



(12) **DEMANDE DE BREVET CANADIEN**
CANADIAN PATENT APPLICATION

(13) **A1**

(86) **Date de dépôt PCT/PCT Filing Date:** 2022/05/12
(87) **Date publication PCT/PCT Publication Date:** 2022/11/17
(85) **Entrée phase nationale/National Entry:** 2023/11/09
(86) **N° demande PCT/PCT Application No.:** US 2022/072292
(87) **N° publication PCT/PCT Publication No.:** 2022/241458
(30) **Priorités/Priorities:** 2021/05/14 (US63/188,955);
2021/11/10 (US17/454,309)

(51) **Cl.Int./Int.Cl.** **G06Q 10/06** (2023.01),
G06Q 10/10 (2023.01), **G06Q 50/04** (2012.01),
H04L 67/1097 (2022.01)
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(54) **Titre : SYSTEMES ET PROCEDES DE VERIFICATION DE BOUT EN BOUT DE FLUX DE TRAVAIL DE FABRICATION**
(54) **Title: SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR END-TO-END VERIFICATION OF MANUFACTURING WORKFLOWS**

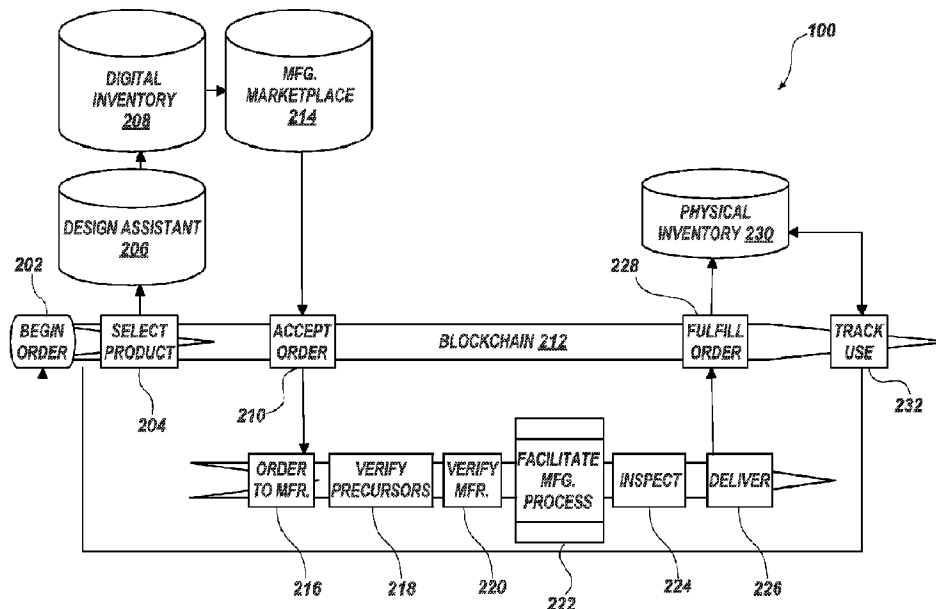


FIG. 2

(57) **Abstrégé/Abstract:**

Methods may involve accepting an order for a product to be manufactured and identification of a product file meeting the specification, the product file comprising instructions for manufacturing the product. Pre-manufacture verification of manufacturer capabilities and product precursors may be accepted. Operational parameters to enable an additive manufacturing device to manufacture the product may be sent as discrete packets. At least one packet may be sent only after receipt of confirmation that at least another previous layer is complete and associated operational parameters for the at least another previous layer have been deleted. In-manufacture verification of the operational parameters utilized by the additive manufacturing device when manufacturing the product may be accepted. At each stage, a blockchain for certifying characteristics of the product may be updated to associate data representative of workflows for the product with an encrypted, secure identifier utilizing a secure, distributed transaction ledger.

Date Submitted: 2023/11/09

CA App. No.: 3218539

Abstract:

Methods may involve accepting an order for a product to be manufactured and identification of a product file meeting the specification, the product file comprising instructions for manufacturing the product. Pre-manufacture verification of manufacturer capabilities and product precursors may be accepted. Operational parameters to enable an additive manufacturing device to manufacture the product may be sent as discrete packets. At least one packet may be sent only after receipt of confirmation that at least another previous layer is complete and associated operational parameters for the at least another previous layer have been deleted. In-manufacture verification of the operational parameters utilized by the additive manufacturing device when manufacturing the product may be accepted. At each stage, a blockchain for certifying characteristics of the product may be updated to associate data representative of workflows for the product with an encrypted, secure identifier utilizing a secure, distributed transaction ledger.

- 1 -

SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR END-TO-END VERIFICATION OF MANUFACTURING WORKFLOWS

PRIORITY CLAIM

5 This application claims the benefit of the filing date of United States Patent
Application Serial No. 17/454,309, filed November 10, 2021, for “SYSTEMS AND
METHODS FOR END-TO-END VERIFICATION OF MANUFACTURING
WORKFLOWS,” which claims the benefit of the filing date under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) of
U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 63/188,955, filed May 14, 2021, for
10 “ADDITIVE MANUFACTURING END-TO-END WORKFLOW PROCESSES,” the
disclosure of each of which is incorporated herein in its entirety by this reference.

FIELD

 This disclosure relates generally to systems and methods for facilitating,
15 controlling, and/or verifying manufacturing of products in a distributed supply chain. More
specifically, disclosed embodiments relate to systems and methods which may enable
aggregation, access control, revision, version tracking, or any combination of these for
product designs from different entities; facilitating, controlling, verifying, or any
combination of these with respect to manufacturing processes for products in accordance
20 with the product designs, particularly when additive manufacturing is employed;
facilitating, controlling, verifying, or any combination of these actions performed for post-
manufacture processing, delivery, use, maintenance, refurbishment, or any combination of
these services applied to products; and/or facilitating and/or tailoring payment for
respective products to different entities having different rights, rates, or both in a
25 distributed supply chain.

BACKGROUND

 Coordinating manufacture of certain products often involves coordination among
entities. For example, a buyer may place an order requiring materials and source
30 components to be provided, manufacturing services to be performed, and post-manufacture
processing of a product to occur, each of which may involve cooperation among several
entities. When making products subject to government and/or industry regulation, and
when a buyer imposes certain quality standards, coordination among the companies may
also involve certifying source materials and components, calibration of machines, and

- 2 -

training and certification of personnel involved in manufacturing those products. When making products made utilizing additive manufacturing (e.g., 3D printing), for example, the source material used, name and model of the machine, calibration for the machine, and certification of the operator may be required in at least some instances, all of which may
5 require coordination and recordkeeping by disparate entities. Additive manufacturing techniques facilitate manufacturing complex shapes with relative ease. Additionally, additive manufacturing facilitates manufacturing component geometries that currently cannot be achieved through certain manufacturing processes such as conventional machining processes.

10

DISCLOSURE

In some embodiments, systems may include a memory device storing instructions that, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to accept an order for a product to be manufactured, the order including a specification for the product. A blockchain for
15 certifying characteristics of the product may be updated to associate the order and the specification with an encrypted, secure identifier utilizing a secure, distributed transaction ledger. Identification of a product file meeting the specification may be accepted, the product file including instructions for manufacturing the product. The blockchain may be updated to associate the product file with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the
20 secure, distributed transaction ledger. Pre-manufacture verification of manufacturer capabilities and product precursors may be accepted. The blockchain may be updated to associate the pre-manufacture verification of manufacturer capabilities and product precursors with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger. Operational parameters to enable an additive manufacturing device to manufacture
25 the product, the operational parameters being sent for manufacturing as discrete packets. At least one packet may be sent only after receipt of confirmation that at least another previous packet is complete and associated operational parameters for the at least another previous packet have been deleted. The blockchain may be updated to associate the operational parameters with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed
30 transaction ledger. In-manufacture verification of operational parameters utilized by the additive manufacturing device when manufacturing the product may be accepted. The blockchain may be updated to associate the in-manufacture verification of the operational

- 3 -

parameters with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger.

In other embodiments, methods may involve accepting an order for a product to be manufactured, the order including a specification for the product. A blockchain for
5 certifying characteristics of the product may be updated to associate the order and the specification with an encrypted, secure identifier utilizing a secure, distributed transaction ledger. Identification of a product file meeting the specification may be accepted, the product file including instructions for manufacturing the product. The blockchain may be updated to associate the product file with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the
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20 transaction ledger. In-manufacture verification of operational parameters utilized by the additive manufacturing device when manufacturing the product may be accepted. The blockchain may be updated to associate the in-manufacture verification of the operational parameters with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger.

25

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

While this disclosure concludes with claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming specific embodiments, various features and advantages of embodiments within the scope of this disclosure may be more readily ascertained from the following description
30 when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings. In the drawings:

FIG. 1 is a schematic view of a system for end-to-end verification of workflow processes for a product;

- 4 -

FIG. 2 is a schematic view of workflow processes for a product to be verified by the system of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a flowchart of a method of providing end-to-end verification of workflow processes for a product;

5 FIG. 4 is a flowchart of another method of providing end-to-end verification of workflow processes for a product;

FIG. 5 is a flowchart of another method of providing end-to-end verification of workflow processes for a product;

10 FIG. 6 is a schematic of a network for implementing end-to-end verification of workflow processes; and

FIG. 7 is a schematic of a computer system for connection to the network of FIG. 6.

MODE(S) FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION

15 The illustrations presented in this disclosure are not meant to be actual views of any particular system, act in a method, or component thereof, but are merely idealized representations employed to describe illustrative embodiments. Thus, the drawings are not necessarily to scale.

20 Disclosed embodiments relate generally to systems and methods which may enable aggregation, access control, revision, version tracking, or any combination of these for product designs from different entities; facilitating, controlling, verifying, or any combination of these with respect to manufacturing processes for products in accordance with the product designs, particularly when additive manufacturing is employed; facilitating, controlling, verifying, or any combination of these actions performed for post-manufacture processing, delivery, use, maintenance, refurbishment, or any combination of
25 these services applied to products; and/or facilitating and/or tailoring payment for respective products to different entities having different rights, rates, or both in a distributed supply chain. More specifically, disclosed are embodiments of systems, including software and hardware, for facilitating cooperation among different entities in a distributed supply chain for products, which may be used at various phases of a product
30 lifecycle, including design, precursor sourcing, manufacturing, post-processing, payment, delivery, use, maintenance, and refurbishment, to provide appropriate parties with control over, and verification of, at least certain aspects of those phases. Such control and verification may reduce risk of theft and copying, may ensure verification of requested

- 5 -

variables throughout the relevant portions of the process, and may reduce burdens associated with verifying product characteristics, quality, accuracy, and performance.

For a valid product qualification certification, for each part manufactured there may be dozens, if not hundreds or thousands, controlled variables requiring verification. For
5 example, variables to be verified may include sourcing and characteristics of product precursors, certification of manufacturing device capability to produce within specified tolerances, calibration of manufacturing devices, certification of device operators, consistency of manufacturing and post-manufacture processes with product specification, and product characteristics. Some verifications may be provided by a machine output, and
10 some others may be harvested from up-the-supply-chain vendor qualifications (raw material for example). The process to collect, verify, store, and make verifications available for inspection for each part may typically be accomplished by discrete manual processes. In accordance with this disclosure, an encrypted, secure identifier per product may be generated and associated with a digital ledger to automatically harvest qualification and
15 certification data, directly from Internet-of-things manufacturing devices in at least some instances. The resulting digital ledger may be shared with a reviewer (e.g., a customer, a government representative) for validation and time stamping. Processes and materials provided by up-the-supply-chain vendors may be recorded into the digital ledger (optionally with supporting documentation) with restrictive access. Such a digital ledger
20 may reduce burdens associated with audits to verify all the quality required documentations.

Authorization and verification techniques in accordance with this disclosure may be implemented in connection with additive manufacturing devices and products adapted to be manufactured utilizing additive manufacturing processes. Adaptations to product
25 designs, 3D part files, and manufacturing specifications to facilitate manufacturing by additive manufacturing processes may be subject to intellectual property rights distinct from any intellectual property rights attaching to the underlying product, product design, methods of manufacturing the product by other techniques, and precursor materials and components. For example, such adaptations may implicate patent rights, trade secret rights,
30 knowhow, or a combination of these rights, which may or may not be held by the same entity having rights in the underlying product, product design, methods of manufacturing, and precursor materials and components. Such concerns may be amplified when manufacturing is decentralized and remotely produced across the globe. Verifying and

- 6 -

tracking the location and number of reproduction for proper distribution is practically impossible with a manual structure. Verification of rights, rights holders, corresponding royalties, distribution of product designs and product specifications, and manufacture and distribution of authorized products and as the products are being produced within an

5 additive manufacturing supply chain may be simplified when manufacturing and verifying in accordance with the techniques disclosed herein. In some examples, manufacturing and verifying in accordance with this disclosure may involve generating discrete data packages that unlock in sequence as instructions to the additive manufacturing devices are receiving them remotely. Such an approach may enable greater control over the exact numbers of

10 products produced per machine, and record required or requested information relevant to the production (e.g., on a digital ledger).

The structure and operation of systems in accordance with this disclosure may incentivize partners in a distributed manufacturing network to adopt and participate in the platform. For example, each vendor registered with the platform may receive a commission

15 or distribution of each transaction to which a given vendor contributed, or simply a commission or distribution of each transaction handled by the platform during a period of time in which the given vendor actively participated in the platform. Such an approach may enable at least some participants to access technologies that a given participant is not yet ready to deploy at scale. For example in the routing of an order in at least some examples,

20 information relevant to the order may pass from a (1) Marketplace App to a (2) Design Tool App, to a (3) Pre-Qualification app, to a (4) Process monitoring app, to an (5) inspection app to a (6) Post Processing app, to a (7) Delivery Tracking app, to a (8) Digital warehouse app, to a (9) Category management app, or any combination of these. Interaction between various apps may be tracked and stored in a (10) digital ledger, and

25 printed through a (11) security layer app. While in this example interactions among eleven potentially distinct applications may be handled by the platform, only some of those applications may be required to implement a given segment of the platform, with network partners maintaining others of the applications. Monetization of various portions of the platform may be handled through an automatic payment system, for example, linked to a

30 given secure identifier for a specific product or manufacturing job.

When implementing systems in accordance with this disclosure in connection with additive manufacturing, sustainability advantages may be realized across product and material life cycles. For example, additive manufacturing can improve resource efficiency

- 7 -

and enable closed-loop material flows. These contributions can be monitored, as well as the process steps realizing these contributions, and either or both may be captured in the digital ledger. The digital ledger may be utilized to calculate automatically a sustainability index, potentially in real time, which may assist participants in realizing sustainability objectives.

5 In some examples, at least some aspects of contracting, invoicing, payment, or any combination of these tasks may be handled by the system. For example, terms relevant to manufacturing the product (e.g., features, quality, verification) may be established when accepting an order. The system may automatically track and verify fulfillment of the terms (e.g., utilizing the one or more smart contracts enabled by the blockchain). The system may
10 also automatically handle invoicing, payment, or both responsive to fulfillment of the terms, optionally by automatically requesting or effecting payment through a connected payment processor (e.g., utilizing an application programming interface (API)). Such functionality may beneficially reduce timing during which payment is outstanding, may reduce invoicing errors or discrepancies, and improve cash flow and operating income
15 efficiency for users.

 In some examples, control over a secure, distributed transaction ledger may be shared between multiple entities participating in the system, potentially requiring consensus among the parties for at least some updates to be made to the secure, distributed transaction ledger. Consensus control may reduce risks of differing interpretation, delays,
20 and miscommunication among the participants. By confirming the qualification process utilizing the system, and with a commercial contract in place validating it, the system may serve as an alternative to (or replace) regulations or standards conventionally employed for qualification, manufacturing, and fulfillment. Such an improved system may reduce risks and liabilities for participants in case of operational failures and disputes.

25 As used herein, the terms “substantially” and “about” in reference to a given parameter, property, or condition mean and include to a degree that one of ordinary skill in the art would understand that the given parameter, property, or condition is met with a degree of variance, such as within acceptable manufacturing tolerances. For example, a parameter that is substantially or about a specified value may be at least about 90% the
30 specified value, at least about 95% the specified value, at least about 99% the specified value, or even at least about 99.9% the specified value.

 The terms “memory” and “memory device,” as used herein, include microelectronic devices exhibiting, but not limited to, memory functionality, but exclude embodiments

- 8 -

encompassing transitory signals. For example, a system on a chip (SoC) is encompassed in the meaning of memory device. By way of non-limiting example, memory devices may generally include Synchronous Random Access Memory (SRAM), Dynamic RAM (DRAM), Read-Only Memory (ROM), Flash memory, and the like, unless otherwise
5 specified.

FIG. 1 is a schematic view of a system 100 for end-to-end verification of workflow processes for a product. The system 100 may be at least partially implemented via software executable on one or more computer systems in connection with one another over a network. The system 100 may include a verification module 102 programmed and
10 configured to generate, receive, and maintain a secure record of at least some workflows in the manufacture of a product. For example, the verification module 102 may be programmed and configured to receive data from other modules of the system 100, to maintain and update a secure, distributed transaction ledger with at least some of the data received and/or with generated data representative of at least some content of the received
15 data, and to control access to the secure, distributed transaction ledger to ensure the secure, distributed transaction ledger accurately reflects those portions of the workflows to be represented in the secure, distributed transaction ledger.

The verification module 102 may be programmed and configured to generate an encrypted, secure identifier for each product to be made, the encrypted, secure identifier
20 configured to identify the physical product, once made, and enable data verifying workflows for manufacturing the product to be collected and verified. In some examples, the verification module 102 may also be termed a “security module” or may include a security module as a sub-module within the verification module 102. For example, upon initiation, and/or receipt, of an order, the verification module 102 may be programmed and
25 configured to generate and encrypt an at least substantially unique identifier to be tied to each subsequent update in the secure, distributed transaction ledger relevant to the product. In some examples, the verification module 102 may query or execute a random output generator (e.g., a non-deterministic random number generator, a pseudorandom number generator, a pseudorandom number generator seeded by a non-deterministic random
30 number generator) to generate a string of bits (e.g., a 128-bit string, a 256-bit string, a 512-bit string) to be encrypted and serve as the encrypted, secure identifier. In other examples, the verification module 102 may query a database of previously used encrypted, secure identifiers (e.g., in a secure, distributed transaction ledger) to retrieve a last-used encrypted,

- 9 -

secure identifier, decrypt the last-used encrypted, secure identifier, and alter the last-used encrypted, secure identifier (e.g., following a pattern, making an incremental change in a sequence) to generate a new encrypted, secure identifier for the product. As a specific, nonlimiting example, the encrypted, secure identifier may include a hash value, which may
5 be utilized to chain subsequently generated data relevant to the product together, forming an at least substantially unique, inalterable fingerprint for verifying the data and its association with the product (e.g., by generating a new, validated fork in a secure, distributed transaction ledger).

The encrypted, secure identifier may be utilized to establish and maintain a secure
10 record verifying at least some workflows in the life cycle of the product, from ordering, through manufacturing, post-processing, fulfillment, delivery, use in the field, repair, refurbishment, retirement, or any combination or subcombination of these. For example, the verification module 102 may update a blockchain with the encrypted, secure identifier to establish a record verifying the workflows for the product utilizing a secure, distributed
15 transaction ledger. More specifically, the verification module 102 may establish a new block in the blockchain including the encrypted, secure identifier (e.g., continuing an existing fork or starting a new, temporary fork pending validation), the new block dedicated to storing data verifying the workflows associated with the product and chained to a previous block, may update a not-yet-complete block in the blockchain to incorporate
20 the encrypted, secure identifier, or may establish a new blockchain altogether to incorporate the encrypted, secure identifier.

In some examples, the encrypted, secure identifier may be or include a token (e.g., a non-fungible token) operable in multiple blockchains (e.g., based on the same or different cryptographic algorithms). For example, the encrypted, secure identifier may include a
25 cross-chain token in accordance with U.S. Patent No. 11,102,003, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein in its entirety by this reference. Briefly, the encrypted, secure identifier may be generated by invoking a token template defined by a set of attributes and control functions representative of a given asset (e.g., the product). When a token is created by the template, the token may incorporate the attributes and control functions of the
30 template, which may then be deployed across multiple blockchains and recognized as a cross-chain token. Configuring the encrypted, secure identifier may facilitate storage of different sets of data in different blockchains while enabling the data to be interlinked to

- 10 -

the encrypted, secure identifier to provide a secure, wholistic record of data relevant to a given product.

Encryption and decryption techniques utilized by the verification module 102 may be adopted, configured, maintained, and utilized to ensure security of files handled by the verification module 102. In some examples, the encryption utilized may be asymmetric. For example, the verification module 102 may utilize a public key to encrypt data to be sent to a given participant in the system 100 (e.g., a customer, a designer, a manufacturer, an auditor) or otherwise to be used by a module of the system 100, and a private key held solely by that participant and/or module may be required to decrypt the data. The private key, and optionally the public key, may be selected and distributed when screening and authenticating potential participants for participation in the system 100. Illustrative asymmetric encryption techniques usable by the verification module 102 may include, for example, Digital Signature Standard (DSS), Elliptic Curve Digital Signature Algorithm (ECDSA), Paillier cryptosystem, Rivest–Shamir–Adleman (RSA) encryption algorithm, etc. In other examples, the encryption utilized by the verification module 102 may be symmetric. For example, the verification module 102 may utilize a private key to encrypt data to be sent to a given participant in the system 100 or otherwise to be used by a module of the system, and the same private key may be required to decrypt the data. The private keys may be selected and distributed in advance, such as, for example, when screening and authenticating potential participants for participation in the system 100. Illustrative asymmetric encryption algorithms usable by the verification module 102 may include, for example, Twofish, Serpent, AES (Rijndael), Camellia, Salsa20, ChaCha20, Blowfish, CAST5, Kuznyechik, RC4, DES, 3DES, Skipjack, Safer, and IDEA.

When data relevant to the product becomes available and the system 100 has been configured to record the data, the verification module 102 may accept the data from another module, optionally encrypt the data, and update the blockchain to include the data in such a way that the data is associated with the encrypted, secure identifier of the product. For example, data automatically generated utilizing one of the modules, or accepted by one of the modules via user input, may also be received by the verification module 102, the verification module 102 may optionally encrypt the data, and the verification module 102 may update a blockchain with the data, and associate the data with, or link the data to, the encrypted, secure identifier, to update and maintain the record verifying the workflows for the product utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger. More specifically, the

- 11 -

verification module 102 may establish a new block in the blockchain including the data and a link or reference to the block including the encrypted, secure identifier, may update a not-yet-complete block in the blockchain already including the encrypted, secure identifier to incorporate the data, or may update a blockchain dedicated to the product with the data.

5 Updating the blockchain with the data may involve, for example, collecting the data in a block, generating a hash to verify the data, and incorporating a hash from a previous block in the blockchain to chain the block including the data to the previous block. When a node (i.e., a computer system authorized to participate in the blockchain) generates a block to be added to the blockchain, consensus from at least one other node on the blockchain
10 network may be requested (e.g., required) to validate the block and officially add it to the blockchain. For example, when a node operated by a manufacturer generates data containing verification of operational parameters utilized by a manufacturing device to manufacture a product, the verification module 102 may query at least one other node (and potentially all other nodes) participating on the blockchain to confirm acceptance of the
15 data, potentially prompting review of the data. When acceptance by the relevant node or nodes has been received, a hash may be generated and applied to the block along with the hash from any preceding block, and the block with the applied hashes may be distributed to the nodes to add the block and update the blockchain. Any proposed changes to (e.g., revisions of) the blockchain may likewise request (e.g., require) consensus from at least
20 one other node on the blockchain network.

 The system 100 may include an ordering module 104 programmed and configured to accept an order and to transmit data representative of the order to the verification module 102 for addition to the blockchain to verify subsequent data relevant to the product. For example, the ordering module 104 may be configured to accept input of a product
25 identification number, a product name, one or more characteristics to be exhibited by the product, one or more performance metrics to be achieved by the product, one or more expected uses for the product, or any combination of these to facilitate ordering of a suitable product. More specifically, the ordering module 104 may send a web form to a client device of a potential customer, the web form containing, for example, a search bar, a
30 series of drop-down menus, one or more checkboxes, an array of product names and/or images, or any combination of these or other user interface elements to accept the input for identifying a suitable product to be ordered. Upon acceptance of a suitable identification of the product, the ordering module 104 may send data representative of the product to the

- 12 -

verification module 102 for generation of the encrypted, secure identifier and any associated block or blocks in the blockchain to identify the product and any other terms associated with the order.

5 The ordering module 104 may also be configured to accept input of one or more terms associated with the order. For example, the ordering module 104 may be configured to accept input of a requested or required date for completion of manufacturing, requested or required date for completion of post-processing, requested or required delivery date, delivery instructions, number of products to be manufactured, requested or required precursors for manufacturing the product (e.g., source materials, preformed components),
10 requested or required verification data to be received at the verification module 102 for the precursors, requested or required manufacturer identity, requested or required manufacturing processes for manufacturing the product (e.g., with associated tolerances), requested or required manufacturing devices for manufacturing the product, requested or required verification data to be received at the verification module 102 for workflows
15 utilized when manufacturing the product (e.g., manufacturer identify, manufacturing device(s) utilized, operational parameters utilized, certifications for device operators, calibration for one or more of the manufacturing device(s)), requested or required post-manufacture processing to be performed on the product, requested or required verification data to be received at the verification module 102 for workflows utilized when performing
20 post-manufacture processing on the product (e.g., processes utilized, devices utilized, operational parameters utilized), requested or required post-manufacture product characteristics (e.g., density, dimensions, adherence to tolerances, surface roughness), requested or required verification data to be received at the verification module 102 for post-manufacture product characteristics of the product and/or workflows utilized to
25 generate the verification data (e.g., processes utilized, devices utilized, operational parameters utilized, calibration for one or more of the device(s)).

In some examples, the ordering module 104 may include smart contract functionality enabled by the blockchain. For example, when an order is accepted via the ordering module 104, a smart contract incorporating the required product characteristics
30 and any other required terms may be sent from the ordering module 104 to the verification module 102. The verification module 102 may update the blockchain to include a smart contract incorporating the required product characteristics and any other required terms. When the verification module 102 updates the blockchain with verification of the required

- 13 -

product characteristics and verification of fulfillment of any other required terms, the smart contract may execute, triggering payment obligations. In some examples, execution of the smart contract may automatically initiate transfer of payment from a customer account to one or more service provider accounts. More specifically, execution of the smart account
5 may prompt automatic transfer of a blockchain-enabled currency (i.e., a cryptocurrency) from a customer account to one or more service provider accounts via the verification module 102 interfacing with the blockchain, may prompt automatic transfer of funds from a connected account (e.g., a bank account) to one or more service provider accounts when preauthorization to withdraw funds has been granted by the customer, or may prompt
10 automatic invoicing, requesting payment from the customer, when preauthorization to withdraw funds has not been granted by the customer.

In some examples, the system 100 may be configured to accept and verify intellectual property rights held by one or more parties in a given product design, and to ensure any royalties due for a product manufactured in accordance with those intellectual
15 property rights are assessed and distributed to appropriate parties. For example, any intellectual property rights that a party claims in a product design may be identified and verified during a prequalification process for accepting that party's participation in the system 100. More specifically, any intellectual property rights, such as, for example, patent, trademark, copyright, trade secret, or other intellectual property rights, covering the
20 material, shape, configuration, or other features of a product, or covering methods of making or using the product, may be verified during prequalification. Any licensing and royalties required by the rights-holder may also be prequalified in the system 100. When a customer wishes to place an order for a product in which other parties have intellectual property rights, the ordering module 104 may confirm that the customer has or can acquire
25 an appropriate license. For example, the rights-holder(s) may provide licenses through the system 100 on fixed terms utilizing smart contracts.

The system 100 and smart contract system may also automatically ensure that any royalty payments from the customer are appropriately sent to the rights-holder upon fulfillment of the respective portion of the order implicating those rights. For example, the
30 system 100 may require up-front payment of royalties for acquiring a license when placing an order through the ordering module 104, may require payment of royalties when precursor materials or components are acquired, may require payment of royalties upon manufacture and/or post-processing of the product, may require payment of royalties upon

- 14 -

sending or delivery of the product, or may require payment at any combination or subcombination of these events.

In some examples, the system 100 may automatically request funds from a payment account when royalties are due. For example, when a royalty-triggering event occurs, the
5 system may automatically execute at least a royalty-bearing portion of a smart contract utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger to cause purchaser funds to be released to the rights holder(s).

The system 100 may include a digital inventory module 106 programmed and configured to maintain and access a database storing a digital inventory including data
10 sufficient to identify and manufacture respective product designs. For example, the digital inventory may include product identifiers (e.g., product numbers), product names, marketing information for the products, images and/or renders of products, recommended use cases, product designs, 3-dimensional product model files, product specifications, or any combination of these data and potentially other data for a product's lifecycle. In some
15 examples, the digital inventory may be maintained cooperatively by the digital inventory module 106 and the verification module 102 on a blockchain. For example, verification data for verifying workflows may be maintained and stored by the verification module 102 on a first blockchain, and the digital inventory may be maintained and stored cooperatively by the verification module 102 and the digital inventory module 106 on a second, discrete
20 blockchain separate from the first blockchain. Any interaction of data to take place between the first blockchain and the second blockchain may be managed by the verification module 102 and/or the digital inventory module 106 to ensure the confidentiality of data to be protected from unrestricted public view. Provision of data on any of the blockchains at least partially managed by the verification module 102 to any entities not already
25 authorized and participating on those blockchains may likewise be managed by the verification module 102, particularly when unrestricted, decrypted access is requested. In other examples, the digital inventory may be stored in a private, encrypted database with access restricted to preauthorized entities (e.g., the digital inventory module 106).

When interfacing with the ordering module 104, the digital inventory module 106
30 may be configured to access and provide information sufficient to identify a product, and to refrain from accessing or providing confidential information about a product. For example, when accepting a product design to be added to the database storing the digital inventory, a designer or other owner of a given product design may designate certain portions of the

- 15 -

data as being freely accessible to the public, certain portions of the data as being accessible only to certain identified entities, certain portions of the data as being accessible only to manufacturers, certain portions of the data as being accessible only to network-connected manufacturing devices and/or control devices for controlling manufacturing devices, or any
5 combination of these controls on accessibility. When stored, all the data in the digital inventory may be encrypted, and the verification module 102 may selectively decrypt certain files in the digital inventory to be provided to the ordering module 104 and ultimately to a prospective purchaser. For example, the verification module 102 may selectively decrypt only those files predesignated by any rights holders in the product as
10 being authorized for unrestricted public view (e.g., product name, marketing information, selected product characteristics, images and/or renders of an exterior of the product). In some examples, the data may be re-encrypted by the verification module 102 before sending to a client device by the ordering module 104. For example, the data may be re-encrypted in accordance with a hypertext transfer protocol secure (HTTPS) standard to
15 ensure secure, verifiable communication to the client device.

For any product designs in the digital inventory, the digital inventory module 106 may maintain a version history. For example, when a designer updates, revises, changes, edits, or otherwise modifies a product design, a new version of the product design may be stored in the digital inventory or made available via a link in the digital inventory, with
20 master source files for the product design being stored and secured by a third party (e.g., a designer, a manufacturer, a third-party storage provider). More specifically, each version of a product design may be tracked with, for example, its own respective encrypted, secure product identifier (e.g., a hash) utilized to uniquely identify a given version of the product design within a secure, distributed transaction ledger of a blockchain of the digital
25 inventory. When implemented utilizing a blockchain, version history of each product design on the secure, distributed transaction ledger may automatically be tracked and verified by virtue of operation of the blockchain. In some examples, a rights holder in an earlier version may restrict access to the earlier version, such that old versions of product designs may not be accessible to the ordering module 104 for presentation to a potential
30 customer. Thus, a user of the system 100 may be assured that any product ordered through the system 100 may be a most up-to-date version or design of a given product. In some situations, an old version of a product design may be eliminated from the digital inventory altogether (e.g., upon consensus from all nodes and/or participants in the digital inventory).

- 16 -

In other examples, multiple versions of a given product design may be made available to the ordering module 104, enabling a designer or other rights holder to offer multiple versions (e.g., for different use cases, at different price points).

5 In some examples, the system 100 may include a physical inventory module 108 programmed and configured to track and analyze a physical inventory of one or more entities participating in the system. For example, the physical inventory module 108 may be configured to track and analyze stock of precursor materials, precursor components, products, or any combination of these inventory items in a physical inventory of each respective entity granting authorization for the physical inventory module 108 of the
10 system 100 to access that entity's physical inventory. More specifically, the physical inventory module 108 may be configured to interface with an existing inventory tracker utilized by an entity (e.g., utilizing an API) and receive automatic updates regarding the contents of that entity's physical inventory, at least with respect to selected precursors and/or products. Data received by the physical inventory module 108 may be stored, for
15 example, in a database discrete from any blockchain, or in a third blockchain discrete from any other blockchain for product lifecycle verification and or digital inventory management. Data receivable by the physical inventory module 108, and storage policies for the data, may be tailored to a user's preferences.

When an entity connects to the ordering module 104, the physical inventory
20 module 108 may optionally provide information regarding the current contents of that entity's physical inventory. For example, the physical inventory module 108 may filter contents of the entity's physical inventory to send the names and current stock of similar products to those searched and/or viewed by the entity utilizing the ordering module 104. In some examples, the physical inventory module 108 may proactively analyze an entity's
25 physical inventory and a rate of depletion of the entity's physical inventory. For example, the physical inventory module 108 may send a notification to a user of a current quantity of a given product and an estimated time at which stock is predicted to fall below a predetermined minimum with sufficient lead time for the user to place an order for one or more products utilizing the ordering module 104 and for those products to be manufactured
30 and delivered before stock falls below the predetermined minimum. As another example, the physical inventory module 108 may automatically place an order with the ordering module 104 for a given product at a predetermined interval before a predicted depletion of stock of the product in the physical inventory, such as, for example, timed so that the

- 17 -

product will likely be manufactured and delivered before stock falls below the predetermined minimum.

In some examples, the system 100 may include a design selection assistance module 110 programmed and configured to provide recommendations to a prospective customer searching within the ordering module 104 of product designs, specifications, and/or materials that may potentially suit the prospective customer's use case. When the ordering module 104 receives inputs in search of a product in the digital inventory, particularly when those inputs do not identify a specific product, the design selection assistance module 110 may be programmed and configured to analyze those inputs, search the digital inventory for product designs, or search in a materials database for materials and/or a specification database for specifications, most closely matching the inputs, and provide one or more closest matching products, materials, and/or specifications for output as potential recommended product designs. For example, receipt of inputs representing expected uses for a product, absent corresponding identification of a desired product for performing the expected uses, may trigger the design selection assistance module 110 to search the digital inventory for product designs having the closest recommended use cases, product designs having the closest verified in-field performance, or both, and output a subset (e.g., a list with a predefined number of results, a list with a number of results corresponding to an available area on a display of a client device) of the digital inventory to recommend those product designs for potential selection. In some examples, the design selection assistance module 110 may include an artificial-intelligence assisted, machine learning algorithm, enabling the design selection assistance module 110 to adaptively provide recommendations based on a wholistic analysis of the inputs as well as other potentially relevant data (e.g., order history, popularity rankings of product designs).

Upon acceptance of an order utilizing the ordering module 104, the verification module 102 may generate the encrypted, secure identifier for the product to be manufactured and update the blockchain for verifying workflows relevant to the lifecycle of the product to include the encrypted, secure identifier, sufficient information to identify the product and version, and any other terms required or requested for fulfillment in connection with manufacturing, post-processing, and delivery of the product. For example, the verification module 102 may generate a "digital twin" of the product to be manufactured, including the encrypted, secure identifier, sufficient information to identify the product, sufficient information to facilitate manufacturing the product, and any other

- 18 -

terms in the order, and store the digital twin in the secure, distributed transaction ledger with the encrypted, secure identifier. Any smart contract to be executed in connection with the product may also be stored on the blockchain in connection with the digital twin.

After acceptance of the order, a manufacturing module 112 of the system 100 may
5 coordinate manufacturing of the product or products in accordance with the terms set forth in the order. In some examples, the system 100 may be vertically integrated, with a single entity accepting the order from the ordering module 104, manufacturing the product, and fulfilling the order. In other examples, the system 100 may be at least partially decentralized, with the ordering module 104 and the manufacturing module 112
10 coordinating fulfillment of a given order or orders by multiple entities. Regardless, manufacturing instructions including at least precursors required to begin manufacturing, manufacturing devices to be used, the product, and any other terms necessary for the manufacturer to know up-front when preparing to manufacture the product (e.g., delivery date, verification data required) may be sent to the entity or entities coordinating fulfillment
15 of the order. To protect details of the product designs from inadvertent disclosure, all transmission of data for manufacturing the product by the manufacturing module 112 to a client device may be encrypted. For example, the manufacturer(s) may be required to utilize a respective private key established when setting the system 100 in place to decrypt the information enabling the manufacturer(s) to make preparations to manufacture the
20 product.

Prior to receiving any further instructions for manufacturing the product from the manufacturing module 112, any manufacturer may be required to send verification of predetermined preliminary qualifications to the verification module 102 in some examples. For example, a manufacturer may be required to send, and the system 100 may require
25 receipt of, verification that precursor materials to be used are in possession of the manufacturer, that precursor components to be used are in possession of the manufacturer, that manufacturing devices having required capabilities are in possession of the manufacturer, the manufacturing devices to be used have been calibrated in accordance with customer and/or industry standards, operators have any required certifications and/or
30 training, or any combination or subcombination of these preliminary qualifications. Accepting such preliminary qualifications for verification may involve, for example, receiving an upload of another encrypted, secure identifier associated with a prequalification portfolio of the manufacturer stored in a database of preverified

- 19 -

manufacturer qualifications and/or capabilities (e.g., another blockchain), which may be accessible to a recipient of the encrypted, secure identifier through the verification module 102.

5 In some examples, updating the blockchain, particularly to add a new block to the blockchain, may require acceptance of the relevant data to be by consensus of at least some of the other parties already qualified within the system 100. For example, the system 100 may require acceptance of the relevant data by consensus of each party hosting a node of the blockchain. As another example, the system 100 may require acceptance of the relevant data by consensus of each party participating in the blockchain.

10 As another example, accepting preliminary qualifications may involve receiving verification of manufacture of a witness mass including the same material(s) and optionally the same material composition as at least a portion of the product is to be manufactured from. To tie the witness mass to the encrypted, secure identifier of the product, one or more physical characteristics of the witness mass may be altered, and the alteration stored in the
15 blockchain in connection with the encrypted, secure identifier to indicate that detection of the identified physical characteristics in the witness mass is representative of the materials and manufacturing processes to be used for the product. More specifically, the manufacturing module 112 may instruct a network-connected additive manufacturing device to control one or more operational parameters (e.g., material feed rate, material
20 dispenser position and/or movement rate, position and/or intensity of applied heat) to produce a randomized variation in one or more product characteristics (e.g., density, surface roughness, distribution of different materials) in one or more portions of the witness mass (e.g., in a layer thereof, on an exterior surface thereof). The verification module 102 may encrypt and store data representative of the randomized variation in the
25 blockchain such that the data representative of the randomized variation is associated with the encrypted, secure identifier of the product. An entity wishing to audit the workflow for the product may inspect the witness mass to detect the randomized variation, send the randomized variation to the verification module 102, and receive from the verification module 102 an indication of the encrypted, secure identifier associated with the
30 randomized variation and the product.

As yet another example, accepting preliminary qualifications may involve receiving timestamped images of manufacturing devices, calibration certificates, training and/or qualification certificates for operators, or any combination or subcombination of these

- 20 -

preliminary qualifications. The timestamped images may be received at the verification module 102, encrypted, and stored in the blockchain in connection with the encrypted, secure identifier for the product.

In some examples, the verification of precursors to manufacture the product may include data regarding the sustainability of materials and components to be used when making the product. For example, the verification module 102 may request or require receipt of indications of the environmental impact of sourcing the precursors and their sustainability. More specifically, the verification module 102 may request or require receipt of indications of, for example, whether the precursors are recycled from a previous product, a measure of green-house gas emissions from sourcing the precursors, an indication whether the precursors are from a renewable source, an indication how the precursors may be reused or recycled upon retirement of the product, or any combination or subcombination of these or other indications of sustainability. Upon receipt, the verification module 102 may update the blockchain to associate received indications of sustainability with the encrypted, secure identifier. In some examples, the verification module 102 may also calculate an impact the verified indications of sustainability have on an entity's target environmental and sustainability goal, such as, for example, by recalculating a sustainability score of the entity (e.g., by rating whether the entity is on track to, predicted to be 10% or closer off track from, or predicted to be more than 10% off track from meeting sustainability targets) based on the added indications.

After acceptance of any verification for any preliminary qualifications, the manufacturing module 112 may send further instructions for manufacturing the product. In some examples where the manufacturing device(s) to be used may not be automatically controlled, the verification module 102 may send an encrypted file including a specification, tolerances, and any other manufacturing instructions to be decrypted by the manufacturer utilizing a private key. The encrypted file may be decryptable by the manufacturer and may contain sufficient information for the manufacturer to manufacture the product in accordance with requirements and preferences in the order.

In other examples where the manufacturing device(s) to be used may be automatically controlled, the verification module 102 may generate or access pre-generated instructions configured to cause the manufacturing device(s) to automatically manufacture the product, encrypt the instructions, and send the encrypted instructions to the manufacturing device(s) for decryption and use to automatically manufacture the product

- 21 -

from the precursors utilizing the manufacturing device(s). For example, the verification module 102 may determine a rate at which a manufacturing device (e.g., an additive manufacturing device) may be capable of manufacturing the product, may encrypt and send a packet of instructions to the manufacturing device, the packet containing only so many
5 instructions to enable the manufacturing device to manufacture a portion of the product upon decryption of the packet of instructions utilizing the manufacturer's private key. As the manufacturing device manufactures the product, the manufacturing module 112 may encrypt and send another packet of instructions to the manufacturing device, the other packet containing instructions to enable the manufacturing device to manufacture a
10 subsequent portion of the product upon decryption of the packet of instructions utilizing the manufacturer's private key. The respective packets may contain instructions so that a preceding packet may be fully executed, manufacturing the relevant portion of the product, deleted, and deletion confirmed to the verification module 102 while the manufacturing device executes the instructions in a subsequent packet. The respective packets may also
15 contain instructions so that manufacturing processes are not interrupted following deletion of the preceding packet and before a still subsequent packet can be received (e.g., layer by layer when a given packet includes sufficient instructions to manufacture an associated layer). With such a process, manufacturing may be efficiently and expeditiously completed, though the manufacturer may never be granted access to a full, unencrypted set of
20 instructions for manufacturing the product.

In some examples, the packets of instructions may be generated and transmitted by granting the manufacturer (or the manufacturing device) temporary access to one or more private keys of a blockchain storing the packets of instructions. The blockchain may automatically record access to, transmission of, and deletion of copies of the instructions
25 by a client device, ensuring that the manufacturer's access and use of the data is in accordance with terms in the order and any terms set by a designer or other rights holder in the product design (and providing an immutable record of any improper access, use, and copying).

To tie the product to the encrypted, secure identifier for the product, one or more
30 physical characteristics of the product may be altered, or the inevitable, naturally occurring, random variations in characteristics of the product (e.g., within specification, within tolerance) may be detected, and the alteration or variation stored in the blockchain in connection with the encrypted, secure identifier to indicate that detection of the identified

- 22 -

physical characteristics in the product is representative of the materials and manufacturing processes used when manufacturing the product. More specifically, the manufacturing module 112 may instruct a network-connected additive manufacturing device to control one or more operational parameters (e.g., material feed rate, material dispenser position
5 and/or movement rate, position and/or intensity of applied heat) to produce a randomized variation in one or more product characteristics (e.g., density, surface roughness, distribution of different materials) in one or more portions of the product (e.g., in a layer thereof, on an exterior surface thereof). The randomized produced variation may also be a consequence of normal statistical errors and deviations from exact values within
10 manufacturing tolerances. The verification module 102 may encrypt and store data representative of the randomized variation in the blockchain such that the data representative of the randomized variation is associated with the encrypted, secure identifier for the product. An entity wishing to audit the workflow for the product may inspect the product to detect the randomized variation, send the randomized variation to the
15 verification module 102, and receive from the verification module 102 an indication of the encrypted, secure identifier associated with the randomized variation and the product. In some examples, the alteration to the product may match a corresponding alteration in a witness mass produced when preparing to make or when making the product.

In some examples, the verification module 102 may receive verification of
20 operational parameters of a manufacturing device while the product is being made. For example, a network-connected manufacturing device (e.g., an additive manufacturing device) may send a record of operational parameters utilized when manufacturing the product to the verification module 102 in real time. The verification module 102 may record all the operational parameters utilized by the manufacturing device, providing real-
25 time updates to the secure, distributed transaction ledger and associating those updates with the encrypted, secure identifier for the product, in some examples. Any record of actual operational parameters utilized may be encrypted to reduce the risk that a product and any methods of making that product may be reverse-engineered utilizing the record. In other examples, the verification module 102 may compare a completed record of the operational
30 parameters utilized by the manufacturing device to a product specification, including any tolerances, and update the secure, distributed transaction ledger with an indication that manufacturing was within specification or was outside specification.

- 23 -

In some examples, the verification of operational parameters of manufacturing devices while the product is being made may include data regarding the sustainability of manufacturing processes and materials used when making the product. For example, the verification module 102 may request or require receipt of indications of the environmental
5 impact of manufacturing the precursors into the product and the sustainability of manufacturing processes utilized to produce the product. More specifically, the verification module 102 may request or require receipt of indications of, for example, energy expended in manufacturing the product, source of the energy expended in manufacturing the product, a measure of green-house gas emissions from energy expended in manufacturing the
10 product, identification of any lubricants and/or coolants used when manufacturing the product, whether the lubricants and/or coolants used when manufacturing the product are reusable, recyclable, and/or biodegradable, or any combination or subcombination of these indications of sustainability. Upon receipt, the verification module 102 may update the blockchain to associate received indications of sustainability with the encrypted, secure
15 identifier. In some examples, the verification module 102 may also calculate an impact the verified indications of sustainability have on an entity's target environmental and sustainability goal, such as, for example, by recalculating a sustainability score of the entity (e.g., by rating whether the entity is on track to, predicted to be 10% or closer off track from, or predicted to be more than 10% off track from meeting sustainability targets) based
20 on the added indications.

In some examples, the verification module 102 may receive in-process verification of characteristics of the product during manufacturing. For example, data from one or more sensors positioned and oriented to detect characteristics of the product during
manufacturing may be received at the verification module 102, and the verification
25 module 102 may update the blockchain with the data or information representative of the data. The sensors may include image sensors, thermal sensors, acoustic sensors (e.g., ultrasonic sensors), distance sensors, or other sensors known in the art for monitoring a manufacturing process. Data received from the sensors may be representative of, for example, still images of an intermediate product in process of manufacturing the product,
30 video of a complete process of manufacturing the product, density, dimensions, peak temperature (e.g., proximate to application of heat to a precursor material in an additive manufacturing device configured as a selective laser sintering device), or other product characteristics. The verification module 102 may record all the data representative of the

- 24 -

product characteristics from the sensors, providing real-time updates to the secure, distributed transaction ledger and associating those updates with the encrypted, secure identifier for the product, in some examples. In other examples, the verification module 102 may compare a completed record of the product characteristics from the sensors to a product specification, including any tolerances, and update the secure, distributed transaction ledger with an indication that product characteristics are within specification or are outside specification.

When manufacturing is verified as being complete, and the record of manufacturing and/or product characteristics is not within specification, the verification module 102 may at least temporarily suspend any further progress toward fulfillment of the order. In some examples, the verification module 102 may send a request for the entity that placed the order to accept or reject the product, given the known deviations from the specification. When receiving acceptance of the product despite the deviations, the manufacturing module 112 and/or an order fulfillment module 114 may proceed toward fulfillment of the order. When receiving rejection of the product because of the deviations, the ordering module 104 may cancel the order or the manufacturing module 112 may coordinate re-manufacturing of the item in accordance with the specification, potentially utilizing a different manufacturing device and/or a different manufacturer altogether. When coordinating re-manufacturing of the product utilizing the same manufacturer, the verification module 102 may provide an indication of the reasons the product was rejected (e.g., a list of product characteristics outside specification, a disclosure of values for the product characteristics as compared to the specification) and optionally recommendations for additional process controls that may be utilized to increase the likelihood that subsequent manufacturing efforts will result in a product within specification.

In some examples, the verification module 102 may compare the deviations from the specification to sets of predefined thresholds to automatically determine whether to accept or reject the product. For example, the ordering module 104 may accept one or more thresholds outside a specification for the product design of the product, within which the customer will accept deviations, and outside which the customer will not accept deviations. When the actual deviations are outside the specification and within the threshold(s), the verification module 102 may automatically record acceptance of the product in the blockchain, consistent with the order, and the manufacturing module 112 may proceed toward fulfillment. When the actual deviations are outside the specification and outside one

- 25 -

or more of the threshold(s), the verification module 102 may automatically record rejection of the product in the blockchain, consistent with the order, and the ordering module 104 may cancel the order or the manufacturing module 112 may coordinate re-manufacturing of the product.

5 In some examples, the manufacturing module 112 may also coordinate any post-processing of the product to be performed in accordance with the product design and/or the order. For example, when the manufacturer has preapproved equipment and capabilities to perform the relevant post-processing (e.g., heat treatment, surface treatment, assembly), the manufacturing module 112 may coordinate post-processing in a manner similar to
10 coordination of manufacturing. More specifically, the manufacturing module 112 may send requests for verification for any precursor materials and post-processor capabilities, the verification module 102 may update the blockchain with received verification, the manufacturing module 112 and verification module 102 may cooperatively send
15 instructions and request/receive verification of operational parameters for post-processing of the product, and the verification module 102 may request/receive, in-process verification of product characteristics during post-processing. The verification module 102 may update the blockchain with all data received or with an indication that the data passed or did not pass comparisons against the specification to associate the verification with the encrypted, secure identifier in the secure, distributed transaction ledger.

20 In some examples, the verification module 102 may receive data representative of final, post-manufacture (and after post-processing) characteristics of the product. For example, data from one or more sensors positioned and oriented to detect characteristics of the product following completion of all instructions from the manufacturing module 112 may be received at the verification module 102, and the verification module 102 may
25 update the blockchain with the data or information representative of the data. The sensors may include, for example, image sensors, thermal sensors, acoustic sensors (e.g., ultrasonic sensors), distance sensors, or other sensors known in the art for monitoring a manufacturing process. As a specific, nonlimiting example, the product may be scanned by a computed tomography (CT) scanner. Data received from the sensors may be
30 representative of, for example, still images of the final product, CT scanner data, density, dimensions, surface roughness, material composition, or other product characteristics. The verification module 102 may record all the data representative of the final product characteristics from the sensors, providing updates to the secure, distributed transaction

- 26 -

ledger and associating those updates with the encrypted, secure identifier for the product, in some examples. In other examples, the verification module 102 may compare a completed record of the product characteristics from the sensors to a product specification, including any tolerances, and update the secure, distributed transaction ledger with an indication that
5 product characteristics are within specification or are outside specification.

In some examples, the verification of data representative of post-manufacture processing of the product may include data regarding the sustainability of processes and materials used when performing post-manufacture processing on the product. For example, the verification module 102 may request or require receipt of indications of the
10 environmental impact of post-processing performed on the product and the sustainability of post-manufacturing processes utilized for post-processing. More specifically, the verification module 102 may request or require receipt of indications of, for example, energy expended in post-processing the product, source of the energy expended in post-processing the product, a measure of green-house gas emissions from energy expended in
15 post-processing the product, identification of any lubricants and/or coolants used when post-processing the product, whether the lubricants and/or coolants used when post-processing the product are reusable, recyclable, and/or biodegradable, or any combination or subcombination of these or other indications of sustainability. Upon receipt, the verification module 102 may update the blockchain to associate received indications of
20 sustainability with the encrypted, secure identifier. In some examples, the verification module 102 may also calculate an impact the verified indications of sustainability have on an entity's target environmental and sustainability goal, such as, for example, by recalculating a sustainability score of the entity (e.g., by rating whether the entity is on track to, predicted to be 10% or closer off track from, or predicted to be more than 10% off
25 track from meeting sustainability targets) based on the added indications.

When post-processing is verified as being complete, and the record of post-processing and/or final product characteristics is not within specification, the verification module 102 may at least temporarily suspend any further progress toward fulfillment of the order. In some examples, the verification module 102 may send a request for the entity that
30 placed the order to accept or reject the product, given the known deviations from the specification. When receiving acceptance of the product despite the deviations, the order fulfillment module 114 may proceed toward fulfillment of the order. When receiving rejection of the product because of the deviations, the ordering module 104 may cancel the

- 27 -

order or the manufacturing module 112 may coordinate re-manufacturing of the item in accordance with the specification, potentially utilizing a different manufacturing device and/or a different manufacturer altogether. When coordinating re-manufacturing of the product utilizing the same manufacturer, the verification module 102 may provide an
5 indication of the reasons the product was rejected (e.g., a list of product characteristics outside specification, a disclosure of values for the product characteristics as compared to the specification) and optionally recommendations for additional process controls that may be utilized to increase the likelihood that subsequent manufacturing efforts will result in a product within specification.

10 In some examples, the verification module 102 may compare the deviations from the specification to sets of predefined thresholds to automatically determine whether to accept or reject the final product. For example, the ordering module 104 may accept one or more thresholds outside a specification for the product design of the product, within which the customer will accept deviations, and outside which the customer will not accept
15 deviations. When the actual deviations are outside the specification and within the threshold(s), the verification module 102 may automatically record acceptance of the product in the blockchain, consistent with the order, and the system 100 may proceed toward fulfillment. When the actual deviations are outside the specification and outside one or more of the threshold(s), the verification module 102 may automatically record rejection
20 of the product in the blockchain, consistent with the order, and the ordering module 104 may cancel the order or the manufacturing module 112 may coordinate re-manufacturing of the product.

When the product has been manufactured and acceptance of the product has been confirmed by the verification module 102, an order fulfillment module 114 may coordinate
25 fulfillment of the order with the product. For example, the order fulfillment module 114 may send a communication to a customer when manufacturing and post-processing for a product ordered by the customer are complete and the product has been approved for delivery. In some examples, the order fulfillment module 114 may be configured to track delivery of the product to the customer, such as, for example, by receiving updates on
30 delivery status from a product delivery service provider (e.g., utilizing an API) and making the updates available to the customer. In some examples, the verification module 102 may be programmed and configured to update the blockchain with information regarding order fulfillment in association with the encrypted, secure identifier.

- 28 -

In some examples, the verification of fulfillment and delivery may include data regarding the sustainability of fulfillment and delivery used when fulfilling the order. For example, the verification module 102 may request or require receipt of indications of the environmental impact of packaging and delivering the product to the customer. More
5 specifically, the verification module 102 may request or require receipt of indications of, for example, materials and material quantities used for packaging the product, whether the materials used to package the product are reusable, recyclable, and/or biodegradable, energy expended in delivering the product, source of the energy expended in delivering the product, a measure of green-house gas emissions from energy expended in delivering the
10 product, or any combination or subcombination of these or other indications of sustainability. Upon receipt, the verification module 102 may update the blockchain to associate received indications of sustainability with the encrypted, secure identifier. In some examples, the verification module 102 may also calculate an impact the verified indications of sustainability have on an entity's target environmental and sustainability
15 goal, such as, for example, by recalculating a sustainability score of the entity (e.g., by rating whether the entity is on track to, predicted to be 10% or closer off track from, or predicted to be more than 10% off track from meeting sustainability targets) based on the added indications.

In some examples, the system 100 may include a use and wear input module 116
20 programmed and configured to receive data indicative of in-field use and/or post-use wear during the useful life of the product. For example, the use and wear input module 116 may be programmed and configured to receive data regarding usage of the product in the field (e.g., time in the field, operational parameters utilized when using the product, location of use, components and/or systems utilized in connection with the product, entities and/or
25 persons operating the product), such as by receiving the data from a connected customer system utilizing an API. In some examples, a network-connected in-field device (e.g., a control system for controlling operation of the product in the field) may send a record of operational parameters utilized when operating the product to the verification module 102 in real time. The verification module 102 may record all the operational parameters utilized
30 by the in-field device, providing real-time updates to the secure, distributed transaction ledger and associating those updates with the encrypted, secure identifier for the product, in some examples.

- 29 -

As another example, the use and wear input module 116 may be programmed and configured to receive data representative of wear and degradation of the product due to in-field use. Such data may include, for example, changes in dimensions, changes in surface roughness, changes in material composition (particularly at exposed surfaces), or other indicators of wear and degradation of the product. The data may be produced utilizing, for example, one or more sensors positioned and oriented to detect characteristics of the product following completion of an in-field deployment and may be received at the verification module 102. The verification module 102 may update the blockchain with the data or information representative of the data. The sensors may include, for example, image sensors, thermal sensors, acoustic sensors (e.g., ultrasonic sensors), distance sensors, or other sensors known in the art for monitoring a manufacturing process. As a specific, nonlimiting example, the product may be scanned by a computed tomography (CT) scanner. Data received from the sensors may be representative of, for example, still images of the used product, CT scanner data, density, dimensions, surface roughness, material composition, or other product characteristics. The verification module 102 may record all the data representative of the used product characteristics from the sensors, providing updates to the secure, distributed transaction ledger and associating those updates with the encrypted, secure identifier for the product, in some examples.

The system 100 may include a repair and refurbishment module 118 in some examples, the repair and refurbishment module 118 programmed and configured to coordinate and verify any efforts to repair, maintain, and refurbish the product following in-field use. For example, when a record of the use and/or wear of the product approaches, reaches, or exceeds a predefined threshold (e.g., set by a product designer or other rights holder in the product design for the product), the repair and refurbishment module 118 may send a recommendation to a client device of the customer to repair, maintain, refurbish, retire, or otherwise address the use and/or wear on the product (e.g., by backfilling voids, re-performing heat treatment, replacing components). In some examples, the repair and refurbishment module 118 may coordinate repair, maintenance, refurbishment, retirement, or other actions to be taken in connection with the product following use. For example, the repair and refurbishment module 118 may facilitate contact between the owner of the product and the manufacturer or a third-party service provider to ensure that appropriate repair, maintenance, refurbishment, retirement, or other actions to be taken in connection with the product following use is provided.

- 30 -

The verification module 102 may receive verification of any repair, maintenance, refurbishment, retirement, or other actions to be taken in connection with the product following use and may update the blockchain to incorporate the verification in a manner linked to the encrypted, secure identifier to track the lifecycle of the product. For example, data verifying repair, maintenance, and/or refurbishment may be produced utilizing, for example, one or more sensors positioned and oriented to detect characteristics of the product during and/or following completion of such repair, maintenance, and/or refurbishment and may be received at the verification module 102. The verification module 102 may update the blockchain with the data or information representative of the data. The sensors may include, for example, image sensors, thermal sensors, acoustic sensors (e.g., ultrasonic sensors), distance sensors, or other sensors known in the art for monitoring a repair, maintenance, and/or refurbishment process. As a specific, nonlimiting example, the product may be scanned (or re-scanned) by a computed tomography (CT) scanner. Data received from the sensors may be representative of, for example, still images of the used product, CT scanner data, density, dimensions, surface roughness, material composition, or other product characteristics. The verification module 102 may record all the data representative of the repaired, maintained, and/or refurbished product characteristics from the sensors, providing updates to the secure, distributed transaction ledger and associating those updates with the encrypted, secure identifier for the product, in some examples. Retirement of the product may be validated by receiving an indication from the owner or other possessor that they no longer intend to use the product, and the verification module 102 updating the blockchain to show that the lifecycle of the product is complete by associating the indication of retirement with the encrypted, secure identifier in the secure, distributed transaction ledger.

When a product is retired, the system 100 may facilitate reordering a replacement. For example, upon receipt of an indication that the product has been retired, the digital inventory module 106 may search the digital inventory to determine whether the same product or an updated version of the product is available. The ordering module 104 may send a request for confirmation regarding a potential reorder of the product or updated version of the product to the owner or other possessor of the retired product. Alternatively, the ordering module 104 may automatically reorder the product or an updated version of the product, send confirmation of the reorder to the owner or other possessor of the retired product, and proceed toward fulfillment.

- 31 -

In some examples, users of the system 100 may be subjected to a prequalification process before being authorized to access and utilize one or more modules of the system 100. For example, an entity may confirm with an administrator of the system the functionality of the system 100 the entity anticipates using, the entity's identity and
5 authorization of those persons and devices operating with the system 100 to act on behalf of the entity, the entity's willingness to comply with any requirements of the system 100 (e.g., connectivity, maintenance of security, commitment to supply reliable information, ongoing participation), the entity's capabilities (e.g., licensing and certification of users, operators, and/or technicians, machinery owned, client devices and controls therefor,
10 databases and controls therefor), or any combination or subcombination of these or other prequalification metrics. In some examples, authorization for a new entity to participate in the system 100 may require consensus among at least some of the existing participants in the system. In other examples, new entities may be prequalified so long as they meet prerequisite standards established within the system 100, or in response to unilateral
15 administrator approval.

Upon prequalification, an entity may be registered within the system 100, any requisite public or private keys to encrypt data to be received by the system 100 may be sent to the entity, any requisite private keys to decrypt data sent from the system 100 may be sent to the entity, software to enable authorized client devices of the entity to interface
20 with the system 100 may be sent for installation, and any other actions to facilitate entity participation in the system 100 may be undertaken. For example, information confirming rights to a product design, information sufficient for a potential purchaser to identify the product design when ordering, and information sufficient to manufacture the product design, or any combination or subcombination of these and any other requested or required
25 information relevant to a product design, its designer, or its current owner may be received from a designer or other rights holder in a product design. The verification module 102 and the digital inventory module 106 may cooperatively receive and store the product design in a designated database, such as a blockchain dedicated to product designs or a blockchain dedicated to product designs by the designer or other rights holder, with access restrictions
30 put in place as discussed previously herein.

As another example, a listing of manufacturing devices in service, identification of how the manufacturing devices are operated (e.g., manual, computer controlled, fully automatic, integrated system) and whether the manufacturing devices are network-

- 32 -

connectable, information confirming licensing and certifications for operators of the manufacturing devices, or any combination or subcombination of these and any other requested or required information relevant to a manufacturer and its capabilities may be received from a designer or other rights holder in a product design. If adequate control and security software is not currently deployed across the manufacturer's devices, The verification module 102 and the digital inventory module 106 may cooperatively receive and store the manufacturer capabilities, and confirmation of installation of control and security software, in a designated database, such as a blockchain dedicated to coordinating manufacturers for given orders or a blockchain dedicated to a specific manufacturer, with access restrictions put in place as discussed previously herein.

Other entities that may be prequalified for participation in the system may include, for example, customers, suppliers of precursor materials and/or components, post-processors (e.g., providers of surface treatments, heat treatments, assembly, system integration), delivery service providers, in-field operators, providers of post-use services (e.g., repair, maintenance, refurbishment), providers of post-retirement services (e.g., recyclers, component salvagers, material reprocessors, providers of disposal services), auditors, regulators, or any combination or subcombination of these or other entities involved in the design, manufacture, delivery, and use of a product.

In some examples, systems 100 in accordance with this disclosure may facilitate secure, reliable manufacturing of products with a verified record of relevant data for the product from order, through manufacturing and fulfillment, and optionally throughout an entire lifecycle of the product. For example, the manufacturing module 112 of the system 100 may be configured to facilitate manufacturing by a decentralized network of manufacturers, enabling concurrent mass production of at least substantially identical products by different entities. Such a decentralized approach may reduce the need to deploy manufacturing equipment and personnel at scale to achieve mass production or concurrent production of multiple units. The verification module 102 of the system 100 may reduce the risk that such a decentralized approach may negatively affect quality and/or consistency among products manufactured utilizing the system 100.

Though many industries may deploy and benefit from systems 100 in accordance with this disclosure, one industry that may deploy and benefit from systems 100 as disclosed herein may include oil and gas exploration. For example, earth-boring tools, cutting elements for earth-boring tools, and equipment and accessories for use with earth-

- 33 -

boring tools may benefit from specialized materials and manufacturing processes. Rather than rely on vertical integration, with a single entity providing personnel, materials, and equipment for manufacturing earth-boring tools and related equipment, systems 100 enabling distributed manufacturing may enable customers to access specialized knowledge and capabilities without compromising security, quality, or consistency. Other industries may likewise benefit from systems 100 in accordance with this disclosure, such as, for examples, the automotive, aerospace, power generation, industrial equipment, construction equipment, defense, and other industries having specialized manufacturing needs and high barriers to deployment.

FIG. 2 is a schematic view of illustrative workflow processes for a product to be verified by the system 100 of FIG. 1. For example, the workflows may start when the system 100 receives a request for order initiation 202 from a client device, such as from a customer or other purchaser of a product through the system 100. At order initiation 202, the system 100 may send identifications of product designs available through the system 100 to enable a user to select an appropriate product design for manufacture. The system 100 may also receive from the user information to assist in presenting product designs likely to meet the user's needs, such as, for example, by receiving expected use information and/or receiving identification of any existing products to be replaced.

The system 100 may proceed toward a product selection process 204. For example, the system 100 may utilize an assisted design module 206 (e.g., with artificial intelligence and/or machine learning) to recommend product designs that may have best predicted performance in the received expected uses. When performing order initiation 202 and product selection process 204, the system 100 may access at least some portions of a digital inventory 208 storing the product designs. For example, the system 100 may utilize one or more private keys available only to the system 100 to access and decrypt encrypted data representative of the product designs in the digital inventory 208. When providing data from the digital inventory 208 to a client device to facilitate a product selection process 204, the system 100 may limit the data provided to information sufficient to identify a given product design (e.g., product name, external images of product) and information preapproved by a designer or other rights holder in the product design for public disclosure (e.g., marketing information).

Following order acceptance 210, and optionally during order initiation 202 and the product selection process 204, the system 100 may update a blockchain 212 to include a

- 34 -

record of the order. For example, the system 100 may generate an encrypted, secure identifier for the product to be manufactured (e.g., a hash), and may store encrypted data representative of the product design in the blockchain in a manner associating the data with the encrypted, secure identifier. In some examples, the digital inventory 208 may likewise
5 be maintained on a blockchain 212, such as, for example, a separate blockchain from the blockchain 212 for verifying the product.

Upon order acceptance 210 the system 100 may coordinate manufacturing of the product design, such as, for example, by sending requests for availability to a manufacturing marketplace 214 maintained within the system 100. For example, the
10 system 100 may contact the manufacturer or manufacturers preferred or required within the order to verify the relevant entity or entity's availability and capability to manufacture the product in accordance with the order. As another example, the system 100 may send information sufficient to identify the product to be manufactured to the manufacturing marketplace 214 with a request for manufacturers to confirm availability, capabilities, and
15 other willingness to comply with terms of the order. The system 100 may automatically coordinate manufacturing among the manufacturers or may send suitable respondents to a client device for a customer to approve the manufacturer(s) to manufacture the product (e.g., with ratings from prior manufacturing jobs to rank potential manufacturers).

Once manufacturing has been coordinated via the manufacturing marketplace 214,
20 the system 100 may transmit confirmation of the order to each approved manufacturer 216. The confirmation of the order may include sufficient information to identify the product to be manufactured, information regarding any precursors that will be required to begin manufacturing, and a request for verification of any manufacturer capabilities required before manufacturing can proceed. Following order acceptance 210, each communication
25 between the system 100 and each manufacturer relevant to the product may be verified and stored in the blockchain 212. For example, all data sent in connection with transmission of the order confirmation may be stored in the blockchain 212 in association with the encrypted, secure identifier.

Before proceeding to manufacture, the system 100 may require receipt of
30 verification of precursor materials and/or components 218 from a client device of the manufacturer. For example, the system 100 may require receipt of images and/or digital records of the source and composition of materials to be utilized during manufacturing. The system 100 may also require receipt of images and/or digital records of the source and

- 35 -

identification of any premade components to be used when manufacturing and/or assembling the product. Each communication from the manufacturer may be authenticated, for example, by the manufacturer's use of a private key put in place during prequalification of the manufacturer to participate in the system 100. The system 100 may update the
5 blockchain 212 with the data received for verification of precursor materials and/or components 218. In some examples, the system 100 may automatically verify the data received against terms of the order to authorize further progress toward fulfilment, or may send the data received to a client device of the customer to approve progress within the system 100.

10 The system 100 may also require receipt of verification of manufacturer capabilities 220 from a client device of the manufacturer. For example, the system 100 may require receipt of images and/or digital records of the identity and calibration of manufacturing devices to be utilized during manufacturing. The system 100 may also require receipt of images and/or digital records of certifications and/or licensing of any
15 equipment operators of any manufacturing devices to be used when manufacturing the product. Each communication from the manufacturer may be authenticated, for example, by the manufacturer's use of a private key put in place during prequalification of the manufacturer to participate in the system 100. The system 100 may update the blockchain 212 with the data received for verification of manufacturer capabilities 220. In
20 some examples, the system 100 may automatically verify the data received against terms of the order to authorize further progress toward fulfilment, or may send the data received to a client device of the customer to approve progress within the system 100.

Following verification of precursor materials and/or components 218 and verification of manufacturer capabilities 220, the system 100 may proceed toward
25 coordination and verification of the manufacturing and post-processing process 222. In some examples, the system 100 may decrypt data from the product design in the digital inventory 208 representative of instructions for manufacturing the product utilizing a private key accessible to the system 100, may prepare instructions configured to enable an automatic manufacturing device (e.g., an additive manufacturing device, a computer
30 numerical control (CNC) manufacturing device) to manufacture the product utilizing the precursors, and may encrypt and send discrete packets of the instructions to a connected client device. The client device may decrypt the packets of instructions, execute the instructions to manufacture the product, and send confirmation of deletion of the packets of

- 36 -

instructions upon completion of each respective packet. In other examples, the system 100 may decrypt data from the product design in the digital inventory 208 representative of instructions for manufacturing the product utilizing a private key accessible to the system 100, may prepare instructions configured to enable an operator of a manually
5 controlled manufacturing device to manufacture the product utilizing the precursors, and may encrypt and send the instructions to a connected client device. The instructions may be decryptable by the client device, may contain embedded access restrictions to permit display of the instructions to manufacture the product, may contain embedded access restrictions to prohibit and send attempts to copy, transmit, or otherwise grant unauthorized
10 access to or use of the instructions to the system 100, and may contain embedded access restrictions to require confirmation of deletion of the instructions upon confirmation of completion from the client device.

The system 100 may also require receipt of verification of the manufacturing process 222 from one or more client devices of the manufacturer. For example, the
15 system 100 may require receipt of sensor data generated by sensors oriented toward the product, manufacturing device, and/or operator during manufacturing. More specifically, the system 100 may require receipt of periodically captured images, a live video feed, real-time thermal imaging at a site of manufacturing on the product, real-time density data of the product during manufacture, real-time measurements of product dimensions, or any
20 combination or subcombination of these and other data indicative of the process utilized to manufacture the product and/or the in-manufacture characteristics of the product. Each communication from the manufacturer may be authenticated, for example, by the manufacturer's use of a private key put in place during prequalification of the manufacturer to participate in the system 100. The system 100 may update the blockchain 212 with the
25 data or with an indication representative of the data received for verification of the manufacturing process 222. In some examples, the system 100 may automatically verify the data received against terms of the order to authorize further progress toward fulfilment, or may send the data received to a client device of the customer to approve progress within the system 100.

30 In some examples, the system 100 may decrypt data from the product design in the digital inventory 208 representative of instructions for post-processing the product utilizing a private key accessible to the system 100, may prepare instructions configured to enable an automatic post-processing device (e.g., a computer-controlled heat treatment device, a

- 37 -

computer-controlled surface treatment device) to process the product, and may encrypt and send discrete packets of the instructions to a connected client device upon receiving confirmation that the product is available and ready for post-processing. The client device may decrypt the packets of instructions, execute the instructions to process the product, and
5 send confirmation of deletion of the packets of instructions upon completion of each respective packet. In other examples, the system 100 may decrypt data from the product design in the digital inventory 208 representative of instructions for processing the product utilizing a private key accessible to the system 100, may prepare instructions configured to enable an operator of a manually controlled post-processing device to process the product,
10 and may encrypt and send the instructions to a connected client device. The instructions may be decryptable by the client device, may contain embedded access restrictions to permit display of the instructions to process the product, may contain embedded access restrictions to prohibit and send attempts to copy, transmit, or otherwise grant unauthorized access to or use of the instructions to the system 100, and may contain embedded access
15 restrictions to require confirmation of deletion of the instructions upon confirmation of completion from the client device.

The system 100 may also require receipt of verification of the post-processing process 222 from one or more client devices of the post-processor. For example, the system 100 may require receipt of sensor data generated by sensors oriented toward the
20 product, post-processing device, and/or operator during post-processing. More specifically, the system 100 may require receipt of periodically captured images, a live video feed, real-time thermal imaging at a site of post-processing on, or an entirety of, the product, real-time density data of the product during post-processing, real-time measurements of product dimensions, or any combination or subcombination of these and other data indicative of the
25 process utilized to process the product and/or the in-process characteristics of the product. Each communication from the post-processor may be authenticated, for example, by the post-processor's use of a private key put in place during prequalification of the post-processor to participate in the system 100. The system 100 may update the blockchain 212 with the data or with an indication representative of the data received for verification of the
30 post-processing process 222. In some examples, the system 100 may automatically verify the data received against terms of the order to authorize further progress toward fulfilment, or may send the data received to a client device of the customer to approve progress within the system 100.

- 38 -

The system 100 may also be configured to accept verification of inspection processes 224 and final product characteristics. For example, the system 100 may decrypt data from the product design in the digital inventory 208 representative of product characteristics to be verified upon completion of manufacturing and post-processing the product utilizing a private key accessible to the system 100, may prepare instructions configured to enable an automatic inspection device (e.g., a CT scanner) to inspect the product, and may encrypt and send discrete packets of the instructions to a connected client device upon receiving confirmation that the product is available and ready for final inspection. The client device may decrypt the packets of instructions, execute the instructions to inspect the product, and send confirmation of deletion of the packets of instructions upon completion of each respective packet. In other examples, the system 100 may decrypt data from the product design in the digital inventory 208 representative of instructions for inspecting the product utilizing a private key accessible to the system 100, may prepare instructions configured to enable an operator of a manually controlled inspection device or manually operated inspection tools (e.g., calipers for measuring dimensions) to inspect the product, and may encrypt and send the instructions to a connected client device. The instructions may be decryptable by the client device, may contain embedded access restrictions to permit display of the instructions to inspect the product, may contain embedded access restrictions to prohibit and send attempts to copy, transmit, or otherwise grant unauthorized access to or use of the instructions to the system 100, and may contain embedded access restrictions to require confirmation of deletion of the instructions upon confirmation of completion from the client device.

The system 100 may also require receipt of the verification of inspection processes 224 and results from one or more client devices of the inspector. For example, the system 100 may require receipt of sensor data generated by sensors oriented toward the product, inspection device, and/or inspector during post-processing. More specifically, the system 100 may require receipt of periodically captured images, a live video feed, real-time or post-scan imaging of the product and its interior structure and material composition from a scanner (e.g., a CT scanner), real-time or post-detection measurements of product dimensions, or any combination or subcombination of these and other data indicative of the process utilized to inspect the product and/or the final characteristics of the product. Each communication from the inspector may be authenticated, for example, by the inspector's use of a private key put in place during prequalification of the inspector to participate in the

- 39 -

system 100. The system 100 may update the blockchain 212 with the data or with an indication representative of the data received for verification of inspection processes 224 and results. In some examples, the system 100 may automatically verify the data received against terms of the order to authorize further progress toward fulfilment, or may send the
5 data received to a client device of the customer to approve progress within the system 100.

In some examples, the system 100 may be configured to coordinate delivery logistics 226 for the product. For example, upon acceptance of the product following manufacturing, post-processing, and inspection, the system 100 may send a request to a delivery service provider to provide a quote for delivery costs or to pick up the product
10 from the inspector or another temporary possessor of the product for delivery.

The system 100 may be configured to receive confirmation of order fulfillment 228. For example, verification of order fulfillment 228 may be received from a delivery service provider upon delivery of the product or from a customer upon receipt of the product. When order fulfillment 228 has been verified, the system 100 may verify and encrypt the
15 record of manufacturing of the product in the blockchain 212. For example, the data received, or data representative of the data received, from order initiation 202 through order fulfillment 228 may be encrypted and uploaded to the blockchain 212 in a manner associating the data with the encrypted, secure identifier. The record may be immutable, or may only be changeable with consensus from relevant participants in the system 100,
20 ensuring that the data is available and reliable for interested parties, such as, for example, the customer, auditors, and regulators.

In some examples, a physical inventory manager 230 may be updated to reflect delivery and ownership of the product upon order fulfillment 228. The physical inventory manager 230 may enable the system 100 to track inventory and stock, and may enable the
25 system 100 to facilitate reordering or replacement of the product responsive to trends and/or status of the physical inventory reflected in the physical inventory manager 230.

In some examples, the system 100 may be configured to receive verification of usage and wear 232 resulting from in-field use of the product. For example, the system 100 may be configured to receive data representative of the location, system into which the
30 product is integrated, operational parameters used in-field, data representative of product performance in the field, data representative of measurements of product dimensions due to in-field wear, or any combination or subcombination of these and other data indicative of the usage and wear of the product and/or the final characteristics of the product. Each

- 40 -

communication from the owner or operator may be authenticated, for example, by the owner or operator's use of a private key put in place during prequalification of the owner or operator to participate in the system 100. The system 100 may update the blockchain 212 with the data or with an indication representative of the data received for verification of
5 usage and wear 232. The verification of usage and wear 232 may enable the system 100 to track product performance and suitability for use, and may enable the system 100 to facilitate reordering or replacement of the product responsive to trends and/or status of the product's characteristics and performance. In some examples, the system 100 may be configured to receive and store in the blockchain 212 data representative of repair,
10 refurbishment, and maintenance of the product, in a manner similar to the verification of usage and wear 232.

FIG. 3 is a flowchart of a method 300 of providing end-to-end verification of workflow processes for a product. The method 300 may involve, for example, initiating an order and generating an encrypted, secure identifier for the product, as indicated at act 302.
15 More specifically, a request from a client device may be received to initiate an order, and information to assist in selecting an appropriate product may be requested. In some examples, requests for the information may be sent to the client device, such as, for example, utilizing a webform. In some examples, the encrypted, secure identifier may be generated upon order initiation, enabling tracking of the ordering process. In other
20 examples, the encrypted, secure identifier may be generated after an order is confirmed, as set forth below.

In some examples, the method 300 may involve performing assisted product selection, as indicated at act 304. For example, a digital inventory of available product designs may be searched, and product designs having best recorded performance in use
25 cases closest to expected uses received from a client device may be recommended. In some examples, the method 300 may also involve performing assisted product design. For example, a designer or other rights holder in a product design may enable alterations to be made a product design in the digital inventory within pre-approved limits (e.g., changes to size, shape, dimensions, alternative materials, alternative manufacturing processes). As
30 another example, potential alterations to a product design may be recommended by the system by analyzing performance of the product against features of other, similar products enabling improved performance.

- 41 -

The method 300 may involve accepting selection of a product from the digital inventory, as indicated at act 306, and finalizing the product design to be manufactured, as indicated at act 308. Upon finalization of the product design to be manufactured, a digital twin of the product, including the product design, may be created and a blockchain may be
5 updated to associate data, such as the product design and digital twin, with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing a secure, distributed transaction ledger, as indicated at act 324.

The method 300 may proceed to begin transmitting manufacturing instructions for manufacturing the product to a manufacturer, as indicated at act 310. For example, information sufficient to identify the product and to enable the manufacturer to obtain any
10 necessary precursors and equipment may be transmitted. The method 300 may involve receiving pre-manufacturing verification of requested and/or required information, such as, for example, precursor availability and manufacturer capabilities, as indicated at act 312. Upon receipt of the pre-manufacturing verification, the blockchain may be updated to associate the pre-manufacturing verification with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing a
15 secure, distributed transaction ledger, as indicated at act 324.

The method 300 may proceed to receive in-process manufacturing verification, as indicated at act 314. For example, operational parameters used and resulting product characteristics produced during manufacturing may be received. Upon receipt of the in-process manufacturing verification, the blockchain may be updated to associate the in-
20 process manufacturing verification with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing a secure, distributed transaction ledger, as indicated at act 324.

The method 300 may proceed to receive verification of post-processing performed on the product, as indicated at act 316. For example, operational parameters used and resulting product characteristics produced during post-processing may be received. Upon
25 receipt of the post-processing verification, the blockchain may be updated to associate the post-processing verification with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing a secure, distributed transaction ledger, as indicated at act 324.

The method 300 may proceed to receive verification of product characteristics, as indicated at act 318. For example, data representative of final product characteristics
30 resulting from manufacturing and post-processing may be received. Upon receipt of the verification of product characteristics, the blockchain may be updated to associate the verification of product characteristics with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing a secure, distributed transaction ledger, as indicated at act 324.

- 42 -

In some examples, the method 300 may involve fulfilling the order, as indicated at act 320. For example, the product meeting the requirements of the product design selected when finalizing the product design at act 308 may be shipped and delivered to the purchaser. In some examples, the method 300 may involve receiving verification of use,
5 maintenance, refurbishment, and other post-manufacture data (e.g., repair, retirement), as indicated at act 322.

FIG. 4 is a flowchart of another method 400 of providing end-to-end verification of workflow processes for a product. The method 400 may involve, for example, generating an encrypted, secure identifier, as indicated at act 402, the encrypted, secure identifier
10 configured to collect and associate the verification received in a secure, reliable database. For example, the method 400 may involve generating a hash or token for use in a blockchain to serve as the encrypted, secure identifier.

Following or concurrent with generation, the method 400 may involve updating a blockchain to store the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing a secure, distributed
15 transaction ledger, as indicated at act 404. For example, a block for storing the workflow verification may be created and linked to a previous block in the blockchain utilizing the encrypted, secure identifier.

In some examples, the method 400 may involve maintaining verification data representative of the workflow processes in association with the encrypted, secure
20 identifier in different, interlinked blocks of the blockchain, as indicated at act 412. In other examples, the method 400 may involve maintaining verification data representative of the workflow processes in association with the encrypted, secure identifier in a single, dedicated block of the blockchain, as indicated at act 406. In other examples, the method 400 may involve maintaining verification data representative of the workflow
25 processes in association with the encrypted, secure identifier in a different, interlinked blockchains, as indicated at act 414.

In some examples, the method 400 may involve updating the blockchain in real time to associate at least some verification data with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger, as indicated at act 408. For example, the
30 blockchain may be updated within 1 minute, 1 second, 10 cycles, or 1 cycle of receipt of the verification data to provide real-time updates of workflow verification in the blockchain.

- 43 -

In some examples, the method 400 may involve updating the blockchain after completion of a process to associate at least some verification data with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger, as indicated at act 410. For example, the verification data may be collected in real time, compared to terms, and the
5 blockchain updated with the results of the comparison. As another example, the verification data may be collected in real time and the blockchain may be updated to include the verification data only after all the verification data has been received. As yet another example, the verification data may only be received after all the verification data has been generated, and the blockchain may be updated to include the verification data or an
10 indication representative of the verification data.

In some examples, the blockchain may be updated with certain of the verification data in real time and a remainder of the verification data upon receipt of the relevant portion of the remainder of the verification data. In other examples, updates to the blockchain may consistently be made in real time or upon receipt of a complete portion of
15 the verification data.

FIG. 5 is a flowchart of another method 500 of providing end-to-end verification of workflow processes for a product. The method 500 may involve, for example, accepting an order for a product to be manufactured, as indicated at act 502. The order may include, for example, a specification for the product, as further indicated at act 502, among other
20 potential data representative of the product to be manufactured, processes for producing the product, or characteristics of the product. In some examples, acceptance of the order may involve a server hosting a system for providing end-to-end verification receiving a signal indicative of the order from a client device. The method 500 may further involve updating a blockchain for certifying characteristics of the product to associate the order and the
25 specification with an encrypted, secure identifier utilizing a secure, distributed transaction ledger, as indicated at act 504. In some examples, the system may restrict access to the blockchain, including the secure, distributed transaction ledger, to preauthorized service providers.

In some examples, the method 500 may involve accepting expected use information
30 before accepting the order for the product, sending identification of product designs within a digital inventory of product designs potentially capable of performing the expected use, and accepting the order for the product to be manufactured from within the digital inventory. For example, the system may utilize a machine-learning-assisted process to

- 44 -

match the product designs from within the digital inventory having desirable recorded performance metrics in similar use cases to the expected use information and recommend the product designs having the desirable recorded performance metrics when sending the identification of the product designs.

5 The method 500 may involve accepting identification of a product file meeting the specification, the product file including instructions for manufacturing the product, as indicated at act 506. For example, the order may contain expected uses for the product to be manufactured as well as other required characteristics for the product without specifying a specific product or product design. In such a situation, the update to the blockchain may
10 not occur until after the product file has been identified. As another example, the order and the identification of the product file may be accepted concurrently. In such a situation, the update to the blockchain may occur at least substantially concurrently with, or shortly after, acceptance of the order and the identification of the product file. Regardless, the method 500 may involve updating the blockchain to associate the product file with the
15 encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger, as indicated at act 508. For example, the product file may be encrypted before updating the blockchain to ensure that the product file remains confidential and secure. In some examples, the identification of the product file may be achieved by a server hosting a system for providing end-to-end verification receiving identification of a product design in a digital
20 inventory from a client device. In other examples, the identification of the product file may be achieved by a server hosting a system for providing end-to-end verification identifying the product design in the digital inventory based on the specification in the order.

 The method 500 may also involve accepting pre-manufacture verification of manufacturer capabilities and product precursors, as indicated at act 510. For example, a
25 server hosting a system for providing end-to-end verification may prompt a client device of a manufacturer to send the verification of manufacturer capabilities and product precursors, and may not proceed toward manufacturing the product until after receipt of the verification of manufacturer capabilities and product precursors. More specifically, the system may accept the pre-manufacture verification of the manufacturer capabilities by
30 receiving images of quality required documentation (e.g., operator licensing/certification, machine identity, machine calibration). In some examples, the system may accept measures of environmental impact associated with sourcing and manufacturing the product and update the blockchain to associate the measures of environmental impact with the

- 45 -

encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger. Following receipt of the pre-manufacture verification of manufacturer capabilities and product precursors, the method 500 may involve updating the blockchain to associate the pre-manufacture verification of manufacturer capabilities and product precursors with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger, as indicated at act 512.

The method 500 may involve sending operational parameters to enable an additive manufacturing device to manufacture the product, as indicated at act 514. For example, the operational parameters may be sent for manufacturing as discrete packets, with at least one packet being sent after receipt of confirmation that at least another previous packet is complete and associated operational parameters for the at least another previous packet have been deleted, as also indicated at act 514. Transmission of the operational parameters may be achieved by, for example, a server hosting a system for providing end-to-end verification sending encrypted packets of the operational parameters to a client device (e.g., a network-connected additive manufacturing device, a network-connected CNC manufacturing device). The client device may have a private key enabling the client device to decrypt and utilize the operational parameters to manufacture the product (e.g., as a result of a prequalification process). The packets may also include instructions causing the client device to delete the operational parameters and other data in a given packet following execution. The packets may further include access restrictions configured to report unauthorized access of the operational parameters by devices other than the authorized client device or access and use by the client device beyond expected access and use. By separating the manufacturing instructions into discrete packets, tracking access and use, and optionally pre-qualifying participants in the system, risks of copying, reverse-engineering, and the manufacture of unauthorized products may be reduced. The method 500 may then involve updating the blockchain to associate the operational parameters with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger, as indicated at act 516.

In some examples, the method 500 may involve, for example, tailoring the operational parameters to cause the additive manufacturing device to produce a unique physical characteristic of the product associated with the encrypted, secure identifier before sending the operational parameters to the additive manufacturing device. For example, one or more of the packets may contain instructions that, when executed, cause the

- 46 -

manufacturing device to produce a detectable, unique variation in product characteristics (e.g., a pattern in density, a pattern in surface roughness, a visible or encoded serial number) while manufacturing the product.

5 The method 500 may further involve accepting in-manufacture verification of the operational parameters utilized by the additive manufacturing device when manufacturing the product, as indicated at act 518. For example, the packets sent to the client device may further include instructions that, when executed, cause the client device to send confirmation of the actual operational parameters utilized by the client device. The method 500 may then proceed with updating the blockchain to associate the in-manufacture
10 verification of the operational parameters with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger, as indicated at act 520. Creating a secure, verified record of the instructions sent and the actual operational parameters used when manufacturing the product, tied to the chain of other verification for the product, may provide a reliable record regarding workflows utilized when manufacturing the product.

15 In some examples, the method 500 may involve accepting in-manufacture verification of a product characteristic for a portion of the product manufactured by the additive manufacturing device. For example, data generated by one or more sensors oriented and positioned to detect one or more characteristics of the product during manufacturing may be received. Upon or after receipt, the blockchain may be updated to
20 associate the in-manufacture verification of the product characteristic with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger.

 In some examples, the method 500 may involve stopping sending the operational parameters to the additive manufacturing device when the in-manufacture verification of the product characteristic is outside a predetermined threshold. For example, the system
25 may automatically pause or stop manufacturing when received verification of one or more product characteristics is outside specification, outside tolerances, or otherwise inconsistent with the product design or terms of the order. More specifically, the method 500 may involve, for example, pausing sending the operational parameters to the additive manufacturing device when the in-manufacture verification of the product characteristic is
30 within the predetermined threshold and outside another, smaller threshold (e.g., when one or more product characteristics is within purchaser specification but outside designer-preferred tolerances). When manufacturing is merely paused, the system may require confirmation of acceptance from a purchaser before resuming sending the operational

- 47 -

parameters to the additive manufacturing device. Upon or after receipt, the blockchain may be updated to associate an indication that the in-manufacture verification of the product characteristic was outside the predetermined threshold with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger.

5 In some examples, the system may automatically request funds from a payment account when the in-manufacture verification of the product characteristic is within a predetermined threshold. For example, when each product characteristic is within all specified thresholds (e.g., is within purchaser specification and within designer-preferred tolerances), the system may automatically execute a smart contract utilizing the secure,
10 distributed transaction ledger to cause purchaser funds to be released to the manufacturer responsive to verified completion of manufacturing in accordance with the order. More specifically, the system may record intellectual property rights associated with the product, the product file, the product precursors, or any combination of these stored in a database accessible to the processor, update the blockchain to associate the intellectual property
15 rights with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger, and generate an account of royalties due for the product, the product file, the product precursors, or any combination of these.

 In some examples, the method 500 may involve accepting post-manufacture verification of operational parameters for post-manufacture processing performed on the
20 product, post-manufacture product characteristics for the product, or both. In some such examples, acceptance of the in-manufacture verification of the operational parameters utilized by the additive manufacturing device when manufacturing the product may be accomplished by accepting an indication that all the operational parameters utilized by the additive manufacturing device when manufacturing the product were within a specified
25 threshold. More specifically, acceptance of the in-manufacture verification of the operational parameters utilized by the additive manufacturing device when manufacturing the product may involve, for example, receiving a log of at least substantially all the operational parameters utilized by the additive manufacturing device when manufacturing the product. As a specific, nonlimiting example, the system may accept the in-manufacture
30 verification of the operational parameters utilized by the additive manufacturing device when manufacturing the product by receiving the log in real time from a network-connected additive manufacturing device while the network-connected additive manufacturing device manufactures the product. Upon receipt of the post-manufacture

- 48 -

verification of operational parameters for post-manufacture processing performed on the product, post-manufacture product characteristics for the product, or both, the system may update the blockchain to associate the post-manufacture verification of the operational parameters for the post-manufacture processing performed on the product, the post-manufacture product characteristics for the product, or both with the encrypted, secure
5 identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger.

FIG. 6 is a schematic of a network 600 for implementing end-to-end verification of workflow processes. The network 600 may include, for example, at least one first server 602 configured to host at least some modules for administering a system for
10 verifying end-to-end workflows of a product. For example, the first server 602 or first grouping of servers 602 may host software including an ordering module, an API for interfacing with a physical inventory module, a digital inventory module, a design selection assistance module, a manufacturing module, an API for interfacing with an order fulfillment module, an API for receiving input from a use and wear input module, and an
15 API for receiving input from a repair and refurbishment module, as described previously in connection with FIG. 1. The first server 602 or first grouping of servers 602 may be connected to a network 604 to enable communication for administration of the system. For example, the first server 602 or first grouping of servers 602 may be connected to a local area network (LAN), a wide area network (WAN), or the Internet.

20 In some examples, the network 600 may include additional servers or additional groupings of servers dedicated to store data usable by the system or to administer certain modules of the system. For example, the network 600 may include a second server 606 or a second grouping of servers 606 configured to administer and store or host a node of the blockchain for containing the verification of the end-to-end workflows for the product.

25 The second server 606 or second grouping of servers 606 may be publicly accessible in some examples, though the data stored in the second server 606 or second grouping of servers 606 may be encrypted, requiring a user to have one or more private keys to decrypt the data. For example, some users may have private keys enabling decryption of only those portions of the blockchain (e.g., blocks, portions of blocks) for
30 which the user has prequalified access. More specifically, the blockchain may be encrypted utilizing multiple encryption (also called “cascade encryption,” “cascade ciphering,” and “superencipherment”), with all users hosting nodes of the blockchain having private keys to decrypt a first layer of encryption, granting access to any single-encrypted data, and only

- 49 -

certain users having private keys to fully decrypt all layers of encryption of a given set or subset of data. As a specific, nonlimiting example, approval from respective administrators may be required to enable an entity to fully decrypt all layers of encryption. In such an example, approval from each designer or other rights holder in a product design may be
5 required to decrypt data representative of the product design and instructions for manufacturing the product design; approval from the manufacturer of a product may be required to decrypt data representative of the manufacturing processes (e.g., actual operational parameters) used during manufacturing; approval from the post-processor of a product may be required to decrypt data representative of the post-processing (e.g., actual
10 operational parameters) performed on the product. In some such examples, a customer, purchaser, or other owner of a product may be pre-approved to fully decrypt all data verifying the workflows for the product.

In some examples, the second server 606 or second grouping of servers 606 may be distinct from the first server 602 or first grouping of servers 602. In other examples, the
15 second server 606 or second grouping of servers 606 may be integrated with or the same as the first server 602 or first grouping of servers 602.

In some examples, the network 600 may include a third server 608 or a third grouping of servers 608 configured to administer an API to access, or to administer and store or host a node of another blockchain for containing, the digital inventory. The third
20 server 608 or third grouping of servers 608 may not be publicly accessible, and the data stored in the third server 608 or third grouping of servers 608 may be encrypted, requiring a user to have one or more private keys to decrypt the data, as discussed previously in connection with the second server 606 or second grouping of servers 606. In some examples, the third server 608 or third grouping of servers 608 may be distinct from the
25 first server 602 or first grouping of servers 602 and/or the second server 606 or second grouping of servers 606. In other examples, the third server 608 or third grouping of servers 608 may be integrated with or the same as the first server 602 or first grouping of servers 602, the second server 606 or second grouping of servers 606, or both.

In some examples, the network 600 may include a fourth server 610 or a fourth
30 grouping of servers 610 configured to administer an API to access, or to administer and store or host a node of yet another blockchain for containing, data representative of physical inventory (e.g., of customers, precursor suppliers, manufacturers, post-processors). The fourth server 610 or fourth grouping of servers 610 may not be publicly

- 50 -

accessible, and the data stored in the fourth server 610 or fourth grouping of servers 610 may be encrypted, requiring a user to have one or more private keys to decrypt the data, as discussed previously in connection with the second server 606 or second grouping of servers 606. In some examples, the fourth server 610 or fourth grouping of servers 610 may
5 be distinct from the first server 602 or first grouping of servers 602, the second server 606 or second grouping of servers 606, and/or the third server 608 or third grouping of servers 608. In other examples, the fourth server 610 or fourth grouping of servers 610 may be integrated with or the same as the first server 602 or first grouping of servers 602, the second server 606 or second grouping of servers 606, the third server 608 or third grouping
10 of servers 608, or any combination or subcombination of these.

In some examples, the network 600 may include a fifth server 612 or a fifth grouping of servers 612 configured to administer an API to access, or to administer and store or host a node of still another blockchain for containing, a database of keys required to encrypt and decrypt the data handled by the system. The fifth server 612 or fifth
15 grouping of servers 612 may only be accessible to the system, and other users of the system may be required to maintain a separate database of their own keys for interacting with the system in some embodiments. In other embodiments, the fifth server 612 or fifth grouping of servers 612 may only be accessible to pre-authenticated users of the system with access restrictions enabling a user to only access those keys which the pre-authenticated user is
20 authorized to utilize. In some examples, the fifth server 612 or fifth grouping of servers 612 may be distinct from the first server 602 or first grouping of servers 602, the second server 606 or second grouping of servers 606, the third server 608 or third grouping of servers 608, and/or the fourth server 610 or the fourth grouping of servers 610. In other examples, the fifth server 612 or fifth grouping of servers 612 may be integrated with or
25 the same as the first server 602 or first grouping of servers 602, the second server 606 or second grouping of servers 606, the third server 608 or third grouping of servers 608, the fourth server 610 or fourth grouping of servers 610, or any combination or subcombination of these.

The network 600 may be accessible to one or more client devices. For example, a
30 client device 614 of a customer, a client device 616 of a designer or other rights holder in a product design, a client device 618 of a manufacturer, and/or a client device 620 of another entity authorized to participate in the system (e.g., a precursor provider, a post-processor, a delivery service provider, an auditor, a regulator, a system administrator) may access the

- 51 -

system via the network 604. More specifically, the first server 602 or first grouping of servers 602 may deliver data to the respective client device 614 through 620 from the respective other servers 606 through 612 or other groupings of servers 606 through 612, the data being unencrypted and in at least some instances re-encrypted by the system on the first server 602 or first groupings of servers 602 before sending to the respective client device 614 through 620. The servers and client devices may be configured as network-connectable computer systems, as described in greater detail in connection with FIG. 7, or other network-connectable devices (e.g., network-connected manufacturing devices).

FIG. 7 is a schematic of a computer system 700 for connection to the network of FIG. 6. The computer system 700 may include, for example, at least one processor 702 configured to execute software programs containing computing instructions. The processor 702 may be configured to execute a wide variety of operating systems and applications including the computing instructions for administering systems and subsystems in accordance with this disclosure. The processor 702 may be configured as, for example, a microprocessor, controller, microcontroller, or state machine suitable for carrying out processes of the present disclosure. The processor 702 may also be implemented as a combination of computing devices, such as a combination of a DSP and a microprocessor, a plurality of microprocessors, one or more microprocessors in conjunction with a DSP core, or any other such configuration.

The computer system 700 may also include at least one memory device 704 configured to hold computing instructions, data, and other information for performing a wide variety of tasks including administering systems and subsystems of the present disclosure. By way of example, and not limitation, the memory device 704 may include Synchronous Random Access Memory (SRAM), Dynamic RAM (DRAM), Read-Only Memory (ROM), Flash memory, and the like.

The computer system 700 may further include at least one storage device 706 configured to store relatively large amounts of nonvolatile information for use in the computer system 700. By way of example and not limitation, the storage device 706 may include computer-readable media (CRM). This CRM may include, but is not limited to, magnetic and optical storage devices such as disk drives, magnetic tape, CDs (compact discs), DVDs (digital versatile discs or digital video discs), and semiconductor devices such as RAM, DRAM, ROM, EPROM, Flash memory, and other equivalent storage devices. "Computer readable media," as utilized herein, excludes transitory signals.

- 52 -

The processor 702, memory device 704, and storage device 706 may be interconnected to one another utilizing a bus 708. A person of ordinary skill in the art will recognize that the computer system 700 may be configured in many different ways with different types of interconnecting buses between the various elements. Moreover, the
5 various elements may be subdivided physically, functionally, or a combination thereof. As one nonlimiting example, the memory device 704 may be divided into cache memory, graphics memory, and main memory. Each of these memories may communicate directly or indirectly with the processor 702 on separate buses, partially combined buses, or a common bus.

10 A networking card 710 may be connected to the remainder of the computer system 700 via the bus 708. The networking card 710 may be configured for communicating with other devices or communication networks. As nonlimiting examples, the networking card 710 may include elements for communicating on wired and wireless communication media, such as for example, serial ports, parallel ports, Ethernet
15 connections, universal serial bus (USB) connections, IEEE 1394 (“firewire”) connections, Thunderbolt™ connections, BLUETOOTH® wireless networks, ZIGBEE® wireless networks, 802.11 type wireless networks, cellular telephone/data networks, and other suitable communication interfaces and protocols.

In some examples, such as when the computer system 700 is configured as a client
20 device, the computer system 700 may include one or more input devices 712 configured to receive user input. As specific, nonlimiting examples, the input devices 712 may include a keyboard 714 and mouse 716, though other input devices 712 may include image sensors, microphones, trackballs, macropads, and other input devices 712 known in the art.

In some examples, such as when the computer system 700 is configured as a client
25 device, the computer system 700 may include one or more output devices 718 configured to provide output. As specific, nonlimiting examples, the output devices 718 may include a monitor 720; though other output devices 718 may include audio drivers and other output devices 718 known in the art.

Systems in accordance with this disclosure may enable secure, decentralized
30 manufacturing of products. Workflows executed when performing the secure, decentralized manufacturing may be captured and reflected in a secure database for verifying the workflows. For example, building the system on a blockchain backbone may ensure that the provenance of products is verifiable, reducing the risk of black and grey market

- 53 -

products circulating from the system. In addition, implementing the system with blockchain technology and encryption protocols, including multi-layered encryption in at least some instances, may reduce the risk that unauthorized products will be manufactured in the first place.

5 Repeatable, verified manufacturing of products may also realize downstream benefits. For example, a customer wishing to audit a manufacturer's capabilities, equipment, calibration, and performance may turn to the verified record of workflows, rather than sending an auditor to inspect the manufacturer's facilities. In addition, a regulator wishing to verify whether a product is compliant with relevant government
10 standards may consult the verified record of workflows to receive a verified record of the product's sourcing, manufacturing, and characteristics.

Additional, nonlimiting examples within the scope of this disclosure may include the following:

Embodiment 1: A system, comprising: a memory device storing instructions that,
15 when executed by a processor, cause the processor to: accept an order for a product to be manufactured, the order comprising a specification for the product; update a blockchain for certifying characteristics of the product to associate the order and the specification with an encrypted, secure identifier utilizing a secure, distributed transaction ledger; accept
20 identification of a product file meeting the specification, the product file comprising instructions for manufacturing the product; update the blockchain to associate the product file with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger; accept pre-manufacture verification of manufacturer capabilities and product precursors; update the blockchain to associate the pre-manufacture verification of manufacturer
25 capabilities and product precursors with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger; send operational parameters to enable an additive manufacturing device to manufacture the product, the operational parameters being sent for manufacturing as discrete packets, at least one packet being sent only after receipt of confirmation that at least another previous packet is complete and associated operational parameters for the at least another previous packet have been deleted; update the
30 blockchain to associate the operational parameters with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger; accept in-manufacture verification of operational parameters utilized by the additive manufacturing device when manufacturing the product; and update the blockchain to associate the in-manufacture verification of the

- 54 -

operational parameters with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger.

Embodiment 2: The system of Embodiment 1, wherein the memory device stores instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to: tailor the
5 operational parameters to cause the additive manufacturing device to produce a unique physical characteristic of the product associated with the encrypted, secure identifier before sending the operational parameters to the additive manufacturing device.

Embodiment 3: The system of Embodiment 1 or Embodiment 2, wherein the
memory device stores instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the
10 processor to: accept in-manufacture verification of a product characteristic for a portion of the product manufactured by the additive manufacturing device; and update the blockchain to associate the in-manufacture verification of the product characteristic with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger.

Embodiment 4: The system of Embodiment 3, wherein the memory device stores
15 instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to: stop sending the operational parameters to the additive manufacturing device when the in-manufacture verification of the product characteristic is outside a predetermined threshold; and update the blockchain to associate an indication that the in-manufacture verification of the product characteristic was outside the predetermined threshold with the encrypted, secure identifier
20 utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger.

Embodiment 5: The system of Embodiment 4, wherein the memory device stores instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to: pause sending the operational parameters to the additive manufacturing device when the in-manufacture verification of the product characteristic is within the predetermined threshold and outside
25 another, smaller threshold; and require confirmation of acceptance from a purchaser before resuming sending the operational parameters to the additive manufacturing device.

Embodiment 6: The system of Embodiment 3 or Embodiment 4, wherein the memory device stores instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to: automatically request funds from a payment account when the in-manufacture
30 verification of the product characteristic is within a predetermined threshold.

Embodiment 7: The system of any one of Embodiments 1 through 6, wherein the memory device stores instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to: accept post-manufacture verification of operational parameters for post-

- 55 -

manufacture processing performed on the product, post-manufacture product characteristics for the product, or both; and update the blockchain to associate the post-manufacture verification of the operational parameters for the post-manufacture processing performed on the product, the post-manufacture product characteristics for the product, or both with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger.

Embodiment 8: The system of any one of Embodiments 1 through 7, wherein the memory device stores instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to: accept the in-manufacture verification of the operational parameters utilized by the additive manufacturing device when manufacturing the product by accepting an indication that all the operational parameters utilized by the additive manufacturing device when manufacturing the product were within a specified threshold.

Embodiment 9: The system of Embodiment 8, wherein the memory device stores instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to: accept the in-manufacture verification of the operational parameters utilized by the additive manufacturing device when manufacturing the product by receiving a log of at least substantially all the operational parameters utilized by the additive manufacturing device when manufacturing the product.

Embodiment 10: The system of Embodiment 9, wherein the memory device stores instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to: accept the in-manufacture verification of the operational parameters utilized by the additive manufacturing device when manufacturing the product by receiving the log in real time from a network-connected additive manufacturing device while the network-connected additive manufacturing device manufactures the product.

Embodiment 11: The system of any one of Embodiments 1 through 10, wherein the memory device stores instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to: accept expected use information before accepting the order for the product; send identification of product designs within a digital inventory of product designs potentially capable of performing the expected use; and accept the order for the product to be manufactured from within the digital inventory.

Embodiment 12: The system of Embodiment 11, wherein the memory device stores instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to: utilize a machine-learning-assisted process to match the product designs from within the digital inventory having desirable recorded performance metrics in similar use cases to the expected use

- 56 -

information; and recommend the product designs having the desirable recorded performance metrics when sending the identification of the product designs.

Embodiment 13: The system of any one of Embodiments 1 through 12, wherein the memory device stores instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to: accept the pre-manufacture verification of the manufacturer capabilities by receiving images of quality required documentation.

Embodiment 14: The system of any one of Embodiments 1 through 13, wherein the memory device stores instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to: record intellectual property rights associated with the product, the product file, the product precursors, or any combination of these stored in a database accessible to the processor; update the blockchain to associate the intellectual property rights with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger; and generate an account of royalties due for the product, the product file, the product precursors, or any combination of these.

Embodiment 15: The system of any one of Embodiments 1 through 14, wherein the memory device stores instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to: restrict access to the blockchain, including the secure, distributed transaction ledger, to preauthorized service providers.

Embodiment 16: The system of any one of Embodiments 1 through 15, wherein the memory device stores instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to: accept measures of environmental impact associated with sourcing and manufacturing the product; and update the blockchain to associate the measures of environmental impact with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger.

Embodiment 17: A method, comprising: accepting an order for a product to be manufactured, the order comprising a specification for the product; updating a blockchain for certifying characteristics of the product to associate the order and the specification with an encrypted, secure identifier utilizing a secure, distributed transaction ledger; accepting identification of a product file meeting the specification, the product file comprising instructions for manufacturing the product; updating the blockchain to associate the product file with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger; accepting pre-manufacture verification of manufacturer capabilities and product precursors; updating the blockchain to associate the pre-manufacture verification of

- 57 -

manufacturer capabilities and product precursors with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger; sending operational parameters to enable an additive manufacturing device to manufacture the product, the operational parameters being sent for manufacturing as discrete packets, at least one packet being sent only after
5 receipt of confirmation that at least another previous layer is complete and associated operational parameters for the at least another previous layer have been deleted; updating the blockchain to associate the operational parameters with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger; accepting in-manufacture verification of the operational parameters utilized by the additive manufacturing device when
10 manufacturing the product; and updating the blockchain to associate the in-manufacture verification of the operational parameters with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger.

Embodiment 18: The method of Embodiment 17, further comprising tailoring the operational parameters to cause the additive manufacturing device to produce a unique
15 physical characteristic of the product associated with the encrypted, secure identifier before sending the operational parameters to the additive manufacturing device.

Embodiment 19: The method of Embodiment 17 or Embodiment 18, further comprising: accepting in-manufacture verification of a product characteristic for a portion of the product manufactured by the additive manufacturing device; and updating the
20 blockchain to associate the in-manufacture verification of the product characteristic with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger.

Embodiment 20: The method of any one of Embodiments 17 through 19, further comprising: accepting post-manufacture verification of operational parameters for post-manufacture processing performed on the product, post-manufacture product
25 characteristics for the product, or both; and updating the blockchain to associate the post-manufacture verification of the operational parameters for the post-manufacture processing performed on the product, the post-manufacture product characteristics for the product, or both with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger.

While certain illustrative embodiments have been described in connection with the
30 figures, those of ordinary skill in the art will recognize and appreciate that the scope of this disclosure is not limited to those embodiments explicitly shown and described in this disclosure. Rather, many additions, deletions, and modifications to the embodiments described in this disclosure may be made to produce embodiments within the scope of this

- 58 -

disclosure, such as those specifically claimed, including legal equivalents. In addition, features from one disclosed embodiment may be combined with features of another disclosed embodiment while still being within the scope of this disclosure.

- 59 -

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 5 1. A system, comprising:
- a memory device storing instructions that, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to:
- accept an order for a product to be manufactured, the order comprising a specification for the product;
- 10 update a blockchain for certifying characteristics of the product to associate the order and the specification with an encrypted, secure identifier utilizing a secure, distributed transaction ledger;
- accept identification of a product file meeting the specification, the product file comprising instructions for manufacturing the product;
- 15 update the blockchain to associate the product file with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger;
- accept pre-manufacture verification of manufacturer capabilities and product precursors;
- update the blockchain to associate the pre-manufacture verification of manufacturer capabilities and product precursors with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger;
- 20 send operational parameters to enable an additive manufacturing device to manufacture the product, the operational parameters being sent for manufacturing as discrete packets, at least one packet being sent only after receipt of confirmation that at least another previous packet is complete and associated operational parameters for the at least another previous packet have been deleted;
- 25 update the blockchain to associate the operational parameters with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger;
- 30 accept in-manufacture verification of operational parameters utilized by the additive manufacturing device when manufacturing the product; and

- 60 -

update the blockchain to associate the in-manufacture verification of the operational parameters with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger.

5 2. The system of claim 1, wherein the memory device stores instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to:
tailor the operational parameters to cause the additive manufacturing device to produce a
unique physical characteristic of the product associated with the encrypted, secure
identifier before sending the operational parameters to the additive manufacturing
10 device.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein the memory device stores instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to:
accept in-manufacture verification of a product characteristic for a portion of the product
15 manufactured by the additive manufacturing device; and
update the blockchain to associate the in-manufacture verification of the product
characteristic with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed
transaction ledger.

20 4. The system of claim 3, wherein the memory device stores instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to:
identify a unique physical characteristic of the product reflected in the in-manufacture
verifications of the product characteristic and associate the unique physical
characteristic with the encrypted, secure identifier.

25 5. The system of claim 3, wherein the memory device stores instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to:
stop sending the operational parameters to the additive manufacturing device when the in-
manufacture verification of the product characteristic is outside a predetermined
30 threshold; and
update the blockchain to associate an indication that the in-manufacture verification of the
product characteristic was outside the predetermined threshold with the encrypted,
secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger.

- 61 -

6. The system of claim 5, wherein the memory device stores instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to:
pause sending the operational parameters to the additive manufacturing device when the in-
5 manufacture verification of the product characteristic is within the predetermined threshold and outside another, smaller threshold; and
require confirmation of acceptance from a purchaser before resuming sending the operational parameters to the additive manufacturing device.
- 10 7. The system of claim 3, wherein the memory device stores instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to:
automatically request funds from a payment account when the in-manufacture verification of the product characteristic is within a predetermined threshold.
- 15 8. The system of claim 1, wherein the memory device stores instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to:
accept post-manufacture verification of operational parameters for post-manufacture processing performed on the product, post-manufacture product characteristics for the product, or both; and
20 update the blockchain to associate the post-manufacture verification of the operational parameters for the post-manufacture processing performed on the product, the post-manufacture product characteristics for the product, or both with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger.
- 25 9. The system of claim 1, wherein the memory device stores instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to:
accept the in-manufacture verification of the operational parameters utilized by the additive manufacturing device when manufacturing the product by accepting an indication that all the operational parameters utilized by the additive manufacturing device
30 when manufacturing the product were within a specified threshold.

- 62 -

10. The system of claim 9, wherein the memory device stores instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to:
accept the in-manufacture verification of the operational parameters utilized by the additive manufacturing device when manufacturing the product by receiving a log of at least
5 substantially all the operational parameters utilized by the additive manufacturing device when manufacturing the product.
11. The system of claim 10, wherein the memory device stores instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to:
10 accept the in-manufacture verification of the operational parameters utilized by the additive manufacturing device when manufacturing the product by receiving the log in real time from a network-connected additive manufacturing device while the network-connected additive manufacturing device manufactures the product.
12. The system of claim 1, wherein the memory device stores instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to:
accept expected use information before accepting the order for the product;
send identification of product designs within a digital inventory of product designs
potentially capable of performing the expected use; and
20 accept the order for the product to be manufactured from within the digital inventory.
13. The system of claim 12, wherein the memory device stores instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to:
utilize a machine-learning-assisted process to match the product designs from within the
25 digital inventory having desirable recorded performance metrics in similar use cases to the expected use information; and
recommend the product designs having the desirable recorded performance metrics when sending the identification of the product designs.
14. The system of any one of claims 1 through 13, wherein the memory device stores instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to:
accept the pre-manufacture verification of the manufacturer capabilities by receiving
30 images of quality required documentation.

- 63 -

15. The system of any one of claims 1 through 13, wherein the memory device stores instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to: record intellectual property rights associated with the product, the product file, the product
5 precursors, or any combination of these stored in a database accessible to the processor;
update the blockchain to associate the intellectual property rights with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger; and
generate an account of royalties due for the product, the product file, the product
10 precursors, or any combination of these.

16. The system of any one of claims 1 through 13, wherein the memory device stores instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to: restrict access to the blockchain, including the secure, distributed transaction ledger, to
15 preauthorized service providers.

17. The system of any one of claims 1 through 13, wherein the memory device stores instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to: accept measures of environmental impact associated with sourcing and manufacturing the
20 product; and
update the blockchain to associate the measures of environmental impact with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger.

- 64 -

18. A method, comprising:
- accepting an order for a product to be manufactured, the order comprising a specification for the product;
- updating a blockchain for certifying characteristics of the product to associate the order and the specification with an encrypted, secure identifier utilizing a secure, distributed transaction ledger;
- accepting identification of a product file meeting the specification, the product file comprising instructions for manufacturing the product;
- updating the blockchain to associate the product file with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger;
- accepting pre-manufacture verification of manufacturer capabilities and product precursors; updating the blockchain to associate the pre-manufacture verification of manufacturer capabilities and product precursors with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger;
- sending operational parameters to enable an additive manufacturing device to manufacture the product, the operational parameters being sent for manufacturing as discrete packets, at least one packet being sent only after receipt of confirmation that at least another previous layer is complete and associated operational parameters for the at least another previous layer have been deleted;
- updating the blockchain to associate the operational parameters with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger;
- accepting in-manufacture verification of the operational parameters utilized by the additive manufacturing device when manufacturing the product; and
- updating the blockchain to associate the in-manufacture verification of the operational parameters with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger.

19. The method of claim 18, further comprising tailoring the operational parameters to cause the additive manufacturing device to produce a unique physical characteristic of the product associated with the encrypted, secure identifier before sending the operational parameters to the additive manufacturing device.

- 65 -

20. The method of claim 18 or claim 19, further comprising:
accepting in-manufacture verification of a product characteristic for a portion of the
product manufactured by the additive manufacturing device; and
updating the blockchain to associate the in-manufacture verification of the product
5 characteristic with the encrypted, secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed
transaction ledger.

21. The method of claim 18 or claim 19, further comprising:
accepting post-manufacture verification of operational parameters for post-manufacture
10 processing performed on the product, post-manufacture product characteristics for
the product, or both; and
updating the blockchain to associate the post-manufacture verification of the operational
parameters for the post-manufacture processing performed on the product, the post-
manufacture product characteristics for the product, or both with the encrypted,
15 secure identifier utilizing the secure, distributed transaction ledger.

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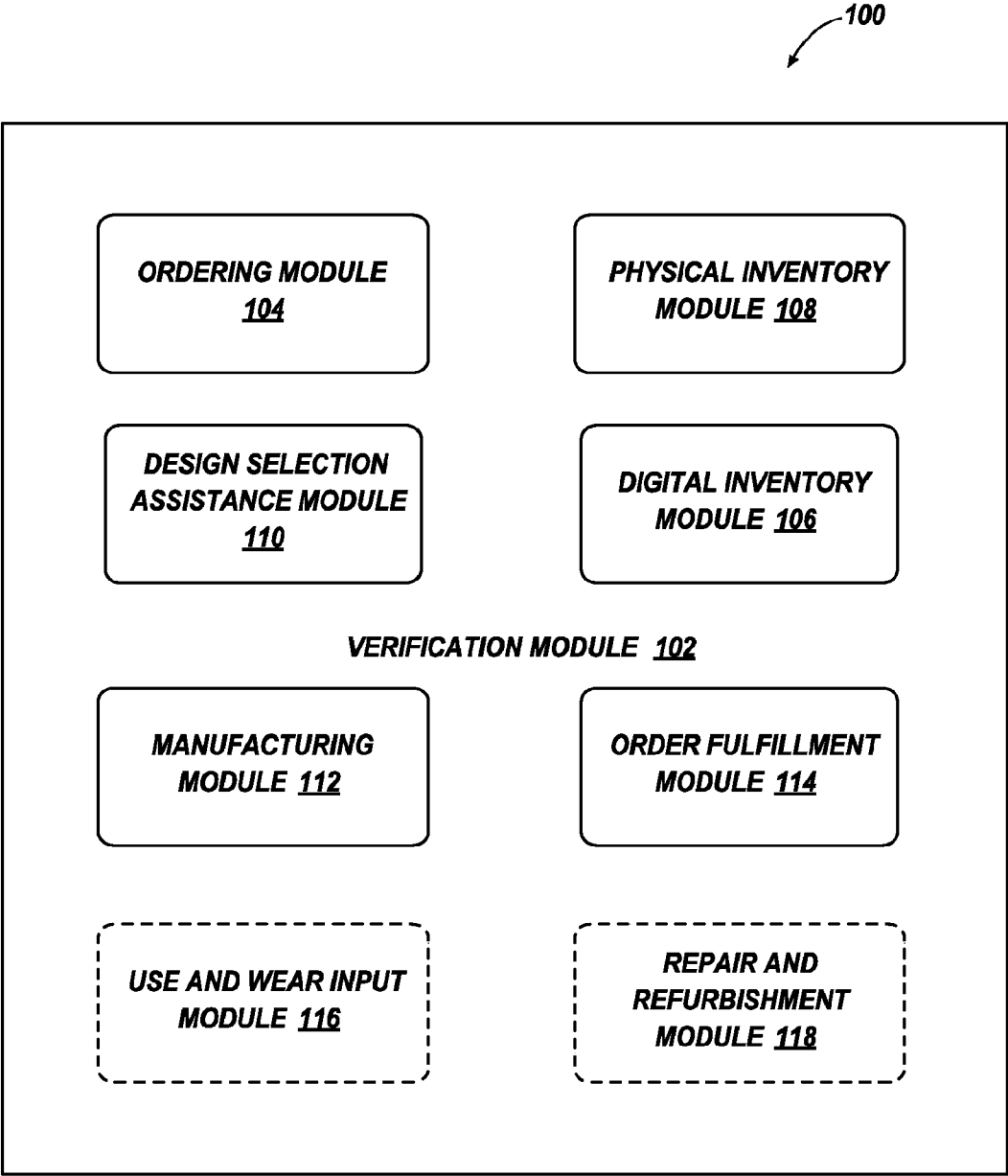


FIG. 1

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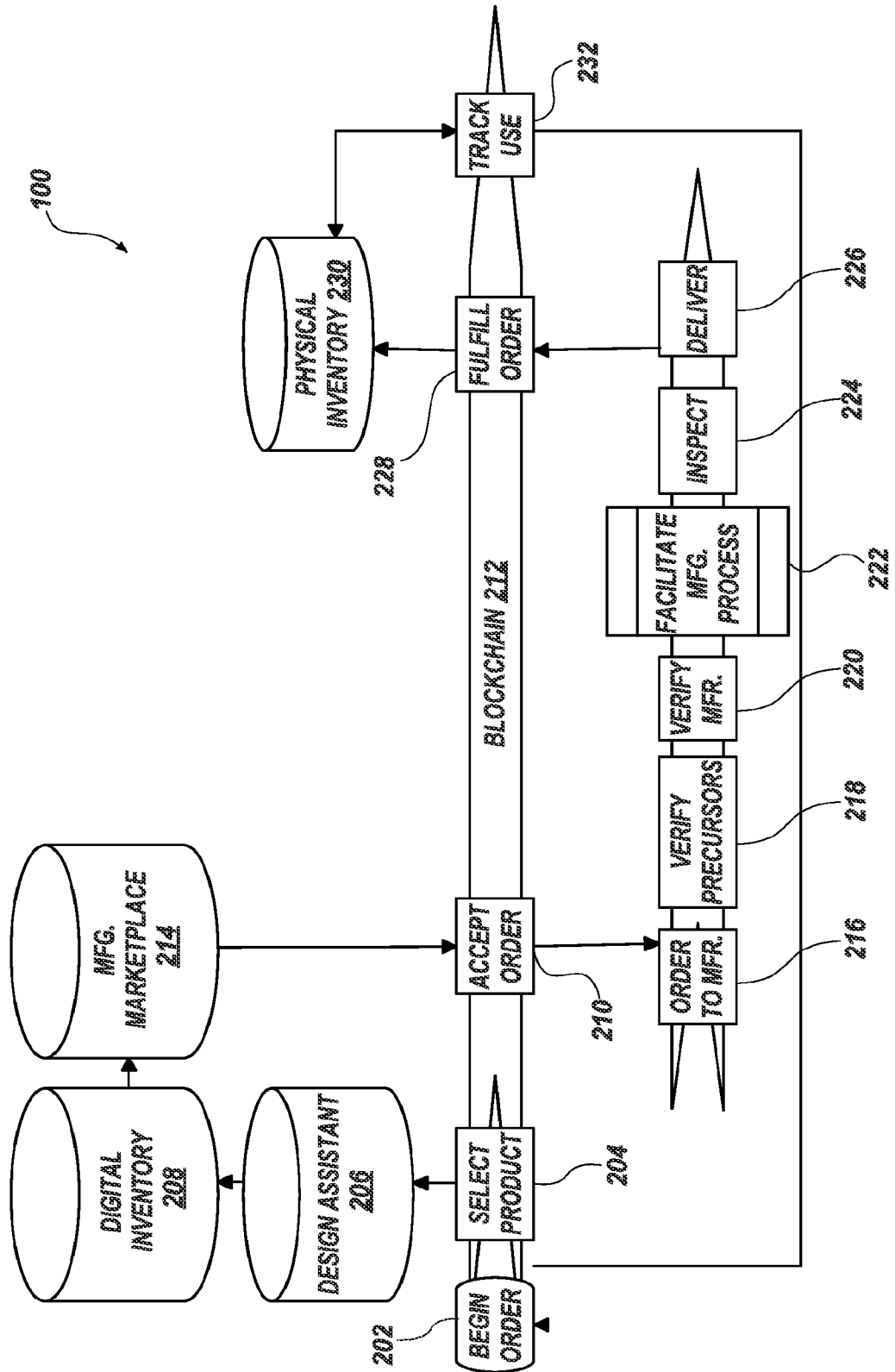


FIG. 2

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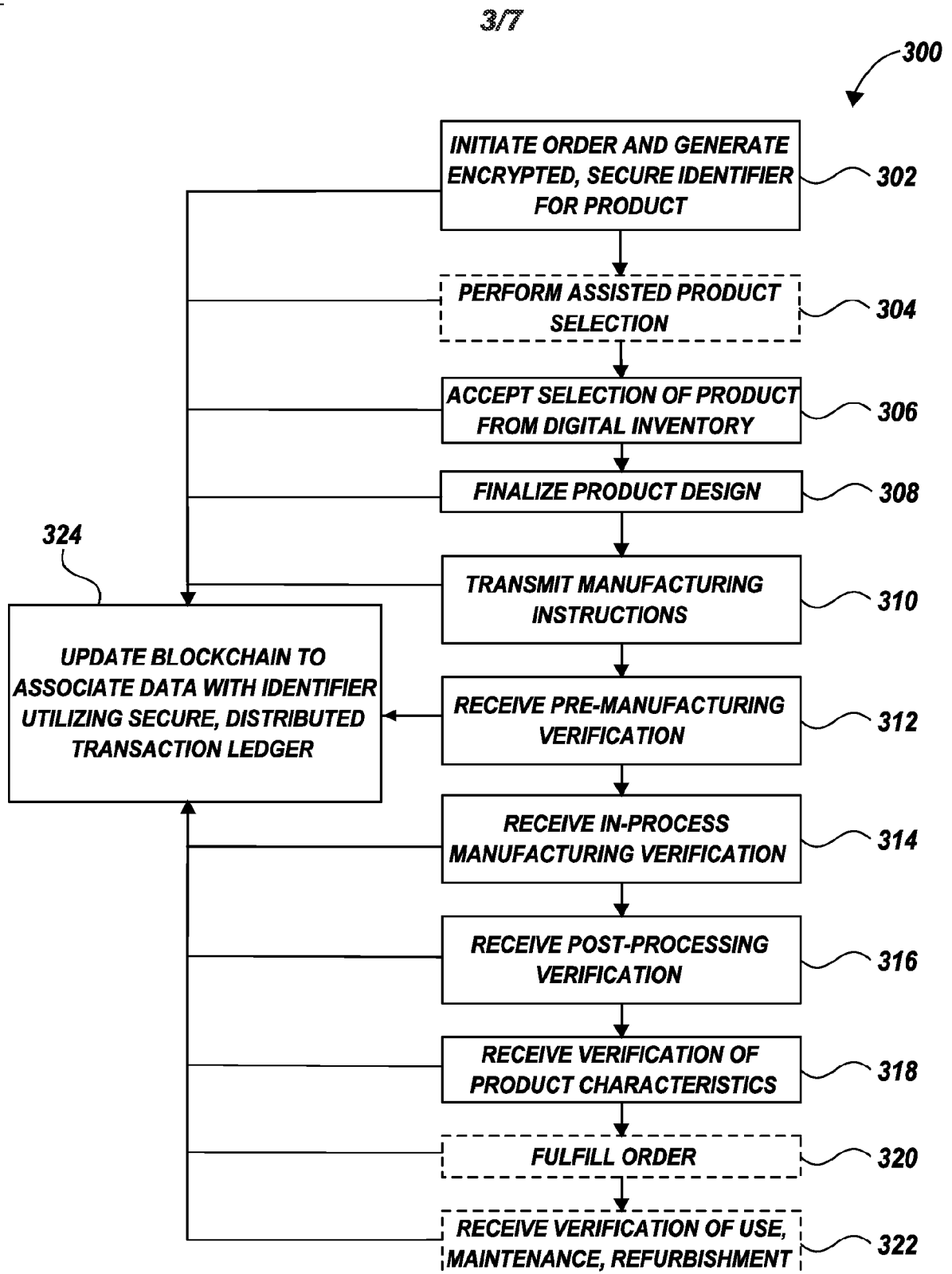
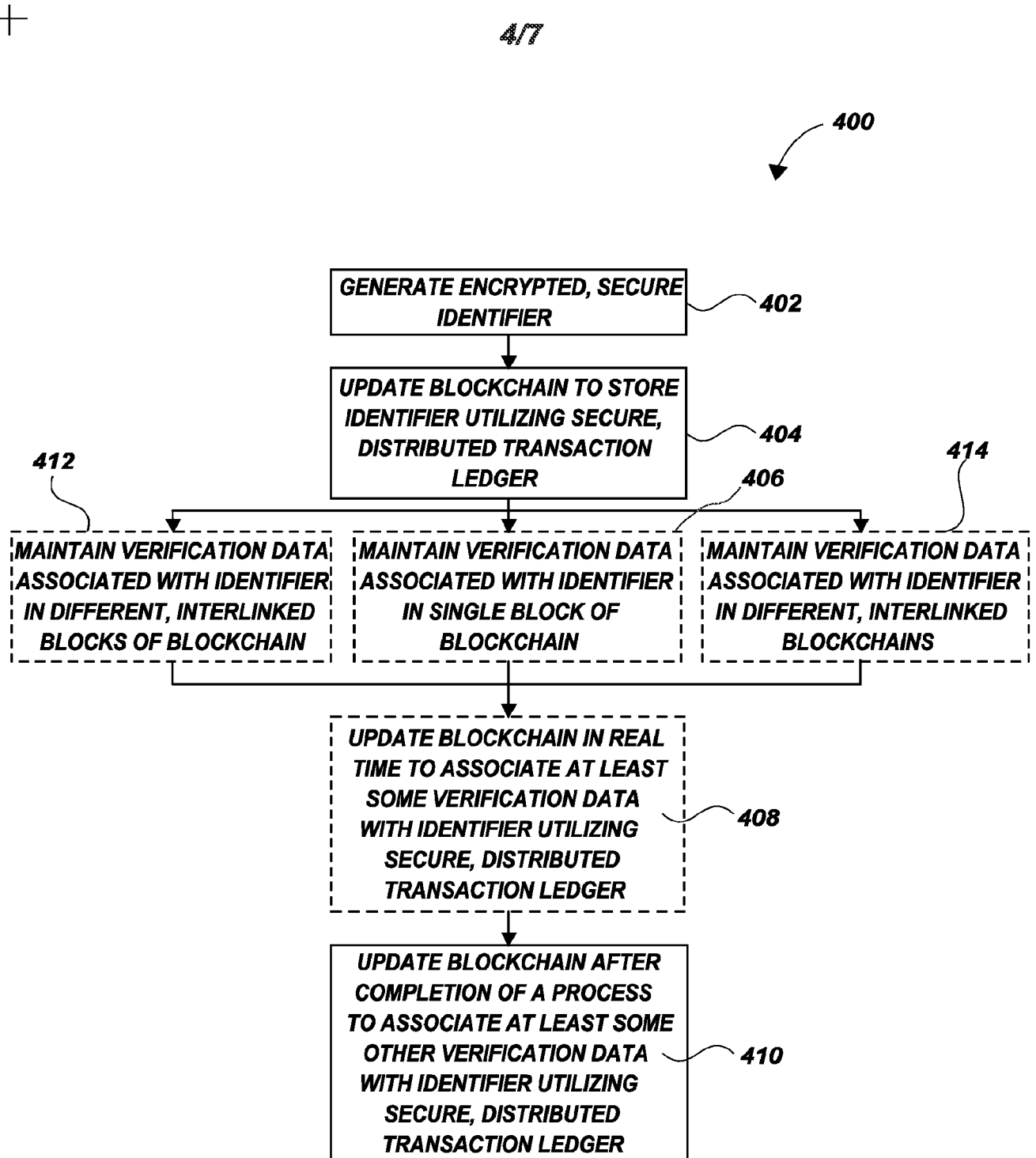


FIG. 3

**FIG. 4**

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5/7

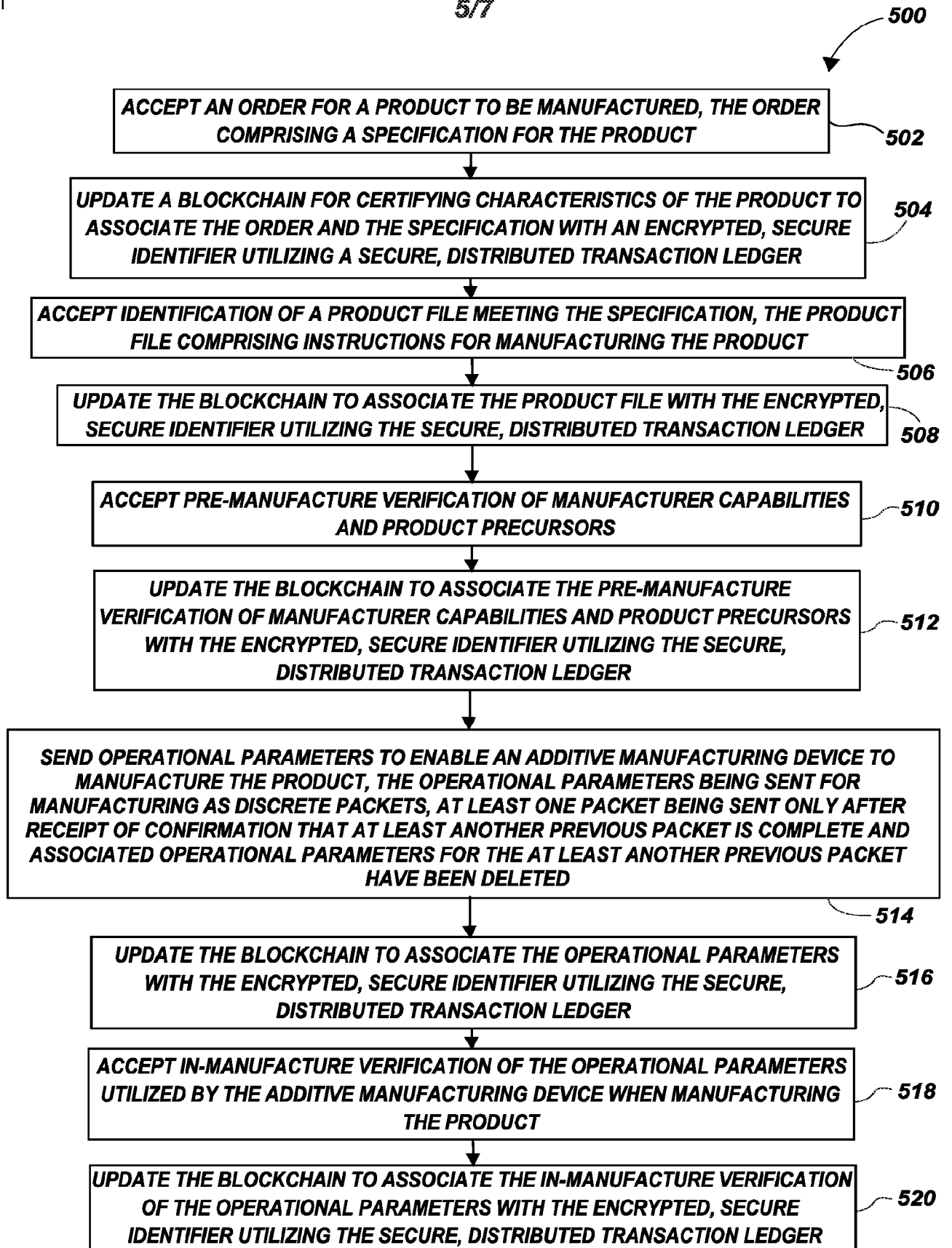


FIG. 5

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6/7

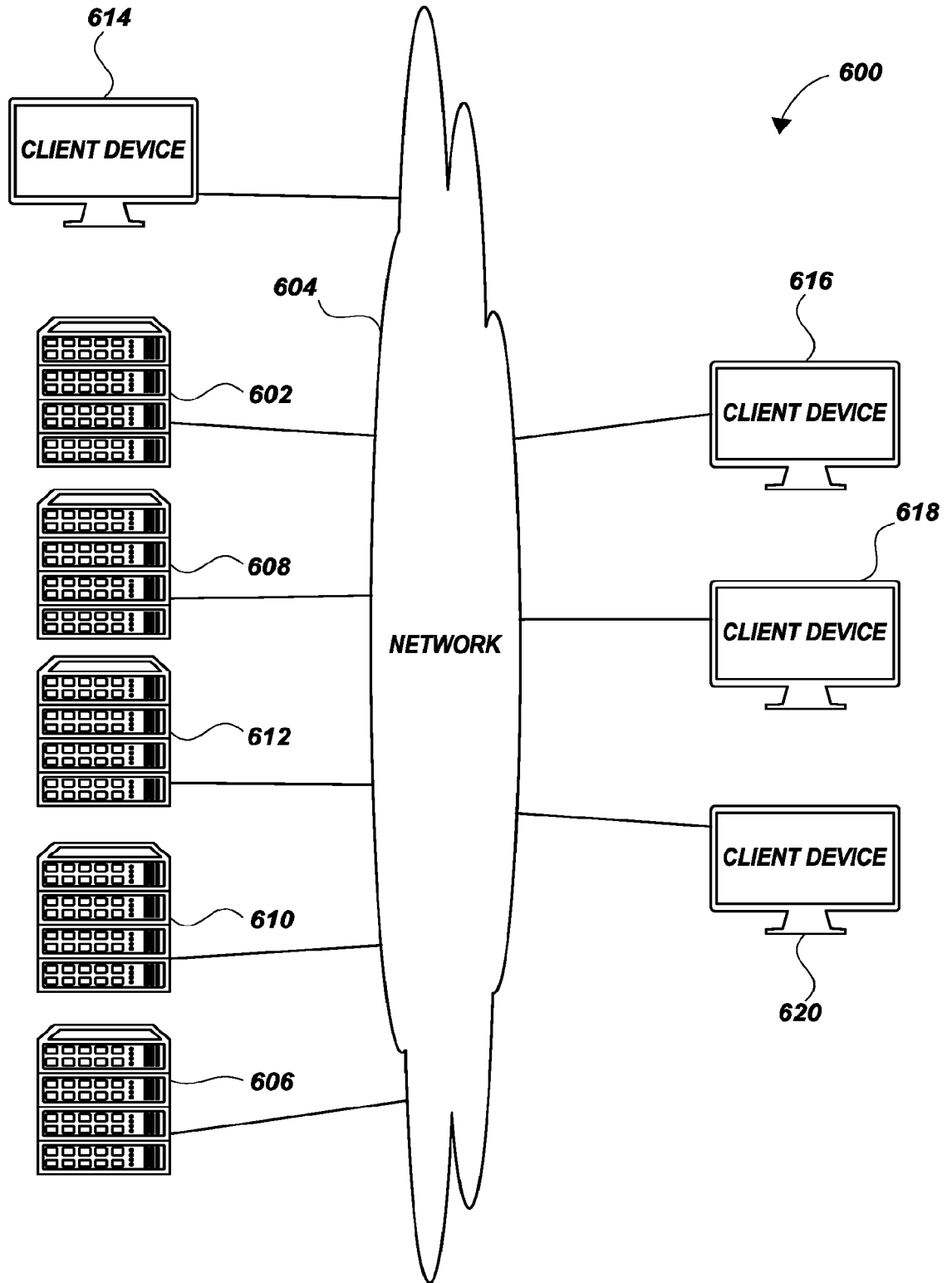


FIG. 6

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7/7

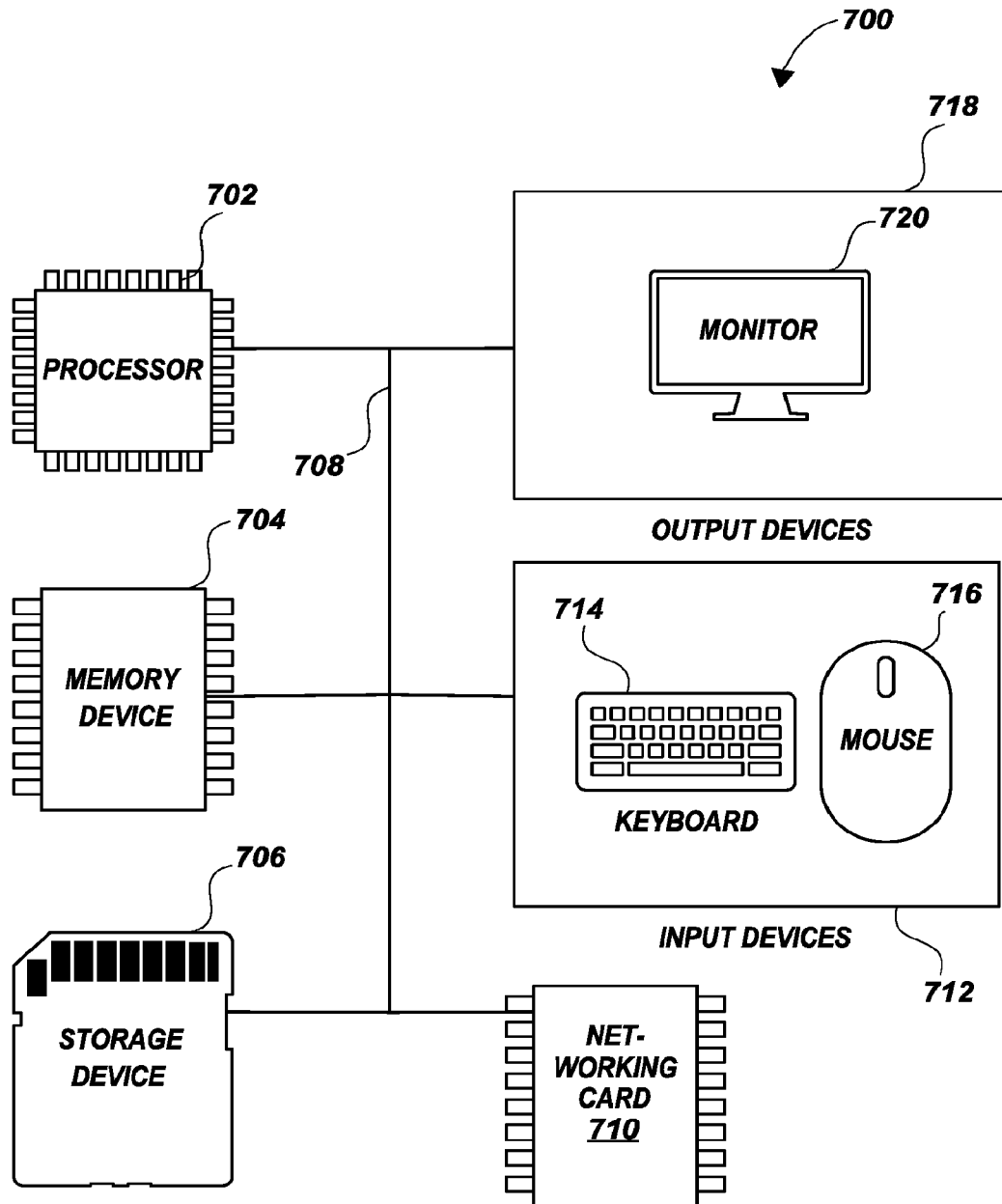


FIG. 7

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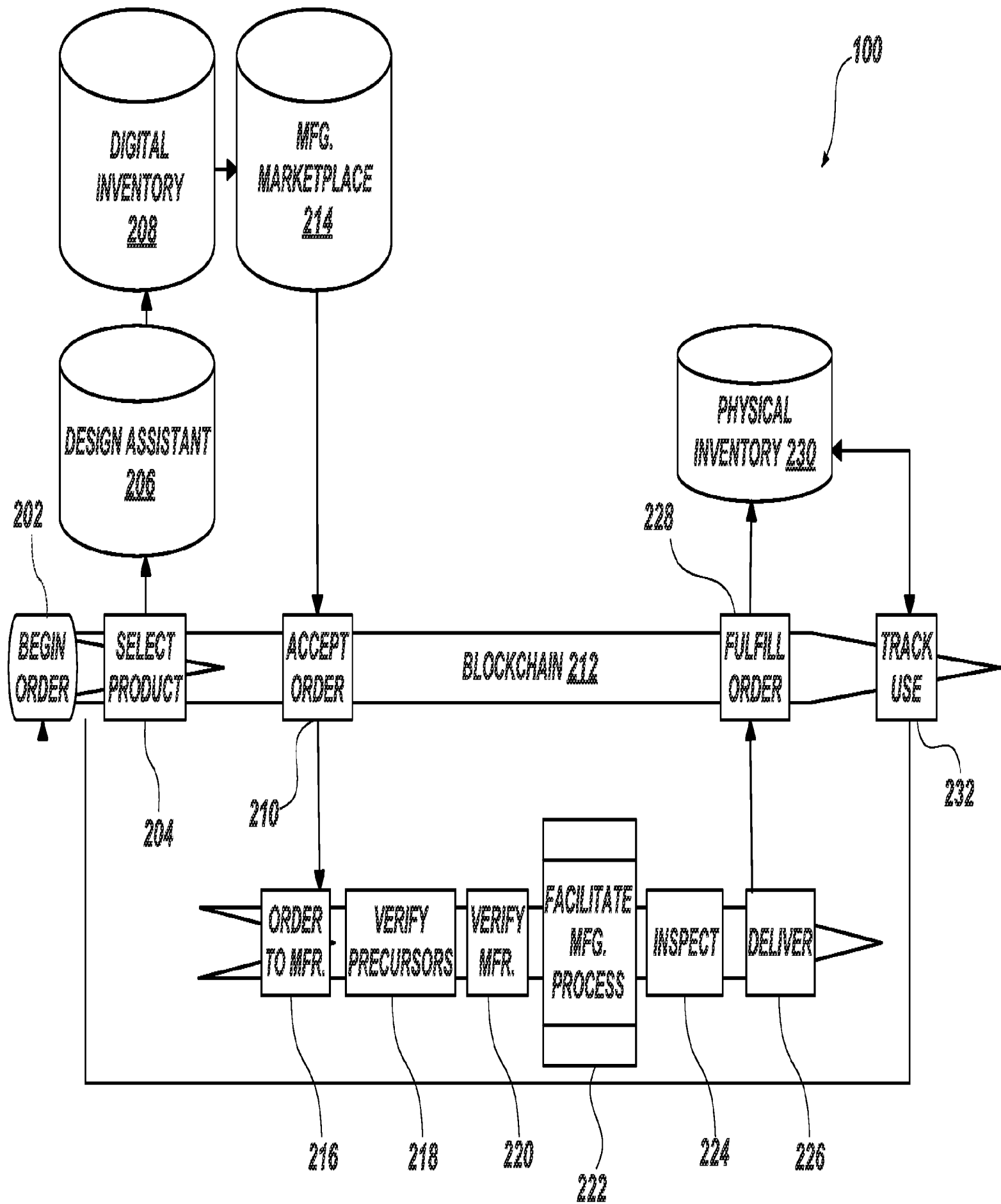


FIG. 2