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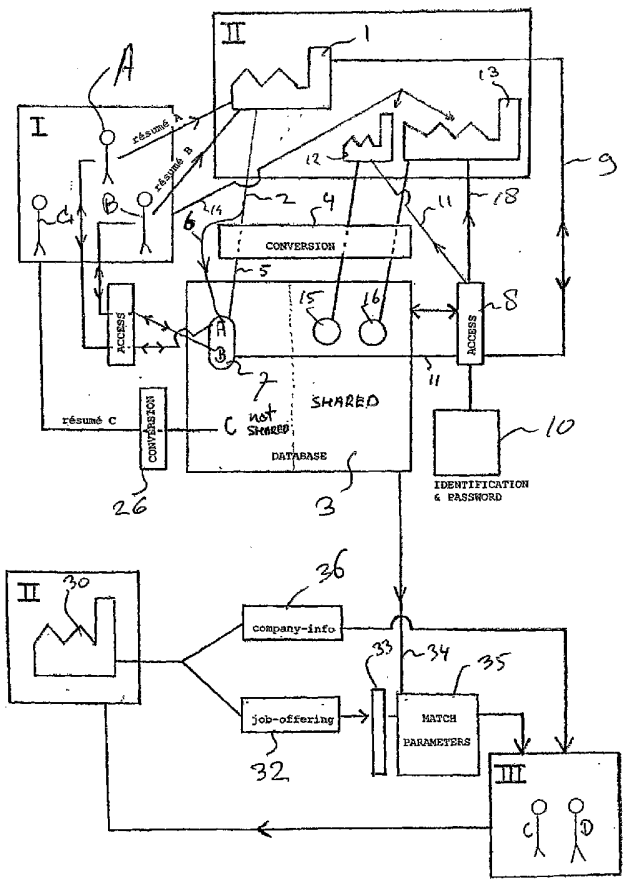

(57) Abstract: A computer-implemented method for managing data. The method may include (a) collecting first data relating to a first party group, wherein the first data is intended for a second party which is part of a second group, the first and second parties are different; (b) converting the first data according to a protocol having a number of parameters to obtain converted first data; (c) storing the converted first data in a database; and (d) providing access to the converted first data to the second party.

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METHOD FOR MANAGING DATA

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application claims the benefit of U.S. provisional application Serial No. 60/584,900, filed on July 1, 2004.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

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1. Field of the Invention

One aspect of the present invention relates to a computer-implemented method for confidentially managing data concerning for example résumés from job candidates or other confidential or private data. Another aspect of the present invention relates to confidential treatment of information relating to résumés of candidates. Yet another aspect of the present invention relates to a system for managing data and data flows.

2. Background Art

Many problems arise when information considered private to one party needs to be exchanged with other parties. The private information should not be publicly accessible. One of the examples to which the invention relates are job résumés. Another example is art that is for sale or other privately owned valuable assets. On the one hand the owner does not want to share the private information publicly, but on the other hand a third party can only evaluate his/her position with use of at least part of that information.

For example, if a company has a vacancy or an opening for a job position, it is known to post an advertisement for this vacancy in a newspaper or a magazine. In recent years, job vacancies have been posted on Internet sites, which are more accessible than newspaper and magazines. Advantageously, job vacancies can be put on the Internet in real time. Moreover, the Internet offers many options

for displaying information concerning job vacancies. Companies often enlist the services of recruiters to help them fill job vacancies. Recruiters use the specific demands for a vacancy presented in the form of a job listing, who may select one or more candidates from a database of candidates, which they have acquired over the years. The job listing can be confidential. The databases used are often patched together using a recruiters paper files and discrete electronic files containing information concerning job candidates.

In light of the foregoing, what is needed is an integrated confidential method and system for managing job candidate data.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

One aspect of the present invention relates to a method and a system for acquiring information, in particular résumés from candidates, and confidentially suggesting vacancies to parties, in particular candidates with résumés.

One aspect of the present invention relates to bringing together parties and information, exchanging the information through a third and independent party, which forms the bottleneck for the information exchange and wherein the third party is allowed to process the information. This particular aspect of the present invention is presented hereunder.

According to a first aspect, the present invention relates to providing a system and method with improved chances to find suitable candidates.

According to a second aspect, the present invention relates to a method and system for confidentially matching a candidate to a vacancy.

According to a further aspect, the present invention relates to collecting information with respect to candidates from different parties, especially companies that receive résumés from candidates.

According to yet another aspect, the invention relates to a system and method for combining human resource capabilities of different companies.

According to yet another aspect the invention relates to a system and method for a communication node for confidentially exchanging information regarding at least two parties.

One method embodiment according to the present invention includes the step of collecting first data with respect to a first party from a first group. The first data can be résumés, art collection, etc. The first data can relate to a first party, for example candidates for a vacancy. The first group can represent a group of people looking for a job or owners of art. The system according to the invention preferably comprises collecting means for first data. The system comprises input means for first data. A first party has access means to the input or collecting means. First data is saved in a memory of the system.

In certain embodiments, possibly combined with elements indicated above, the first data are collected after being delivered by a second party, e.g. by collecting means for second data connected to the system's memory. The second party can be part of a second group. The nature of the second party is different from the first party. A second party can be a firm with a vacancy or buyers interested in art. The first data, e.g. résumés, can be collected by the second party. For example, a first party can react to a vacancy in a newspaper or alike. Art can be offered to a second party, however this particular second party is not interested. If the current owner wishes to pursue selling, the information concerning the work of art can be entered into the system according to the invention. The second party therefore receives first data concerning a first party. The system comprises input means accessible to second parties from a second group. The input means are connected to the system. The input means are adapted to receive first data relating to first parties.

Instead of physically receiving first data, the first data can also be sent directly to the system according to the present invention. The system and method according to the present invention collects the first data for the second party.

This relieves the second party of registering and setting up a system for receiving first data and administering first data, but also for delivering first data received by a second party to the method or system according to certain embodiments of the present invention. Instead of sending the job résumé to the second party in reaction to a job opening, the first information is sent directly to the system. The system comprises e.g. a mailbox or a web server. Delivered first data is received and processed. Processing means for processing the first data are connected to the system.

According to certain embodiments, the method and system comprises the collecting of first data, in particular résumés, from different parties from the first group, which can be delivered by different parties from the second group. The first data have a common feature, namely it relates to the working history of parties or art owned from the first group. Hereby, a collection of data relating to parties from the first group, in particular a collection of résumés, is formed. In this way, parties from the second group do not carry the burden of collecting first data individually. The first data relating to different parties are collected in memory means.

A protocol for the first data is developed. The protocol provides a suitable record for collecting the first data. It can contain fields, such as name, address etc.. In one embodiment a data form is provided according to the protocol which can be edited by a first or second party, e.g. through a web-server.

In certain embodiments, the first data are converted, by a defined protocol, into a number of parameters. Hereby, a certain format can be applied for the collected first data. Collection means are connected to conversion means. Converted first data can be collected in a form or file. In particular, this makes collecting the first data easier and more accessible. The data can be displayed in a generally similar fashion for the respective collected first data. In certain embodiments, the protocol is adaptable. The protocol can set up a form for 15 or more fields and in some cases at least 20 fields, representing essential information from the first data in particular résumés. One of the fields is for example work experience. Another field represents date of birth and name or address of the person

from the first group. The conversion means comprise recognition means recognizing fields according to a protocol in first data.

In certain embodiments, the present invention provides for a method or system including the step of collecting and adding additional data to the collected first data from a first party. If the first data are not sufficient, for example, a candidate left out essential details in his or her résumé, these details can be added later on, thus ensuring that the data file contains the necessary parameters. The system comprises contact means for contacting first parties. Updates can be inputted through input means accessible to first parties.

In certain embodiments, the system or method includes adding the first data, which can be converted data, to a database, e.g. in a memory. The first data relates to the first party. Hereby, a database is created containing the collected information relating to parties from a first group. One collection of first data relating to a first party is a file. The file can contain both converted first data as 'raw' first data. In particular, a database can contain files converted according to a certain protocol containing a number of parameters relating to first parties, in particular candidates for jobs.

According to certain embodiments, the method or system includes providing access to the database to a second party, in particular access to first data from a first party delivered to the system according to the invention by said second party. In certain embodiments, the converted first data can be accessible and available to the second party. Hereby, the second party has access to a file containing the information related to the first party. The file contains a field indicating which second party has delivered the first data in the file. For example, the second party, a company, has access to the information, delivered by that company, namely the résumés they received from candidates for a vacancy they had posted. In this way the company or a second party has assured himself or herself of a service of identifying possible first parties that are qualified for a job opening. The system comprises access means adapted to output first data from the database to a second party. The access means comprise identification means for identifying

the second party. The system has selection means for selecting only those files or first data delivered by said second party.

According certain embodiments of the present invention, a professional or a protocol can be used for converting the first data. Hereby, a more efficient selection procedure for vacancies is secured.

In certain embodiments, a method and system of the present invention can also provide for access to the first party to the data file, e.g. containing the converted first data related to the same first party. Hereby, the first party can verify the data that is collected. In a further embodiment, the data that is accessible is a limited version of the collected data. The access means comprise selection and identification means for granting first parties access to only (parts) of a file of first data relating to said first party.

In certain embodiments, access to the data file, requires a log-in system. Hereby, it is guaranteed that certain parties are granted only certain rights for accessing the database in a limited fashion. In particular, the first party can only access the first data related to that same party. Differently, the second party can only access the data delivered by the second party. In fact, the total database includes data relating to parties from the first group, wherein only a part of the database is accessible to the second party. Only a limited set of files can be accessed by a second party. The second party will have access to data delivered to the system by said second party. Only one of the first data collected in the data file is accessible to the first person.

In certain embodiments, an encryption protocol is used for accessing the data file, thus providing more security. The system comprises encryption means.

In another embodiment, the data file containing the converted first data related to the first party can be updated with information provided by the first party. Hereby, an up-to-date data file can be maintained, for example when a first party moves, a change in address can be added. The first party can update the first

data itself, for example, by providing Internet access to the data file. Also other information can be updated, such as work experience and the work current job.

In certain embodiments, the system and method provides for granting access rights to different parties from different groups. As mentioned above, access rights can be read only, read and update or access to limited set of files in the database.

According to certain embodiments, the second party can indicate that the provided data relating to parties from the first group, can be accessed by other parties from the second group. Within the second group a sub-group of sharing parties is formed for sharing their collected data. The database can include shared and non-shared files. Access rights of parties to the files are likewise adapted. The file relating to a first party in the database contains a field indicating the sharing. The system comprises input means adapted to change the sharing level of a file, e.g. according to instructions from said second party.

According to certain embodiments of the present invention, the system and method also includes the collecting of the second data relating to another party from the second group. The second data can be information relating to that other party. If the second group is a group of companies, that other party can be a company, and the second data relate to that company. For example, the second data can relate to information with respect to the that other party and/or company. If that other party is, for example, Microsoft, the second data will relate to Microsoft's products, size of the company, locations, added work set, etc. Second and other parties can be identical firms. The system comprises input and memory means for inputting and saving said second data.

According to certain embodiments of the present invention, the other party for the second group also inputs desired parameters into the system. The method includes inputting desired parameters by that party. These parameters relate to the parameters according to the specified protocol. For example, they relate to specifications needed for a certain vacancy offered by that other party. For a job

opening certain parameters can be identified, for example, earlier job experience. The third party can input the desired parameters, for example, at least five years working experience in a certain technical field. The system comprises input means for desired parameters. Parameters can e.g. be inputted through the Internet. Parameters can be configured in a form. The form can be submitted and processed by the system.

In a further embodiment, the method and system include generating a third group, based on the desired parameters of that other party from the second group. The third group is formed by parties from the first group stored in the database. The parties in the third group have (converted) first data that generally correspond to the desired parameters. Hereby, a third group is selected that could possibly meet the criteria set out by that other party, in particular the criteria for a job opening. The system comprises selection means for selecting parties from the database with corresponding parameters.

In order to confidentially handle the collected data from parties from the first group, that other party is not directly granted access rights to, for example, address data relating to a party from the third group. According to the method and system of certain embodiments of the present invention, it is the method or system that contacts the parties from the third group, for example, by sending the second data relating to that other party to the parties from the third group. In this way, a party from the third group is provided with the information related to the job opening. However, the privacy of parties from the first group is guaranteed. The system comprises output means for contacting a party from said third group. The output means are adapted to send second data and/or desired parameters. The output means are adapted to send information to the address of a party as indicated in database. The system can comprise verification means for checking whether the address is still correct.

In certain embodiments, the system and method according to the present invention includes an intake meeting with a possible candidate from the first

group. In this way, the correct information can be collected from the candidate corresponding to the protocol for the database in an efficient manner.

In certain embodiments, the system and method according to the invention includes a step of contacting a first party after receiving first data from the second party. Hereby, interest by the first party can be verified. It is also possible to further question the first party. If necessary, the first party can be contacted in order to get permission to use data relating to that party for contacting third parties with the first data or converted first data.

In certain embodiments the system and method according to the present invention can be particularly suitable for settling confidential vacancies. The system makes it possible to match possible candidates for a confidential vacancy, without a "public" offering of the job.

Parties from the third group can be offered all information necessary to evaluate the possible vacancy. According to one aspect of this method, some essential information with regard to contacting that other party from the second group are withheld.

The system and method according to the invention comprise a node for collecting, processing and/or exchanging the information concerning the first parties. The node is a contact point for party from all different groups. The node, e.g. contacted by regular communication means, such as telephone or internet, is a trusted party for all parties involved. The node is e.g. a data communication exchange center, e.g. a help desk where parties from all groups can collect answers. As all information exchange according to the system is centralized, the node is the bottleneck in the full exchange of information. According to the invention the node has moved in between the direct communication between parties from the first group and the second group, thereby providing a secure environment for the exchange of private information. The system comprising the node will resemble a normal trustworthy system for collecting first data relating to first parties and can for example explain the workings of the system in detail. Through the node first parties

can obtain information with regard to the part of the first information that will be provided to parties from the second group.

In an embodiment intake meetings are provided by the node. During the intake meetings first information can be collected by employees of the first node and can be inputted into the system according to the invention by those employees.

The node is preferably coupled to the system and has access to the information provided by the different parties. The node is capable of updating the protocol used in communication in the system. The node in part performs the role of a webmaster if the system is partly implemented as a web application.

The node checks and verifies the information provided by the parties.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

The invention will be described referring to the figures wherein an embodiment of the invention is shown.

Figure 1 shows a system architecture diagram according to one embodiment of the present invention;.

Figure 2 shows a conversion of a résumé according to an embodiment of the invention; and.

Figure 3 shows a flowchart for a decision by a second party.

DETAIL DESCRIPTION OF EMBODIMENTS OF THE PRESENT INVENTION

The data management system construction is a multi-step process that involves several disciplines and several precedent steps that expose the actual

construction of the system e.g. at least partly implemented by software for each application. The software and resulting application of the software embodies the standard components of the data management methodology but each company or user will be equipped with slight variations in the interface outcome based on process variations those company or user possess.

Turning to figure 1, Group I according to this embodiment includes parties, e.g. persons, that have interest in a job. However the system, software and method according to the invention can also be used for another group of parties, e.g. owners of art etc.. When interested for a job, these parties will set up a résumé in order to make their interest known to a company or likewise other party having a vacancy. In the embodiment shown, candidates A and B send a résumé to company 1 from group II. Company 1 has offered a job, in an advertisement in a magazine or a newspaper, and candidates A and B react by sending their résumé. As a result of posting a vacancy, company 1 collects résumés from candidates.

Collecting résumés can take place in very different ways, e.g. by collecting e-mails, normal mail etc..

A human resource manager in company 1 normally selects suitable candidates from these résumés. However, according to embodiments of the present invention, the résumés are sent as indicated with arrow 2, and delivered to a database 3. The résumés will be collected in the database 3. Candidate A has a résumé A sent to a company 1, which delivers the résumé A to database 3 as indicated in the figure. Résumé A becomes part of the database.

In another embodiment, company 1 has advertised a vacancy, but has indicate that possible candidates should send their application, including their résumé directly to an address linked with the database 3.

According to yet another embodiment, the résumés are collected by a third party (not represented in the figure) and sent to the database 3.

Collected résumés A and B are sent to the database 3, but are, according to figure 1, first converted. An example is shown in figure 2.

Party A has sent his first data to party 1. Party 1 delivers this résumé to the database. On the left hand side in figure 2, part of the résumé A is shown. Candidate name is Peter and he lives in 105 North Street, Big Apple. Part of the documents submitted by this candidate is also shown in figure 2. The candidate discusses his relevant work experience.

At the conversion 4, either put into practice by scanning résumés, text recognizing the résumé and recognizing the content and meaning of the text or by scanning the document by suited employees, first data or a résumé is converted into a file A consisting in this embodiment of 8 fields.

Fields {1}, {2} and {3} relate to personal data to identify the first party A. In this embodiment, the database has a field {4} relating to work experience. Candidate A has relevant work experience in the field of Y. As this is one of the most important fields for selecting candidates, this is an independent field. Dependent on field {4} are fields {4a}, {4b} and {4c} respectively indicating the duration, the company and a possible reference for this work experience.

Any different fields are possible. Technical field Y can be pre-programmed. Y can be a limited set of technical field, such as, medical IT, lawyer, etc.

According to the non-limiting shown protocol for the fields in a file from a database, according to the example shown, field {1} is name, field {2} is address, field {3} is place of birth. Possible additions comprise nationality, place of birth, date of birth, etc. In certain embodiments, a historical database can be maintained of an address update, etc. Possibly another identifying number can be added. This number can not changed, but is also not accessible for other parties outside the database. This way the file A can be identified if it is accessed by a

party. As field {1} identifies the first party from the first group, file A relates to the party identified in {1}.

As an additional field {5} file A is identified as being submitted by company 1. Company 1 will be identified with this résumé, and hereby access to this résumé, added to the database will be allowed. Discussion of this system is made hereunder.

A protocol can include one or more fields with respect to work experience, but also relevant non-work experience, education, grades, extra-curricular activities, sports, etc.

Fields can be numbered for every file in the same way. If a field remains empty, the candidate can be contacted in order to update the field if possible.

The résumés A and B sent by company 1 according to arrow 2 are converted, as depicted by reference numeral 5. The résumés are examples of first data from first parties received by a second party from a second group II. The converted first data are sent from the conversion 4 to database 3 according to arrow 5. In this example the original first data A and B are sent according to arrow 6 to the database 3. The file within database 3 contains both original data and converted data. By maintaining a file, containing both the original first data as the converted first data, one can choose whether, when the database is accessed by a third party, one will show (part of) the original résumé/first data or the converted data. By only showing the original first data, the format and protocol of the database 3 can be kept secret to third parties.

Within database 3, a group 7 indicated by balloon contains file A, file B and other files containing first data that were delivered by company 1. Since company 1 delivers this information it will want to have access to the data throughout the existence of the database 3. That the files were delivered by party 1 is indicated in field {5}, containing a reference to party 1. Access can be provided

in many different ways, which are technically implemented by the person skilled in the art. A possible access point 8 is shown on the right hand side of figure 1. The database 3 could be accessed through the Internet or physical access through the files contained in the database at the location where the database is stored. Other possible ways of accessing the information are through mobile phone, direct contact through a modem, etc. Company 1 is identified if a communication connection is established, which communication line in this example is indicated by reference number 9. Company 1 can be identified by using an identification and a password. In figure 1, this is identified by identification and password 10. For party 1 it will be the human resource manager or delegates, who has access rights.

Figure 1 shows how company 1 through communication 9 is granted access 8 to all those files that company 1 delivered to the database. This is indicated by arrow 11.

Company 12 and company 13, as part of the second group II, have also collected first data from parties from first group I as indicated with arrow 14. After conversion, two sets 15 and 16 of files with first data relating to parties from first group I, have been created in the database 3. Companies 12 an 13 have access to "their" files 15 and 16 through the access 8 over communication lines 17 and 18.

Figure 3 shows a detail flow chart according to a certain embodiment the invention. A company 20 is shown. At a certain times, company 20 is asked as indicated in block 21, whether it wishes to share its collected first data/résumés. If the company does not wish to share, company 20 is granted access to only those files delivered to the database by company 1 as indicated with block 23 and arrow 22. This is a very efficient solution for company 20 in setting up a specialized structure for managing its data relating to persons from the first group I. Within a database 3, the company has created and has permanent access to its own file system containing all relevant data relating to persons from the first group.

However, if company 20 wishes to share the collected first data, it is granted access to files delivered by company 20 as indicated by arrow 24, but also

access to other files within the database, that were not specifically delivered by company 20, as depicted by arrow 25. This grants company 20 access to a much larger amount of data relating to parties from the first group, making it possibly easier to match parameters for a job opening at company 20 with a file from the database linked to a party from group I. However, by granting access to its own files, other companies will also have this access to data delivered by company 20 to the database.

In figure 1, as indicated above, company 1 has access to its files only. However, companies 12 and 13 have indicated that they would like to share. Companies 12 and 13 have access to their respective set of files 15 and 16, but not the group of files 7 from company 1. In fact, database 3 can be split in two parts, as indicated by the dotted lines in a shared (right hand side) and a non-shared (left side) part.

Party C from group I can submit its résumé C directly to the database 3. The data can be first converted at conversion 26. Conversion 26 can be an intake conversation with a manager of the database 3. In this way, a file C is created in the database 3. Since party C will wish to be contacted, party C will prefer its file to be shared. Company 30 will have access to this file. In one embodiment, company 1 will also have access to this file. In another embodiment, a company 1 will not have access to this file.

Since data relating to C is not delivered by a party from group II, field {5} remains empty.

In yet another embodiment of the invention, but also shown in figure 1, party 30 again from group II wishes to access the data contained in database 3.

Party 30 can provide information with respect to company 31 and information 32 with respect to a vacancy by party 30. This vacancy conditions could be converted 33 in order to have the conditions corresponding to the same protocol as used for the database 3.

As depicted by 34, by inputting information from the shared part of database 3, a number of files relating to parties from group 1 can be matched with the converted parameters for the vacancy 32. Parameters from the file, especially parameters from the set of fields {4}, {4a} etc. can be matched at 35. A number of files from database 3 generally corresponds to the desired parameters of the vacancy 32.

The files matching the parameters at 35 correspond to a number of parties, indicated by group III with parties D and E. Parties D and E are parties in the original group I. Parties D and E are the parties in field {1} of files that have matching parameters. Group III represents candidates for the job at party 30.

Third party 30 is not provided directly with the data relating to parties D and E from group III, since this data are most often confidential. Privacy is secured according to the invention by providing parties from group III with company information 31 and details with respect to the vacancy 32.

Although not indicated, every handling mentioned above, can be put into practice for every group. Parties from group I in set of files 15 can be contacted in order to update files. Also these parties can be contacted in order to allow third parties, like company 30 access to their files.

At access point 8, companies 12 and 13 can be granted only limited access to limited set of fields from the files in the shared database. According to the present invention, parties from group II can have data relating to parties from group I managed in a centralized database.

By using such a centralized database, the information contained therein can be updated more easily and can be handled by a professional, also by combining this effort, costs can be saved. Companies at different locations can combine their efforts in updating the respective data relating to parties from group I. Parties in group II can be different branches from one company. The present invention can implemented for recruitment of personal for a regional or international

firm having a centralized HR management system. According to certain embodiments, at least two different companies are part of group II. This way it is assured that parties from group I focusing on one company only, will be known to other companies from group II, if at least the parties in group II have chosen to share some of its collected data.

Further, parties from group II have an option of permitting access to the data they have delivered to database 3 to other parties from group II. By doing so, the parties from group II will also gain access to other files delivered by other parties from the group. This highly increases the possibilities finding a suitable candidate for example for a vacancy at a company from group II.

The system according to the invention further comprises a node. A node according to the invention is a contact point for parties from different groups. The node is allowed to access the database 3 and e.g. also to perform amendments to protocols used for conversion 4 or the granting of access to parts of the database. The node has full access. To the parties concerned the node can be contacted through normal ways of communications and will therefor be a confidential source for the parties involved. The node can comprises several communication lines to employees of the company using the system according to the invention. The node forms a help desk for the parties involved. Additional access means when using the communication line to the node could be used for example for verification of the parties.

Those of skill will further appreciate that the various illustrative logical blocks, modules, circuits, and algorithm steps described in connection with the embodiments disclosed herein can be implemented as electronic hardware, computer software, or combinations of both. To clearly illustrate this interchangeability of hardware and software, various illustrative components, blocks, modules, circuits, and steps have been described above generally in terms of their functionality. Whether such functionality is implemented as hardware or software depends upon the particular application and design constraints imposed on the overall system. Skilled persons can implement the described functionality in

varying ways for each particular application, but such implementation decisions should not be interpreted as causing a departure from the scope of the present invention.

The various illustrative logical blocks, modules, and circuits described in connection with the embodiments disclosed herein can be implemented or performed with a general purpose processor, a digital signal processor (DSP), an application specific integrated circuit (ASIC), a field programmable gate array (FPGA) or other programmable logic device, discrete gate or transistor logic, discrete hardware components, or any combination thereof designed to perform the functions described herein. A general-purpose processor can be a microprocessor, but in the alternative, the processor can be any processor, controller, micro controller, or state machine. A processor can also be implemented as a combination of computing devices, for example, a combination of a DSP and a microprocessor, a plurality of microprocessors, one or more microprocessors in conjunction with a DSP core, or any other such configuration.

The steps of a method or algorithm described in connection with the embodiments disclosed herein can be embodied directly in hardware, in a software module executed by a processor, or in a combination of the two. A software module can reside in RAM memory, flash memory, ROM memory, EPROM memory, EEPROM memory, registers, hard disk, a removable disk, a CD-ROM, or any other form of storage medium. An exemplary storage medium can be coupled to the processor such that the processor can read information from, and write information to, the storage medium. In the alternative, the storage medium can be integral to the processor. The processor and the storage medium can reside in an ASIC.

The above description of the disclosed embodiments is provided to enable any person skilled in the art to make or use the invention. Various modifications to these embodiments will be readily apparent to those skilled in the art, and the generic principles defined herein can be applied to other embodiments without departing from the spirit or scope of the invention. Thus, the invention is

not intended to be limited to the embodiments shown herein but is to be accorded the widest scope consistent with the principles and novel features disclosed herein.

While embodiments of the invention have been illustrated and described, it is not intended that these embodiments illustrate and describe all possible forms of the invention. Rather, the words used in the specification are words of description rather than limitation, and it is understood that various changes may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A computer-implemented method for managing data, comprising:

(a) collecting first data relating to a first party from a first group, wherein the first data is intended for a second party which is part of a second group, the first and second parties are different;

(b) converting the first data according to a protocol having a number of parameters to obtain converted first data;

(c) storing the converted first data in a database; and

(d) providing access to the converted first data to the second party.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the first party sends the first information to the second party and the second party provided said first information for collecting.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the database is a computer database.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the converting step (b) is conducted electronically.

5. The method of claim 1 further comprising (e) collecting second data relating to a third party from the second group.

6. The method of claim 4 further comprising (f) receiving a second number of parameters related to the protocol from the third party.

7. The method of claim 6 further comprising (g) generating a third group based on the second number of parameters.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein the converted first data substantially corresponds to the second number of parameters.

9. The method of claim 8 further comprising (h) contacting one or more individuals from the third group and transmitting the second data relating to the third party to one or more individuals in the third group.

10. The method of claim 1 further comprising (i) updating the converted first data based on information from the first party.

11. The method of claim 1 further comprising (j) splitting the database into a shared part and a non-shared part.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein the second party indicates if the converted first data are to be shared, and granting access to different parties from the second group to the converted first data provided for by the second party if the second party agrees.

13. A computer-implemented system for managing data, comprising on or more computers configured to:

(a) collect first data relating to a first party from a first group, intended for a second party, the second party being part of a second group, the first and second parties are different;

(b) convert the first data according to a protocol having a number of parameters to obtain converted first data;

(c) store the converted first data in a database; and

(d) provide access to the converted first data to the second party.

14. The system according to claim 13 wherein the first data are provided for collection by the second party.

15. The system of claim 13 wherein the computer is further configured to (e) collect second data relating to another party from the second group.

16. The system of claim 15 wherein the computer is further configured to (f) receive a second number of parameters related to the protocol from said other party.

17. The system of claim 16 wherein the computer is further configured to (g) generate a third group based on the second number of parameters.

18. The system of claim 13 further comprising providing access to first parties to edit the collected first data.

19. The system of claim 13 further comprising access and editing of data if one of the parties has contacted a node using a communication line.

20. An apparatus for managing data, comprising:

(a) means for collecting first data relating to a first party from a first group intended for a second party, the second party is part of a second group, the first and second parties are different;

(b) means for converting the first data according to a protocol having a number of parameters to obtain converted first data;

(c) means for storing the converted first data in a database; and

(d) means for providing access to the converted first data to the second party.

21. The apparatus of claim 20 wherein the means for collecting first data are arranged to have the first data provided by the second group.

22. The apparatus of claim 20 further comprising (e) means for collecting second data relating to a third party from the second group.

23. The apparatus of claim 20 further comprising (f) means for receiving a second number of parameters related to the protocol from the third party.

24. The apparatus of claim 23 further comprising (g) means for generating a third group based on the second number of parameters.

25. The apparatus of claim 20 wherein the converted first data is relied upon by the first party to fill a job vacancy.

26. The apparatus of claim 20 wherein the apparatus is part of a system further comprising a node for communication with the parties through communication means.

FIGURE 1

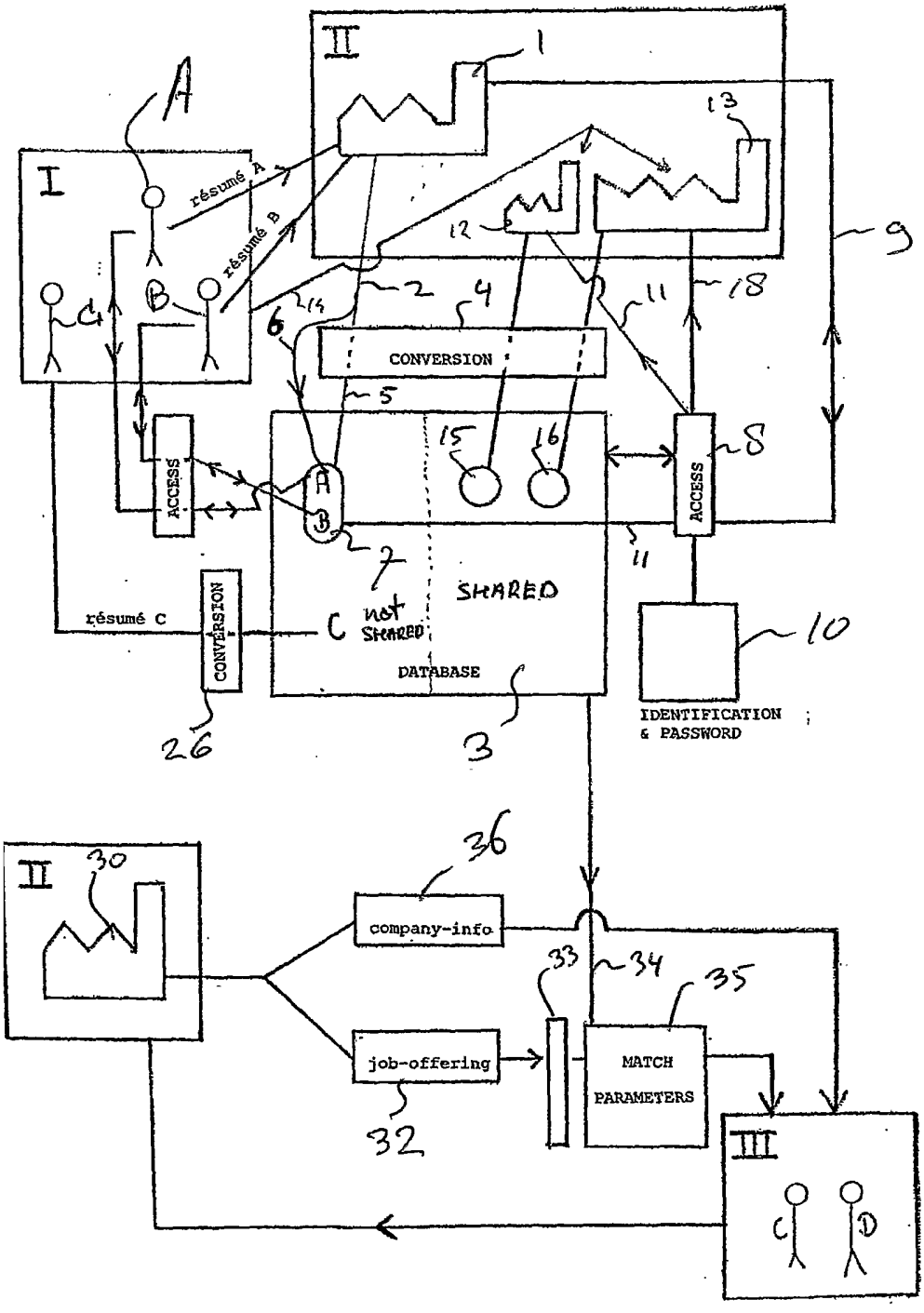
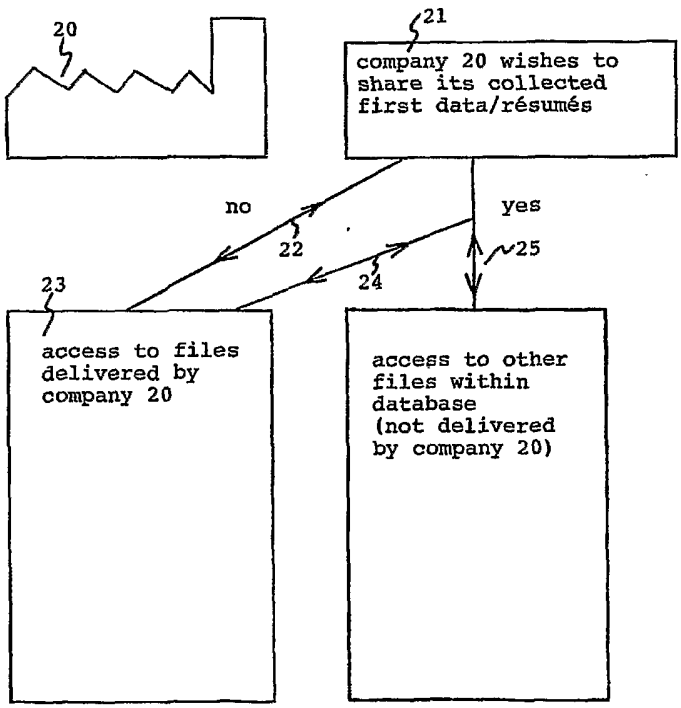

II
1
A
I
résumé A
résumé B
13
12
9
B
C
2
4
11
18
6
CONVERSION
5
ACCESS
15
16
8
A
B
7
SHARED
not SHARED
11
résumé C
CONVERSION
C
DATABASE
10
IDENTIFICATION & PASSWORD
26
3
II
30
36
company-info
33
34
35
job-offering
MATCH PARAMETERS
32
III
C
D

FIGURE 2

RESUME A	DATABASE file A
Name : Peter	1
Address : 105 North Street	2
Big Apple	3
My relevant work experience is	4
a 3 year (1999-2002) job	4a
at company X relating to	4b
technical field Y. My director was Mr. T	4c

FIGURE 3



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

PCT/IB2005/001892

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 7 G06F17/60

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

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
IPC 7 G06F

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

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, WPI Data

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category °	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	EP 1 197 904 A (GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY) 17 April 2002 (2002-04-17) abstract page 2, paragraph 9 - page 3, paragraphs 14,17 page 4, paragraph 19	1-26
X	US 2001/042000 A1 (DEFOOR WILLIAM) 15 November 2001 (2001-11-15) abstract page 2, paragraph 18 - page 3, paragraphs 24,25,29	1-26
X	WO 02/063532 A (THINKSHED, INC; JONES, KEITH, DUNCAN) 15 August 2002 (2002-08-15) abstract page 8, lines 8-20 - page 18, lines 17-23 page 19, lines 9-20	1-26

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

° Special categories of cited documents:

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"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

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"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search	Date of mailing of the international search report
30 August 2005	19/09/2005

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PCT/IB2005/001892

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