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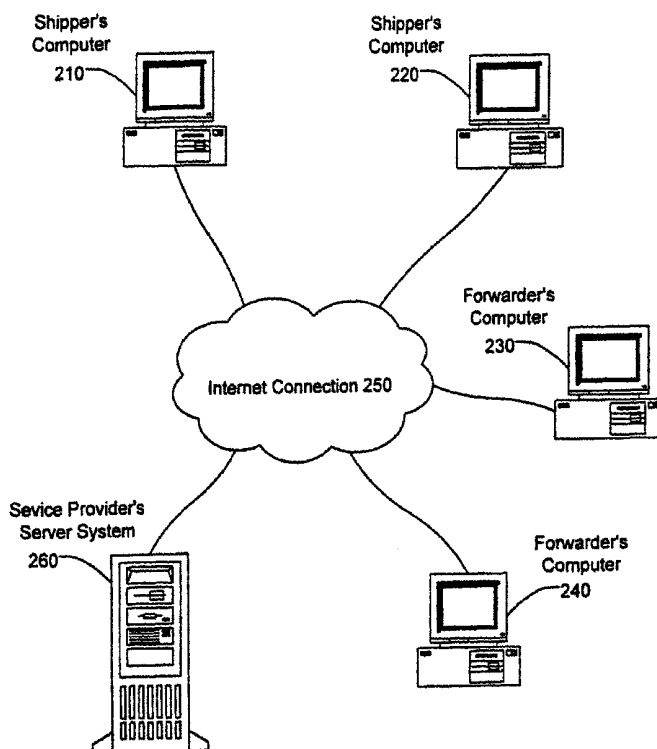
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(54) Title: A METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR HANDLING SHIPPING REQUESTS VIA THE INTERNET



(57) Abstract: The invention is directed to a method of handling shipping orders over the Internet. In one or more embodiments of the invention, a shipper provides the necessary shipment information to numerous forwarders by providing the information only once to a service provider. The provided information is then maintained in the service provider's information storage system. The information is provided to a plurality of forwarders. The forwarders are invited to place their bids by a certain deadline. The system queries forwarders to place their bids and enter all relevant information that may be useful to the shipper in making a selection. The placed bids and information are then collected, stored, and arranged by the system for submission to the shipper. Certain information, such as survey results, news articles, or other publications including detailed information about the background of various forwarders that have participated in the bidding process, can also be made available to a shipper, if requested. Once the collected information is submitted to a shipper, he or she has the opportunity to select from the multiple bids provided by the system. Once the shipper accepts a bid, the transaction is completed and a confirmation is forwarded to the forwarder who has won the bid.

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— Before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of receipt of amendments.

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## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

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A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER  
IPC 7 G06F17/60

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)

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## C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	US 5 835 716 A (HUNT WILLIAM M ET AL) 10 November 1998 (1998-11-10)	1-8,10, 14-18, 20,21, 24-27, 29,31
A	the whole document	11-13
Y	US 5 835 896 A (KAPLAN SAMUEL JERROLD ET AL) 10 November 1998 (1998-11-10)	1-8,10, 14-18, 20,21, 24-27, 29,31
A	the whole document	11-13
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Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.



Patent family members are listed in annex.

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\*&\* document member of the same patent family

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## C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

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A	US 5 862 223 A (JORASCH JAMES A ET AL) 19 January 1999 (1999-01-19)  column 7, line 6 -column 9, line 18 ----	1,2,7,8, 14-18, 20,21, 24-27, 29,31
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Information on patent family members

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