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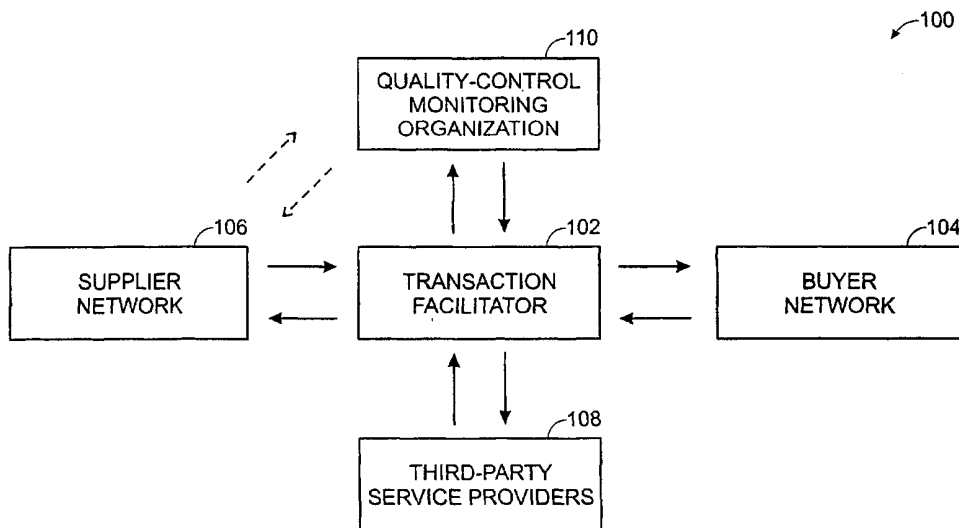
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(54) Title: INTERNATIONAL TRADING SYSTEM AND METHOD



(57) Abstract: A system and method for facilitating transactions involving the sale of goods or services. A standardized product rating system allows the subjective characteristics of a product to be evaluated and objectively rated based on generally accepted levels of quality. The products and factories of suppliers are also evaluated and rated in accordance with the standardized rating system. In one exemplary embodiment, a network of product buyers (104) and suppliers (106) are connected via a computer network. Through remote terminals, buyers submit requests-for-quotes, and suppliers submit bids, both of which specify objective and subjective aspects of a product using the standardized ratings. A network of independent, third-party service providers (108) is also provided. The third-party service providers may place bids, via the computer network, to perform services necessary to execute purchase/sales transactions between the buyer and supplier.



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## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

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<b>A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER</b> IPC(7) :G06F 17/60 US CL :705/26, 37 According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC		
<b>B. FIELDS SEARCHED</b> Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols) U.S. : 705/26, 37  Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched  Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used) EAST (USPAT, JPO, EPO)		
<b>C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT</b>		
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 5,842,178 A (GIOVANNOLI) 24 November 1998, col 2, line 39 - col 3, line 25 and col 4, lines 7-29.	1-3
Y	US 5,870,719 A (MARITZEN et al) 09 February 1999, col 7, lines 12-61.	1-3
Y	US 5,794,207 A (WALKER et al) 11 August 1998, col 9, lines 45-51.	1-3
Y	US 5,168,446 A (WISEMAN) 01 December 1992, col 2, line 10 - col 4, line 64.	1-3
Y	US 4,799,156 A (SHAVIT et al) 17 January 1989, col 13, lines 10-50.	1-3
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. <input type="checkbox"/> See patent family annex.		
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"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone	
"E" earlier document published on or after the international filing date	"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art	
"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	"&" document member of the same patent family	
"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means		
"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed		
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International application No.  
PCT/US00/20701

C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	US 5,732,400 A (MANDLER et al) 24 March 1998, col 3, lines 31-55 and col 4, lines 20-31.	1-3
Y, P	US 6,131,087 A (LUKE et al) 10 October 2000, col 5, line 40 - col 6, line 55 and col 9, lines 1-12.	1-3
Y, P	US 6,141,653 A (CONKLIN et al) 31 October 2000, col 13, line 66 - col 15, line 33.	1-3