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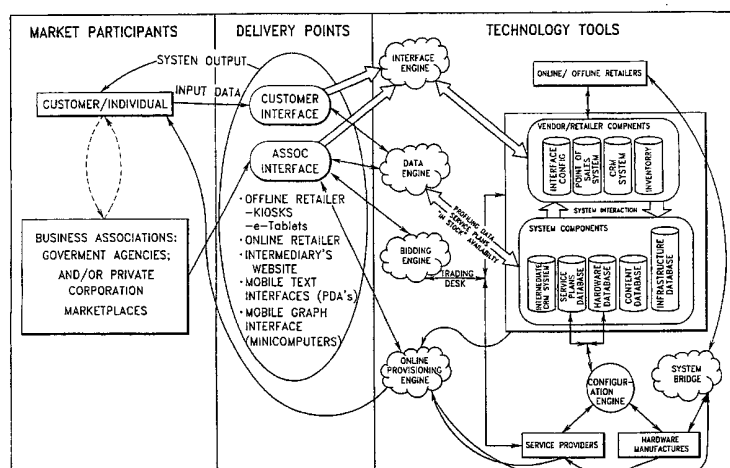
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- For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

(54) Title: **DISTRIBUTED INFORMATION METHODS AND SYSTEMS USED TO COLLECT AND CORRELATE USER INFORMATION AND PREFERENCES WITH PRODUCTS AND SERVICES**



(57) Abstract: The present invention is related to a distributed information system used to collect and correlate user information with products and services (see Fig. 16). One method in accordance with the present invention comprises providing a first terminal in a store which is networked to a server having item and services databases, receiving an indication from a customer that the customer wants to purchase a first item-type, receiving profile information related to the first-item type from the customer, and, based on the profile information, selecting a plurality of items from the item database corresponding to the first item-type and a plurality of related services of a first service type from the services database. The method further comprises providing a ranking of the selected plurality of items and related services, and receiving an order for at least one of the ranked selected plurality of items and at least one of the related services.



## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US01/16670

<b>A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER</b> IPC(7) : G06F 17/60 US CL : 705/8, 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. : 705/8, 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) Please See Extra Sheet.				
<b>C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT</b>				
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.		
Y	US 5,394,324 A (CLEARWATER) 28 February 1995; Abstract; col. 2, lines 5-38	1-50		
Y	US 5,890,137 A (KOREEDA) 30 March 1999; Abstract; col. 2, line 10 - col. 4, line 45	51-77		
Y	US 6,047,274 A (JOHNSON et al.) 04 April 2000; Abstract; col. 5, line 26 - col. 7, line 51	1-50		
Y	US 5,835,896 A (FISHER et al.) 10 November 1998; Abstract; col. 4, line 12 - col. 5, line 27	1-77		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. <input type="checkbox"/> See patent family annex.				
<table border="0"> <tr> <td>           * 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 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         </td> <td>           "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            "Z" document member of the same patent family         </td> </tr> </table>			* 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 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 "Z" document member of the same patent family
* 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 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 "Z" document member of the same patent family			
Date of the actual completion of the international search 18 SEPTEMBER 2001		Date of mailing of the international search report <b>31 DEC 2001</b>		
Name and mailing address of the ISA/US Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks Box PCT Washington, D.C. 20231 Facsimile No. (703) 305-9230		Authorized officer <i>Peggy Hand</i> FOREST THOMPSON Telephone No. (703) 306-5449		



## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US01/16670

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 5,794,207 A (WALKER et al.) 11 April 1998; Abstract; col. 8, line 27 - col. 11, line 3	1-77
Y	US 5,727,165 A (ORDISH et al.) 10 March 1998 Abstract; col. 4, line 7 - col. 5, line 10	1-77
Y	US 5,845,211 A (ROACH, Jr.) 01 December 1998, Abstract; col. 3, line 55 - col. 11, line 46.	78-100
Y	US 5,826,244 A (HUBERMAN) 20 October 1998, Abstract; col. 2, line 53 - col. 18, line 24.	78-100
Y	US 5,862,475 A (ZICKER et al.) 19 January 1999, Abstract; col. 2, line 63 - col. 5, line 17.	78-100
Y	US 5,159,625 A ((ZICKER) 27 October 1992, Abstract; col. 3, lines 8-50.	78-100
Y	US 5,046,082 A ((ZICKER et al.) 03 September 1991, Abstract; col. 3, line 10 - col. 4, line 60.	78-100



# INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US01/16670

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

This international 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:

Please See Extra 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.:

Remark on Protest

☐

The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest.

☐

No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.



## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

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### B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Electronic data bases consulted (Name of data base and where practicable terms used):

STN, EAST

terms searched: utilities, gas, electricity, predict or prediction, meter or metering, bid, bidding, customer or user, consumption, inventory, service, cellular telephone, telephone coverage, service area

### BOX II. OBSERVATIONS WHERE UNITY OF INVENTION WAS LACKING

This ISA found multiple inventions as follows:

This application contains the following inventions or groups of inventions which are not so linked as to form a single inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1. In order for all inventions to be searched, the appropriate additional search fees must be paid.

- Group I, claim(s) 1-50, drawn to bidding for the right to provide customers with their utilities.

- Group II, claim(s) 51-77, drawn to ordering products from a store.

- Group III, claim(s) 78-100, drawn to identifying the best cellular coverage area for an individual.

The inventions listed as Groups I, II, and III do not relate to a single inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 because, under PCT Rule 13.2, they lack the same or corresponding special technical features for the following reasons:

- Group I, claim(s) 1-50, drawn to bidding for the right to provide customers with their utilities (gas, electricity, etc.). The utility companies target customers whom they want to attract (by bidding for their patronage), based on each customer's historical energy consumption profile.

- Group II, claim(s) 51-77, drawn to ordering products from a store. They also recite ranking items of interest based on a customer's profile as well as the checking of inventory. The claims of Group I do not include the invention of the claims of Group II.

- Group III, claim(s) 78-100, drawn to identifying the best cellular coverage area for an individual (i.e., matching customer travel profiles to available service areas). The inventions of Groups I and II do not include the invention of the claims of Group III.