 data concerning a second user; and

 computer means storing the gift wager from the first user and tracking the particular event,
the computer means sending result data to the second user prior and in response to an outcome
of the particular event.

10 18. The electronic wagering system of claim 17 wherein the computer means includes:
gift wager database 15 configured to store information pertaining to the gift wager, the
first user and the second user; and

 wager engine (13, 201, 202, 205, 207) configured to compose the gift wager from the
input from the first user and storing the gift wager composed in the gift wager database 15.

15 19. The electronic wagering system of claim 18 wherein the wager engine (13, 201, 202,
205, 207) is further configured to determine the outcome of the particular event by obtaining
information from a digital feed having information concerning outcomes for a plurality of events
including the particular event, and to calculate a payoff based on the outcome of the particular
20 event, odds associated with the outcome of the particular event and an amount of money
wagered.

 20. The electronic wagering system of claim 19 wherein result data sent includes
contact information of the second user from the gift wager and the computer means is configured
25 to notify the second user concerning the outcome of the particular event determined, utilizing the
contact information extracted.

 21. The electronic wagering system of claim 20 wherein the computer means is further
configured to notify the first user concerning the second user obtaining winnings associated with
30 the outcome of the particular event providing upon the second user obtaining the winnings
associated with the outcome of the particular event.

 22. The electronic wagering system of claim 20 wherein the communication means is
an internet connection.

35 23. An electronic wagering system to provide a gift wager by a first user to a second
user comprising:

 a first user (11) computer utilized by a first user and coupled to a first communication

1 medium;

a second user computer utilized by a second user and coupled to a second communication medium; and

5 a wager server (13) coupled to the first communication medium and the second communication medium, the wager server (13) including:

memory storage in which at least one wager record, at least one first user record, and at least one second user record are stored in the memory storage, the at least one wager record pertaining to a predetermined event, the at least one first user record pertaining to the first user, the at least one second user pertaining to the second user, and

10 wager engine (13, 201, 202, 205, 207) configured to receive information from the first user computer (11) to compose the at least one wager record, to determine an outcome of the predetermined event and to transmit information regarding the at least one wager record to the second user computer.

15 24. The electronic wagering system of claim 23 further comprising:

a status server coupled to a digital feed providing periodic results pertaining to a plurality of predetermined events, the status server coupled to the wager server (13) and providing the periodic results to the wager server (13) to determine the outcome of the predetermined event;

20 wherein the wager engine (13, 201, 202, 205, 207) searches the memory storage to retrieve the at least one wager record related to the periodic results.

25 25. The electronic wagering system of claim 24 further comprising:

gift and message server configured to store and provide information and records pertaining to predetermined messages and gifts, the gift and message server coupled to the wager server (13) and providing the information and records to the wager server (13) to provide the first user computer (11) a selection of messages and gifts.

30 26. The electronic wagering system of claim 25 wherein the wager engine (13, 201, 202, 205, 207) retrieves the at least one second user record from the memory storage to extract information about the second user to send the second user result data to the second user prior and in response to the outcome of the predetermined event.

35 27. The electronic wagering system of claim 26 wherein the result data further includes providing access information to the second user computer, such that the second user obtains winnings associated with the outcome of the predetermined event.

28. The electronic wagering system of claim 27 wherein the access information provided further provides information to the second user computer, such that the second user

1 obtains messages and gifts from the selection of messages and gifts.

5 29. The electronic wagering system of claim 28 wherein the wager engine (13, 201, 202, 205, 207) is further configured to notify the first user computer (11) concerning the second user obtaining winnings associated with the outcome of the predetermined event.

10 30. The electronic wagering system of claim 28 wherein one of the messages includes an electronic greeting card.

31. The electronic wagering system of claim 29 wherein the first communication medium and the second communication medium is an internet connection.

15 32. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
inputting the outcome of the particular event; and
retrieving a wager record that corresponds to the outcome of the particular event inputted.

20 33. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
retrieving results pertaining to the outcome of the particular event from a digital feed
having information concerning outcomes for a plurality of events including the particular event;
and
retrieving a wager record that corresponds to the outcome of the particular event determined.

25 34. The method of claim 32 wherein providing result data includes extracting contact information of the second user from a second user record associated with the wager record retrieved and notifying the second user concerning the outcome of the particular event determined, utilizing the contact information extracted.

30 35. The method of claim 33 wherein providing result data includes extracting contact information of the second user from a second user record associated with the wager record retrieved and notifying the second user concerning the outcome of the particular event determined, utilizing the contact information extracted.

35 36. The method of claim 1 further comprising providing result data to the first user in response to the outcome of the particular event.

37. The method of claim 1 further comprising providing result data to the first user by

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1 extracting contact information of the first user from a first user record associated with the wager record retrieved and notifying the first user concerning the outcome of the particular event determined, utilizing the contact information extracted.

5 38. The method of claim 1 further comprising providing receipt information to the first user upon the second user obtaining the winnings associated with the outcome of the particular event.

10 39. The electronic wagering system of claim 17 wherein result data sent includes contact information of the second user from the gift wager and the computer means is configured to notify the second user concerning the outcome of the particular event determined, utilizing the contact information extracted.

15 40. The electronic wagering system of claim 17 wherein the computer means is further configured to notify the first user concerning the second user obtaining winnings associated with the outcome of the particular event upon the second user obtaining the winnings associated with the outcome of the particular event.

20 41. The electronic wagering system of claim 17 wherein result data sent includes contact information of the first user from the gift wager and the computer means is configured to notify the first user concerning the outcome of the particular event determined, utilizing the contact information extracted.

25 42. The electronic wagering system of claim 23 wherein the wager engine (13, 201, 202, 205, 207) retrieves the at least one second user record from the memory storage to extract information about the second user to send result data to the second user in response to the outcome of the predetermined event.

30 43. The electronic wagering system of claim 23 wherein the result data further includes providing access information to the second user computer, such that the second user obtains winnings associated with the outcome of the predetermined event.

35 44. The electronic wagering system of claim 23 wherein the wager engine (13, 201, 202, 205, 207) is further configured to notify the first user computer (11) concerning the second user obtaining winnings associated with the outcome of the predetermined event.

45. The electronic wagering system of claim 23 wherein the wager engine (13, 201, 202, 205, 207) retrieves the at least one first user record from the memory storage to

1 extract information about the first user to send result data to the first user in response to the
outcome of the predetermined event.

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AMENDED SHEET
EMPfangszeit 10. JUN. 3:57

Ausdruckszeit 10. JUN. 4:05

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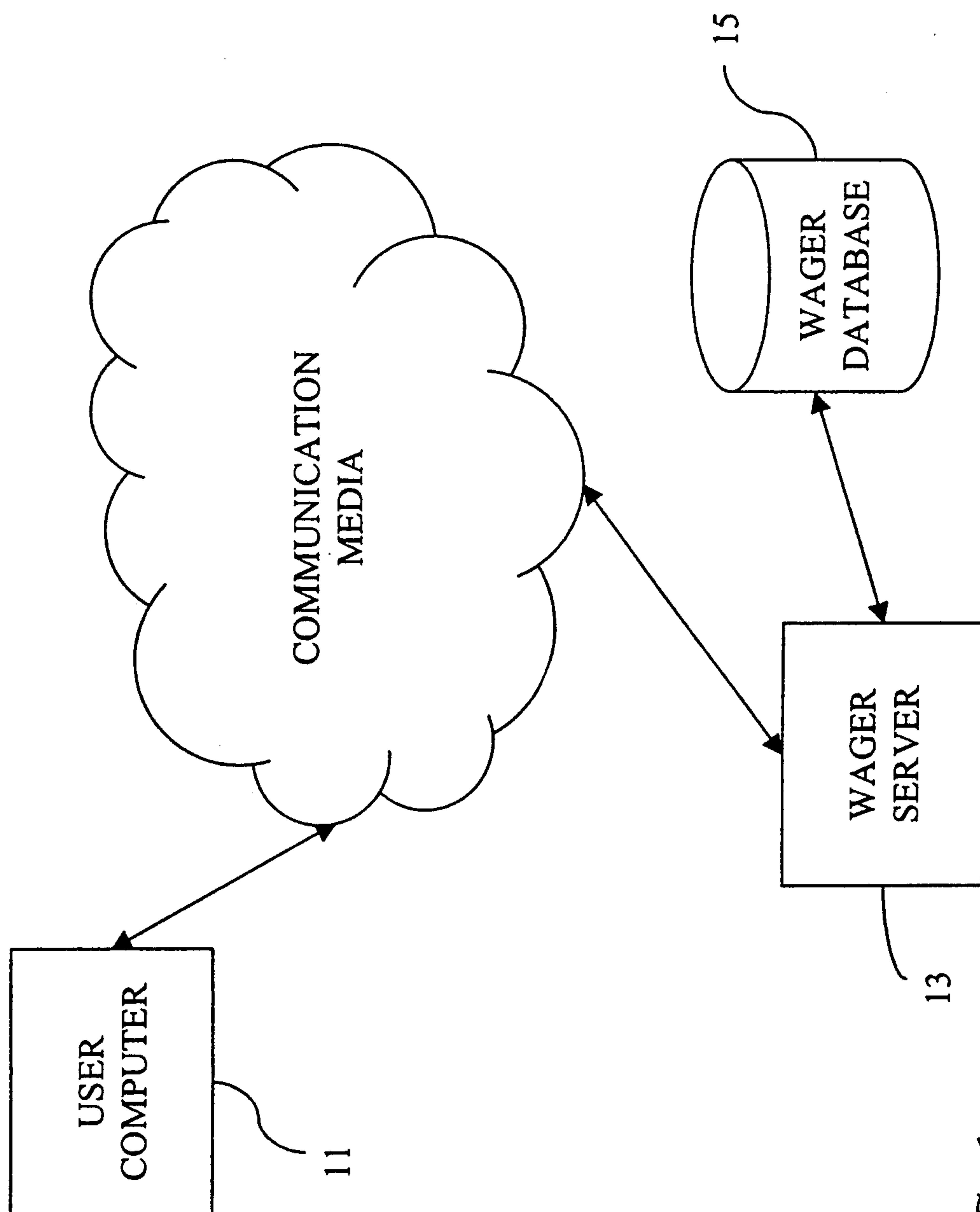


FIG. 1

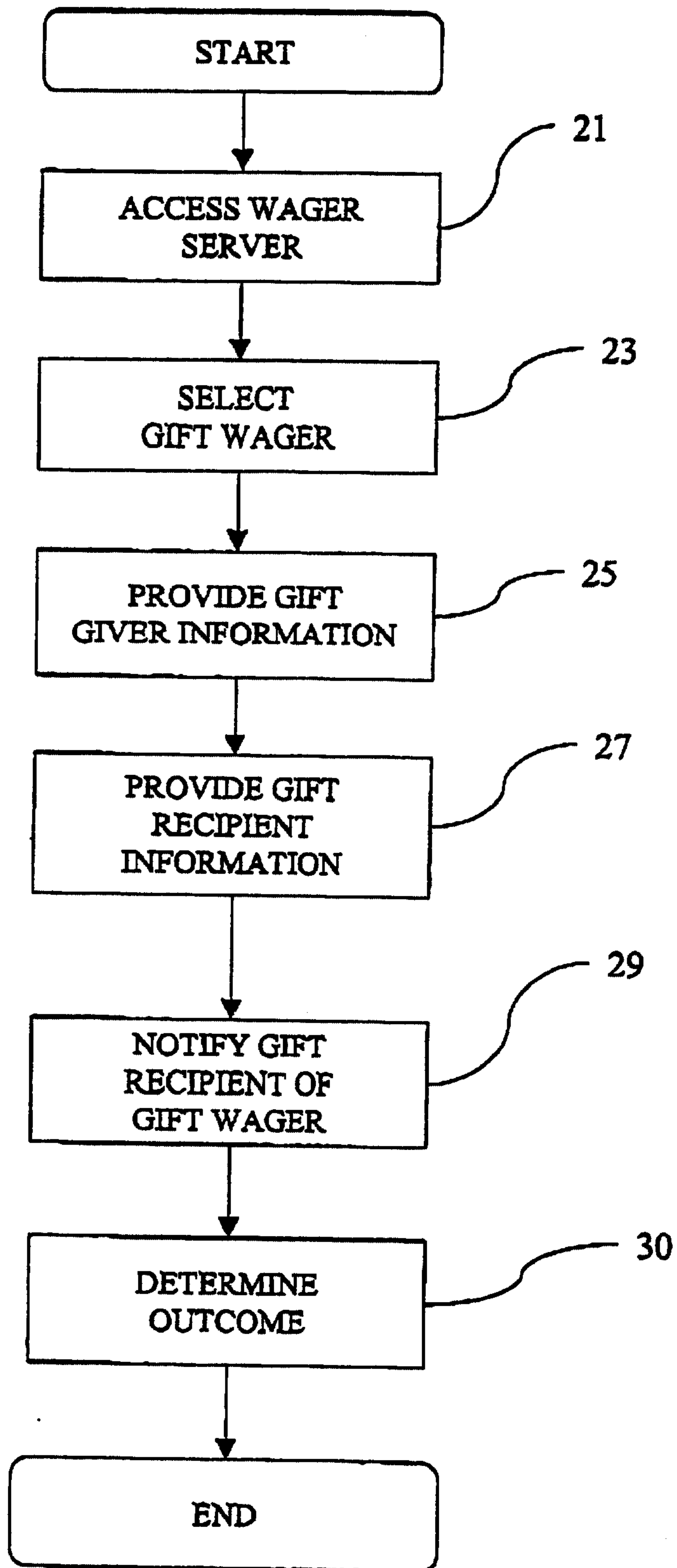


FIG. 2

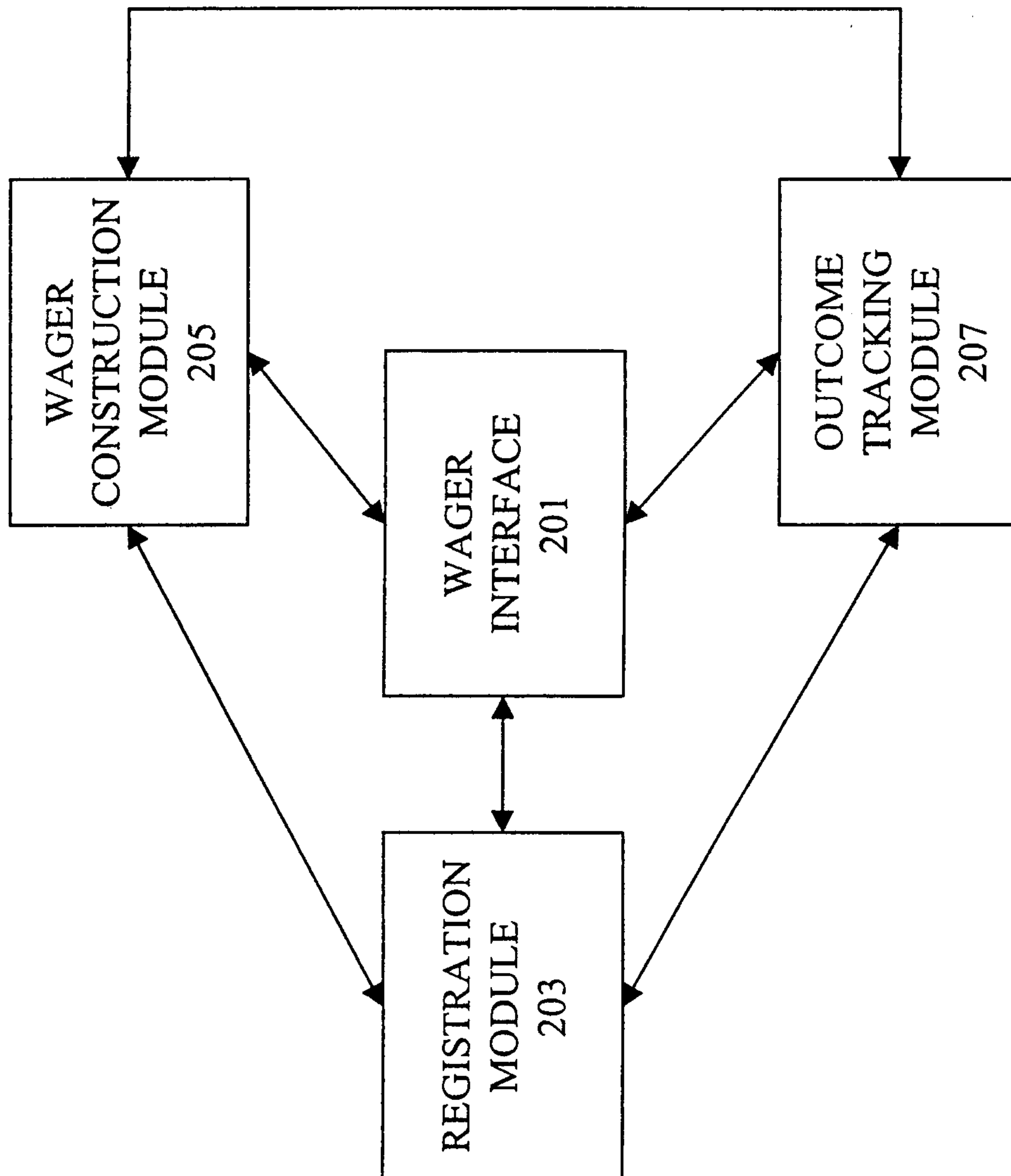


FIG. 3

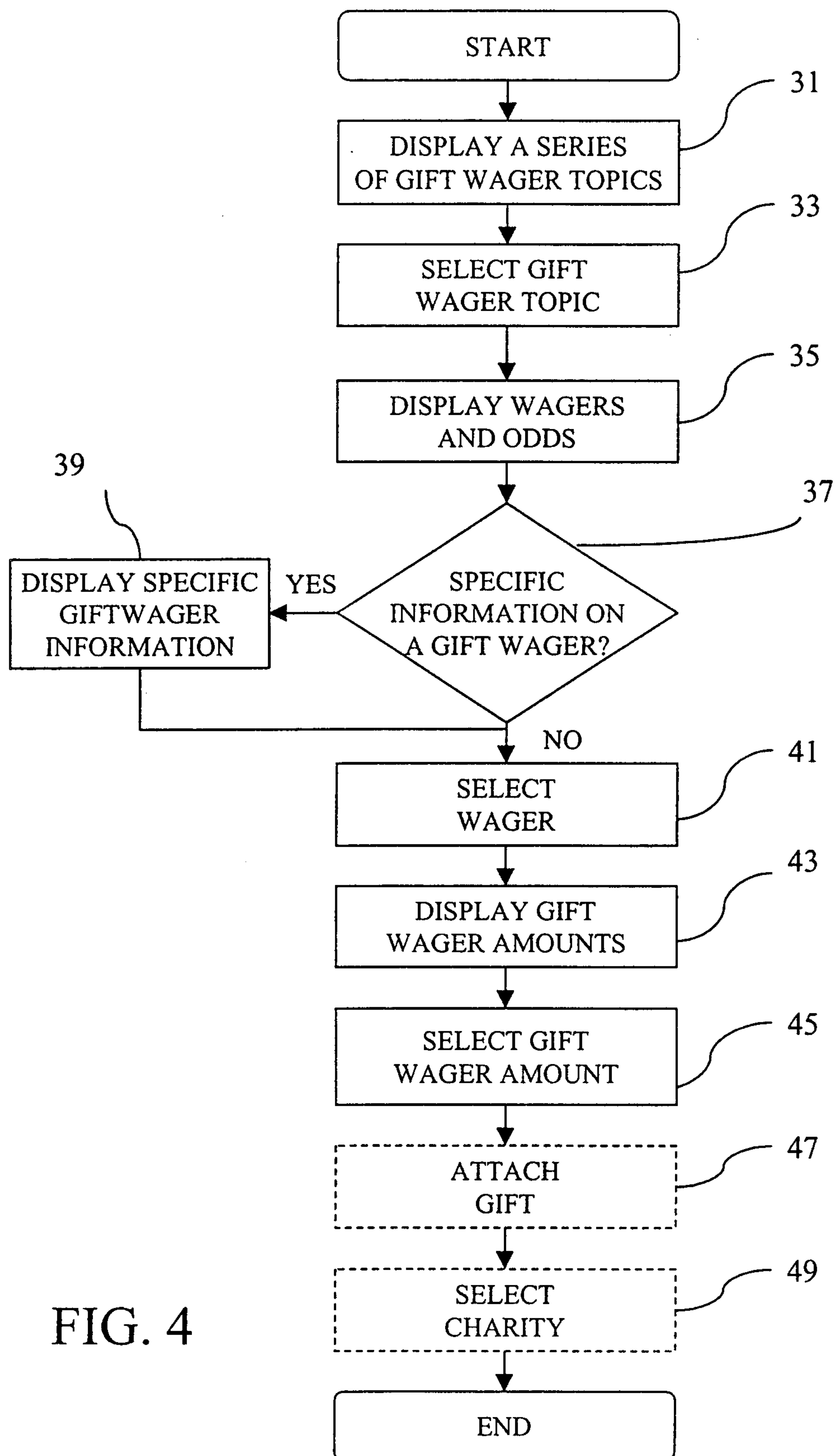


FIG. 4

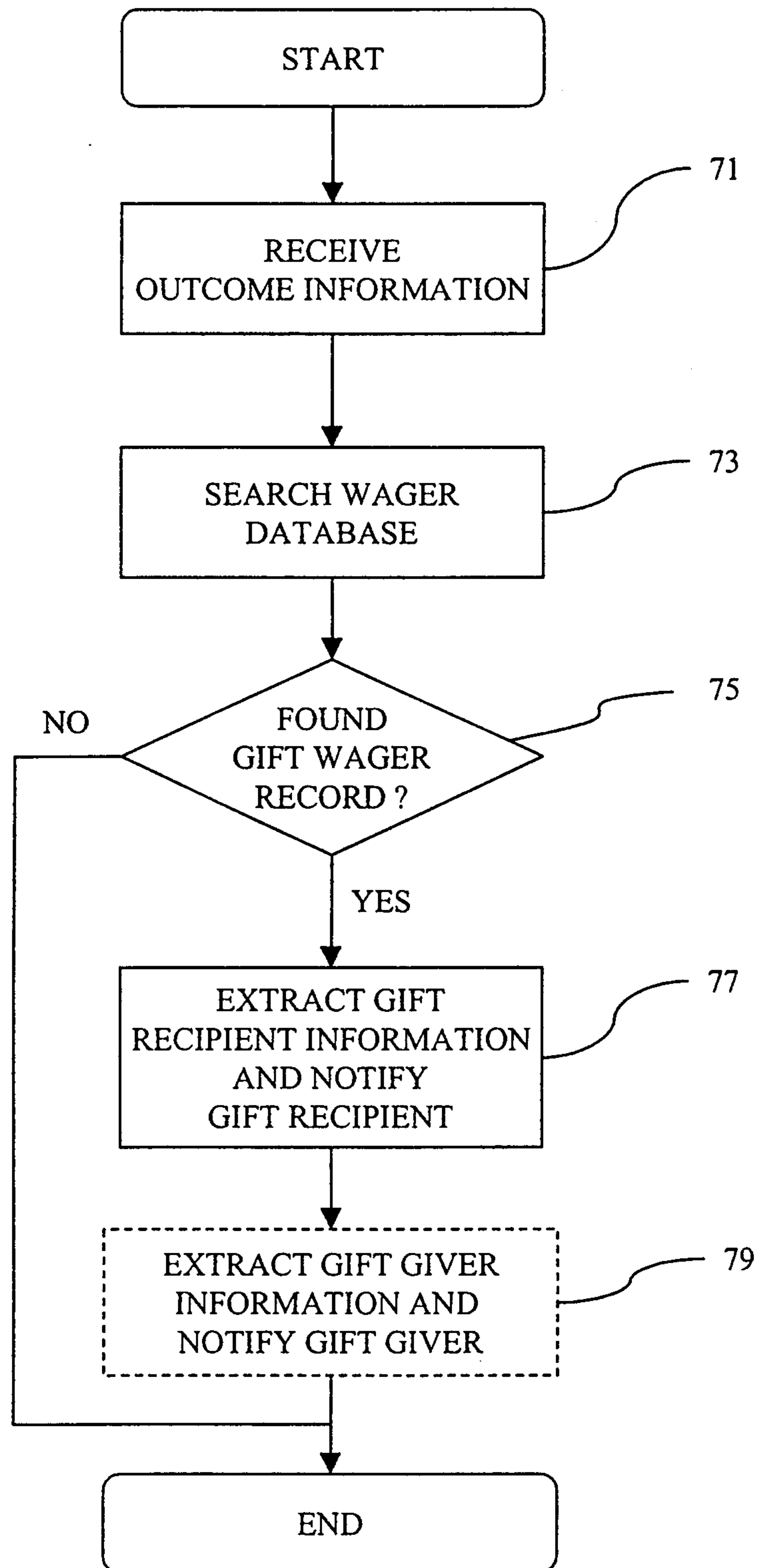


FIG. 5

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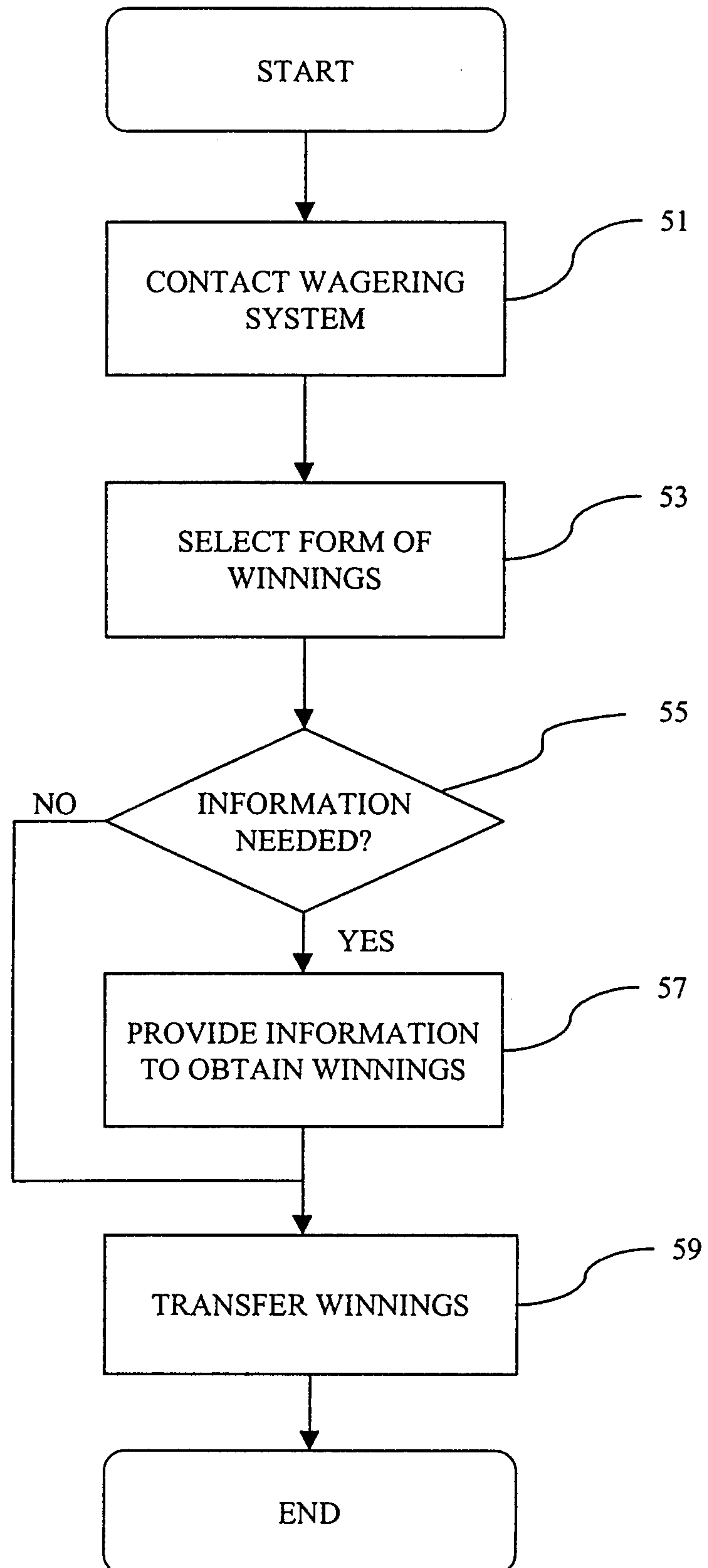


FIG. 6

