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(54) **Title:** SYSTEM AND/OR METHOD FOR INTERACTIVE CONTESTS

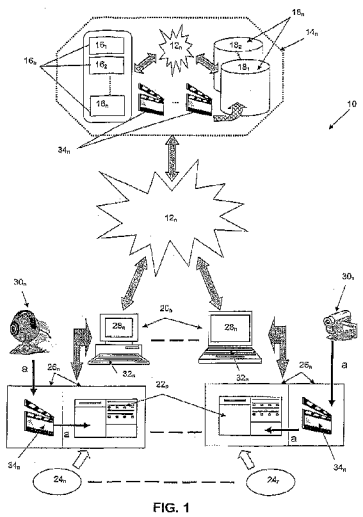

FIG. 1

(57) **Abstract:** The present invention provides a system (10) for effecting interactive contests over a communications network (12_n), preferably world record contests. The system (10) provides an interactive facility (14_n) which enables users (24_n) to contest any form of world record they care to name, wherein the eventual world record holder is determined by the aggregated votes of users (24_n) of the system, and not by an official and stringent authentication procedure. The present invention also provides associated methods (300, 400, 500, 600, 700) for effecting the interactive contests in accordance with the system (10) of the invention.

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SYSTEM AND/OR METHOD FOR INTERACTIVE CONTESTS

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates generally, to systems and/or methods for effecting interactive contests, and relates particularly, though not exclusively, to a system and/or method which enables a plurality of users to interactively compete against one another over a communications network. More particularly, the present invention relates to an interactive World Wide Web (hereinafter simply referred to as "WWW") based system and/or method that enables users to compete for any form of world record they care to name, wherein the eventual world record holder is determined by the aggregated votes of users of the system.

It will be convenient to hereinafter describe the invention in relation to a system and/or method for interactively contesting world records utilising the WWW, however it should be appreciated that the present invention is not limited to that use only. The system and/or method of the present invention may also enable users to compete against one another for any other purpose, without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as hereinafter described. Accordingly, throughout the ensuing description the expressions "contest" or "compete" are simply intended to refer to user's challenging one another in an effort to be declared a winner by other users of the system.

Similarly, although the present invention is hereinafter described in relation to system and/or method which is provided to users via the WWW, or the Internet, it should be appreciated that the present invention is not limited to that use only.

BACKGROUND ART

Any discussion of documents, devices, acts or knowledge in this specification is included to explain the context of the invention. It should not be taken as an admission that any of the material forms a part of the prior art base or the common general knowledge in the relevant art in Australia or elsewhere on or before the priority date of the disclosure and claims herein.

The general concept of contesting "World Records" has been around for a very long time. The most famous dedicated "World Record" authenticating authority is Guinness World Records™, a United Kingdom based company that was established in the early 1950s.

The first edition of what was originally known as the "Guinness Book of Records" was bound on August 27, 1955, and went to the top of the British bestseller lists by Christmas that year. Since then, Guinness World Records™ has become a household name and the global leader in "World Records". No other enterprise collects, confirms, accredits and presents world record data with the same investment in comprehensiveness and authenticity.

The Guinness World Records™ management team maintains a vigilant watch to guarantee the accuracy and relevance of each and every Guinness World Record™. It is stated on Guinness World Records™ website that "... a fact may only become a Guinness World Record™ when it's tested, verified and elevated above all suspicion."

This stringent authentication procedure puts the task of becoming a "World Record" holder beyond the reach of many individuals. In some instances, a Guinness World Record™ attempt can take hours, days, weeks or even years of effort and organisation to arrange the Guinness officials necessary to verify the results of a record attempt. If more than one attempt is required to break, or regain, a "World Record" it is considered that very few people would be willing or able to outlay the time and money required to challenge a world record.

A need therefore exists for a simpler, less stringent, and more entertaining interactive "World Record" contest system that is readily accessible to the greater population.

Accordingly, an object of the present invention is to provide a system and/or method for effecting interactive contests.

DISCLOSURE OF THE INVENTION

According to one aspect of the present invention there is provided a method for effecting interactive contests, preferably world record contests, over a communications network, said method including the steps of: providing a

central repository for storing and sharing information; providing a plurality of users with controlled access to said central repository and said information stored therein; receiving personal information from at least one of said plurality of users, said personal information including at least one file, preferably a video file, which shows that users attempt to claim a contest title, preferably by way of a moving visual presentation; storing said personal information in said central repository, and selectively making said personal information available to all of said plurality of users; determining whether personal information has been received from more than one of said plurality of users regarding the same contest title, and if so, receiving feedback information from at least one of said plurality of users regarding said personal information stored in said central repository; and, determining a contest winner for that contest title based on said feedback information received.

In a practical preferred embodiment, wherein said at least one file is a video file, it is preferred that said video file is of a predetermined duration, preferably at least one minute, such that all entrants videos may be judged by other users based on the same predetermined video duration.

In a further practical preferred embodiment, if it is determined that personal information has not been received from more than one of said plurality of users regarding the same contest title, the contest winner is deemed to be the inaugural entrant for that contest title until such time that another user chooses to challenge the inaugural entrants contest title attempt, at which time, the eventual contest winner is determined based on said feedback information received.

Preferably said step of receiving feedback information from at least one of said plurality of users regarding said personal information stored in said central repository includes the steps of: allocating a predetermined point amount, preferably one point, to a contest title entrant each time a user selectively chooses to view that entrants contest title attempt; and/or, allocating a user defined point amount, preferably selected from within a range of between 1 and 100 points, e.g. 1 to 5 points, 1 to 10 point, 1 to 100 points, etc, to a contest title entrant each time a user selective chooses to subjectively vote for that entrants contest title attempt.

Preferably said predetermined point amount is only allocated to a contest title entrant when a user who selectively chooses to view that entrants contest title attempt does not choose to subjectively vote for same. It is also preferred that said predetermined point amount is only allocated to a contest title entrant once for each user that selectively chooses to view that entrants contest title attempt.

Preferably said user defined point amount is only allocated to a contest title entrant once for each user that selectively chooses to subjectively vote for that entrants contest title attempt..

Preferably said step of determining a contest winner for any given contest title based on said feedback information received includes the steps of: determining an aggregated point score for each contest title entrant; and, selecting a contest title winner based on the contest title entrant having the highest aggregated point score.

Preferably all contest title entrants aggregated point scores, no matter how high or low, are made available to all of said plurality of users so that contest title entrants and other users can compare the aggregated point scores (i.e. rankings) of all contest title entrants. In this way the interactive contest provided by the present invention is more entertaining and enjoyable for all users.

It is preferred that said method for effecting interactive contests further includes the step of: providing a forum facility to said plurality of users to enable the creation of a virtual community of contest attempt enthusiasts, preferably world record attempt enthusiasts, that can interactively exchange opinions and/or information about contest related information.

It is also preferred that said method for effecting interactive contests further includes the step of: providing a merchandise purchasing facility. Preferably merchandise available via said merchandise purchasing facility is only available to contest title entrants and/or contest winners.

In a practical preferred embodiment said central repository is at least one computing device which preferably includes at least one processor which is operable to execute software that maintains and controls access to said information for said plurality of users. Preferably said information is stored on

at least one memory or storage unit associated with said at least one computing device.

In a further practical preferred embodiment said at least one computing device is a web-server accessible to said plurality of users via said communications network, preferably the Internet, wherein each of said plurality of users can access said web-server via at least one user operable terminal which may be permanently, or selectively, connected to said communications network. Preferably said at least one user operable terminal is selected from the group consisting of: a PDA; a mobile or cellular telephone; a personal, tablet or notebook computer; or any other suitable computing or communications device. It is preferred that said method for effecting interactive contests provides an online or virtual community which is accessible to said users in real time, i.e. "live".

According to a further aspect of the present invention there is provided a machine readable medium storing a set of instructions that, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to execute a method for effecting interactive contests, preferably world record contests, over a communications network, said method including the steps of: providing a central repository for storing and sharing information; providing a plurality of users with controlled access to said central repository and said information stored therein; receiving personal information from at least one of said plurality of users, said personal information including at least one file, preferably a video file, which shows that users attempt to claim a contest title, preferably by way of a moving visual presentation; storing said personal information in said central repository, and selectively making said personal information available to all of said plurality of users; determining whether personal information has been received from more than one of said plurality of users regarding the same contest title, and if so, receiving feedback information from at least one of said plurality of users regarding said personal information stored in said central repository; and, determining a contest winner for that contest title based on said feedback information received.

According to yet a further aspect of the present invention there is provided a computer program including computer program code adapted to

perform some or all of the steps of the method as described with reference to any one of the preceding paragraphs, when said computer program is run on a computer.

According to yet a further aspect of the present invention there is provided a computer program according to the preceding paragraph embodied on a computer readable medium.

According to yet a further aspect of the present invention there is provided a system for effecting interactive contests, preferably world record contests, over a communications network, said system including: at least one memory or storage unit operable to store and share information; at least one processor operable to execute software that maintains and controls access to said information for a plurality of users, said information including personal information that is received from at least one of said plurality of users including at least one file, preferably a video file, which shows that users attempt to claim a contest title, preferably by way of a moving visual presentation, and feedback information that is received from at least one of said plurality of users regarding said personal information stored on said at least one memory unit; at least one display device operable to present said information to said plurality of users; and, at least one input/output device operable to provide an interface for said plurality of users to operate said software in order to: selectively transmit said personal information to said at least one memory unit; selectively view said personal information on said at least one display device; and/or, selectively provide said feedback information regarding said personal information stored on said at least one memory unit; wherein if personal information has been received from more than one of said plurality of users regarding the same contest title, a contest winner for that contest title is determined based on said feedback information received.

In a practical preferred embodiment said system includes at least one computing device having said at least one processor and said at least one memory or storage unit associated therewith. Preferably said at least one computing device is a network server connected to said communications network. It is also preferred that said network server is a web-server accessible to said plurality of users via said communications network,

preferably the Internet. In this practical preferred embodiment said at least one input/output device is associated with at least one user operable terminal, wherein each of said plurality of users can access said information stored on said web-server via at least one software application installed on said at least one user operable terminal which may be permanently, or selectively, connected to said Internet. Preferably said at least one user operable terminal is selected from the group consisting of: a PDA; a mobile or cellular telephone; a personal, tablet or notebook computer; or any other suitable computing or communications device.

In a further practical preferred embodiment, wherein said at least one file is a video file, it is preferred that said video file is of a predetermined duration, preferably at least one minute, such that all entrants videos may be judged by other users based on the same predetermined video duration.

In yet a further practical preferred embodiment, if it is determined that personal information has not been received from more than one of said plurality of users regarding the same contest title, the contest winner is deemed to be the inaugural entrant for that contest title until such time that another user chooses to challenge the inaugural entrants contest title attempt, at which time, the eventual contest winner is determined based on said feedback information received.

Preferably said feedback information includes: a predetermined point amount, preferably one point, that is allocated to a contest title entrant each time a user selectively chooses to view that entrants contest title attempt; and/or, a user defined point amount, preferably selected from within a range of between 1 and 100 points, e.g. 1 to 5 pints, 1 to 10 points, 1 to 100 points, etc, that is allocated to a contest title entrant each time a user selective chooses to subjectively vote for that entrants contest title attempt.

Preferably said predetermined point amount is only allocated to a contest title entrant when a user who selectively chooses to view that entrants contest title attempt does not choose to subjectively vote for same. It is also preferred that said predetermined point amount is only allocated to a contest title entrant once for each user that selectively chooses to view that entrants contest title attempt.

Preferably said user defined point amount is only allocated to a contest title entrant once for each user that selectively chooses to subjectively vote for that entrants contest title attempt.

Preferably said contest winner for any given contest title based on said feedback information received is determined based on the aggregated point score for each contest title entrant, i.e. the contest title winner is selected based on the contest title entrant having the highest aggregated point score.

Preferably all contest title entrants aggregated point scores, no matter how high or low, are made available to all of said plurality of users so that contest title entrants and other users can compare the aggregated point scores (i.e. rankings) of all contest title entrants. In this way the interactive contest system provided by the present invention is more entertaining and enjoyable for all users.

Preferably said system further provides a forum facility to said plurality of users to enable the creation of a virtual community of contest attempt enthusiasts, preferably world record attempt enthusiasts, that can interactively exchange opinions and/or information about contest related information.

It is also preferred that said system further provides a merchandise purchasing facility. Preferably merchandise available via said merchandise purchasing facility is only available to contest title entrants and/or contest winners.

According to yet a further aspect of the present invention there is provided a system for effecting interactive contests, preferably world record contests, said system being operable over a communications network, preferably the Internet, said system including: at least one central computer server connected to said communications network, said at least one central computer server, preferably a web-server, acting as a central repository for storing and sharing information; and, at least one user operable terminal which can be selectively connected to said communications network for inputting, viewing and/or retrieving said information from said at least one central computer server; wherein said information stored on said at least one central computer server includes: personal information received from a user of at least one user operable terminal, said personal information including at least one file,

preferably a video file, which shows that users attempt to claim a contest title, preferably by way of a moving visual presentation; and, feedback information received from a user of at least one user operable terminal, said feedback information representing that users opinion of said personal information stored on said at least one central computer server; and wherein, if personal information has been received from more than one user regarding the same contest title, a contest winner for that contest title is determined by said at least one central computer server based on said feedback information received.

ADVANTAGES OF THE INVENTION

Accordingly, the present invention provides a system, method and/or computer program for effecting interactive contests, preferably world record contests, over a communications network, such as, for example, the Internet or WWW.

In a preferred form, the present invention provides a software and/or hardware system which is operable to enable users to contest any form of world record they care to name, wherein the eventual world record holder is determined by the aggregated votes of users of the system, and not by an official authentication procedure as in the case of known world record organisations, such as, for example, Guinness World Records™.

According to one preferred aspect of the present invention users are able to contest a world record by simply uploading files, preferably video or movie files, to a network server showing their attempt to claim a world record title. It is especially preferred that all videos uploaded to the network server are of a predetermined duration, preferably at least one minute, such that all entrants are judged by other users based on the same predetermined video duration.

It is preferred that the inaugural entrant in any category is deemed to be the world record holder. Once a challenge is mounted against any world record the eventual record holder is the entrant which receives the most points or votes from other users of the system. Points may be awarded as follows: Any user viewing a video has the right to award a vote of between 0 and 100 points based on whatever criteria they choose. One point may be awarded any time a

user views a video without voting. A block may be used to stop users from voting more than once for any video. All voting is preferably subjective and there is no other form of voting. Every entrant preferably receives a world ranking no matter how high or low their score. In this way the system is entertaining and enjoyable for all entrants.

Hence, the system and/or method of the present invention provides users with an entertaining interactive world record contest system that is readily accessible via the Internet. Armed with even a simple video capturing device, such as a mobile phone, users can compete for world records with no outside assistance required.

No other world record based contest system allows users to compete against one another in an almost endless range of pursuits via such a simple procedure. Many pursuits would never have had a world record holder before, e.g. worlds best joke, as organisations like Guinness World Records™ do not provide such categories. By providing a system whereby world record holders are determined by the aggregated subjective votes of users of the system, and not by a stringent authentication procedure, the opportunity for new world record holders in almost any category becomes available.

Subjective voting allows entrants to use degree of difficulty to overcome their deficiencies which isn't a possibility in many sports, games or events if a stringent authentication procedure is used.

It is considered that a preferred one minute video time limit will open up new opportunities for existing sports or pastimes, as for example, a one minute twelve lane Tenpin Bowling challenge. A one minute time limit also allows people limited by talent, time, finance or dedication to be able to compete for a world record, e.g. knocking down as many Dominoes as they can in one minute.

The system and/or method of the present invention may also enable the creation of a virtual community of world record attempt enthusiasts that can interactively exchange opinions and/or information about world records or world record related information. Such a user forum would enable users/voters to discuss their opinions on any entry.

The system and/or method of the present invention may also provide a convenient means of selling merchandise that could be further enhanced by only allowing entrants or world record holders to purchase same.

The present invention therefore provides a system and/or method for interactively contesting world records in a way that has never before been possible.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

In order that the invention may be more clearly understood and put into practical effect there shall now be described in detail preferred constructions of a system and/or method for effecting interactive contests in accordance with the invention. The ensuing description is given by way of non-limitative example only and is with reference to the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Fig. 1 is a block diagram of a system for effecting interactive contests, made in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 2 is an exemplary graphical user interface (hereinafter simply referred to as "GUI") illustrating a preferred home-page of a website suitable for use with the system for effecting interactive contests shown in Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 is a flow diagram illustrating one embodiment of a method for effecting interactive contests, which is suitable for use with the preferred system for effecting interactive contests shown in Fig. 1; and,

Figs. 4 to 7 are flow diagrams illustrating in detail preferred methods of operation of the corresponding marked blocks of the flow diagram shown in Fig. 3.

MODES FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION

In Fig. 1 there is shown a system 10 for effecting interactive contests, for example, world record contests as shown and as will now be described in detail. System 10 is suitable for use over a communications network 12_n. It should be understood however, that system 10 of the present invention is not limited to that use only.

System 10 includes at least one network server 14_n which hosts and/or maintains a plurality of tools or applications 16_n, and databases 18_n that

together provide a means of implementing and maintaining interactive world record contests.

Network server 14_n is designed to receive/transmit data or system content 22_n from/to at least one input terminal 20_n. The term "Input terminal 20_n" refers to any suitable type of computing device capable of transmitting/receiving and displaying system content 22_n as described herein, including, but not limited to, a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) as for example a Palm Pilot®, a Wireless Application Protocol (WAP) capable communications device, as for example, a mobile or cellular phone, and/or any other suitable computing device, as for example a personal/desktop, tablet or notebook computer.

Network server 14_n is configured to communicate with input terminals 20_n via any suitable communications connection or network 12_n (hereinafter referred to simply as a "network(s) 12_n"). Input terminals 20_n are configured to display and/or transmit/retrieve system content 22_n to/from network server 14_n. Each input terminal 20_n may communicate with network server 14_n via the same or a different network 12_n. Suitable networks 12_n include, but are not limited to: a Local Area Network (LAN); a Personal Area Network (PAN), as for example an Intranet; a Wide Area Network (WAN), as for example the Internet; a Wireless Application Protocol (WAP) network; a Bluetooth network; and/or any suitable WiFi network (wireless network). Network server 14_n may include various types of hardware and/or software necessary for communicating with input terminals 20_n and/or additional computers/hardware (not shown) as for example routers, switches, access points and/or Internet gateways, each of which would be deemed appropriate by persons skilled in the relevant art.

Input terminals 20_n are each configured to be operated by at least one user 24_n of system 10. The term "user 24_n" refers to any person in possession of, or stationed at, at least one input terminal 20_n whom is able to operate input terminal 20_n and display and/or transmit/receive system content 22_n, as for example, a world record attempt participant, a world record holder, or a web-user simply wishing to view/rate other users world record attempts/achievements.

Input terminals 20_n may include various types of software and/or

hardware required for capturing and/or displaying system content 22_n including, but not limited to: web-browser or other GUI application(s) 26_n; monitor(s) 28_n, video capturing devices 30_n (as for example, video cameras, video capable mobile phones, or webcams), keyboard(s) 32_n, GUI pointing devices (not shown) and/or any other suitable data acquisition and/or display device(s) (not shown). Similarly, input terminals 20_n may also include various types of software and/or hardware suitable for transmitting/receiving system content 22_n to/from network server 14_n via network(s) 12_n.

Although the use of system 10 is specifically described with reference to users 24_n utilising input terminals 20_n to connect to, and interact with, network server 14_n, via network 12_n, it should be appreciated that system 10 of the present invention is not limited to that use only. In an alternative embodiment (not shown) users 24_n may simply interact directly with network server 14_n which may be their own personal computing device or a public computing device, as for example an Internet kiosk, library or Internet Café computing device(s). In this alternative embodiment, system 10 could be provided entirely by a single network server 14_n as a software and/or hardware application(s) and as such input terminals 20_n would not be essential to the operation of system 10. The present invention is therefore not limited to the specific arrangement shown in the drawings.

As is shown in Fig. 1, and explained in more detail with reference to Figs. 2 to 7, it is preferred that network server 14_n is at least one web-server, or is connected via network(s) 12_n to at least one additional network server 14_n (not shown) acting as a web-server, such that system 10 is an online service accessible to users 24_n in possession of, or stationed at, input terminals 20_n connected to the Internet (network(s) 12_n).

System 10 may be available to users 24_n for free, or may be offered to users 24_n on an "on demand" Application Service Provider (hereinafter simply referred to as "ASP") basis, with use thereof being charged accordingly. ASP usage may only apply to a select group of users 24_n, such as, for example, professional and/or corporate users 24_n, who may be heavy users of system 10, or users 24_n wishing to advertise their products and/or services via system 10.

It is preferred that network server 14_n utilises security to validate access from input terminals 20_n. It is also preferred that network server 14_n performs validation functions to ensure the integrity of data transmitted between network server 14_n and input terminals 20_n. A person skilled in the relevant art will appreciate such technologies and the many options available to achieve a desired level of security and/or data validation, and as such a detailed discussion of same will not be provided. Accordingly, the present invention should be construed as including within its scope any suitable security and/or data validation technologies as would be deemed appropriate by a person skilled in the relevant art.

Communication and/or data transfer between input terminals 20_n and network server 14_n, via network(s) 12_n may be achieved utilising any suitable communication and/or data transfer protocol, such as, for example, File Transfer Protocol (hereinafter simply referred to as "FTP"), Hypertext Transfer Protocol (hereinafter simply referred to as "HTTP"), Electronic Mail (hereinafter simply referred to as "e-mail"), Transfer Control Protocol / Internet Protocol (hereinafter simply referred to as "TCP/IP"), Short Message Service (hereinafter simply referred to as "SMS"), Multimedia Message Service (hereinafter simply referred to as "MMS"), any suitable Internet based message service, any combination of the preceding protocols and/or technologies, and/or any other suitable protocol or communication technology that allows delivery of system content 22_n and/or communication/data transfer between input terminals 20_n and network server 14_n.

Access to network server 14_n, and the transfer of system content 22_n between input terminals 20_n and network server 14_n, may be intermittently provided (for example, upon request), but is preferably provided "live", i.e. in real-time.

System 10 is designed to enable users 24_n to interactively contest world records in a very simple manner over network 12_n. To achieve this, network server 14_n, of system 10, includes a plurality of applications 16_n (such as software and/or hardware modules or engines) and databases 18_n that enable multiple aspects of system 10 to be provided over network 12_n. These applications 16_n and databases 18_n include, but are not limited to: a system

content database 18_1; a user database 18_2, a forum or community database 18_n (not shown); a module or application for displaying system content and for determining a contest winner 16_1 (hereinafter simply referred to as "system content display engine 16_1"); a user registration and/or sign-in/sign-out engine 16_2 (hereinafter simply referred to as "user administration engine 16_2"); a user generated system content capture and/or administration engine 16_3 (hereinafter simply referred to as "system content capture engine 16_3"); a user generated system content edit engine 16_4 (hereinafter simply referred to as "system content edit engine 16_4"); and/or, a merchandise sales engine 16_5 (hereinafter simply referred to as "merchandise engine 16_5").

Databases 18_n are preferably managed by a Database Management System(s) (hereinafter simply referred to as "DBMS(s)") installed on network server 14_n that enables data to be stored, modified, searched and/or extracted from respective databases 18_n. DBMS(s) (not shown) work with modules 16_n of system 10 to enable the storage, searching, display and/or extraction of system content 22_n.

A detailed description of each of these databases 18_n and applications 16_n of system 10 will now be provided.

System Content Database:

System content database 18_1 stores and/or maintains the system content 22_n necessary to enable users 24_n of system 10 to interactively compete against one another over network(s) 12_n. System content 22_n includes personal information (i.e. user 24_n generated content) captured, for example, by system content capture engine 16_3, and may also include administrator installed information (i.e. system installed information) that is used by system 10 for other means, such as, for example, for advertising and/or merchandising purposes (see, for example, "merchandise engine 16_5" described below).

In accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, and as is shown in Fig. 1, to enable users 24_n of system 10 to interactively contest world records over network(s) 12_n, personal system content (22_n) captured from a user 24_n of system 10 includes at least one file 34_n, preferably a video file (of any suitable format), which shows, preferably by way of a moving visual

presentation, that users 24_n attempt to claim a contest title.

In Fig. 1 it can be seen that users 24_n of system 10 can utilise any suitable video capturing device 30_n (as for example, a video camera, video capable mobile phone, webcam, etc) to generate a video of themselves contesting a chosen world record. After creating a video(s), a user 24_n can simply download the associated video file(s) 34_n from their video capturing device(s) 30_n, to their input terminal(s) 20_n, as is illustrated by arrows *a*, at which time that video file(s) 34_n is/are available to be uploaded/transferred to network server 14_n, of system 10, by way of, for example, system content capture engine 16_3.

As will be described in further detail later in this description, it is especially preferred that all videos 34_n uploaded to system 10 are of the same predetermined duration, preferably one minute, or just over one minute to allow a short lead in time (e.g. around 10 seconds), such that all contest entrants (i.e. users 24_n wishing to contest a particular world record) are judged by other users 24_n based on the same predetermined video duration. To enable users 24_n to limit/edit their video(s) 34_n to the required predetermined duration, e.g. one minute, etc, system 10 may include a suitable video editing facility, such as, for example, system content edit engine 16_4, as will be described in detail below.

It is considered that a preferred one minute video file 34_n time limit will open up new opportunities for existing sports or pastimes, as for example, a one minute twelve lane Tenpin Bowling challenge. A one minute time limit also allows people limited by talent, time, finance or dedication to be able to compete for a world record, e.g. knocking down as many Dominoes as they can in one minute.

Although a video file format has been described as being particularly suitable for use with system 10 of the present invention, it should be appreciated that the present is not limited to just that particular file format. A person skilled in the relevant art would appreciate other file formats, e.g. still image formats, sound files, etc, that could also be utilised to perform the invention, and as such, the present invention should not be construed as limited to the specific example provided. Similarly, although at least a one

minute video file duration has been suggested, it will be appreciated that any desired duration could be used.

User Database:

User database 18_2 stores personal and public information of users 24_n of system 10. During a sign-up or registration process, or when updating their profile information utilising, for example, user administration engine 16_2, users 24_n may select whether particular aspects (e.g. their full name or nickname, age, location, etc) of their profile are to be shared with other users 24_n of system 10.

Forum Database:

Forum or community database 18_n (not shown) stores and/or maintains forum and/or community information which is shared with users 24_n of system 10.

Although not shown in the drawings, forum database 18_n may be utilised by a forum display/administration engine (not shown) of system 10 for the purpose of providing users 24_n with a forum environment for freely sharing information, more particularly, world record related information. A person skilled in the relevant art will appreciate many ways in which an interactive forum environment can be provided over the Internet (network(s) 12_n), and as such, a detailed discussion of same will not be provided. Accordingly, the present invention should be construed as including within its scope any suitable forum providing facility/means as would be deemed appropriate by a skilled person.

By providing a suitable forum facility (not shown) system 10 will enable the creation of a virtual community of world record attempt enthusiasts that can interactively exchange opinions and/or information related to world records. Such a user 24_n forum would allow users/voters 24_n to discuss their opinions on any entry (i.e. video files 34_n stored in system content database 18_1, etc).

System Content Display Engine:

System content display engine 16_1 is an software and/or hardware application that enables users 24_n of system 10 to view any/all of the world record attempt videos (files) 34_n that have been uploaded and stored in system content database 18_1 of network server 14_n by users 24_n of system 10. System

content display engine 16_1 also facilitates/provides a voting/scoring system that enables system 10 to determine a contest winner, i.e. a world record holder, for any given contest title by, for example, receiving feedback information from users 24_n each time they selectively view a video file 34_n. System content display engine 16_1 of system 10 aggregates the feedback information received and determines a contest winner based on the entrant (user 24_n) who receives the highest aggregated voting or point score.

If however, it is determined by system 10 that only one video (file) 34_n has been received for a given contest title, the contest winner (or world record holder) may preferably be simply deemed to be the inaugural entrant (user 24_n) for that contest title until such time that another user 24_n chooses to challenge the inaugural entrants contest title attempt (by submitting their own video file 34_n), at which time, the eventual contest winner is determined based on the aggregated feedback information received.

In accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, and as is shown in Fig. 4 (which will be described in detail below), it is preferred that the feedback information consists of: the allocation of a predetermined point amount, preferably 1 point, to each contest title entrant (user 24_n) each time a user 24_n selectively chooses to view that entrants contest title attempt (video file 34_n); and/or, the allocation of a user defined point amount, preferably selected from within a range of between 1 and 100 points, e.g. 1 to 5 points, 1 to 10 points, 1 to 100 points, etc, to a contest title entrant each time a user selective chooses to subjectively vote for that entrants contest title attempt.

Subjective user 24_n voting, amongst other things, allows contest title entrants (users 24_n) to use degree of difficulty to overcome their deficiencies which isn't a possibility in many sports, games or events if a stringent authentication procedure is used.

Depending on the desired configuration of system content display engine 16_1 of system 10, the predetermined point amount (e.g. 1 point) might only be allocated to a contest title entrant (user 24_n) if a user 24_n who selectively chooses to view an entrants contest title attempt does not choose to subjectively vote for same, i.e. if user 24_n chooses not to vote for an entrants contest title attempt they have viewed, the predetermined point amount is

allocated to that entrant, however if user 24_n instead selects to subjectively vote for that entrants contest title attempt, only the user defined point amount may be allocated to that entrant, and visa versa.

For the purpose of generating an accurate and fair aggregated point score for all contest entrants (user 24_n), system content display engine 16_1 of system 10 may have an inbuilt block system to restrict users 24_n from submitting feedback information more than once for any one entrants contest title attempt (video file 34_n), in particular there own. In this way, the predetermined point amount (e.g. 1 point) may only be allocated to a contest title entrant once for each user 24_n that selectively chooses to view that entrants contest title attempt. Similarly, the user defined point amount (e.g. selected from within a range of between 1 and 100 points) may only be allocated to a contest title entrant once for each user 24_n that selectively chooses to subjectively vote for that entrants contest title attempt.

So that the use of system 10 is enjoyable for all users 24_n, it is preferred that the aggregated point scores for all contest title entrants (users 24_n), no matter how high or low, are viewable by all users 24_n of system 10 so that contest title entrants and other users 24_n can compare the rankings of all contest title entrants (users 24_n) for any nominated world record. The effect of this is that every competitor 24_n would gain a world ranking, even if it was $1{,}000{,}000^{th}$ place. Many competitors would aim for no more than outranking their friends and having proof of the fact. It is therefore believed that this aspect of system 10 would help to generate continual and extensive use of same.

A flow diagram illustrating a preferred method 400 for displaying system content 22_n (including video files 34_n) and for determining a contest winner, i.e. a world record holder, for any given contest title in accordance with system content display engine 16_1 is shown in Fig. 4. Method 400 of Fig. 4 is suitable for use with system 10 of Fig. 1. It should be understood that the embodiment provided in Fig. 4 only illustrates one way in which system content 22_n may be displayed to users 24_n, and contest winners determined based on the feedback information received, in accordance with system 10. Many other methods (not shown) may be utilised to achieve the same or similar result and as such the

present invention is not limited to the specific example provided.

Before providing a detailed discussion of preferred method 400 for displaying system content 22_n and for determining a contest winner for any given contest title, reference will first be made to Figs. 2 & 3 in an effort to provide a more complete understanding of the preferred operation of system 10 of the present invention.

In Fig. 2, there is shown an exemplary GUI 26_n, for example, a web-browser, illustrating a preferred home-page 100 of a website 200 suitable for effecting the preferred interactive contest system 10 shown in Fig. 1.

Referring to Fig. 2, it can be seen that home-page 100 may include a plurality of icons and/or buttons 102_n that allow users 24_n of system 10 to perform a number of website 200 functions. For example, these buttons 102_n may include, but are not limited to: a 'quick selection pull-down menu' button 104 which may be used to jump directly to various sections of website 200; a 'view' button 106 which may be used to view available video files 34_n and to submit feedback information as hereinbefore described, the 'view' button 106 preferably initiating the operation of system content display engine 16_1 of system 10; a 'challenge' button 108 which may be used to submit a video file 34_n to contest a world record title, the 'challenge' button 108 preferably initiating the operation of system content capture engine 16_3 of system 10; an 'edit' button 110 which may be used to edit/alter a video file 34_n in order to, for example, reduce the video file 34_n duration to a required time, e.g. 1 minute, etc, the 'edit' button 110 preferably initiating the operation of system content edit engine 16_4 of system 10; a 'purchase merchandise' button 112 which may be used to browse and/or purchase merchandise, the 'purchase merchandise' button 112 preferably initiating the operation of merchandise engine 16_5 of system 10; and/or, various other buttons 114_n which may be used to jump directly to specific sections of website 200, or to link to external websites (not shown) that may be related, or associated with, system 10 of the present invention.

Although specific examples of the features, construction, use and/or functionality of preferred website 200, and more particularly, home-page 100, of system 10 of the present invention have been provided, it should be

appreciated that the present invention is not limited to those examples only. A person skilled in the relevant art would appreciate the general operation and functionality of an online facility capable of performing the invention, and accordingly, would understand many alternative embodiments of such a facility. The present invention should therefore be construed as including within its scope any such alternative embodiments that would be deemed appropriate by a person skilled in the relevant art. Further still, it will of course be appreciated that the actual graphical display of home-page 100 can be designed in an infinite amount of ways, and hence, the layout of the buttons 102_n, etc, shown in Fig. 2 should in no way taken to be limiting to the present invention.

In Fig. 3 there is shown a flow diagram illustrating one embodiment of a preferred method 300 for effecting interactive contests, which is suitable for use with the preferred system 10 for effecting interactive contests shown in Fig. 1, and, which may be used to initiate the operation of system applications $16_1,16_3,16_4,16_5$, ... 16_n (i.e. system content display engine, system content capture engine, system content edit engine, merchandise engine, etc) of system 10, upon users 24_n clicking on buttons 106,108,110,112, ... 102_n (i.e. view, challenge, edit, purchase merchandise, etc) available on home-page 100 of preferred website 200 shown in Fig. 2.

In Fig. 3, the step of arriving at home-page 100, of preferred website 200 of Fig. 2, in accordance with preferred method 300 is illustrated by block 302. As is shown in this figure, the actual manner by which a user 24_n is able to navigate to (arrive at) home-page 100 (block 302) can vary depending on that users 24_n preference. For example, user 24_n may stumble upon website 200 after performing a search within a search engine, as illustrated by block 300^{i}. Alternatively a user 24_n may navigate directly to a splash screen of website 200, or the home-page 100 of website 200 itself, by entering the appropriate URL into their web-browser (GUI 26_n), as is illustrated by blocks 300_{ii} & 300_{iii}, respectively.

No matter which way a user 24_n has navigated their way to home-page 100, after arriving thereat home-page 100, the operation of the remaining blocks of method 300 are the same. As can be clearly seen in this figure, at block 302, and in the related exemplary GUI 26_n shown in Fig. 2, home-page

100 of preferred website 200 is essentially a selection screen that enables users 24_n to perform/initiate various functions of system 10 by simply clicking on buttons 106 to 112, etc.

At block 304, users 24_n are selectively able to view video files 34_n which initiates system content display engine 16_1. At block 306, users 24_n are selectively able to challenge other users 24_n by uploading their own video file(s) 34_n which shows their attempt to claim a world record title, selective activation of this block 306 (by way of, for example, 'challenge' button 108) initiates system content capture engine 16_3. At block 308, users 24_n are selectively able to edit video files 34_n which initiates system content edit engine 16_4. Finally, at block 310, users 24_n are selectively able to browse and/or purchase merchandise by way of merchandise engine 16_5, which as shown, may only be available to users 24_n whom have submitted a video file 34_n in an attempt to claim a world record, and/or users 24_n who have been determined to be the world record holder by system content display engine 16_1 of system 10.

Now that a detailed description of exemplary GUI 26_n shown in Fig. 2, and preferred method 300 for effecting interactive contests in accordance with system 10 shown in Fig. 3 has been provided, a detailed discussion of preferred method 400 for displaying system content 22_n and for determining a contest winner for any given contest title will be provided with reference to Fig. 4.

In Fig. 4, it can be seen that preferred method 400 is initiated upon a user 24_n selectively activating block 304 ("View") of method 300 by way of, for example, 'view' button 106 of home-page 100.

At block 402, users 24_n are prompted to select a specific category relating to the video files 34_n they wish to view. After selecting a category, at block 404, users 24_n are prompted to select a particular entrants (users 24_n) video file 34_n they would like to view. Upon selecting an entrant at block 404, users 24_n are then able to view the selected entrants video file 34_n as illustrated by block 406. After viewing the selected video file 34_n at block 406, users 24_n may return to block 402, if desired, to select and view further video files 34_n in accordance with blocks 402 to 406 as hereinbefore described. Although not shown, instead of jumping back to block 402, and hence, prompting a user 24_n

to once again select a specific category before enabling them to view further users 24_n video files 34_n, it will of course be appreciated that users 24_n may instead simply refer to block 404 at which time they could continue to select and view other users 24_n video files 34_n within the specific category they had previously selected.

Upon selecting to view a particular entrants video file 34_n at block 404, system content display engine 16_1 may allocate a predetermined point amount, for example, 1 point as shown, to that entrant as a reward for that user 24_n choosing to view their video file 34_n, as illustrated by block 408.

After viewing a selected entrants video file 34_n at block 406, users 24_n may be prompted to selectively submit a subjective vote or score from within a set range, for example, of between 1 and 100 points as shown, which is then allocated to that entrant as illustrated by block 410.

As already discussed above, if users 24_n opt to subjectively vote for an entrants video file 34_n, at block 410, system content display engine 16_1 of system 10 may disregard the predetermined point amount (e.g. 1 point) previously allocated to that entrant at block 408. Or alternatively, system content display engine 16_1 may combine both the point amounts allocated at blocks 408 and 410. The specific parameters being chosen by the administrator (not shown) of system 10.

After users 24_n have finished viewing entrants video files 34_n at block 406, having chosen to vote or not to vote for same at block 410, users are then able to: return to block 402 (or block 404 as previously described), if desired, to select and view further video files 34_n in accordance with blocks 402 to 406 as hereinbefore described; or, return to the selection block 302 of preferred method 300 shown in Fig. 3, which is the equivalent of returning to home-page 100, of preferred website 200, shown in Fig. 2.

What is also shown in Fig. 4 is an optional block 412 which illustrates that users 24_n may selectively choose to navigate to a forum facility (not shown) of system 10 after viewing and/or voting for a video file 34_n at blocks 406,408, for the purpose of openly sharing world record related information. Should a user 24_n choose to utilise the forum facility of system 10, for example to comment on their subjective score allocated to an entrants video file 34_n,

they can then decide to: return to block 402 (or block 404 – not shown) to select and view further video files 34_n in accordance with blocks 402 to 406 as hereinbefore described; or, return to the selection block 302 of preferred method 300 shown in Fig. 3, which is the equivalent of returning to home-page 100, of preferred website 200, shown in Fig. 2.

It should now be appreciated that system content display engine 16_1 of system 10, can aggregate the points allocated to all contest entrants (users 24_n) in accordance with, for example, blocks 408 and/or 410 of preferred method 400 shown in Fig. 4, to determine contest winners for all contest titles, i.e. the entrants with (preferably) the highest aggregated scores in any category are determined to be the world record holders.

Although not shown in Fig. 4, method 400 may include alternative and/or additional steps necessary to allocate points to contest entrants in other ways. A skilled person will appreciate many such variations and accordingly the present invention should not be construed as limited to the specific examples provided.

User Administration Engine:

User administration engine 16_2 is a structured application that may be utilised by network server 14_n to police the use of system 10. As will be described in further detail below, user administration engine 16_2 may be utilised at blocks 502, 602 & 702 of preferred methods 500, 600 & 700, shown in Figs. 5 to 7, to control access to various facilities of preferred website 200 (Fig. 2) of system 10.

Although not shown in the drawings, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, during a registration and/or sign-in process necessary to access and/or use various facilities of system 10, users 24_n may be prompted to agree to predetermined acceptable Terms of Use before they can utilise the registered user only features of website 200.

The registration and/or sign-in process of system 10 may also require: a valid name, nickname and/or e-mail address; IP logging within each session; and/or, the use of suitable security certificates which must be installed locally on input terminals 20_n before users 24_n are able to access certain facilities of

system 10. Cookies could be used to automatically sign-in a user 24_n to system 10 after the registration process has been successfully completed.

A person skilled in the relevant art will appreciate many ways in which a user administration engine 16_2 can be provided over a network(s) 12_n, and as such, a detailed discussion of same will not be provided. Accordingly, the present invention should be construed as including within its scope any suitable facility able to provide a user administration engine 16_2 as would be necessary to police the use of system 10 of the present invention as herein described.

System Content Capture Engine:

As already briefly described above with reference to system content database 18_1, system content capture engine 16_3 is a structured application that may be utilised by network server 14_n of system 10 to upload and capture system content 22_n (including video files 34_n) provided by users 24_n.

A flow diagram illustrating a preferred method 500 for capturing system content 22_n in accordance with system content capture engine 16_3 is shown in Fig. 5. Method 500 of Fig. 5 is suitable for use with system 10 of Fig. 1. It should be understood that the embodiment provided in Fig. 5 only illustrates one way in which system content 22_n may be captured from users 24_n in accordance with system 10. Many other methods (not shown) may be utilised to achieve the same or similar result and as such the present invention is not limited to the specific example provided.

In Fig. 5, it can be seen that preferred method 500 is initiated upon a user 24_n selectively activating block 306 of preferred method 300 of Fig. 3, by way of, for example, clicking on 'challenge' button 108 of home-page 100 (see Fig. 2).

At block 502, users 24_n are initially prompted to enter their registration details as it is preferred that only registered users 24_n are able to upload video files 34_n in accordance with system content capture engine 16_3 of system 10. It will be appreciated that a registration process is not essential to the operation of system 10 of the present invention, and as such, the present invention should not be construed as limited to the specific example provided.

If at block 504 it is determined that a user 24_n is not a registered user of system 10, that user 24_n is able to be guided through a registration process at

block 506, if desired, after which time system content capture engine 16_3 will recognize, at blocks 502,508, that that user 24_n has now become a registered user of system 10 and is then able to proceed further. At this point it will be recognised that user administration engine 16_2 may be utilised at block 506 to facilitate the registration of users 24_n.

After determining that a user 24_n is a registered user at blocks 502,508, users 24_n are then prompted to enter a particular name to define their record attempt, i.e. the attempt shown by way of their video file 34_n, as is illustrated by block 510. After entering a name (which of course could also be selected from predetermined names provided by system 10) to define their record or contest attempt at block 510, users 24_n are then prompted to upload their video file 34_n to network server 14_n at block 512. The video file 34_n is then transferred from input terminal 20_n to network server 14_n, via network(s) 12_n, where thereafter they are selectively stored in system content database 18_1 by system content capture engine 16_3 of system 10.

Upon a user 24_n entering a name for their record attempt video file 34_n at block 510, system content capture engine 16_3 may allocate a unique serial number to that user 24_n, which may be later used by user administration engine 16_2 and/or merchandise engine 16_5 for the purpose of determining whether that user 24_n is able to browse and/or purchase merchandise available via website 200 of system 10, as is illustrated by blocks 514 & 516.

It will be appreciated that all video files 34_n may be reviewed by a system administrator (not shown) of network server 14_n to determine their appropriateness for publication via system 10. If, for example, it was deemed that a particular video file 34_n was unsuitable for any reason, that video file 34_n would not be made available for viewing via system content display engine 16_1, and hence, the owner (user 24_n) of that video file 34_n would be disqualified from the record contest.

After uploading video files 34_n to network server 14_n, at block 512, users 24_n are then able to navigate their way to other areas of website 200, as illustrated by blocks 304, 310, & 518 in Fig. 5. More particularly, users 24_n may opt to: view video files 34_n at blocks 304,402 in accordance with preferred method 400 for displaying system content 22_n and for determining a contest

winner for any given contest title as was described hereinbefore with reference to Fig. 4; purchase merchandise at block 310 in accordance with preferred method 700 for selling merchandise to users 24_n of system 10 as will be described hereinafter with reference to Fig. 7; and/or, choose to utilise a forum facility (not shown) of system 10 at block 518 for the purpose of openly sharing world record related information.

Alternatively, or after utilising other features of system 10 at blocks 304, 310 and/or 518, users 24_n may simply opt to return to the selection block 302 of preferred method 300 shown in Fig. 3, which is the equivalent of returning to home-page 100, of preferred website 200, shown in Fig. 2.

Although not shown in Fig. 5, method 500 may include alternative and/or additional steps necessary to capture other system content 22_n and/or to navigate users 24_n to other facilities of system 10. A skilled person will appreciate many such variations and accordingly the present invention should not be construed as limited to the specific examples provided.

System Content Edit Engine:

System content edit engine 16_4 is an application that may be utilised by users 24_n of system 10 to edit their video files 34_n after they have been uploaded to network server 14_n of system 10 utilising, for example, system content capture engine 16_3 of system 10, as was described with reference to preferred method 500 for capturing system content 22_n shown in Fig. 5.

A flow diagram illustrating a preferred method 600 for enabling users 24_n to edit their video files 34_n in accordance with system content edit engine 16_4 is shown in Fig. 6. Method 600 of Fig. 6 is suitable for use with system 10 of Fig. 1. It should be understood that the embodiment provided in Fig. 6 only illustrates one way in which system content 22_n may be edited by users 24_n in accordance with system 10. Many other methods (not shown) may be utilised to achieve the same or similar result and as such the present invention is not limited to the specific example provided.

In Fig. 6, it can be seen that preferred method 600 is initiated upon a user 24_n selectively activating block 308 of preferred method 300 of Fig. 3, by way of, for example, clicking on 'edit' button 110 of home-page 100 (see Fig. 2).

At block 602, users 24_n are initially prompted to enter their registration details as it is preferred that only registered users 24_n are able to edit video files 34_n in accordance with system content edit engine 16_4 of system 10. It will be appreciated that a registration process is not essential to the operation of system 10 of the present invention, and as such, the present invention should not be construed as limited to the specific example provided.

If at block 604 it is determined that a user 24_n is not a registered user of system 10, that user 24_n is able to be guided through a registration process at block 606, if desired, after which time system content edit engine 16_4 will recognise, at blocks 602,608, that that user 24_n has now become a registered user of system 10 and is then able to proceed further. At this point it will be recognised that user administration engine 16_2 may be utilised at block 606 to facilitate the registration of users 24_n.

After determining that a user 24_n is a registered user at blocks 602,608, users 24_n are then able to optimise (their) video files 34_n as illustrated by block 610. As was described hereinbefore with reference to system content database 18_1, the video file 34_n optimisation process performed at block 610 of preferred method 600 shown in Fig. 6 may involve the reduction of the duration of video files 34_n such that they are limited to a predefined set duration, for example, one minute, or just over one minute allowing for a suitable lead in time, which may be necessary for use with system 10. It is believed that a suitable lead in time may help to verify the legitimacy of any video challenge.

After optimising video files 34_n at block 610, users 24_n may navigate to other areas of website 200, as illustrated by blocks 306 & 302 in Fig. 6. More particularly, users 24_n may opt to: upload further video files 34_n at blocks 306, or to replace their existing uploaded video file(s) 34_n with the newly optimised video file(s) 34_n created at block 610 in accordance with preferred method 600 for enabling users 24_n to edit their video files 34_n; and/or, return to the selection block 302 of preferred method 300 shown in Fig. 3, which is the equivalent of returning to home-page 100, of preferred website 200, shown in Fig. 2.

Although not shown in Fig. 6, method 600 may include alternative and/or additional steps necessary to edit system content 22_n and/or to navigate users 24_n to other facilities of system 10. A skilled person will appreciate many such

variations and accordingly the present invention should not be construed as limited to the specific examples provided.

Merchandise Engine:

As already briefly described above with reference to other applications 16_n and/or databases 18_n of system 10, merchandise engine 16_5 is an application that can be used to sell merchandise (not shown) to users 24_n of system 10.

A flow diagram illustrating a preferred method 700 for selling merchandise to users 24_n in accordance with merchandise engine 16_5 is shown in Fig. 7. Method 700 of Fig. 7 is suitable for use with system 10 of Fig. 1. It should be understood that the embodiment provided in Fig. 7 only illustrates one way in which merchandise may be made available to users 24_n in accordance with system 10. Many other methods (not shown) may be utilised to achieve the same or similar result and as such the present invention is not limited to the specific example provided.

In Fig. 7, it can be seen that preferred method 700 is initiated upon a user 24_n selectively activating block 310 of preferred method 300 of Fig. 3, by way of, for example, clicking on 'purchase merchandise' button 112 of home-page 100 (see Fig. 2).

At block 702, users 24_n are initially prompted to enter their registration and/or entrant serial number details (see Fig. 5) as it is preferred that only registered/qualified users 24_n are able to purchase merchandise in accordance with merchandise engine 16_5 of system 10. It will be appreciated that a registration/qualification process is not essential to the operation of system 10 of the present invention, and as such, the present invention should not be construed as limited to the specific example provided.

If at block 704 it is determined that a user 24_n is not a registered/qualified user of system 10, that user 24_n is: able to be guided through a registration process at block 702, if desired, after which time merchandise engine 16_5 will recognise, at blocks 702,706, that that user 24_n has now become a registered/qualified user of system 10 and is then able to proceed further; or, is returned to the selection block 302 of preferred method 300 shown in Fig. 3, which is the equivalent of returning to home-page 100, of

preferred website 200, shown in Fig. 2, until such time that they have uploaded their own video file 34_n to system 10 (i.e. become a contest entrant), been awarded the title of world record holder, etc, at which time they would have qualified to purchase merchandise utilising merchandise engine 16_5 and could return to block 310 to try and purchase merchandise once again.

It will be recognised that user administration engine 16_2 may be utilised at block 702 to facilitate the registration of users 24_n.

After determining that a user 24_n is a registered/qualified user at blocks 702,706, users 24_n are then able to enter their registration details and/or unique serial number at block 708, where after they are able to browse and purchase merchandise at block 710.

Users 24_n who compete for and/or who brake world records may earn the right to purchase specialised merchandise utilising, for example, merchandise engine 16_5 of system 10. To maximise sales of merchandise via system 10, different colours and/or styles could be used to signify different levels of achievement. For example, entrants, world record place-getters, world record holders, top 100 point scorers, overall top point scorers, proud grandparent, etc, could all have different lines of merchandise and some users 24_n may qualify to buy more than one line of merchandise over a period of time.

After browsing and/or purchasing merchandise at block 710, users 24_n may: navigate to other areas of website 200 (not shown); and/or, return to the selection block 302 of preferred method 300 shown in Fig. 3, which is the equivalent of returning to home-page 100, of preferred website 200, shown in Fig. 2.

Although not shown in Fig. 7, method 700 may include alternative and/or additional steps necessary to offer merchandise for sale to users 24_n of system 10. A skilled person will appreciate many such variations and accordingly the present invention should not be construed as limited to the specific examples provided.

To provide a better understanding of the operation of system 10, a number of brief examples of possible uses and/or benefits of the use of system 10 will now be described. It should be appreciated that the examples that follow only represent a portion of the possible uses and/or benefits of the use of

system 10 and as such the present invention should not be construed as limited to those examples provided.

Use of system 10 of the present invention may open up whole new concepts for some sports which may create renewed interests in same. Using Ten Pin Bowling as an example, which traditionally is a sport based on consistency, concentration, and composure, renewed interest in same could be provided by way of a user 24_n submitting a video file 34_n showing themselves performing a one minute Ten Pin Bowling challenge. That challenge, may involve a user 24_n utilising 12 lanes of a bowling alley to try to score 300 points utilising each of the 12 lanes once for each frame. If such a challenge was submitted, that user 24_n would only have a maximum of 5 seconds to bowl a ball for each of the 12 lanes, and to get to the next lane, which would mean that speed and luck would be the necessary criteria to succeed. Should a user 24_n successfully manage to bowl a 300 game the challenge would still exist to beat the time that the 300 game bowler achieved. If every bowling alley in the world, having at least 12 lanes, held a challenge as a fun day at the end of their competition season, or as a charity day, it would create a lot of challenges, something fun and different for all bowlers and would produce, for example, an AMF™ World Champion.

Darts is a sport that already uses different configurations of games, so a new contest introduced by way of system 10, challenging users 24_n to score the highest possible points in one minute using as many darts as necessary would be something that could be incorporated easily into competitive and/or social darts at any level.

System 10 may offer the opportunity for sponsors of world renown sports stars to promote their company name and/or products by simply having their contracted stars enter a challenge for any user 24_n to attempt to beat. For example, if David Beckham's sponsor was Adidas and was to engage Beckham to submit a video file 34_n of himself kicking as many goals as possible from a designated corner or area of a ground, system 10 would provide the worlds two billion odd soccer fans (users 24_n) with the chance to bend it better than Beckham. The publicity for Adidas that would result in such a challenge provided by system 10 would be enormous. Even if like Sir Don

Bradman's batting average Beckham's efforts were never seriously challenged, system 10 would instigate millions of losing challengers. Every time someone practiced for a challenge, videoed a challenge that wasn't entered, or entered a losing challenge, the Adidas name would be to the fore.

If the Ford Motor Company sponsored Mark Webber to perform a slalom event in his F1 car, every petrol head, or motor racing enthusiast, would be able to compete head to head with Webber. It was reported that Ford returned to Australian V8 car racing many years ago because the average age of its new car buyers had climbed too nearly 60 years old. Ford obviously decided that they needed something exciting to attract young buyers. System 10 would offer car manufacturers a similar opportunity to attract young buyers. Something as simple as a slalom could involve cars, trucks, motor bikes, push bikes or even billy-carts, on dirt or bitumen, not including boats, skateboards, water skiing, running, etc. Given that contest winners, i.e. world record holders, of system 10 are determined by the subjective votes of users 24_n, when it comes to a slalom challenge, entrants may choose to film their video file 34_n from inside their car, from in line with their car, or from a selected side of their car. They could also choose to space their markers well apart to allow maximum speed, or to space their markers close together to increase the action and/or chances of hitting a marker. They may choose to perform their slalom attempt on an open paddock, or on a tree lined track. Subjective voting opens up a lot of options in presentation and degree of difficulty which voters may choose over the strict efforts of another entrant. Hence, the opportunity to become a world record holder in accordance with system 10 is more readily available to users 24_n of system 10, then to entrants of other known record based contests.

Other possible challenges may includes: a one minute challenge to re-make an existing song, or to produce a new one minute song; a one minute challenge to climb as high as one can up a rope; a one minute challenge to build the worlds largest human pyramid; a challenge to produce the worlds best one minute recipe; the longest golf hole completed in one minute; best poem; best dance routine; best bicycle stunt; and/or, the most AFL handballs performed in a set time.

While this invention has been described in connection with specific embodiments thereof, it will be understood that it is capable of further modification(s). The present invention is intended to cover any variations, uses or adaptations of the invention following in general, the principles of the invention and including such departures from the present disclosure as come within known or customary practice within the art to which the invention pertains and as may be applied to the essential features hereinbefore set forth.

Finally, as the present invention may be embodied in several forms without departing from the spirit of the essential characteristics of the invention, it should be understood that the above described embodiments are not to limit the present invention unless otherwise specified, but rather should be construed broadly within the spirit and scope of the invention as defined in the appended claims. Various modifications and equivalent arrangements are intended to be included within the spirit and scope of the invention and the appended claims. Therefore, the specific embodiments are to be understood to be illustrative of the many ways in which the principles of the present invention may be practiced.

Where the terms "comprise", "comprises", "comprised" or "comprising" are used in this specification, they are to be interpreted as specifying the presence of the stated features, integers, steps or components referred to, but not to preclude the presence or addition of one or more other features, integer, step, component to group thereof.

CLAIMS:

1. A method for effecting interactive contests over a communications network, said method including the steps of: providing a central repository for storing and sharing information; providing a plurality of users with controlled access to said central repository and said information stored therein; receiving personal information from at least one of said plurality of users, said personal information including at least one file which shows that users attempt to claim a contest title; storing said personal information in said central repository, and selectively making said personal information available to all of said plurality of users; determining whether personal information has been received from more than one of said plurality of users regarding the same contest title, and if so, receiving feedback information from at least one of said plurality of users regarding said personal information stored in said central repository; and, determining a contest winner for that contest title based on said feedback information received.

2. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said contests are world record contests.

3. The method as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2, wherein said file is a video file.

4. The method as claimed in claim 3, wherein said video file shows said users attempt to claim a contest title by way of a moving visual presentation.

5. The method as claimed in claim 3 or claim 4, wherein said video file is of a predetermined duration.

6. The method as claimed in claim 5, wherein said predetermined video file duration is one minute, or just over one minute to provide a short lead in time.

7. The method as claimed in claim 5, wherein by requiring that all of said video files are of the same said predetermined duration all contest entrants are judged by other users based on the same said predetermined video duration.

8. The method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein if it is determined that said personal information has not been received from more than one of said plurality of users regarding the same contest title, the contest winner is deemed to be the inaugural entrant for that contest title until such time that another user chooses to challenge the inaugural entrants contest title attempt, at which time, the eventual contest winner is determined based on said feedback information received.

9. The method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein said step of receiving feedback information from at least one of said plurality of users regarding said personal information stored in said central repository includes the steps of: allocating a predetermined point amount to a contest title entrant each time a user selectively chooses to view that entrants contest title attempt; and/or, allocating a user defined point amount to a contest title entrant each time a user selective chooses to subjectively vote for that entrants contest title attempt.

10. The method as claimed in claim 9, wherein said predetermined point amount allocated to a contest title entrant each time a user selectively chooses to view that entrants contest title attempt is one point, and, said user defined point amount is selected from within a range of between 1 and 100 points, more particularly 1 to 5 points, 1 to 10 point, or, 1 to 100 points.

11. The method as claimed in claim 9, wherein said predetermined point amount is only allocated to a contest title entrant when a user who selectively chooses to view that entrants contest title attempt does not choose to subjectively vote for same.

12. The method as claimed in claim 9, wherein said predetermined point amount is only allocated to a contest title entrant once for each user that selectively chooses to view that entrants contest title attempt.

13. The method as claimed in claimed 9, wherein said user defined point amount is only allocated to a contest title entrant once for each user that selectively chooses to subjectively vote for that entrants contest title attempt.

14. The method as claimed in any one of claims 9 to 13, wherein said step of determining a contest winner for any given contest title based on said feedback information received includes the steps of: determining an aggregated point score for each contest title entrant; and, selecting a contest title winner based on the contest title entrant having the highest aggregated point score.

15. The method as claimed in claimed in claim 14, wherein all contest title entrants aggregated point scores, no matter how high or low, are made available to all of said plurality of users so that contest title entrants and other users can compare the aggregated point scores of all contest title entrants.

16. The method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, further including the step of: providing a forum facility to said plurality of users to enable the creation of a virtual community of contest attempt enthusiasts that can interactively exchange opinions and/or information about contest related information.

17. The method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, further including the step of: providing a merchandise purchasing facility.

18. The method as claimed in claim 17, wherein merchandise available via said merchandise purchasing facility is only available to contest title entrants and/or contest winners.

19. The method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein said central repository is at least one computing device which includes at least one processor which is operable to execute software that maintains and controls access to said information for said plurality of users.

20. The method as claimed in claim 19, wherein said information is stored on at least one memory or storage unit associated with said at least one computing device.

21. The method as claimed in claim 19 or claim 20, wherein said at least one computing device is a web-server accessible to said plurality of users via said communications network, wherein each of said plurality of users can access said web-server via at least one user operable terminal which may be permanently, or selectively, connected to said communications network.

22. The method as claimed in claim 21, wherein said at least one user operable terminal is selected from the group consisting of: a PDA; a mobile or cellular telephone; a personal, tablet or notebook computer; or any other suitable computing or communications device.

23. The method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein said communications network is the Internet.

24. The method as claimed in claim 23, wherein said method provides an online or virtual community which is accessible to said users in real time, i.e. is "live".

25. A machine readable medium storing a set of instructions that, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to execute a method for effecting interactive world record type contests over a communications network, said method including the steps of: providing a central repository for storing and sharing information; providing a plurality of users with controlled access to said central repository and said information stored therein; receiving personal

information from at least one of said plurality of users, said personal information including at least one video file which shows that users attempt to claim a contest title by way of a moving visual presentation; storing said personal information in said central repository, and selectively making said personal information available to all of said plurality of users; determining whether personal information has been received from more than one of said plurality of users regarding the same contest title, and if so, receiving feedback information from at least one of said plurality of users regarding said personal information stored in said central repository; and, determining a contest winner for that contest title based on said feedback information received.

26. A computer program including computer program code adapted to perform some or all of the steps of the method as described with reference to any one of claims 1 to 24, when said computer program is run on a computer.

27. The computer program according to claim 26, embodied on a computer readable medium.

28. A system for effecting interactive contests over a communications network, said system including: at least one memory or storage unit operable to store and share information; at least one processor operable to execute software that maintains and controls access to said information for a plurality of users, said information including personal information that is received from at least one of said plurality of users including at least one file which shows that users attempt to claim a contest title, and feedback information that is received from at least one of said plurality of users regarding said personal information stored on said at least one memory unit; at least one display device operable to present said information to said plurality of users; and, at least one input/output device operable to provide an interface for said plurality of users to operate said software in order to: selectively transmit said personal information to said at least one memory unit; selectively view said personal information on said at least one display device; and/or, selectively provide said feedback information regarding said personal information stored on said at least one memory unit;

wherein if personal information has been received from more than one of said plurality of users regarding the same contest title, a contest winner for that contest title is determined based on said feedback information received.

29. The system as claimed in claim 28, wherein said contests are world record contests.

30. The system as claimed in claim 28 or claim 29, wherein said file is a video file which shows said users attempt to claim a contest title by way of a moving visual presentation.

31. The system as claimed in claim 30, wherein said video file is of a predetermined duration, more particularly one minute, or just over one minute to provide a short lead in time.

32. The system as claimed in any one of claims 28 to 31, wherein said system includes at least one computing device having said at least one processor and said at least one memory or storage unit associated therewith.

33. The system as claimed in claim 32, wherein said at least one computing device is a network server connected to said communications network.

34. The system as claimed in claim 33, wherein said network server is a web-server accessible to said plurality of users via said communications network, which is the Internet.

35. The system as claimed in claim 34, wherein said at least one input/output device is associated with at least one user operable terminal, wherein each of said plurality of users can access said information stored on said web-server via at least one software application installed on said at least one user operable terminal which may be permanently, or selectively, connected to said Internet.

36. The system as claimed in claim 35, wherein said at least one user operable terminal is selected from the group consisting of: a PDA; a mobile or cellular telephone; a personal, tablet or notebook computer; or any other suitable computing or communications device.

37. The system as claimed in any one of claims 28 to 36, wherein if it is determined that personal information has not been received from more than one of said plurality of users regarding the same contest title, the contest winner is deemed to be the inaugural entrant for that contest title until such time that another user chooses to challenge the inaugural entrants contest title attempt, at which time, the eventual contest winner is determined based on said feedback information received.

38. The system as claimed in any one of claims 28 to 37, wherein said feedback information includes: a predetermined point amount that is allocated to a contest title entrant each time a user selectively chooses to view that entrants contest title attempt; and/or, a user defined point amount that is allocated to a contest title entrant each time a user selective chooses to subjectively vote for that entrants contest title attempt.

39. The system as claimed in claim 38, wherein said predetermined point amount allocated to a contest title entrant each time a user selectively chooses to view that entrants contest title attempt is one point, and, said user defined point amount is selected from within a range of between 1 and 100 points, more particularly 1 to 5 points, 1 to 10 point, or, 1 to 100 points.

40. The system as claimed in claim 38, wherein said predetermined point amount is only allocated to a contest title entrant when a user who selectively chooses to view that entrants contest title attempt does not choose to subjectively vote for same.

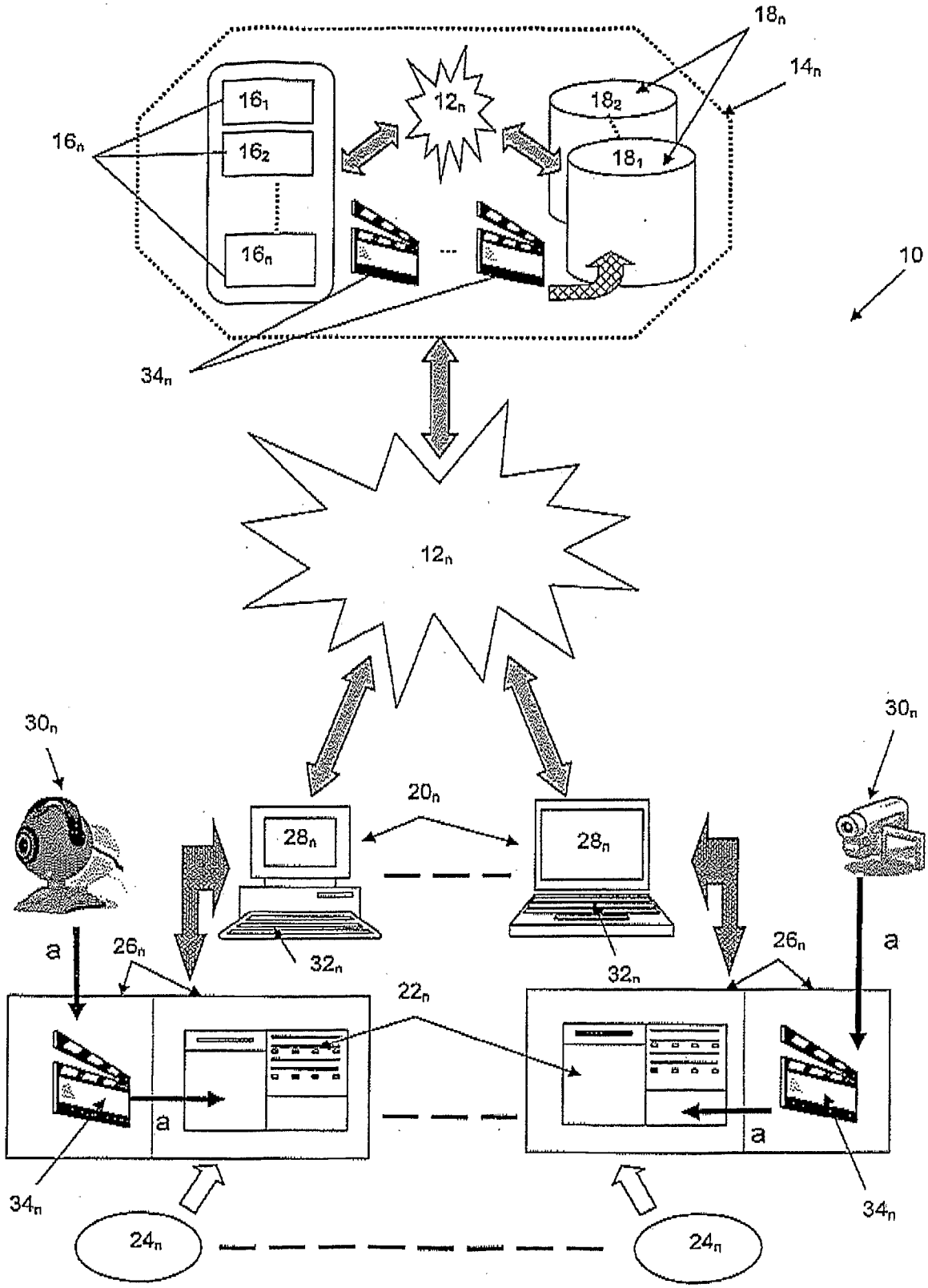
41. The system as claimed in claim 38, wherein said predetermined point

amount is only allocated to a contest title entrant once for each user that selectively chooses to view that entrants contest title attempt.

42. The system as claimed in claimed 38, wherein said user defined point amount is only allocated to a contest title entrant once for each user that selectively chooses to subjectively vote for that entrants contest title attempt.

43. The system as claimed in any one of claims 38 to 42, wherein said contest winner for any given contest title is determined based on an aggregated point score for each contest title entrant, and wherein the contest title winner is the entrant having the highest aggregated point score.

44. A system for effecting interactive world record type contests, said system being operable over the Internet, said system including: at least one central web-server connected to said communications network, said at least one central web-server acting as a central repository for storing and sharing information; and, at least one user operable terminal which can be selectively connected to said Internet for inputting, viewing and/or retrieving said information from said at least one central web-server; wherein said information stored on said at least one web-server includes: personal information received from a user of at least one user operable terminal, said personal information including at least one video file which shows that users attempt to claim a contest title by way of a moving visual presentation; and, feedback information received from a user of at least one user operable terminal, said feedback information representing that users opinion of said personal information stored on said at least one central web-server; and wherein, if personal information has been received from more than one user regarding the same contest title, a contest winner for that contest title is determined by said at least one central web-server based on said feedback information received.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16n
16₁
16₂
16n
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18₁
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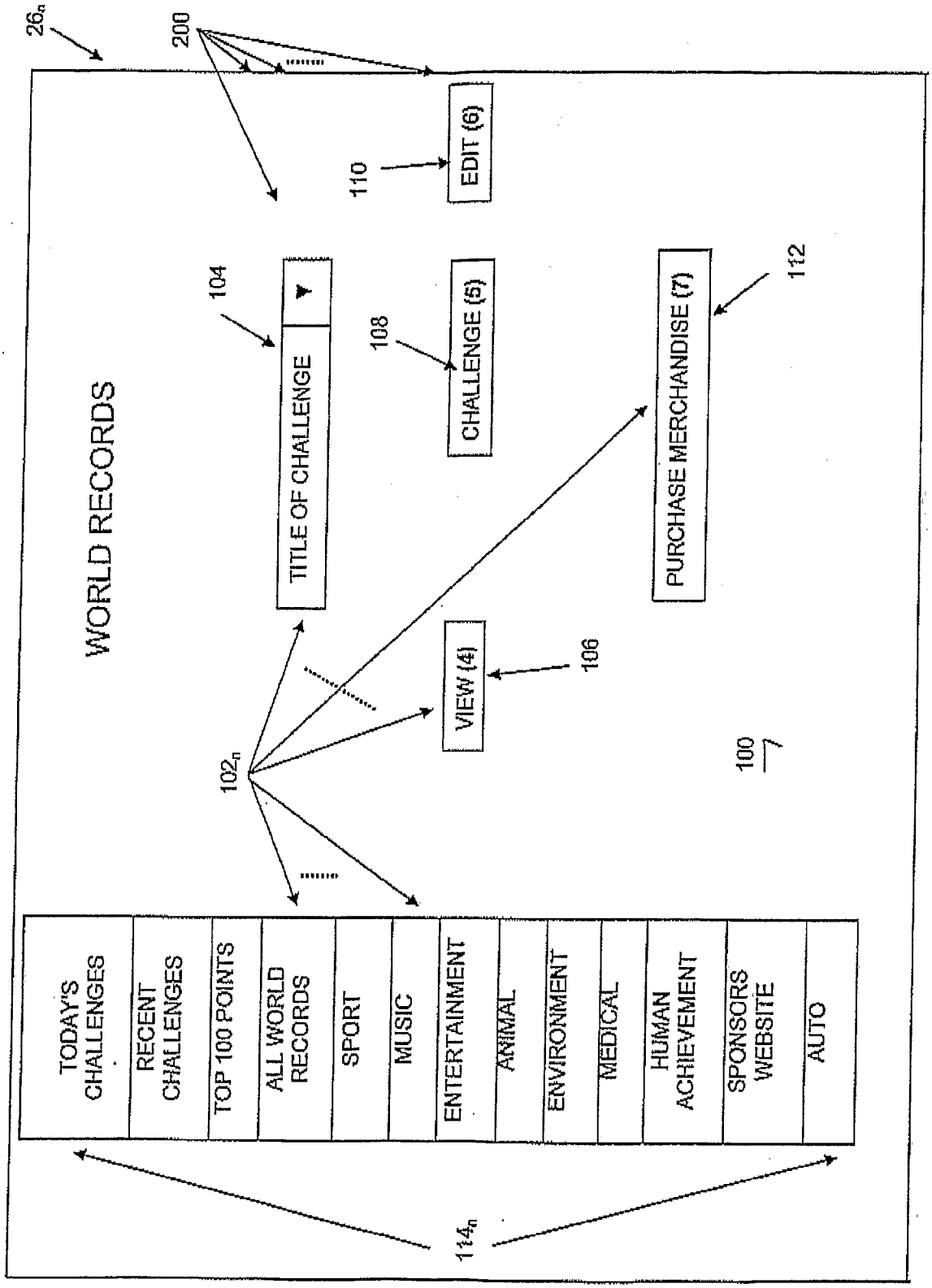
FIG. 1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CHALLENGE (5)
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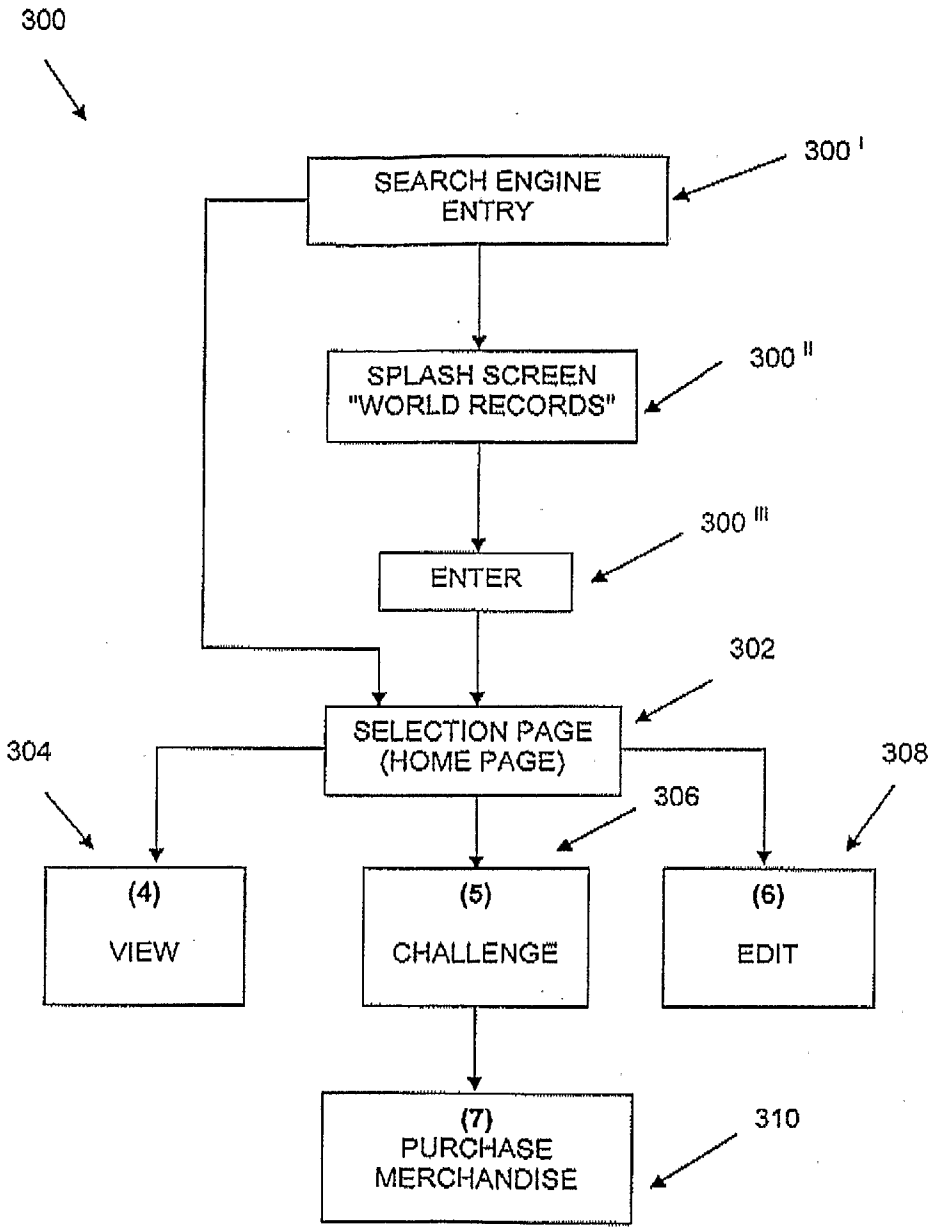
VIEW (4)
106
102n
100
TODAY'S CHALLENGES
RECENT CHALLENGES
TOP 100 POINTS
ALL WORLD RECORDS
SPORT
MUSIC
ENTERTAINMENT
ANIMAL
ENVIRONMENT
MEDICAL
HUMAN ACHIEVEMENT
SPONSORS WEBSITE
AUTO
114n

FIG. 2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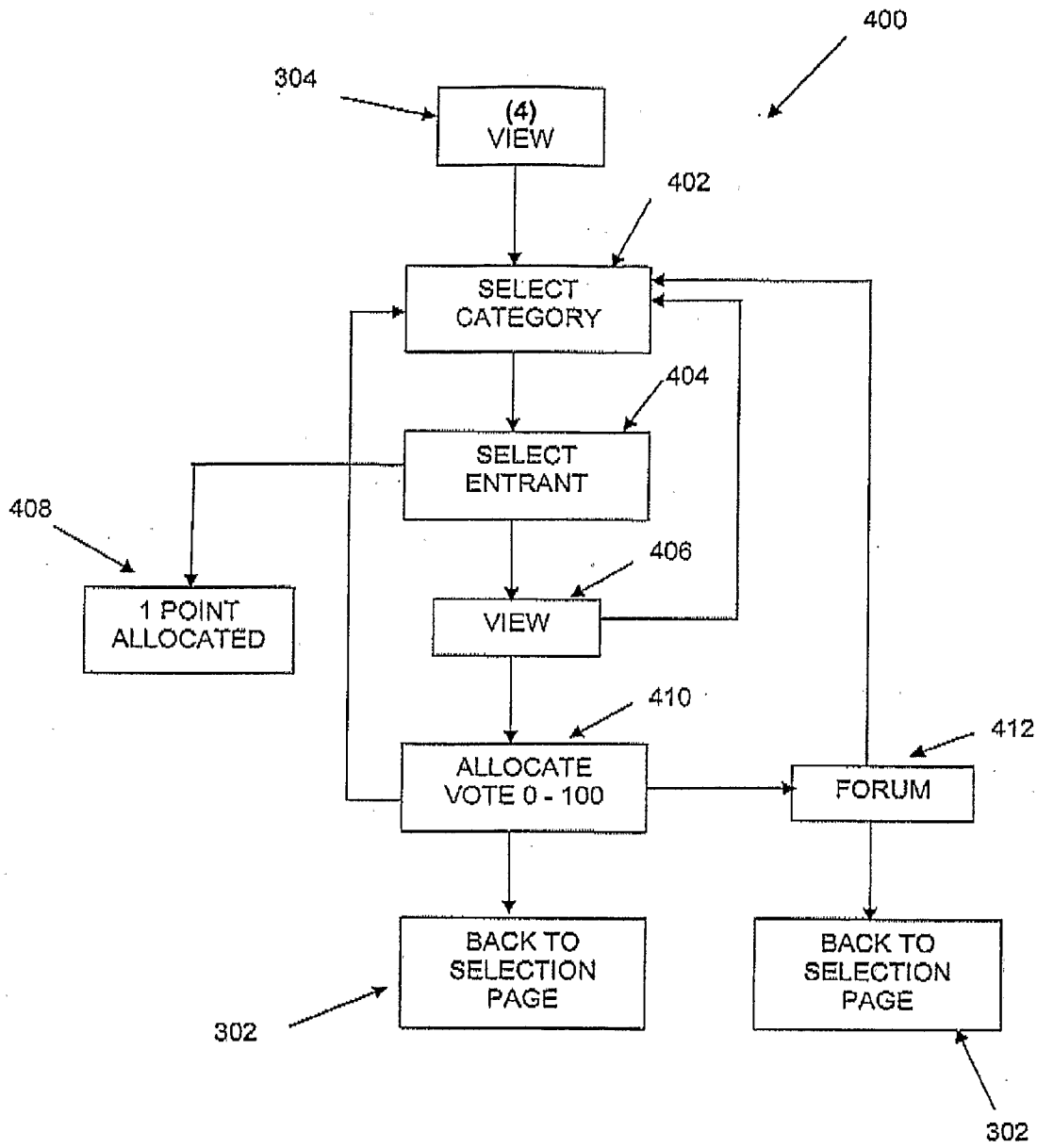
SEARCH ENGINE ENTRY
300 I
SPLASH SCREEN "WORLD RECORDS"
300 II
ENTER
300 III
302
SELECTION PAGE (HOME PAGE)
304
306
308
(4) VIEW
(5) CHALLENGE
(6) EDIT
(7) PURCHASE MERCHANDISE
310

FIG. 3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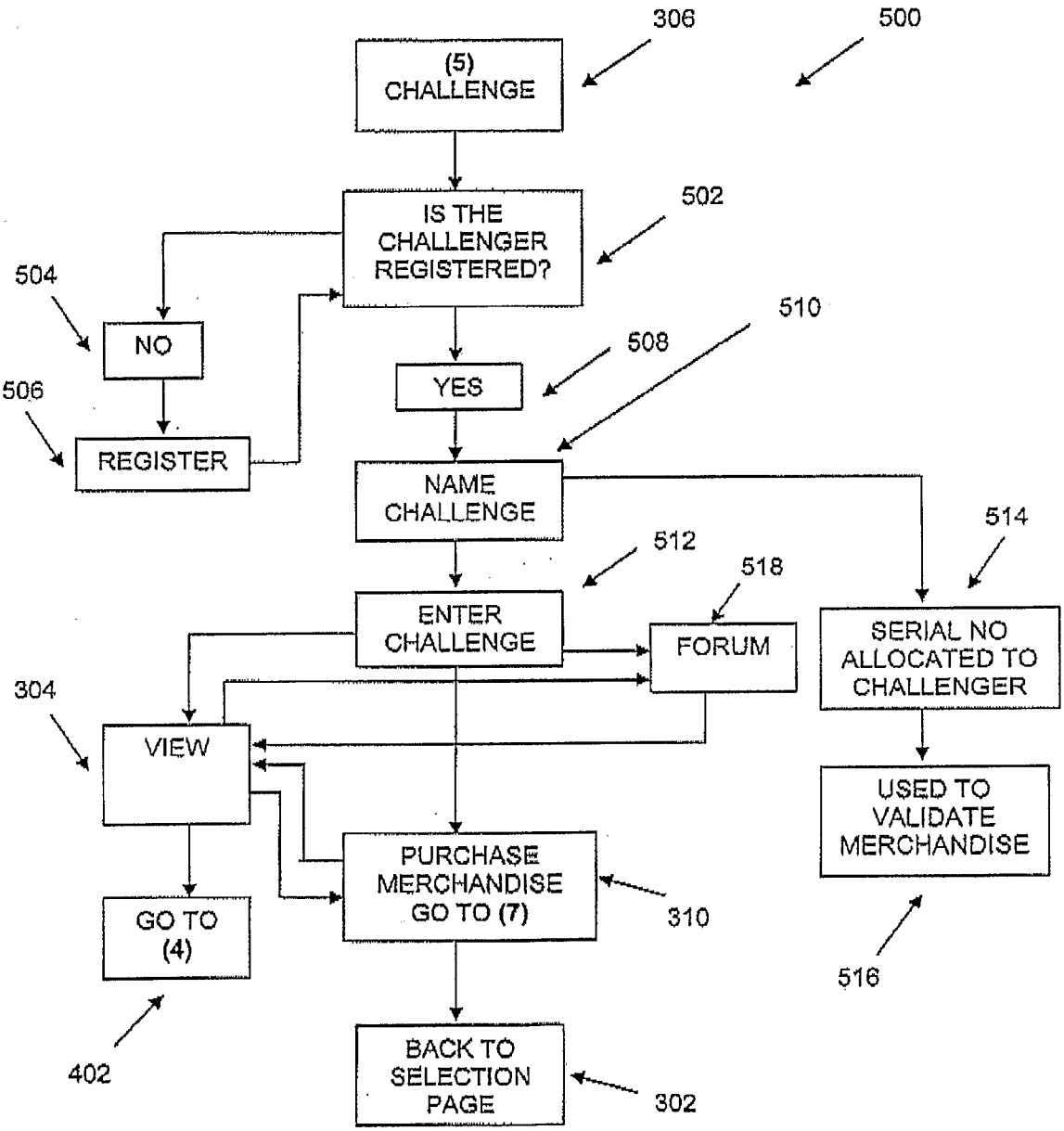
PAGE
BACK TO
SELECTION
PAGE
302
302

FIG. 4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512
514
518
ENTER
CHALLENGE
FORUM
SERIAL NO
ALLOCATED TO
CHALLENGER
304
VIEW
USED TO
VALIDATE
MERCHANDISE
PURCHASE
MERCHANDISE
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GO TO
(4)
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402
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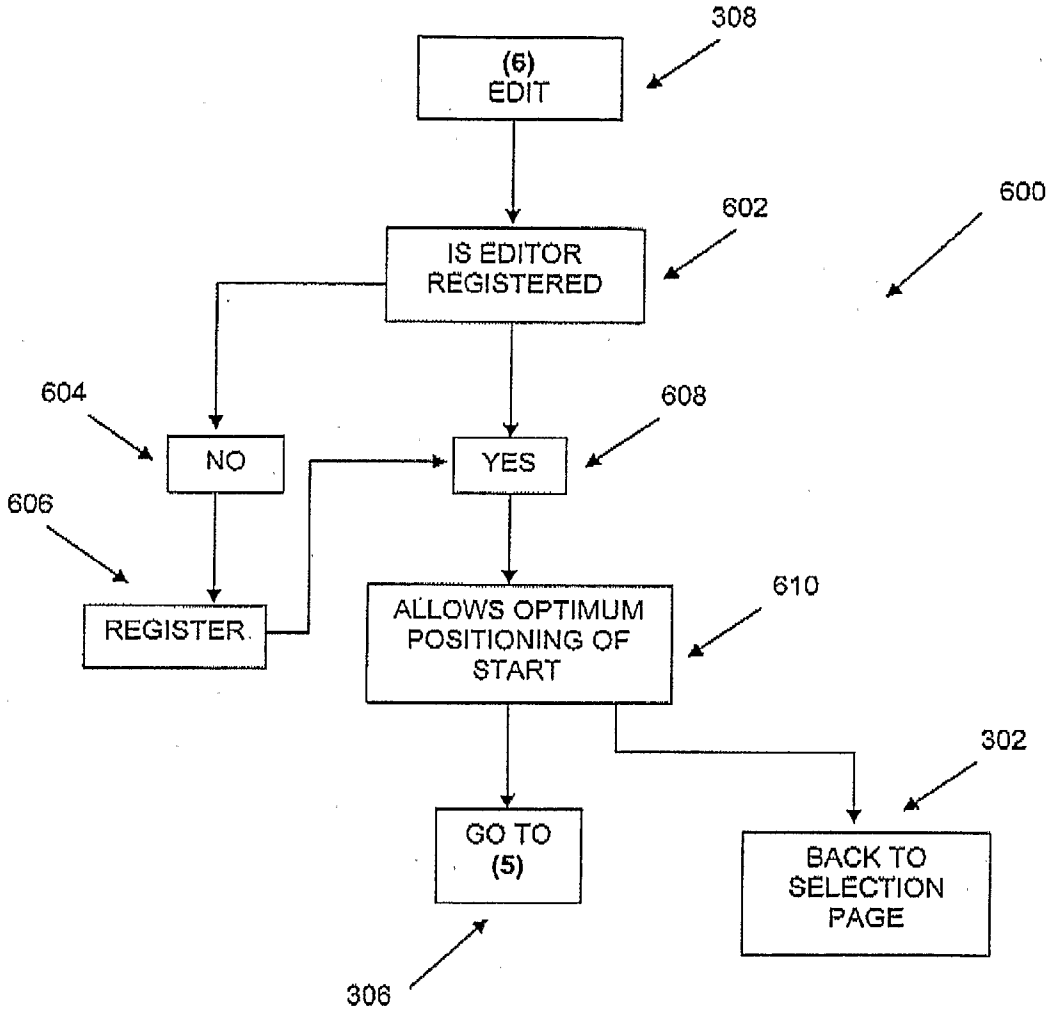
SELECTION
PAGE
302

FIG. 5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(6)
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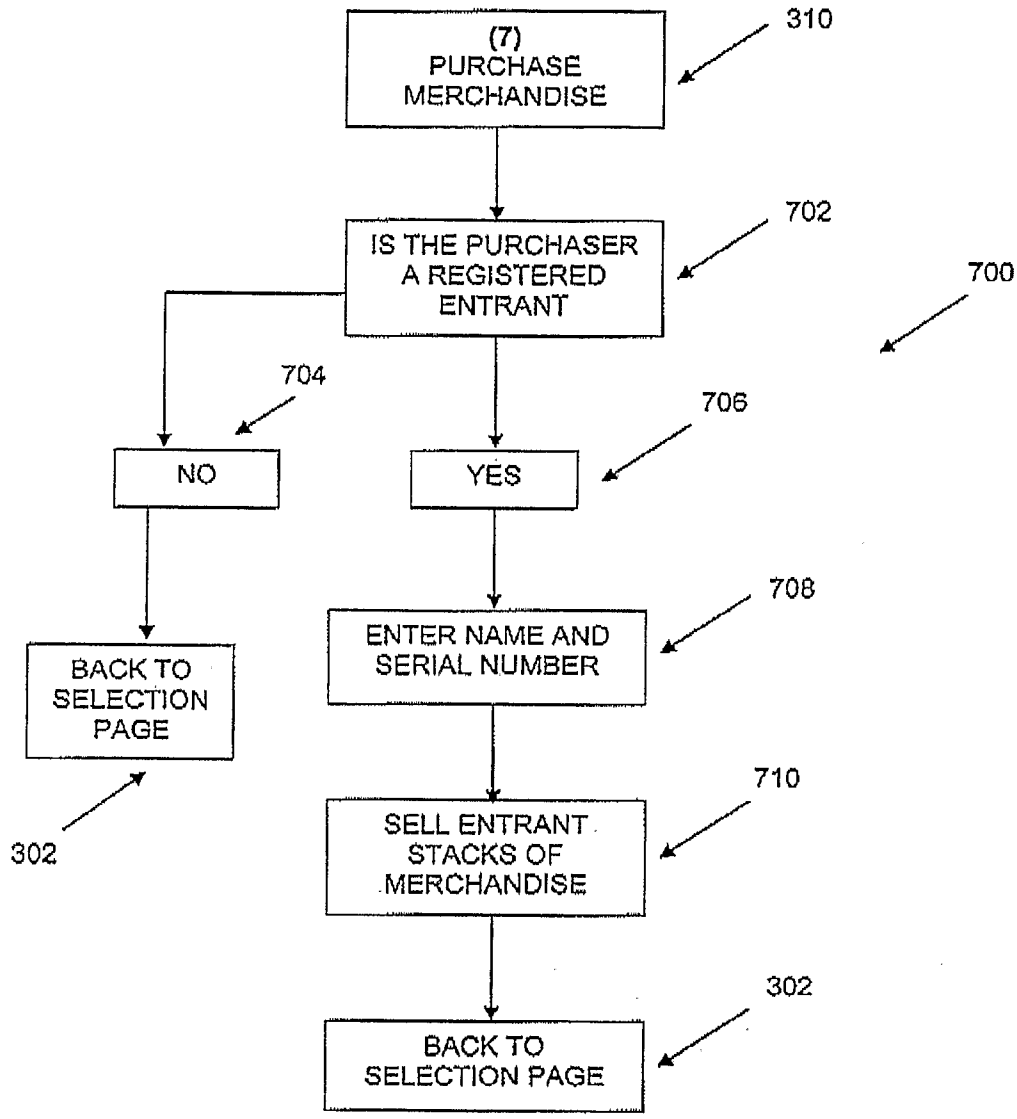
(5)
BACK TO
SELECTION
PAGE
306

FIG. 6


(7)
PURCHASE
MERCHANDISE
310
IS THE PURCHASER
A REGISTERED
ENTRANT
702
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704
706
NO
YES
BACK TO
SELECTION
PAGE
302
ENTER NAME AND
SERIAL NUMBER
708
SELL ENTRANT
STACKS OF
MERCHANDISE
710
BACK TO
SELECTION PAGE
302

FIG. 7

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/AU2009/000079

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

Int. Cl.

G06F 17/00 (2006.01)

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

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

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

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)
DWPI, EPODOC, Google Patents, ESP@CE, USPTO, Google: interactive, online, contest, competition, votes, points, winner and similar words.

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X A	US 2007/0156507 A1 (CONNELLY et al.) 5 July 2007 (See for example the abstract, figs 1, 4A-4C, paragraphs 0004-0006, 0043, 0051, 0066)	1-7, 16-36, 44 8-15, 37-43
A	US 2007/0250878 A1 (RYCKMAN et al.) 25 October 2007 (See for example the abstract, paragraphs , 0056, 0065)	1-44
A	US 7,162,433 B1 (FOROUTAN) 9 January 2007 (See for example the abstract, column 3 line 65 – column 4 line 44)	1-44

[X] Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C [X] See patent family annex

* Special categories of cited documents:

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

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

"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)

"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

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

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search	Date of mailing of the international search report
16 March 2009	20 MAR 2009
Name and mailing address of the ISA/AU AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE PO BOX 200, WODEN ACT 2606, AUSTRALIA E-mail address: pct@ipaustralia.gov.au Facsimile No. +61 2 6283 7999	Authorized officer **SAMRAT SEN** AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE (ISO 9001 Quality Certified Service) Telephone No : +61 3 99359616

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/AU2009/000079

C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US 6,968,243 B1 (OH) 22 November 2005 (See for example the abstract, column 4 line 9- line 24)	1-44

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No.
PCT/AU2009/000079

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

Patent Document Cited in Search Report		Patent Family Member					
US	2007/0156507	WO	2007/081698				
US	2007/0250878	US	2007/0236558	US	2007/0236585	US	2007/0236586
		US	2007/0236587	US	2007/0237496	US	2007/0237502
		US	2007/0238498	US	2007/0250374	US	2007/0250879
		US	2007/0253684	US	2007/0265869	US	2008/0055398
		US	2008/0068473	US	2008/0074487	US	2008/0075436
		US	2008/0115181	WO	2008/039407		
US	7162433	US	2007/0186230	US	2009/0024457		
US	6968243	NONE					

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

END OF ANNEX