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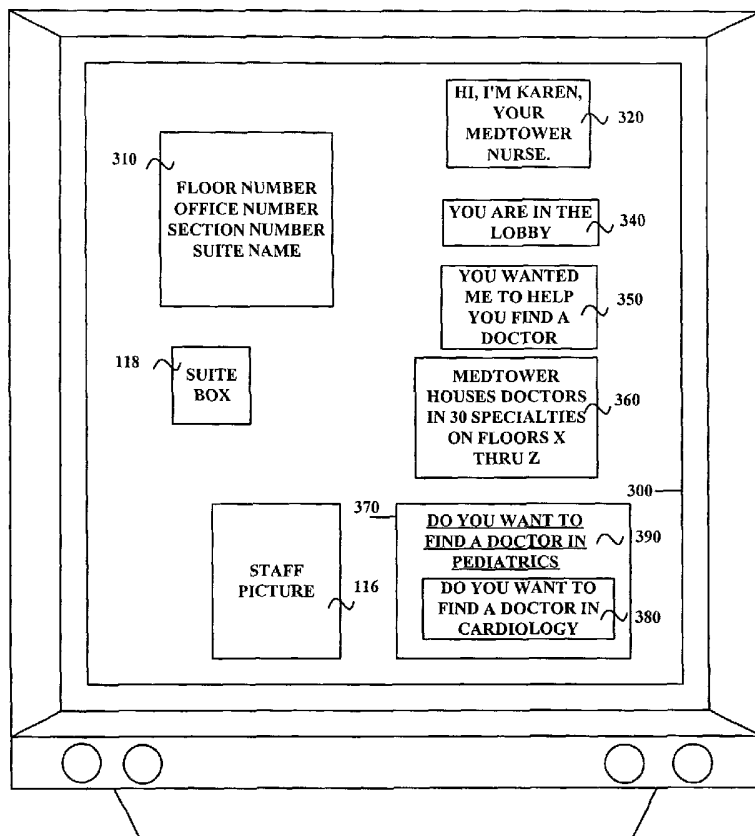
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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: BUILDING METAPHOR



(57) Abstract: The present invention concerns a software-based metaphor for a building which is represented as data which is located on a distributed computer network. The building metaphor includes a template which defines an arrangement of elements to be included in a virtual office and defines how those elements are queried in a database. The database contains information which relates to a plurality of specific virtual offices. A station connected to a distributed computer network submits virtual office data to a software engine. The software engine responds by accessing the database and populating the template with information relating to one of a plurality of specific virtual offices. A plurality of virtual offices in a building metaphor are definable by processing a respective virtual office address.



WO 01/035275 A3



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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Interr Application No
PCT/US 00/30800

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 7 G06F17/30

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
IPC 7 G06F

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 practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, WPI Data, INSPEC

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 5 974 443 A (JESKE CHARLES E) 26 October 1999 (1999-10-26) abstract column 2, line 60 -column 4, line 14 column 5, line 35 -column 6, line 56 ---	1,2,5-8
X	WO 98 14896 A (STERLING SOFTWARE INC) 9 April 1998 (1998-04-09) abstract page 1, line 21 -page 2, line 17 page 3, line 27 -page 5, line 23 --- -/--	1,5-7

Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

Patent family members are listed in annex.

* Special categories of cited documents :

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

"E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date

"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)

"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

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"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

"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.

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

5 April 2002

Date of mailing of the international search report

05. 08. 2002

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Intern: Application No
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C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	<p>TUNG BUI ET AL: "Group decision and negotiation support in telemedicine: an application of intelligent mobile agents as non-human teleworkers" SYSTEM SCIENCES, 1997, PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRTIETH HAWAII INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WAILEA, HI, USA 7-10 JAN. 1997, LOS ALAMITOS, CA, USA, IEEE COMPUT. SOC, US, 7 January 1997 (1997-01-07), pages 120-129, XP010271864 ISBN: 0-8186-7743-0 abstract page 121, right-hand column, line 44 -page 122, left-hand column, line 21 page 123, right-hand column, line 32 -page 126, right-hand column, line 2 ---</p>	1-9, 19, 20
A	<p>NOAH W W: "The integration of the World Wide Web and intranet data resources" SYSTEM SCIENCES, 1998., PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRTY-FIRST HAWAII INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON KOHALA COAST, HI, USA 6-9 JAN. 1998, LOS ALAMITOS, CA, USA, IEEE COMPUT. SOC, US, 6 January 1998 (1998-01-06), pages 496-502, XP010263110 ISBN: 0-8186-8255-8 abstract page 498, left-hand column, line 4 -page 498, right-hand column, line 47 page 499, left-hand column, line 37 -page 499, right-hand column, line 22 -----</p>	1-9

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US 00/30800

Box I Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 1 of first sheet)

This International Search Report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. Claims Nos.:
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:

2. Claims Nos.:
because they relate to parts of the International Application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful International Search can be carried out, specifically:

3. Claims Nos.:
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box II Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

see additional sheet

1. As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this International Search Report covers all searchable claims.
2. As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, this Authority did not invite payment of any additional fee.
3. As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this International Search Report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:
4. No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this International Search Report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

1-9, 19, 20

Remark on Protest

- The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest.
- No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

FURTHER INFORMATION CONTINUED FROM PCT/ISA/ 210

This International Searching Authority found multiple (groups of) inventions in this international application, as follows:

1. Claims: 1-9,19,20

A building metaphor represented as data and located on a distributed computer network

2. Claims: 10-18

A software construct for metaphor display on a monitor connected to a computing machine, comprising a locator section displaying a position of a user within a virtual office

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

Intern Application No

PCT/US 00/30800

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
US 5974443 A	26-10-1999	AU 9403598 A	23-04-1999
		CA 2303861 A	08-04-1999
		EP 1025507 A	09-08-2000
		WO 9917216 A	08-04-1999

WO 9814896 A	09-04-1998	AU 4662197 A	24-04-1998
