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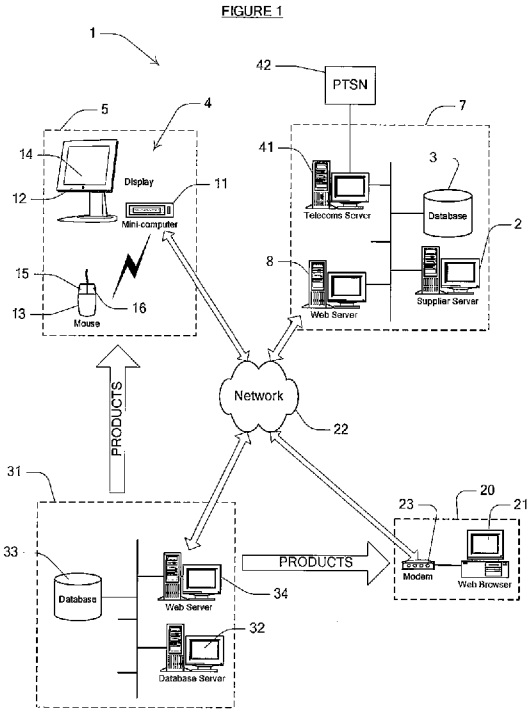
FIGURE 1



(57) Abstract: According to the invention there is provided a computer networked environment for implementing a system (1) for delivering a multi-step program in the form of a time spaced series of skin care treatments to a customer. The system (1) includes a supplier server (2) for maintaining a database (3) that contains program information indicative of the program, customer information indicative of the customer, and outlet information indicative of the outlet. A remote provider terminal (4) is located at a program outlet (5) where the customer attends for delivery of the treatments, the terminal being linked to server (2) for selectively accessing the information to facilitate delivery to the customer of the next treatment in the multi-step program.

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A SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR INTERFACING BUYERS AND SELLERS OF GOODS AND/OR SERVICES

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[01] The present invention relates to a system and method for interfacing buyers and sellers of goods and/or services.

[02] The invention has been developed primarily for delivering multi-step beauty, cosmetic and bodily care programs to customers and will be described hereinafter with reference to that application. However, the invention is not limited to that particular field of use and is suitable for facilitating the promotion and/or sale of other goods and/or services, and the delivery of other multi-step programs where skilled human expertise is required, such as automotive servicing, medical and rehabilitation programs, fitness programs, education and training programs, and the like.

BACKGROUND

[03] Any discussion of the prior art throughout the specification should in no way be considered as an admission that such prior art is widely known or forms part of common general knowledge in the field.

[04] The delivery of beauty and cosmetic treatments typically occurs through salons, beauty parlors, and other like establishments. These establishments, while many and varied in nature, are widespread, often smaller in size, and have loyal customers. However, due to the dispersed and fractured nature of the market for these treatments, there are few structured programs for customers – primarily due to the high capital costs involved in developing such a program – the result of which is that it is more usual for a customer to have a "once-off" treatment.

[05] In the event that an establishment wishes to establish a structured program the usual approach is to align the establishment with a particular manufacturer or supplier of products that are used in that treatment. However, this generally results in the establishment having to stock large amounts of the products in anticipation

of the customers' needs, and to be excluded from using products from other manufacturers even if a customer has a preference for the latter. The adverse cash flow and customer relation impact of this, particularly on the smaller establishments, is often significant.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[06] It is an object of the present invention to overcome or ameliorate at least one of the disadvantages of the prior art, or to provide a useful alternative.

[07] According to a first aspect of the invention there is provided a system for interfacing buyers and sellers of goods and/or services, the system including:

a system server for maintaining a database containing product information indicative of the goods and/or services, buyer information indicative of the buyers, and seller information indicative of the sellers; and

a plurality of remote terminals being disposed at locations where the sellers offer for sale the goods and/or services, the terminals being linked to the server for selectively accessing the information to facilitate the purchase of the goods and/or services by the buyers.

[08] In an embodiment, the system server is operated by an administrator, and the administrator provides the terminals to the sellers. Preferably, the terminals are linked to the server via a computer network. More preferably, the network is the internet. However, in other embodiments, the network is a WAN, a LAN, a LEO uplink, a public telecommunications network, a private landline, a wireless network or a combination of these.

[09] In an embodiment, each terminal includes a storage device that stores program information indicative of one or more programs of supply of goods and/or services to a buyer. Preferably, the storage device is selectively accessed to provide the program information to a buyer or a seller. More preferably, the storage device is selectively accessed to update the program information. In an embodiment, the terminal includes a communication device through which the storage device is accessed to update the program information. In some embodiments, the communication device affects the link between the terminal and

the server. That is, the communication device is an internal modem, a PCMCIA card, or other communications card. In other embodiments, however, the communications device includes a port for communicating with a portable storage medium that includes the updated program information. That is, the communications device is a drive for receiving one or more of: a removable hard drive, a CD; a DVD; or other memory device. In other embodiments, the communications device is a port for interacting with a memory device that uploads drivers. For example, a USB port that interacts with a memory stick.

[10] In an embodiment, the terminals are available for use by the buyers and the sellers. Preferably, each of the buyers and sellers is allocated a unique user identifier that is entered via the terminal prior to the use being permitted. More preferably, each of the buyers and the sellers has a password that is entered via the terminal and verified, together with the user identifier, prior to the terminal being available for use to the respective buyer or seller. That is, to use the terminal, the buyer or seller has to be authorized to do so, and must provide the required level of identification prior to be granted access.

[11] In an embodiment, the terminal is responsive to the entry of the user identifier and the password for obtaining the verification. Preferably, the terminal communicates data indicative of the user name and password to the server to obtain the verification.

[12] In an embodiment, the terminal is responsive to the identifier for providing selective access to the information contained on the database. Preferably, the terminal is responsive to the identifier for providing selective access to the program information. More preferably, the storage device includes a duplicate of some of the information contained on the database.

[13] According to a second aspect of the invention there is provided a method for interfacing buyers and sellers of goods and/or services, the method including:

maintaining on a system server a database containing product information indicative of the goods and/or services, buyer information indicative of the buyers, and seller information indicative of the sellers; and

disposing a plurality of remote terminals at locations where the sellers offer for sale the goods and/or services, the terminals being linked to the server for selectively accessing the information to facilitate the purchase of the goods and/or services by the buyers.

[14] According to a third aspect of the invention there is provided a system for delivering a multi-step program to a customer, the system including:

a supplier server for maintaining a database containing program information indicative of the program and customer information indicative of the customer; and

a remote provider terminal located at a program outlet where the customer attends for delivery of the program, the terminal being linked to the server for selectively accessing the information to facilitate delivery to the customer of the next step in the multi-step program.

[15] In an embodiment, the remote provider terminal provides an update signal to the server in response to the next step in the multi-step program being completed, and the server is responsive to the signal for updating the one or more of the program information or the customer information.

[16] In an embodiment, the database contains provider information indicative of the provider.

[17] Preferably, the system delivers a plurality of multi-step programs to a plurality of customers. More preferably, the system includes a plurality of remote provider terminals located in a plurality of program outlets. While typically a given customer is engaged in only one program, in some embodiments, a given customer is engaged simultaneously in more than one program. In the case of the latter, and in one embodiment, that customer attends more than one outlet to be delivered those respective programs. However, in other embodiments, that customer attends the same outlet for delivery of those programs.

[18] In an embodiment, the remote provider terminal includes a visual display, and a processing unit for interfacing with the server and the display. Preferably, the terminal includes an input device for allowing the customer to selectively access and/or change the program information or the customer information. More

preferably, the outlet has at least one staff member who assists with the delivery of the program, and the input device allows the staff member to selectively access and/or change the program information or the customer information.

[19] In an embodiment, the input device is a computer mouse. Preferably, the mouse is a wireless mouse, and the terminal includes a wireless communicator that interfaces with the processor and which wirelessly interfaces with the mouse. More preferably, the wireless mouse is an infra-red mouse. However, in other embodiments, the mouse is a **B**luetooth™ mouse, while in other embodiments other wireless forms of communication are used.

[20] In an embodiment, the visual display is a dynamic display such as a computer screen.

[21] In an embodiment, the terminal is linked to the server via a telephone line. However, in other embodiment, the connection is by way of dedicated cable, while in other embodiments, a wireless connection is used. Preferably, the server delivers web pages to the terminal. However, in other embodiments, use is made of other forms of delivery.

[22] In an embodiment, the terminal includes a storage device for storing some of all of the program information. Accordingly, there is no need to transmit this substantive information along what may only be a standard telephone line. However, should there be a need to update minor parts of the program information, that can occur in non-peak times. In an embodiment, the storage device is a hard drive, while in other embodiments the storage device is a CD ROM or DVD. Other storage devices will be known to those skilled in the art.

[23] In an embodiment, the server includes a customer interface for allowing the customer to selectively access some or all of the customer information or the program information via a customer terminal. In this embodiment, the server provides the interface as a browser based interface and, as such, the customer is able to access the selected information from any online computer having a web browser.

[24] In the embodiments, the system has a variety of security mechanisms for ensuring the security and safety of the information retained on database 3. Any person having access to that information, including the staff member and the customer, are allocated unique user identities and must use passwords to log onto the server. Logs are kept of all events, including details of: the information that was accessed; the user identity; the time; and what, if any, changes were made to the information.

[25] In an embodiment, the customer information includes records of the timing for the next step in the multi-step program and the outlet at where that next step is to be delivered. Preferably, the server is responsive to the customer information for formulating stocking information indicative of needs for one or more predetermined products at the outlet. More preferably, the system includes a stocking depot that is responsive to selective stocking information for affecting delivery to the outlet of one or more predetermined products. That is, the outlet is delivered the predetermined product as and when required, thereby reducing the overhead for the individual outlet.

[26] In an embodiment, the stocking information is indicative of services required at the outlet, and the stocking depot is responsive to selective stocking information for affecting attendance at the outlet of one or more predetermined personnel. For example, in an embodiment, the next step in the program requires input from a person with specialist skills, and the stocking depot includes a register of such persons and provides them with instructions to attend the particular outlet at the required time.

[27] In an embodiment, the multi-step program is a series of time spaced apart bodily cosmetic treatments that involve the use of predetermined cosmetic products. Preferably, the outlet is a salon where the treatments are to be provided, and the remote provider terminal is located in the salon for not only facilitating the timely delivery of the predetermined cosmetic products to the salon, but also for providing an audible and visual guide to the customer and the staff member as to the detailed implementation of the next step or steps in the treatment.

[28] According to a fourth aspect of the invention there is provided a method for delivering a multi-step program to a customer, the method including:

maintaining with a supplier server a database containing program information indicative of the program and customer information indicative of the customer; and

locating a remote provider terminal at a program outlet where the customer attends for delivery of the program, the terminal being linked to the server for selectively accessing the information to facilitate delivery to the customer of the next step in the multi-step program.

[29] According to a fifth aspect of the invention there is provided a remote terminal for an outlet where buyers attend to purchase goods and/or services from a seller, the terminal including:

a visual display device for displaying both an image and a cursor that is overlaid on that image;

a storage device for containing programming information;

an input device that provides displacement information and only one type of actuation information; and

a processor that is responsive to: the displacement information for moving the cursor about the image; and the actuation information and the location of the cursor on the image for selectively accessing the programming information for changing the image being displayed.

[30] In an embodiment, the input device includes a single actuator for providing the one type of actuation information. In other embodiments, however, the input device includes a plurality of actuators for providing the actuation information.

[31] According to a sixth aspect of the invention there is provided a method for operating an outlet where buyers attend to purchase goods and/or services from a seller, the method including:

providing a visual display device for displaying both an image and a cursor that is overlaid on that image;

containing programming information a storage device;

providing an input device that provides displacement information and only one

type of actuation information; and

being responsive to: the displacement information for moving the cursor about the image; and the actuation information and the location of the cursor on the image for selectively accessing the programming information for changing the image being displayed.

[32] According to a seventh aspect of the invention there is provided a system for interfacing buyers and sellers of goods and/or services, the system including:

a database containing product information indicative of the goods and/or services, buyer information indicative of the buyers, and seller information indicative of the sellers;

a plurality of remote terminals being disposed at locations where the sellers offer for sale the goods and/or services, each terminal being activated by one of the buyers or sellers, and being responsive to the activation for linking the terminal to the database for selectively accessing the information and facilitate the purchase of the goods and/or services by the buyers; and

a display having a background upon which are superimposed images for viewing by one or more of the sellers and/or buyers, the background being varied in accordance with one or more of the buyer information, the seller information, and the product information.

[33] According to an eighth aspect of the invention there is provided a method for interfacing buyers and sellers of goods and/or services, the method including:

providing a database containing product information indicative of the goods and/or services, buyer information indicative of the buyers, and seller information indicative of the sellers;

disposing a plurality of remote terminals at locations where the sellers offer for sale the goods and/or services, each terminal being activated by one of the buyers or sellers, and being responsive to the activation for linking the terminal to the database for selectively accessing the information and facilitate the purchase of the goods and/or services by the buyers; and

providing a display having a background upon which are superimposed images for viewing by one or more of the sellers and/or buyers, the background being varied in accordance with one or more of the buyer information, the seller information, and

the product information.

[34] In an embodiment, the terminals are respective desktop computers. However, in other embodiments, the terminals are selected from one or more of the following: laptop computers; PDA's; cellular telephones; LEO reception devices; WAP devices; and the like.

[35] Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, throughout the description and the claims, the words 'comprise', 'comprising', 'include', 'including', and the like are to be construed in an inclusive sense as opposed to an exclusive or exhaustive sense; that is to say, in the sense of "including, but not limited to".

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[36] Preferred embodiments of the invention are described herein by way of example only, and not by way of limitation in the figures of the accompanying drawings in which like references indicate similar elements. It should be noted that references to "an" or "one" embodiment in this disclosure are not necessarily to the same embodiment, and such references mean at least one.

[37] Embodiments of the invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings in which: Figure 1 illustrates a computer networked environment for implementing a system and method for delivering a program to a customer according the invention; and Figure 2 is an instance of a webpage for a social networking site interacting with the system and method of Figure 1.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[38] For convenience, in this detailed description reference to the terms "good", "goods", "service", "services", "product" and "products" should be taken as reference to the "good and/or service" and "goods and/or services", as the case may be, except where the context clearly indicates otherwise. Additionally, as used in this specification, including the claims, the term "buyer" includes within its scope a potential buyer.

[39] Referring to Figure 1 there is illustrated a computer networked

environment for implementing a system for delivering a multi-step program – in the form of a time spaced series of skin care treatments – to a customer (not shown). The system is generally indicated by the reference numeral 1 and includes a supplier server 2 for maintaining a database 3 that contains program information indicative of the program, customer information indicative of the customer, and outlet information indicative of the outlet. A remote provider terminal 4 is located at a program outlet 5 where the customer attends for delivery of the treatments, the terminal being linked to server 2 for selectively accessing the information to facilitate delivery to the customer of the next treatment in the multi-step program.

[40] It will be appreciated that while only a single outlet 5 is illustrated, system 1 is adapted for interacting with a large number of like outlets for facilitating a widespread delivery of the treatments to many customers. Accordingly, where reference is made to outlet 5 it is intended to be a reference to all the outlets unless the context indicates otherwise.

[41] While typically each customer will only be undertaking one program at any given time, and attending a single outlet for the delivery of that treatment, system 1 accommodates a customer undertaking more than one program simultaneously, whether at one or more of the outlets. That is, a customer is able to undertake a program where the individual treatments are not all delivered by the same outlet. For example, if a customer commences a program at a given outlet and, during that program, he or she moves location and can no longer conveniently attend that same outlet, system 1 allows that customer to continue with the program at another outlet. That is, customers are able to enjoy continuity of the programs, and to choose which of the outlets are most convenient at the time of each treatment in the program.

[42] Server 2 and database 3 are located at a processing site 7 that, in this embodiment, is remote from outlet 5 and the other outlets. However, in another embodiment, site 7 is adjacent to or near one of the outlets, while in a further embodiment, site 7 is also an outlet.

[43] In this embodiment, system 1 is administered and operated by an

administrator (not shown) who is primarily responsible for setting up and operating the hardware and software combination located at site 7. As will be appreciated from the disclosure herein, that the hardware and software is primarily used to allow selective access to the customer and program information by customers and members of staff at the outlets. Another important feature is for the regular and accurate updating and modification of the information to provide an accurate and current record of events and progress of the programs, as well as being a planning tool for the delivery of products to the outlets.

[44] The hardware used at site 7 is designed for operation 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and at a minimum of 99% availability. Where possible use is made of high reliability and fault tolerant hardware and software combinations, as well as best practice design and redundancy. Typically, this comprises at least 100%, and more likely 200%, redundancy.

[45] The primary functionality of server 2 is to allow selective access to database 3 by customers and staff members and to ensure that the information stored is accurate.

[46] Database 3 is a relational database and is maintained on a storage device in the form of a RAID configured hard drive. In other embodiments, alternative storage devices are used.

[47] Also located at site 7 is a web server 8 for facilitating remote external interaction with server 2 and database 3. While some pages are delivered in HTML or other web based programming, other information is delivered in compressed data files be that text, video, audio or a combination of these.

[48] Terminal 4 includes a set-top box 11 that contains a fully functioning desktop computer. In this embodiment, box 11 has dimensions of about 120 mm x 50 mm x 120 mm and contains a 1 GHz Pentium™ processor, 256 M RAM, a 20 Gigabyte hard drive, a 32 M video card, a USB port, and an infrared transmitter. In other embodiments, alternative specifications are used.

[49] Box 11 is connected, via the video card, to a 15" flat screen display 12 that

is driven to display a predetermined image and/or sequences of images that are superimposed upon a background 14 of the display. This background is referred to as "wallpaper" or the "desktop" and represents the visual base plane or base space for the display, as provided by box 11. In this embodiment, not only are the images that are superimposed upon background 14 changed, but so too is the visual form of that background.

[50] An input device, in the form of an infrared mouse 13, allows a customer or staff member to move a cursor about the bounds of background 14 and any image that is superimposed upon that background. As the mouse is manually translated across an underlying support surface, it provides a proportional or corresponding positional signal to box 11 via the infrared transmitter. This signal is processed by box 11 to correspondingly progress a cursor (not shown) about background 14. When the cursor has been positioned as desired – that is, superimposed above a desired icon, hypertext link, other link, button, or command feature – the user of the mouse presses one of the two buttons 15 and 16 on mouse 13. This has the effect of activating the link, command or button. Notwithstanding that mouse 13 has more than one actuator – that is, it has two buttons – the effect of using any one or more of these is the same. In other embodiments where the input device includes more than two actuators, the same effect applies.

[51] As described above, the customer and staff member being able to selectively access the information on database 3 via terminal 4. In addition, the customer is also able to selectively access database 3 from a home site 20 via a web-enabled device, such as a desktop computer 21 that is connected to the internet 22 via a modem 23. In other embodiments, the web-enabled device is a cellular telephone, a PDA, a laptop or the like. Moreover, that access need not occur from site 20, but could occur from any location that provides access to the required network. While in this embodiment the network is the internet, in other embodiments, the network is a WAN, a LAN, a LEO uplink, a public telecommunications network, a private landline, a wireless network or a combination of these.

[52] Also represented in Figure 1 is a warehouse site 31 where the products

(not shown) are stored and, in some embodiments, manufactured. In addition to those products, site 31 includes a database server 32 and a database 33 for storing and managing supply information that is indicative of the quantity of product required, the party requiring the product, the delivery requirements for that product, and the timing of the required delivery. This information is derived from the information stored in database 3.

[53] Server 32 is linked to database 3 via internet 22 and web server 34 for allowing exchange of information between database 3 and database 33 in response to the requirement for the supply of product, and the actual supply of that product.

[54] In this embodiment, the administrator also operates warehouse site 31. However, in other embodiments, separate parties operate sites 7 and 31.

[55] Outlet 5 is, in this embodiment, an independently owned professional services outlet for providing skin care to its customers. That is, system 1 provides a link for a plurality of such outlets, in that the programs – in this case, skin care programs – that have been centrally developed and stored as the program information on database 3, are available for use by all the outlets without them having to outlay the capital to independently develop those programs. While database 3 includes customer information for each of the customers, access to that information for staff members of an outlet is limited to only the customers who are actively involved in a program that is running or which is set to run at that outlet. Moreover, it is only selected information about the customer, and of which the customer authorises, which is provided to the outlet.

[56] An example of the process of participating in a skin care program includes:

1. A customer attending an outlet for an ad hoc or periodic treatment.
2. The customer being shown via display 12 a promotional video or other presentation that is derived from the program information as stored in box 11 or database 3.
3. The customer registering with system 1 via terminal 4, in that a unique user identifier is assigned to that customer, and a password chosen by

them.

4. The customer agreeing to enter into a desired one of the available programs.
5. Scheduling for the first or next step in the program.
6. Attending the first step or next step in the program.
7. Repeating the above steps 5 and 6 until all the steps in the program are completed.
8. Returning to step 1 or 2 above.

While the customer and the staff member at the outlet interact with terminal 4, that terminal communicates with server 2 via the internet 22.

[57] Once the customer has been allocated an identifier and provided a password, the customer information is updated accordingly. Once the customer has selected the desired program, the program information is updated accordingly. Server 2 is responsive to these changes for providing order information to server 32. This order information is indicative of the type and quantity of skin treatment product or products that need to be delivered to the outlet for the completion of the next step in the program. It is also indicative of the scheduling of the next step so that that product or products will be timely delivered to outlet 5. If the next step in the program also has an intermediate treatment step that is completed by the customer away from outlet 5, the order information is indicative of the product or products, and the timing of the delivery of those products to the customer site 20. For example, one skin treatment requires the customer to apply to the skin daily a particular cream for the five days prior to the next step in the program. The order information will indicate accordingly, and server 32 will be responsive to that information for scheduling the delivery of the relevant products to the customer at site 20 prior to the required time for application, and the other products to outlet 5 prior to the scheduled next step.

[58] In this manner, the outlet 5 need not hold any stock of the products, and hence minimise inventories and hence reduce overheads. Some outlets choose to hold minimal stock such as for display or promotional purposes. However, as terminal 4 provides promotional material, this also alleviates the need to hold such stock.

[59] In this embodiment, terminal 4 is self contained and is owned and supplied to the outlets by the administrator. Accordingly, the need for the outlet to outlay capital on such equipment is avoided.

[60] The storage device within terminal 4 is updated with new program information, or additional program information by downloading this from database 3. However, as typically the link between terminal 4 and the internet is a low bandwidth telephone line, the downloading is segmented and/or done in non-peak times such as after business hours. In other embodiments, a representative of the administrators provides a memory stick of other memory device that interacts with the USB port in terminal 4 for transferring the data to the storage device. In other embodiments, terminals 4 include a disk drive, and the relevant disk is sent by mail, courier, or hand, to the outlets for loading onto the respective storage means.

[61] At site 7 there is also located a telecommunications server 41 for interfacing with the public telephone system 42. Server 41 is responsive to scheduling information contained within the program information for generating and sending reminders to the customers and outlets of approaching events such as the imminent timing of a next step in a program for a particular customer. In this embodiment, server 41 generates reminders in the form of SMS text messages that are sent to the cellular telephone numbers contained within the relevant fields of the customer information and the outlet information contained in database 3. For example, a reminder is sent to the customer 24 hours prior to a next step in a program. The message being "Hi. Just a quick note. Your appointment with [name of outlet, as personalized by the outlet] is tomorrow at [time]. Look forward to seeing you then." It will be appreciated by those skilled in the art, from the teaching herein, that other reminders at other times and with different text are possible. It will also be appreciated by those skilled addressees, that reminders other than SMS text messages are possible. Examples of such other messages include a voice mail message, a voice message, an email, a fax, or other such messages.

[62] In this embodiment, database 3 includes a field that stores the customer's nominated preferences for reminders, including the timing, frequency, content and

delivery form. In other embodiments, database 3 includes another similar field for the outlets.

[63] The above described embodiment of the invention allows a plurality of small and independent service providers – that is, the outlets – to make use of a centralised system 1 to gain access to a number of pre-developed programs that would be beyond the ability of each individual organisation to independently and financially sustainably develop and implement. Additionally, the service providers do not share data about their customers with other outlets making use of system 1. That is, the outlets retain their traditional advantages of local presence, but gain the advantages of centralised development of treatment programs and distribution of products, including the reduce requirement to hold inventory. Another advantage to the outlets is that they are actively increasing their chances of repeat or ongoing business by offering the customer a continuing program that relieves that customer from having to make a continuous sequence of choices. In the event that the customer does wish to take a more active role, he or she is able to interact with terminal 4 to gain additional information about the available choices and the relative merits of each.

[64] The administrator, through use of system 1, gains a wider marketing arm for the products and services and the ability to market other of the outlets' services to customers via terminals 4.

[65] It will be appreciated that the outlets are paid a commission for the products that are sold either through the outlet or to the customer who is undertaking a program through the outlet. That is, the outlet is only seeing a positive cash benefit, and does not have to outlay any significant capital over and above what would have to be outlaid to provide the professional expertise that is being provided to the customer.

[66] The program information contained in database 3 also included educational programs that are primarily directed toward staff members at the outlets, although it is also available for viewing by those customers who desire to do so. These educational programs are delivered via terminal 4 or computer 21,

whichever is most convenient for each staff member.

[67] The educational programs include information about the products, the application of the products, and associated warnings, benefits and helpful hints. This allows the staff at the outlets to gain an ongoing and updated education in the products and their best method of use to ensure that customers are provided with the best available advice and assistance.

[68] In this embodiment, each staff member is also allocated a unique identifier and sets a password. The outlet information is updated in accordance with this information, and to indicate which of the education programs have been completed by the staff members. For some educational programs delivered by system 1, there are tests set for the staff members, typically in the form of multiple-choice questions. As the educational programs and tests are completed, the outlet information is updated. There is also scheduling information contained within database 3 that is processed by server 2 for providing reminders to staff members either to undertake additional training or tests, or alerting them to the fact that additional training is now available.

[69] This educational functionality allows the small outlets to gain the benefits of training that would be otherwise difficult and expensive to acquire. It also allows the administrator to accurately target those staff members who require training.

[70] In this embodiment, system 1 also allows for the customer, should they wish to do so, to order product without having to attend one of the outlets. Each outlet is provided with a web page or pages that are stored on database 3 and which are delivered to the customer by server 8. These web pages are hosted by the administrator and provided in a standardised form that is able to be tailored by the outlet. Each hosted web page provides the customer with the ability to purchase products and to have them delivered to site 20 or elsewhere. As the customer is purchasing via the site of a particular outlet, it is relatively easy to track that sale, and pay that outlet the commission for the sale. This allows the customer access to products that have traditionally only been available though personally attending the

outlet. It also allows the manufacturer of the products to gain sales that would have been unlikely to have otherwise occurred. It also has the added benefit in this embodiment that the owner of the distribution chain is also the manufacturer of the products. That is, on-selling of the products by a customer is not economically viable, as the only source of those products is through system 1.

[71] The embodiments of the invention are also applicable to outlets of other multi-step programs are delivered. For example, automotive servicing, medical and rehabilitation programs, fitness programs, education and training programs, and the like. All such services are traditionally delivered by a vast number of relatively small organizations that typically have a strong local presence and loyal locally based customers who trust the outlet to deliver a service that is also in the customer's interest. In providing these types of services, there is a need for products, and system 1 allows these to be scheduled for delivery to the customers or the outlets, as and only when required. Importantly, there is also a need for education of the staff members at the outlets, and system 1 provides a systematic and rigorous educational regime for achieving this.

[72] System 1 creates a local market presence for products while also increasing the outlets' ability to retain the customers. Hitherto, it is only through large and expensive advertising campaigns that such market penetration was possible, which limited such endeavours to the larger manufacturers and retailers.

[73] As the identity of the customer, staff member or outlet is known once that party has logged onto system 1 via terminal 4 or computer 21, it is possible to fine-cast – as opposed to broadcast – information to those parties. This again makes use of the greater trust that is typically found in a relationship between a smaller local establishment and its customers over that relationship between a large organization and its customers. In this embodiment, database 3 includes fields for the customer and/or the outlet to nominate preferences that are able to be used when formulating fine-cast messages. For example, if an outlet knows that a particular customer has a dislike for a specific program or treatment, database 3 is updated accordingly to ensure that that customer is not informed of products or programs of this type.

[74] System 1 is also applicable to the sale of goods and/or services other than those associated with multi-step programs. Take, by way of example, an outlet in the form of an independent local butcher who has a terminal 4 located at the outlet. The administrator is able to alert the butcher, via SMS text message or via terminal 4, of any upcoming supplies of meat that may be of particular interest based upon prior orders made. If the butcher is aware of one or more customer with a known preference for such meat, and those customers are registered with system 1, the butcher is able to alert those customer only, without having to broadcast the message to all customers, some of whom will have a dislike to that meat. The messaging in this embodiment is via SMS text messaging, although other messaging systems are used in other embodiments. The alerted customer or customers are then in a position to respond, if so desired. In the embodiment described, the response is by a return SMS text message that is sent to database 3 via server 41. However, in other embodiments, the customer responds through use of computer 21 or the like. If orders for the meat are received, database 3 is updated accordingly, and the meat dispatched, at the appropriate time, to either the outlet or the delivery address of the customer. As in the earlier described embodiment, even though the meat – or other product in other embodiments – does not necessarily have to get delivered to the butcher, that butcher receives a commission for initiating the sale. In an alternative embodiment, the customer information contained on database 3 is used to allow automatic fine-casting to the customers about the existence of the meat. However, that message is still sent on behalf of the butcher, and a commission paid to that butcher should an order result.

[75] As terminals 4 are provided by, and the ownership retained by, the administrator, use is also made of the background plane of the terminals as a means for conveying information or displaying images. This information or images are delivered to the terminals via the internet, or alternatively, are stored on the storage device within terminal 4. As will be understood from the above description, there are instances where the customers, the staff members or the outlets wish to communicate with server 2 or access database 3 via a channel other than a terminal 4. When using these channels, the relevant person is able to permit the fine-cast to occur through that channel. So, for example, if a customer who is using computer

21 desires to access database 3 and/or the fine-cast information via that computer, the customer provides the administrator with the authority to do so. That is, the customer is able to gain access to advice and information that has been filtered from a trusted source – the local outlet. It is also possible for the customer to order products and/or services from outlets using system 1, to gain scheduling information for the delivery of the ordered products, to gain information about upcoming offers that have been filtered to those that are believe to be of interest to that customer.

[76] Terminal 4 is responsive to, amongst other things, the identity of the party using the terminal for setting the information and/or images contained within the background plane. That is, the information and/or images are also part of a fine-cast system that allows the user to tailor the terminal for their needs. It also allows the administrator to reduce the risk of exposing the user to unwanted and needless information.

[77] In one embodiment, the background plane of the terminal is used to provide the user with advertising. However, in other embodiments, the background plane is used to provide the user with scheduling information indicative of upcoming events that are being policed on system 1. For a computer working with a Windows™ based GUI, such as terminal 4, the background plane is the desktop. The image portrayed by this desktop is updated and/or changed in response to, amongst other things, the customer information, the outlet information, and the product information. That is, individual users will have an individual background plane.

[78] The use of this fine-cast functionality with the background plane is carried out, in this embodiment, in accordance with a schedule that is derived from the information stored in database 3. However, in other embodiments, a schedule is not used or, if it is, it is derived from other than the information on database 3.

[79] By using the background plane of terminal 4 or other electronic device, the preferred embodiments convert a passive or idle space into an active space.

[80] In some embodiments, when terminal 4 is powered, but no user is logged

in, display 12 is driven to present a series of images. These images are derived from a schedule of images that are contained within the storage device within terminal 4. The schedule itself is selected based upon the outlet in which the terminal is disposed. That is, even when there is no specific user logged onto the terminal, it is still able to provide a tailored effect for the outlet.

[81] The background plane is that base image that is presented by a display for a computer or other device and upon which the other images are superimposed or overlaid. It is also referred to as the base plane or the underlying face of the device, home position or resting place between software applications. While reference has been made to the background plane of a computer, it will also be appreciated that such a plane is included in most electronic devices, be they pager, a PDA, a LEO interface, cellular telephones, pagers, television screens, and the like.

[82] In the foregoing specification, some exemplified preferred embodiments of the invention have been described. It will be evident to the skilled addressee, from the teaching herein, that various modifications and changes can be made without departing from the broader spirit and scope of the invention. The specification and drawings are, accordingly, to be regarded in an illustrative rather than a restrictive sense.

[83] In one embodiment, there is provided a system and method for facilitating a recommendation scheme whereby customers, staff members of each outlet and the general public are able to recommend products to other customers and potential customers. In return, rewards such as discounts are able to be offered based on certain criteria. Examples of such criteria include the number of recommendations made by a customer, staff member or member of the public to others, the form of the recommendation, the forum in which the recommendation is made, the purchases linked to the making of the recommendation or others.

[84] In one embodiment, the method is carried out by providing a software application – for example, an installer application – on the administrator's website, which is freely available for access or download by customers, staff members and

the general public. Preferably the installer application is able to be downloaded through the activation of a hypertext link, image link, other link, button or command feature. In this specific embodiment, the customer, staff member or member of the general public utilizing this software application is referred to as the "host".

[85] Once accessed or downloaded, the installer application allows the host, as illustrated in Figure 2, to add, embed or install an associated software application 43 into the host's personal web page 44 on a social networking website 45 available on the internet or other network. Such social networking websites include, but are not limited to, Facebook™, MySpace™, Bebo™ and Twitter™. In some embodiments the software application is positioned on the personal web page 44 adjacent other user-selected applications 46 and personal information 47.

[86] In other embodiments, the software application is also compatible with other web-based applications such as MSN Messenger. In some embodiments, the host is required to register certain details in the administrator's database server 32 prior to adding the software application to its personal web page.

[87] The software application preferably includes an image link, hypertext link, other link, button or command feature which friends – real or virtual – of the host or any other people viewing the host's personal web page are able to access. In this embodiment, the friend or other person accessing the software application from the host's personal web page is referred to as the "user".

[88] In a particularly preferred embodiment, the software application includes an image link 48 which displays a recommendation for a certain product and/or brands of product. When the link is accessed by a user, it links the user's web browser to the administrator's website where the certain product and/or brands of products are available for sale. Moreover, the website includes details of, or additional links to, one or more outlets selling these products.

[89] The software application also provides feedback information on each recommendation to the administrator and/or selected outlets. This information, in this embodiment, includes details indicative of at least the host, products or brands

of product recommended, and the user. This information is subsequently used to reward the host by, for example, providing a discount to that host on the next product purchase made by the host.

[90] Unless specifically stated otherwise, as apparent from the following discussions, it is appreciated that throughout the specification discussions utilizing terms such as "processing," "computing," "calculating," "determining", analyzing" or the like, refer to the action and/or processes of a computer or computing system, or similar electronic computing device, that manipulate and/or transform data represented as physical, such as electronic, quantities into other data similarly represented as physical quantities.

[91] In a similar manner, the term "processor" may refer to any device or portion of a device that processes electronic data, e.g., from registers and/or memory to transform that electronic data into other electronic data that, e.g., may be stored in registers and/or memory. A "computer" or a "computing machine" or a "computing platform" may include one or more processors.

[92] The methodologies described herein are, in one embodiment, performable by one or more processors that accept computer-readable (also called machine-readable) code containing a set of instructions that when executed by one or more of the processors carry out at least one of the methods described herein. Any processor capable of executing a set of instructions (sequential or otherwise) that specify actions to be taken are included. Thus, one example is a typical processing system that includes one or more processors. Each processor may include one or more of a CPU, a graphics processing unit, and a programmable DSP unit. The processing system further may include a memory subsystem including main RAM and/or a static RAM, and/or ROM. A bus subsystem may be included for communicating between the components. The processing system further may be a distributed processing system with processors coupled by a network. If the processing system requires a display, such a display may be included, e.g., a liquid crystal display (LCD) or a cathode ray tube (CRT) display. If manual data entry is required, the processing system also includes an input device such as one or more of an alphanumeric input unit such as a keyboard, a pointing control device such as

a mouse, and so forth. The term memory unit as used herein, if clear from the context and unless explicitly stated otherwise, also encompasses a storage system such as a disk drive unit. The processing system in some configurations may include a sound output device, and a network interface device. The memory subsystem thus includes a computer-readable carrier medium that carries computer-readable code (e.g., software) including a set of instructions to cause performing, when executed by one or more processors, one of more of the methods described herein. Note that when the method includes several elements, e.g., several steps, no ordering of such elements is implied, unless specifically stated. The software may reside in the hard disk, or may also reside, completely or at least partially, within the RAM and/or within the processor during execution thereof by the computer system. Thus, the memory and the processor also constitute computer-readable carrier medium carrying computer-readable code.

[93] Furthermore, a computer-readable carrier medium may form, or be included in a computer program product.

[94] In alternative embodiments, the one or more processors operate as a standalone device or may be connected, e.g., networked to other processor(s), in a networked deployment, the one or more processors may operate in the capacity of a server or a user machine in server-user network environment, or as a peer machine in a peer-to-peer or distributed network environment. The one or more processors may form a personal computer (PC), a tablet PC, a set-top box (STB), a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA), a cellular telephone, a web appliance, a network router, switch or bridge, or any machine capable of executing a set of instructions (sequential or otherwise) that specify actions to be taken by that machine.

Note that while some diagrams only show a single processor and a single memory that carries the computer-readable code, those in the art will understand that many of the components described above are included, but not explicitly shown or described in order not to obscure the inventive aspect. For example, while only a single machine is illustrated, the term "machine" shall also be taken to include any collection of machines that individually or jointly execute a set (or multiple sets) of instructions to perform any one or more of the methodologies discussed herein.

[95] Thus, one embodiment of each of the methods described herein is in the form of a computer-readable carrier medium carrying a set of instructions, e.g., a computer program that is for execution on one or more processors, e.g., one or more processors that are part of web server arrangement. Thus, as will be appreciated by those skilled in the art, embodiments of the present invention may be embodied as a method, an apparatus such as a special purpose apparatus, an apparatus such as a data processing system, or a computer-readable carrier medium, e.g., a computer program product. The computer-readable carrier medium carries computer readable code including a set of instructions that when executed on one or more processors cause the processor or processors to implement a method. Accordingly, aspects of the present invention may take the form of a method, an entirely hardware embodiment, an entirely software embodiment or an embodiment combining software and hardware aspects. Furthermore, the present invention may take the form of carrier medium (e.g., a computer program product on a computer-readable storage medium) carrying computer-readable program code embodied in the medium.

[96] The software may further be transmitted or received over a network via a network interface device. While the carrier medium is shown in an exemplary embodiment to be a single medium, the term "carrier medium" should be taken to include a single medium or multiple media (e.g., a centralized or distributed database, and/or associated caches and servers) that store the one or more sets of instructions. The term "carrier medium" shall also be taken to include any medium that is capable of storing, encoding or carrying a set of instructions for execution by one or more of the processors and that cause the one or more processors to perform any one or more of the methodologies of the present invention. A carrier medium may take many forms, including but not limited to, non-volatile media, volatile media, and transmission media. Non-volatile media includes, for example, optical, magnetic disks, and magneto-optical disks. Volatile media includes dynamic memory, such as main memory. Transmission media includes coaxial cables, copper wire and fiber optics, including the wires that comprise a bus subsystem. Transmission media also may also take the form of acoustic or light waves, such as those generated during radio wave and infrared data communications. For

example, the term "carrier medium" shall accordingly be taken to included, but not be limited to, solid-state memories, a computer product embodied in optical and magnetic media; a medium bearing a propagated signal detectable by at least one processor of one or more processors and representing a set of instructions that, when executed, implement a method; a carrier wave bearing a propagated signal detectable by at least one processor of the one or more processors and representing the set of instructions a propagated signal and representing the set of instructions; and a transmission medium in a network bearing a propagated signal detectable by at least one processor of the one or more processors and representing the set of instructions.

[97] It will be understood that the steps of methods discussed are performed in one embodiment by an appropriate processor (or processors) of a processing (i.e., computer) system executing instructions (computer-readable code) stored in storage. It will also be understood that the invention is not limited to any particular implementation or programming technique and that the invention may be implemented using any appropriate techniques for implementing the functionality described herein. The invention is not limited to any particular programming language or operating system.

[98] Reference throughout this specification to "one embodiment" or "an embodiment" means that a particular feature, structure or characteristic described in connection with the embodiment is included in at least one embodiment of the present invention. Thus, appearances of the phrases "in one embodiment" or "in an embodiment" in various places throughout this specification are not necessarily all referring to the same embodiment, but may. Furthermore, the particular features, structures or characteristics may be combined in any suitable manner, as would be apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art from this disclosure, in one or more embodiments.

[99] Similarly it should be appreciated that in the above description of exemplary embodiments of the invention, various features of the invention are sometimes grouped together in a single embodiment, FIG., or description thereof for the purpose of streamlining the disclosure and aiding in the understanding of

one or more of the various inventive aspects. This method of disclosure, however, is not to be interpreted as reflecting an intention that the claimed invention requires more features than are expressly recited in each claim. Rather, as the following claims reflect, inventive aspects lie in less than all features of a single foregoing disclosed embodiment. Thus, the claims following the Detailed Description are hereby expressly incorporated into this Detailed Description, with each claim standing on its own as a separate embodiment of this invention.

[100] Furthermore, while some embodiments described herein include some but not other features included in other embodiments, combinations of features of different embodiments are meant to be within the scope of the invention, and form different embodiments, as would be understood by those skilled in the art. For example, in the following claims, any of the claimed embodiments can be used in any combination.

[101] Furthermore, some of the embodiments are described herein as a method or combination of elements of a method that can be implemented by a processor of a computer system or by other means of carrying out the function. Thus, a processor with the necessary instructions for carrying out such a method or element of a method forms a means for carrying out the method or element of a method. Furthermore, an element described herein of an apparatus embodiment is an example of a means for carrying out the function performed by the element for the purpose of carrying out the invention.

[102] In the description provided herein, numerous specific details are set forth. However, it is understood that embodiments of the invention may be practiced without these specific details. In other instances, well-known methods, structures and techniques have not been shown in detail in order not to obscure an understanding of this description.

[103] Thus, while there has been described what are believed to be the preferred embodiments of the invention, those skilled in the art will recognize that other and further modifications may be made thereto without departing from the spirit of the invention, and it is intended to claim all such changes and modifications as fall

within the scope of the invention. For example, any formulas given above are merely representative of procedures that may be used. Functionality may be added or deleted from the block diagrams and operations may be interchanged among functional blocks. Steps may be added or deleted to methods described within the scope of the present invention.

THE CLAIMS DEFINING THE INVENTION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. A system for interfacing buyers and sellers of goods and/or services, the system including:

a system server for maintaining a database containing product information indicative of the goods and/or services, buyer information indicative of the buyers, and seller information indicative of the sellers; and

a plurality of remote terminals being disposed at locations where the sellers offer for sale the goods and/or services, the terminals being linked to the server for selectively accessing the information to facilitate the purchase of the goods and/or services by the buyers.

2. A method for interfacing buyers and sellers of goods and/or services, the method including:

maintaining on a system server a database containing product information indicative of the goods and/or services, buyer information indicative of the buyers, and seller information indicative of the sellers; and

disposing a plurality of remote terminals at locations where the sellers offer for sale the goods and/or services, the terminals being linked to the server for selectively accessing the information to facilitate the purchase of the goods and/or services by the buyers.

3. A system for delivering a multi-step program to a customer, the system including:

a supplier server for maintaining a database containing program information indicative of the program and customer information indicative of the customer; and

a remote provider terminal located at a program outlet where the customer attends for delivery of the program, the terminal being linked to the server for selectively accessing the information to facilitate delivery to the customer of the next step in the multi-step program.

4. A method for delivering a multi-step program to a customer, the method including:

maintaining with a supplier server a database containing program information indicative of the program and customer information indicative of the customer; and

locating a remote provider terminal at a program outlet where the customer

attends for delivery of the program, the terminal being linked to the server for selectively accessing the information to facilitate delivery to the customer of the next step in the multi-step program.

5. A remote terminal for an outlet where buyers attend to purchase goods and/or services from a seller, the terminal including:

a visual display device for displaying both an image and a cursor that is overlaid on that image;

a storage device for containing programming information;

an input device that provides displacement information and only one type of actuation information; and

a processor that is responsive to: the displacement information for moving the cursor about the image; and the actuation information and the location of the cursor on the image for selectively accessing the programming information for changing the image being displayed.

6. A method for operating an outlet where buyers attend to purchase goods and/or services from a seller, the method including:

providing a visual display device for displaying both an image and a cursor that is overlaid on that image;

containing programming information a storage device;

providing an input device that provides displacement information and only one type of actuation information; and

being responsive to: the displacement information for moving the cursor about the image; and the actuation information and the location of the cursor on the image for selectively accessing the programming information for changing the image being displayed.

7. A system for interfacing buyers and sellers of goods and/or services, the system including:

a database containing product information indicative of the goods and/or services, buyer information indicative of the buyers, and seller information indicative of the sellers;

a plurality of remote terminals being disposed at locations where the sellers offer for sale the goods and/or services, each terminal being activated by one of the buyers or sellers, and being responsive to the activation for linking the terminal to the

database for selectively accessing the information and facilitate the purchase of the goods and/or services by the buyers; and

a display having a background upon which are superimposed images for viewing by one or more of the sellers and/or buyers, the background being varied in accordance with one or more of the buyer information, the seller information, and the product information.

8. A method for interfacing buyers and sellers of goods and/or services, the method including:

providing a database containing product information indicative of the goods and/or services, buyer information indicative of the buyers, and seller information indicative of the sellers;

disposing a plurality of remote terminals at locations where the sellers offer for sale the goods and/or services, each terminal being activated by one of the buyers or sellers, and being responsive to the activation for linking the terminal to the database for selectively accessing the information and facilitate the purchase of the goods and/or services by the buyers; and

providing a display having a background upon which are superimposed images for viewing by one or more of the sellers and/or buyers, the background being varied in accordance with one or more of the buyer information, the seller information, and the product information.

FIGURE 1

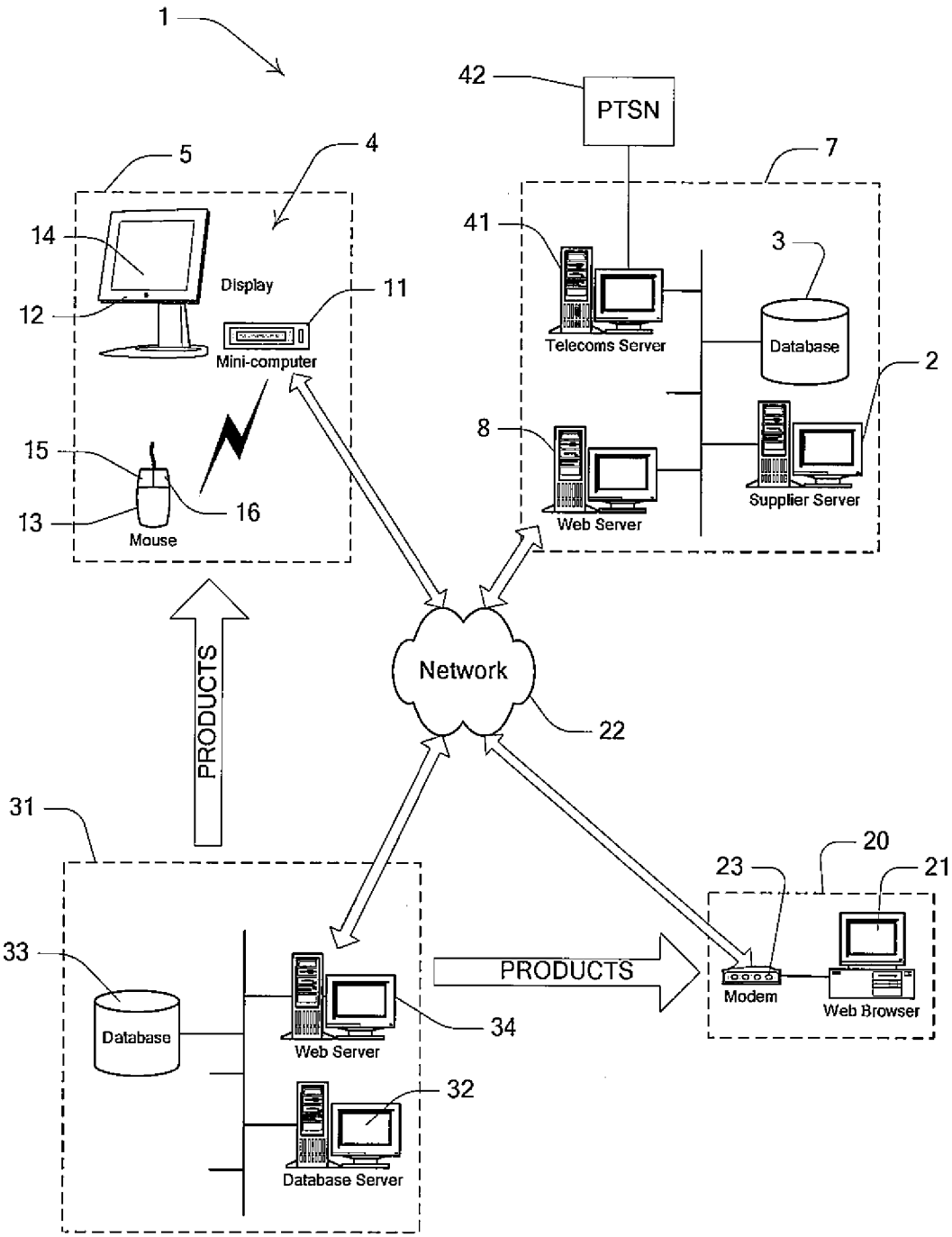
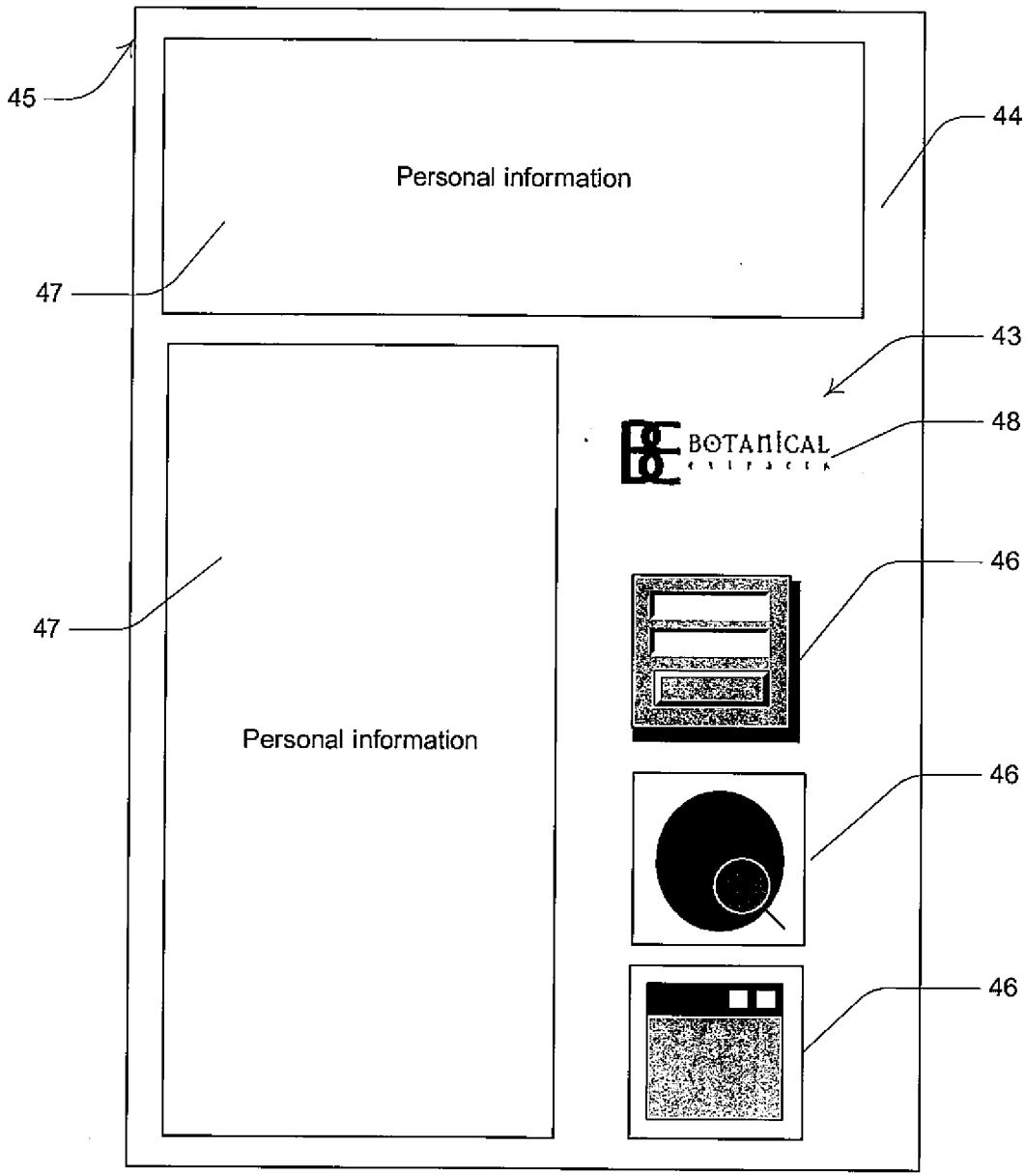

1
42
PTSN
5
4
7
14
Display
12
11
Mini-computer
41
3
Telecoms Server
Database
2
8
Supplier Server
Web Server
15
16
13
Mouse
PRODUCTS
Network
22
31
20
23
21
33
Database
Web Server
34
PRODUCTS
Modem
Web Browser
32
Database Server

FIGURE 2


45
44
Personal information
47
43
48
BOTANICAL
47
46
Personal information
46
46

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/AU2010/001183

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

Int. Cl.

G06Q 50/00 (2006.01) ***G06Q 30/00*** (2006.01) ***G06F15/00*** (2006.01)

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)

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)
WPI; IPC G06Q & keywords (point of sale, POS, treatment, care, multiple, step, phase, series, in store, delivery, service, program, server, outlet, customer, purchase, sale, sell, mouse, cursor, GUI, position) and like terms, Google, USPTO database, es@cenet, Patent Lens

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
	US 6315553 B1 (SACHDEVA et al.) 13 November 2001	
X	abstract, fig. 1, col. 4 lines 6-8 and 18-39	1-4
Y	abstract, fig. 1, col. 4 lines 6-8 and 18-39	7-8
	US 2006/0229506 A1 (CASTELLANOS) 12 October 2006	
X	abstract, fig. 1, pars. [0018-0019, 0049]	1-4
Y	abstract, fig. 1, pars. [0018-0019, 0049]	7-8
	US 2004/0153378 A1 (PERKOWSKI) 5 August 2004	
X	abstract, pars. [0066, 0642]	5-6
	WO 2007/106753 A2 (CQGT, LLC) 20 September 2007	
X	abstract, fig. 1, par. [007, 081]	5-6

[X] Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C [X] See patent family 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 application or patent 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	Date of mailing of the international search report
19 November 2010	30 NOV 2010
Name and mailing address of the ISA/AU AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE PO BOX 200, WODEN ACT 2606, AUSTRALIA E-mail address: pct@ipaustralia.gov.au Facsimile No. +61 2 6283 7999	Authorized officer **YING LI** AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE (ISO 9001 Quality Certified Service) Telephone No : (02) 6283 2802

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/AU2010/001183

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 7575163 B2 (MALIK) 18 August 2009 abstract, col. 5 line 49-col. 6 line 7, col. 7 lines 1-17	7-8
A	US 2005/0165626 A1 (KARPF) 28 July 2005 whole document	
P, A	US 2009/0271218 A1 (MOK et al.) 29 October 2009 whole document	
A	US 2005/0091615 A1 (SUZUKI) 28 April 2005 whole document	
A	US 6865719 B1 (NICHOLAS, III) 8 March 2005 whole document	

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/AU2010/001183

Box No. II Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 2 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 No. III Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 3 of first sheet)

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

1) Claims 1-4 and 7-8 are directed to a system/method for interfacing or delivering a multi-step program (Claim 1 does not explicitly define multi-step program. However, the service in claim 1 is construed to be the multi-step program in the context of the description.) and/or products between buyers and sellers using a client-server system. The system/method includes a server for maintaining a database containing product/program information, buyer information and seller information, and a plurality remote terminals being disposed at locations where the seller offer for sale the goods/services. It is considered that the system/method for sellers delivering a multi-step program/service/product to buyers comprises a first distinguishing feature.

2) Claims 5 and 6 are directed to a terminal for purchasing. The terminal includes a visual display device, a storage device, an input device, and a processor which is responsive to the cursor actuation information and location information. It is considered that the terminal with certain functions comprises a second distinguishing feature.

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 additional fees, this Authority did not invite payment of additional fees.

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 and, where applicable, the payment of a protest fee.

☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest but the applicable protest fee was not paid within the time limit specified in the invitation.

☐ No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No.
PCT/AU2010/001183

This Annex lists the known "A" publication level patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned international search report. The Australian Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

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Due to data integration issues this family listing may not include 10 digit Australian applications filed since May 2001.

END OF ANNEX