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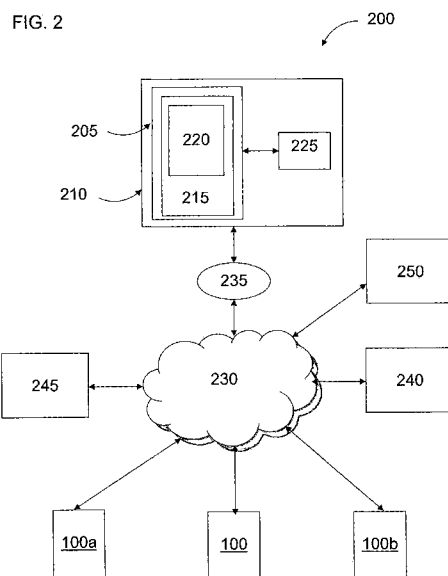
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(54) **Title:** VIRTUAL GIFTING



(57) **Abstract:** Systems, methods and apparatus for selecting, wrapping, sending, receiving and unwrapping virtual gifts include a data storage unit having stored therein data relating to subscribers of the system, virtual gifts and virtual wrapping for the virtual gifts. A first computing device in communication with the data storage unit via a communication network comprises a user interface to detect inputs, such as hand gestures of a user via a touch screen, from a first user to enable a first user to select a virtual gift, virtually wrap the gift and send the virtual gift to a second computing device of a second user who is the recipient of the virtual gift.

TITLE

VIRTUAL GIFTING

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

5 The present invention relates to the sending and receiving of gifts. In particular, the present invention relates to systems, methods and apparatus for virtual gifting.

BACKGROUND TO THE INVENTION

10 Sending and receiving gifts is a very old tradition practiced all over the world and for a wide variety of reasons, such as to celebrate events and achievements, to show appreciation and affection.

 In today's world many people are time poor and have insufficient time to visit stores and shop for suitable gifts. This problem has been alleviated to
15 an extent by internet shopping, which allows millions of stores to be searched in a short period of time which reduces the time required to find the appropriate gift.

 However, the gift must still be packaged and sent to the recipient, which takes time, particularly when there are large distances between the
20 origin of the gift and the location of the recipient. Cost is also incurred for the packaging and delivery, which is both a financial cost and an environmental cost due to the materials, resources and modes of transportation used.

 The delivery of gifts also requires that the recipient or a partner/friend, neighbour or colleague, is present at the delivery address to receive the gift.
25 If not, the gift typically needs to be collected from a depot or post office, which causes further delay and inconvenience.

 The aforementioned problems can act as deterrents to gifting, which can negatively impact the economy. Many therefore miss out on the enjoyment typically experienced in giving and receiving gifts.

OBJECT OF THE INVENTION

It is a preferred object of the present invention to provide a system and/or a method and/or an apparatus to address or at least ameliorate one or more of the aforementioned problems and/or provide a useful commercial alternative.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Generally, embodiments of the present invention relate to systems, methods and apparatus for selecting, wrapping, sending, receiving and unwrapping virtual gifts. Embodiments of the present invention include virtually wrapping and virtually unwrapping virtual gifts through the detection and interpretation of hand gestures of a user via a touch screen or via other user inputs via other user interfaces.

According to one aspect, but not necessarily the broadest aspect, the present invention resides in a system for virtual gifting comprising:

a data storage unit having stored therein data relating to subscribers of the system, virtual gifts and virtual wrapping for the virtual gifts;

a first computing device in communication with the data storage unit via a communications network, the computing device comprising a user interface to detect inputs from a first user to enable a first user to select a virtual gift, virtually wrap the gift and send the virtual gift to a second computing device of a second user who is the recipient of the virtual gift.

Preferably, the user interface of the second computer device detects inputs from the second user to enable the second user to virtually unwrap the virtual gift.

Suitably, virtual wrapping and/or unwrapping of the virtual gift includes detecting and interpreting hand gestures of a user via the user interface in the form of a touch screen.

Suitably, virtual wrapping and/or unwrapping of the virtual gift includes detecting and interpreting other inputs of a user via the user interface, such as movement of a cursor or pointer.

Suitably, virtual wrapping of the virtual gift is carried out automatically in a "wrap on the run" option.

Suitably, virtual unwrapping of the virtual gift includes options for a different style and/or a different speed of unwrapping based on detecting and interpreting one or more other inputs, such as gradual unwrapping or a faster "rip unwrap" style and speed.

Suitably, audio clues indicative of the nature of the virtual gift are provided, for example by shaking the second computing device.

Suitably, the data storage unit receives data relating to the virtual gift from the first computing device and transmits data relating to the virtual gift to the second computing device to enable the second computing device to render images relating to the virtual gift.

Suitably, sending the virtual gift to the recipient includes an invitation to register with the system.

Suitably, the virtual gift is sent directly to the computing device of the recipient where the recipient is registered with the system.

Suitably, the virtual gift is sent to a social media address of the recipient where the recipient is not registered with the system.

Preferably, the user interface detects one or more inputs from a first user to enable the first user to select virtual wrapping for the gift, such as virtual wrapping paper and/or virtual ribbons and/or virtual boxes or other form of packaging.

Preferably, a financial institution is in communication with the first computing device via a communications network for processing a payment from the first user for the virtual gift and/or for the virtual wrapping.

Preferably, a proportion of the payment is credited to an account of a nominated charitable organisation via the communications network.

Preferably, points are awarded to and accrued for users for one or more of the following: each virtual gift sent; each virtual wrapping purchased; each new user registered with the system.

Preferably, accrued points are exchangeable for virtual gifts and/or for virtual wrapping paper, ribbons, boxes or other form of virtual packaging.

Suitably, the virtual gift includes one or more of the following; an image; an animation; a 3D image; a 3D animation; a 3D model; an email; a SMS message; a MMS message; a recorded voice message; customized virtual wrapping generated from an image; an augmented reality.

5 According to another aspect, but not necessarily the broadest aspect, the present invention resides in a method for virtual gifting comprising:

 receiving a selection of a virtual gift via a user interface of a first computing device of a first user;

 virtually wrapping the virtual gift in response to detecting one or more
10 inputs via the user interface; and

 sending the wrapped virtual gift from the first computing device via a communication network to a second computing device of a second user who is the recipient of the virtual gift.

 Suitably, the method includes a data storage unit receiving data
15 relating to the virtual gift via the communication network from the first computing device and sending data relating to the virtual gift to the second computing device to enable the second computing device to render images relating to the virtual gift.

 According to a further aspect, but not necessarily the broadest aspect,
20 the present invention resides in an apparatus for virtual gifting comprising:

 a memory having stored therein data relating to virtual gifts and virtual wrapping for the virtual gifts;

 a processor in communication with the memory for selectively executing computer program code components to effect:

25 receiving a selection of a virtual gift via a user interface of the apparatus from a first user;

 virtually wrapping the virtual gift in response to inputs via the user interface from the first user; and

 sending the wrapped virtual gift from the apparatus via a
30 communication network to a second apparatus of a second user who is the recipient of the virtual gift.

 The apparatus may further comprise one or more of the following:

a microphone in communication with the processor to detect a voice command which is interpreted by the processor to effect virtual wrapping and/or unwrapping of the virtual gift;

an accelerometer in communication with the processor to detect motion of the computing device which is interpreted by the processor to effect virtual wrapping and/or unwrapping of the virtual gift.

Further features and/or aspects of the present invention will become apparent from the following detailed description.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

By way of example only, preferred embodiments of the invention will be described more fully hereinafter with reference to the accompanying drawings in which like features have like reference numerals, wherein:

FIG 1 is a schematic diagram illustrating a computing device for use with embodiments of the present invention;

FIG 2 is a schematic diagram illustrating a system for virtual gifting in accordance with embodiments of the present invention;

FIGS 3-5 are screenshots from a computing device illustrating embodiments of the present invention;

FIG 6 is a general flow diagram illustrating methods in accordance with embodiments of the present invention; and

FIGS 7-12 are further screenshots from a computing device illustrating embodiments of the present invention.

Skilled addressees will appreciate that elements in the drawings are illustrated for simplicity and clarity and have not necessarily been drawn to scale. For example, the relative dimensions of some of the elements in the drawings may be distorted to help improve understanding of embodiments of the present invention.

30

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Embodiments of the present invention are directed to systems, methods and apparatus for selecting, wrapping, sending, receiving and unwrapping virtual gifts. Embodiments of the present invention will primarily
5 be described with reference the use and implementation of the present invention on a computing device in the form of a smart phone. However, it will be appreciated that embodiments of the present invention can be used with a range of other types of computing devices.

Referring to FIG 1, a schematic diagram illustrates an apparatus in the
10 form of a computing device 100 for use with embodiments of the present invention. Whilst computing device 100 can be in the form of a smart phone, computing device 100 can also be in the form of a desktop, laptop, netbook or notebook computer, a personal digital assistant (PDA), a portable multimedia device, a tablet or other mobile computing device.

15 Computing device 100 comprises a processor 105 operatively coupled to one or more input devices 110, such as a keyboard, touch screen, mouse, controller, camera, microphone and/or other suitable input device. Processor 105 is operatively coupled to one or more output devices 115, such as a display screen, loudspeaker and/or vibration device. Processor 105 is also
20 operatively coupled to a storage medium in the form of memory 120. It will be appreciated that modifications to the arrangement of components in the computing device 100 as are known in the art are possible. For example, where the computing device comprises a touch screen, the touch screen functions as both an input device 110 and an output device 115 and
25 therefore as a user interface.

Memory 120 comprises a computer readable medium 125, such as a read only memory (e.g., programmable read only memory (PROM), or electrically erasable programmable read only memory (EEPROM)), a random access memory (e.g. static random access memory (SRAM), or synchronous
30 dynamic random access memory (SDRAM)), or hybrid memory (e.g., FLASH), or other types of memory as are well known in the art. The computer readable medium 125 comprises computer readable program code

components 130 which are selectively executed to effect embodiments of the present invention described herein.

Referring to FIG 2, a schematic diagram illustrates a system 200 for virtual gifting comprising a data storage unit 205 having stored therein data relating to subscribers of the system, virtual gifts and virtual wrapping for the virtual gifts. Data storage unit 205 can comprise any suitable database as is known in the art. In some embodiments, data storage unit 205 can be stored on a cloud based server 210 that automatically expands as the number of users increases. In some embodiments the data storage functionality is provided by Amazon elastic compute cloud (Amazon EC2).

Data storage unit 205 can comprise computer readable medium 215 of the types described above in relation to computer readable medium 125. Computer readable medium 215 comprises computer readable program code components 220 which are selectively executed by processor 225 coupled to data storage unit 205 to effect embodiments of the present invention described herein.

Computing devices 100 as described above are in communication with the data storage unit 205 via a communication network 230, such as a global communications network, such as the Internet, via conventional wireless and/or wired connections as are well known in the art. In some embodiments, access to data storage unit 205 can be via a portal 235, such as an encrypted client management system (CMS) or administration portal as is known in the art to log usage statistics.

System 200 further includes a financial institution 240 for processing payments within the system, a charitable organization 245, and one or more 3rd party websites 250, which are all coupled to communication network 230.

Generally, and in accordance with embodiments of the present invention, a computing device, such as first computing device 100a comprising a user interface, such as input/output devices 110, 115, detects inputs from a first user to enable the first user to select a virtual gift, virtually wrap the gift and send the virtual gift via communication network 230 to a second computing device 100b of a second user who is the recipient of the

virtual gift. The second user virtually unwraps the virtual gift via a user interface of the second computing device 100b. Each stage of the process will now be described in further detail with reference to the screenshots shown in FIGS 3-5.

5 It is envisaged that in some embodiments of the present invention, an application ("app") is downloaded to the computing device 100, such as a smart phone, tablet or other portable communication device via communication network 230 to provide the computing device 100 with the requisite computer readable program code components 130 to perform the
10 present invention. However, in alternative embodiments, computing device 100 can be in the form of, for example, a laptop or personal computer, but the requisite computer readable program code components 130 can be downloaded to the computing device 100 in a similar manner.

 Once computing device 100 comprises the requisite computer
15 readable program code components 130, virtual gifting can be activated by following a user authentication procedure as is known in the art, such as entering a username, unique identifier and passphrase, which registers the user with data storage unit 205 on cloud server 210. Payment details, such as credit card, debit card or PayPal details can be entered during
20 registration, or later for settlement of purchases within the system.

 With reference to FIG 3, once logged in, a user can elect to send a virtual gift, check virtual gifts they have already received, refer a friend to the virtual gifting system, make a payment within the system, or set or adjust the settings for the user in the system. These options may be selected by
25 tapping the relevant icon 300 on the user interface of the computing device 100 or making the selection via another input device 110 where a touch screen is not available. The settings can include the option for users to synchronise their social media accounts with the system. These options can be displayed on a Home screen or the like, which can also display a number
30 of reward points accrued by the user.

 To send a gift, a user selects a virtual gift from a number of virtual gifts on offer. These can include images of gifts from which the user can choose

or the user can select their own stored image of a gift or download an image via the communications network 230. Alternatively, the user can capture an image of the gift with the camera on the computing device 100 if available. In some embodiments, a video of the gift can be captured. In other
5 embodiments, audio relating to, or emanating from the gift can be captured, such as the noise of a pet or a product (e.g. coffee machine, toaster, car). In some embodiments, the gift to be virtually wrapped, sent and unwrapped can be in the form of an animation, such as an emoticon.

With reference to FIG 4, the image, video, animation, audio or other
10 digital representation of the gift is then virtually wrapped whereby the user selects virtual wrapping for the gift, such as virtual wrapping paper and/or virtual ribbons and/or virtual boxes or other form of virtual packaging and/or virtual accessories, such as virtual gift tags, balloons and the like. For example, the gift can be placed in a virtual box, wrapped in virtual wrapping
15 paper and tied up in virtual ribbons, one or more of which are selected by the user. Embodiments of the invention can include multiple tiers or standards of virtual wrapping, such as standard wrapping and premium wrapping, which cost different amounts to purchase.

In some embodiments, where the computing device 100 comprises a
20 user interface in the form of a touch screen, virtual wrapping (and/or unwrapping, as will be described hereinafter) of the virtual gift includes the computing device 100 detecting and interpreting hand gestures of the user. For example, the present invention includes the computing device 100 displaying images representing wrapping for the gift. The user is required to
25 perform hand gestures representative of wrapping the gift, such as placing the gift in a box, placing a lid on the box, wrapping the box in wrapping paper and/or tying ribbons around the box. The user's hand gestures are detected by the touch screen and interpreted by the computing device 100. If the hand gestures are correct or otherwise appropriate, wrapping of the gift is carried
30 out and displayed accordingly.

Arrows or other icons can be displayed to aid users in performing the required hand gestures to virtually wrap or unwrap the virtual gift. For

example, a lid can be displayed next to a box with an arrow from the lid in the direction of the top of the box indicating to the user that they should swipe the screen from the lid toward the top of the box to cause the virtual lid to be placed on the virtual box. A suitable swipe of the screen within
5 predetermined tolerances causes an animation to be displayed of the lid being placed on the box. This can be accompanied by any suitable audio, vibration or other output of which the computing device 100 is capable. It will be appreciated that a wide range of gestures can be indicated on the display to indicate to the user how to virtually wrap and unwrap the virtual gifts. Such
10 gestures can depend on the size and shape of the virtual gift and the type of virtual wrapping selected.

According to some embodiments, the virtual gift can include or be accompanied by additional data, such as an email, a SMS message, a MMS message or a recorded voice message, which is delivered to the recipient at
15 the same time as the virtual gift, in advance, or after receipt of the virtual gift.

Some embodiments include a quick or shortened wrapping process in which virtual wrapping of the virtual gift is carried out automatically in a "wrap on the run" option once the gift has been selected. This option can be effected by detecting the applicable dedicated user input, such as selection
20 via a displayed icon.

Once virtual wrapping has been completed, the user pays for the virtual wrapping according to the type of wrapping used. For example, wrapping comprising a premium box, paper and ribbon will cost more than wrapping comprising a basic box and wrapping with no ribbon. Where
25 payment details have been entered in advance during the registration process, financial institution 240, in communication with the computing device 100 for processing a payment, processes a payment by the user for the virtual wrapping and for the virtual gift where a charge is made for the gift.

30 In accordance with some embodiments of the present invention, a proportion of the payment is credited to an account of a nominated charitable organisation 245. The proportion of the payment credited to the charitable

organisation can be selected by the user on each gifting occasion. Alternatively, the proportion can be set as a fixed amount or a percentage of the amount spent and automatically credited to the account of the charitable organisation on each gifting occasion. Hence, embodiments of the present invention include the added benefit that a nominated charity benefits from every gift sent and received.

Once payment has been made, the user sends the virtual gift to the computing device 100 of the recipient. This can occur in a number of different ways. Where the recipient is registered with the system, in some embodiments the virtual gift is sent directly to the computing device 100 of the recipient. In preferred embodiments the virtual gift is sent to the server 210 and the server transmits instructions to the computing device 100 of the recipient to render the virtual gift on their device. This avoids the need for the transmission of potentially large files, such as animation files and allows the data relating to virtual gifts and virtual wrapping for the virtual gifts to be updated on the server 210 without the need for users to update the application on their computing device 100.

If the recipient is not registered with the system, the virtual gift can be sent to a social media address of the recipient, such as their Facebook, Twitter or MySpace account. Alternatively, the virtual gift can be sent to the recipient via email, SMS or MMS. In these cases, according to some embodiments, sending the virtual gift to the recipient includes an invitation to register with the system. The recipient then needs accept the invitation, by activating the relevant icon or the like, which directs the recipient's computing device 100 to a website or the like to download the "app" for the present invention as described above. Registering with the system enables the recipient to access their virtual gift. Hence, sending virtual gifts via the present invention encourages more users to subscribe and therefore more users participating in the gifting experience and more charitable donations being made.

Where the recipient is registered with the system, is logged in and has accepted the option of receiving push notifications, recipients of virtual gifts

will receive a push notification advising them when they have been sent a virtual gift. Senders of virtual gifts will also receive a push notification when the recipient has accepted an invitation to subscribe and/or opened their virtual gift.

5 In some embodiments, the Bluetooth or WiFi capabilities of mobile computing devices can be used to "bump" the virtually wrapped gift from one mobile computing device, such as a smart phone or tablet, to another mobile computing device which effects sending of the virtual gift from the sender to the recipient. The physical activity or gesture of bumping the computing
10 devices renders the act of giving and receiving a gift more tangible and further enhances the gifting experience. If the giving of the gift from one person to another is intended to be shared with many people, this can be done simultaneously via the one "bump" or action according to an electronic mailing or contacts list stored on the computing device.

15 Users can collect virtual gifts sent to them by other users. Virtual gifts can be listed and sorted according to any parameter, such as the date the gift is received or the name of the sender. Selecting an icon representing the received gift causes a representation of the virtual gift to be displayed on the recipient's computing device 100.

20 With reference to FIG 5, virtual unwrapping of the virtual gift can include the computing device 100 detecting and interpreting hand gestures of the user via the user interface as described above in relation to virtual wrapping of the gift. The user is required to perform hand gestures representative of unwrapping the gift, such as untying ribbons around the
25 virtual box, removing wrapping paper from the box, removing a lid from the box and/or removing the virtual gift from the box. The user's hand gestures are detected by the touch screen and interpreted by the computing device 100 as described above in relation to wrapping of the gift.

30 As shown in FIG 5, arrows or other icons 500 can be displayed to aid users in performing the required hand gestures to virtually wrap or unwrap the virtual gift. One or more arrows or icons can be displayed simultaneously or sequentially as each stage of unwrapping occurs. If the hand gestures are

correct or otherwise appropriate, unwrapping of the gift is carried out and the virtual gift selected or uploaded by the sender is displayed to the recipient on their computing device 100 accordingly.

Where computing device 100 does not comprise a touch screen, or
5 where an alternative form of interaction with the computing device is required or desired, virtual gifts can be wrapped, sent and unwrapped by detecting and interpreting other inputs to the computing device 100, such as cursor or pointer movements via a mouse or other controller, as described above. In other embodiments, inputs can be in the form of voice commands detected
10 by the microphone of the computing device 100 and/or in the form of motion of the computing device 100 detected via an accelerometer of the computing device. A first user can therefore navigate through the functions associated with wrapping, sending and unwrapping virtual gifts in accordance with embodiments of the present invention as described herein in ways other than
15 via the touch screen.

Virtual unwrapping of the virtual gift can include options for different styles and/or speeds of unwrapping based on detecting and interpreting other inputs. For example, a gradual unwrapping option can be selected which extends the time taken to unwrap the virtual gift thus increasing the
20 anticipation. Alternatively, a faster "rip unwrap" style and speed can be selected.

In some embodiments, audio clues indicative of the nature of the virtual gift can be provided. For example, shaking the computing device 100 activates an accelerometer common to portable computing devices, which
25 causes a short audio file selected by the sender at the time of wrapping to be played to the recipient prior to unwrapping of the virtual gift. This feature further enhances the virtual gifting experience.

In some embodiments, points are awarded to and accrued for users for each virtual gift sent, each virtual wrapping purchased, each new user
30 registered with the system. For example, 1 point can be awarded for each virtual gift sent and 10 points awarded to a user if they cause another user to subscribe to the system. 20 points can be awarded for each type of wrapping

paid for and 50 points can be awarded to each user for their subscription. Clearly, this is just one of many points award schemes that could be used. Accrued points are exchangeable for virtual gifts and/or for virtual wrapping paper, ribbons, boxes or other form of virtual packaging.

5 A share functionality of the present invention allows senders and recipients to share their gifting experience with others, for example via their social media account. For example, senders can share with others that they have sent a virtual gift and to whom it has been sent, although the nature of the virtual gift can be concealed. Recipients can share the nature of the gift
10 as well as the sender once the gift has been virtually unwrapped. Hence, the present invention builds a community around the concept of virtual gifting, which can develop into a referral scheme and therefore have the potential to increase the benefit to the charitable organizations.

Embodiments of the present invention can include tactile elements so
15 the visually impaired can also share in the innovation and gifting experience. For example, the vibration device of the computing device can be selectively activated to provide feedback to a visually impaired user to signify features of the present invention as described herein, such as the sending or receiving of a virtual gift, the virtual wrapping or unwrapping of a virtual gift. The audio
20 clues indicative of the nature of the virtual gift will also be useful for the visually impaired to enjoy the present invention.

Embodiments of the present invention are designed for broad universal appeal across a wide range of cultures, ages and levels of ability. In some embodiments, particularly where the invention is utilised on a
25 computing device 100 in the form of a smart phone, this is achieved by incorporating universal design principles to enhance its usability and intuitive functionality.

With reference to FIG 6, according to another aspect, the present invention resides in a method 600 for virtual gifting comprising, at step 610,
30 receiving a selection of a virtual gift via a user interface of a first computing device 100a of a first user. The method 600 can include at step 620 virtually wrapping the virtual gift in response to inputs via the user interface of the first

computing device 100, as described herein. The method 600 further includes at step 630 sending the wrapped virtual gift from the first computing device 100a via the communication network 230 to the second computing device 100b of a second user who is the recipient of the virtual gift. This can include
5 sending the virtual gift directly to the computing device of the recipient, via the data storage device 205 or to a social media address of the recipient as described herein. The method 600 further includes at step 640 the second user virtually unwrapping the virtual gift via the second computing device 100b detecting inputs from the second user. The method can include the
10 further details of selecting, wrapping, sending, receiving and unwrapping virtual gifts in accordance with embodiments of the present invention as described herein.

According to a further aspect, the present invention resides in an apparatus 100 for virtual gifting comprising memory 120 having stored
15 therein computer program code components 130. Apparatus 100 comprises a processor 105 in communication with memory 120 for selectively executing computer program code components 130 to effect receiving a selection of a virtual gift via a user interface of the computing device 100a. Processor 105 selectively executes computer program code components 130 to effect
20 virtually wrapping the virtual gift in response to detecting inputs via the user interface and to effect sending the wrapped virtual gift from the first computing device via the communication network 230 to a second computing device 100b of a second user who is the recipient of the virtual gift. Selective execution of computer program code components 130 also effects further
25 aspects and features of selecting, wrapping, sending, receiving and unwrapping virtual gifts as described herein.

According to some embodiments, the virtual gift can include a 3D animation or model, which can be manipulated and viewed from all angles. This can be implemented using a real-time 3D PVR plug-in that pre-defines
30 the 3D animation or model, which can be imported to the computing device 100, thus avoiding the need to download large 3D files. In some embodiments, the 3D animation or model can be of a box comprising a lid in

which the image of the gift is stored/wrapped. The selections of virtual wrapping, such as paper and ribbons, can be viewed on the model of the box until the desired combination is found. When the virtual gift is sent to the computing device 100 of the recipient, a pop-up (push) notification is displayed. Opening the application on their computing device 100 enables the recipient to commence opening of their virtual gift.

The computing device 100 detects the recipient's hand gesture via the user interface, such as a downward swipe on the touchscreen of the device 100, for example in the location of a ribbon of the virtual wrapping. This begins the first of the 3D unwrap sequences and a bow of the ribbon unties and fall around the box. Detection of another hand gesture, for example by swiping across the touchscreen, causes the paper to unwrap and fall away revealing the box. Detection of a further hand gesture, for example a swipe up gesture, the lid of the box lifts, falls back and the image sent by the sender will rise from the box fill the screen, spin around and be revealed.

In some embodiments, it is envisaged that a user can capture an image, for example, using the camera on their computing device 100 and generate customized virtual wrapping for the virtual gift from the captured image. For example, a user can capture an image and the image is replicated on the virtual wrapping paper and/or ribbon once or multiple times, e.g. in the form of a repeating pattern. Alternatively, part of a captured image can be used for the virtual wrapping, such as a portion of a landscape scene or one person's face from a crowd of people.

It is envisaged that in some embodiments, customized virtual wrapping can include a company name, brand and/or logo. In some embodiments, the company can pay a sponsorship fee for such advertising. Such customized wrapping paper can relate to the image of the gift. For example, the image can be of a smartphone relating to a real or virtual gift and the virtual wrapping can display the brand of the smartphone.

FIGS 7-12 show further screen shots illustrating embodiments of the invention.

FIG 7 is a screenshot of a display of the computing device 100

displaying a menu to receive inputs from a user to select an image of the virtual gift, capture an image of the virtual gift using the camera of the computing device 100 or to download an image of the virtual gift, e.g. from a website.

5 FIG 8 is a screenshot of a display of the computing device 100 displaying an image of the virtual gift that is to be wrapped. Wrapping of the image can be commenced by receiving a user selection of the Wrap Presi icon. Alternatively an alternative image can be selected by receiving a user selection of the Choose Again option.

10 FIG 9 is a screenshot of a display of the computing device 100 displaying one option of virtual wrapping paper for the virtual gift. Different options of virtual wrapping paper can be scrolled through by detecting hand gestures of the user via the touch screen.

15 FIG 10 is a screenshot of a display of the computing device 100 displaying a 3D image of the box wrapped in wrapping paper selected by the first user, but before the ribbon has been selected.

FIG 11 is a screenshot of a display of the computing device 100 displaying options, such as colours and textures for ribbons for the virtual wrapping.

20 FIG 12 is a screenshot of a display of the computing device 100 displaying a 3D image of the box wrapped in the virtual wrapping paper and ribbon with an accompanying message ready to be sent to the second user (recipient).

25 In the screenshots shown in FIGS 7-12, the menu bar shows the stages in the gifting process and highlights the stage to which the current display belongs.

30 According to some embodiments, selecting, wrapping, sending, receiving and/or unwrapping of virtual gifts can occur in an augmented reality (AR). For example, images of the virtual gifts can be superimposed on real time images captured by the camera of the computing device 100 of the sender and/or the recipient. Hence, selecting, wrapping and sending of a virtual gift by the first user (sender) can occur in a first augmented reality

environment using the first computing device 100a and receiving and unwrapping the virtual gift by the second user (receiver) can occur in a second augmented reality environment using the second computing device 100b.

5 In some embodiments, 3rd party organizations selling their products and/or services online via their websites 250 can include the option for a virtual gift corresponding to the real product or service that has been purchased to be sent. An image of the real product or service purchased via the website can be virtually wrapped, sent, received and virtually unwrapped
10 as described herein.

Hence embodiments of the present invention address or at least ameliorate one or more of the aforementioned problems of the prior art. The virtual gifting system, method and apparatus of the present invention avoid the aforementioned drawbacks of conventional gifting and even shopping
15 online. Embodiments of the present invention save time in selecting a gift, are more cost effective and provide environmentally sustainable alternatives compared with the prior art. Embodiments of the present invention are easy to use for people of all ages, abilities and incomes and nominated charities benefit from every virtual gift. People enjoy the process of giving and
20 receiving gifts without the inconvenience and people can share their experiences with their friends and colleagues via social media sites. Embodiments of the present invention also promote a referral base and community advertising.

Hence, embodiments of the present invention thus contribute to the
25 economic benefit of each country in which the invention is implemented. Further, embodiments of the present invention described herein comprise a mode or manner of achieving an end result which is an artificially created state of affairs of utility in the field of economic endeavour, which involves a physical, observable effect causing the electronic computing devices 100 to
30 function in an improved specific manner in relation to virtual gifting as described herein.

In this specification, the terms "comprise", "comprises", "comprising" or

similar terms are intended to mean a non-exclusive inclusion, such that an apparatus that comprises a list of elements does not include those elements solely, but may well include other elements not listed.

5 The reference to any prior art in this specification is not, and should not be taken as, an acknowledgement or any form of suggestion that the prior art forms part of the common general knowledge.

10 Throughout the specification the aim has been to describe the invention without limiting the invention to any one embodiment or specific collection of features. Persons skilled in the relevant art may realize variations from the specific embodiments that will nonetheless fall within the scope of the invention.

CLAIMS:

1. A system for virtual gifting comprising:
 - 5 a data storage unit having stored therein data relating to subscribers of the system, virtual gifts and virtual wrapping for the virtual gifts; and
 - 10 a first computing device in communication with the data storage unit via a communications network, the computing device comprising a user interface to detect inputs from a first user to enable a first user to select a virtual gift, virtually wrap the virtual gift and send the virtual gift to a second computing device of a second user who is the recipient of the virtual gift.
- 15 2. The system of claim 1, wherein a user interface of the second computer device detects inputs from the second user to enable the second user to virtually unwrap the virtual gift.
- 20 3. The system of claim 1 or 2, wherein virtual wrapping and/or unwrapping of the virtual gift includes detecting and interpreting hand gestures of a user via the user interface in the form of a touch screen.
- 25 4. The system of any preceding claim, wherein virtual wrapping and/or unwrapping of the virtual gift includes detecting and interpreting one or more of the following inputs of a user via the user interface: movement of a cursor, pointer or controller; a voice command; motion of the computing device.
- 30 5. The system of claim 1, wherein virtual wrapping of the virtual gift is carried out automatically in a "wrap on the run" option by detecting a dedicated user input.
6. The system of any of claims 1 to 5, wherein virtual unwrapping of the

virtual gift includes one or more options for a different style and/or a different speed of unwrapping based on detecting and interpreting one or more other inputs.

- 5 7. The system of any preceding claim, wherein one or more audio clues indicative of the nature of the virtual gift are provided.
8. The system of claim 7, wherein the audio clue is provided in response to shaking the second computing device.
- 10 9. The system of any preceding claim, wherein sending the virtual gift to the recipient includes an invitation to register with the system.
- 15 10. The system of any preceding claim, wherein the data storage unit receives data relating to the virtual gift from the first computing device and transmits data relating to the virtual gift to the second computing device to enable the second computing device to render images relating to the virtual gift.
- 20 11. The system of any of claims 1 to 9, wherein the virtual gift is sent directly to the computing device of the recipient where the recipient is registered with the system.
- 25 12. The system of any of claims 1 to 9, wherein the virtual gift is sent to a social media address of the recipient where the recipient is not registered with the system.
- 30 13. The system of any preceding claim, wherein the user interface detects one or more inputs from a first user to enable the first user to select virtual wrapping for the gift in the form of virtual wrapping paper and/or virtual ribbons and/or virtual boxes or other form of virtual packaging.

14. The system of any preceding claim, wherein a financial institution is in communication with the first computing device via the communications network for processing a payment from the first user for the virtual gift and/or for the virtual wrapping.
- 5
15. The system of claim 14, wherein a proportion of the payment is credited to an account of a nominated charitable organisation via the communications network.
- 10
16. The system of any preceding claim, wherein points are awarded to and accrued for users for one or more of the following: each virtual gift sent; each virtual wrapping purchased; each new user registered with the system.
- 15
17. The system of claim 16, wherein accrued points are exchangeable for virtual gifts and/or for virtual wrapping paper, ribbons, boxes or other form of virtual packaging.
- 20
18. The system of any preceding claim, wherein the virtual gift includes one or more of the following; an image; an animation; a 3D image; a 3D animation; a 3D model; an email; a SMS message; a MMS message; a recorded voice message; customized virtual wrapping generated from an image; an augmented reality.
- 25
19. A method for virtual gifting comprising:
- receiving a selection of a virtual gift via a user interface of a first computing device of a first user;
- virtually wrapping the virtual gift in response to detecting one or more inputs via the user interface; and
- 30
- sending the wrapped virtual gift from the first computing device via a communication network to a second computing device of a second user who is the recipient of the virtual gift.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein virtual wrapping and/or unwrapping of the virtual gift includes detecting and interpreting one or more of the following inputs of a user: hand gestures of a user where the user interface in the form of a touch screen; movement of a cursor, pointer or controller; a voice command; motion of the computing device.
21. The method of claim 19 or 20, including a data storage unit receiving data relating to the virtual gift via the communication network from the first computing device and sending data relating to the virtual gift to the second computing device to enable the second computing device to render images relating to the virtual gift.
22. An apparatus for virtual gifting comprising:
- a memory having stored therein data relating to virtual gifts and virtual wrapping for the virtual gifts;
 - a processor in communication with the memory for selectively executing computer program code components to effect:
 - receiving a selection of a virtual gift via a user interface of the apparatus from a first user;
 - virtually wrapping the virtual gift in response to inputs via the user interface from the first user; and
 - sending the wrapped virtual gift from the apparatus via a communication network to a second apparatus of a second user who is the recipient of the virtual gift.
23. The apparatus of claim 22, further comprising one or more of the following:
- a microphone in communication with the processor to detect a voice command which is interpreted by the processor to effect virtual wrapping and/or unwrapping of the virtual gift;
 - an accelerometer in communication with the processor to

detect motion of the computing device which is interpreted by the processor to effect virtual wrapping and/or unwrapping of the virtual gift.

1/9

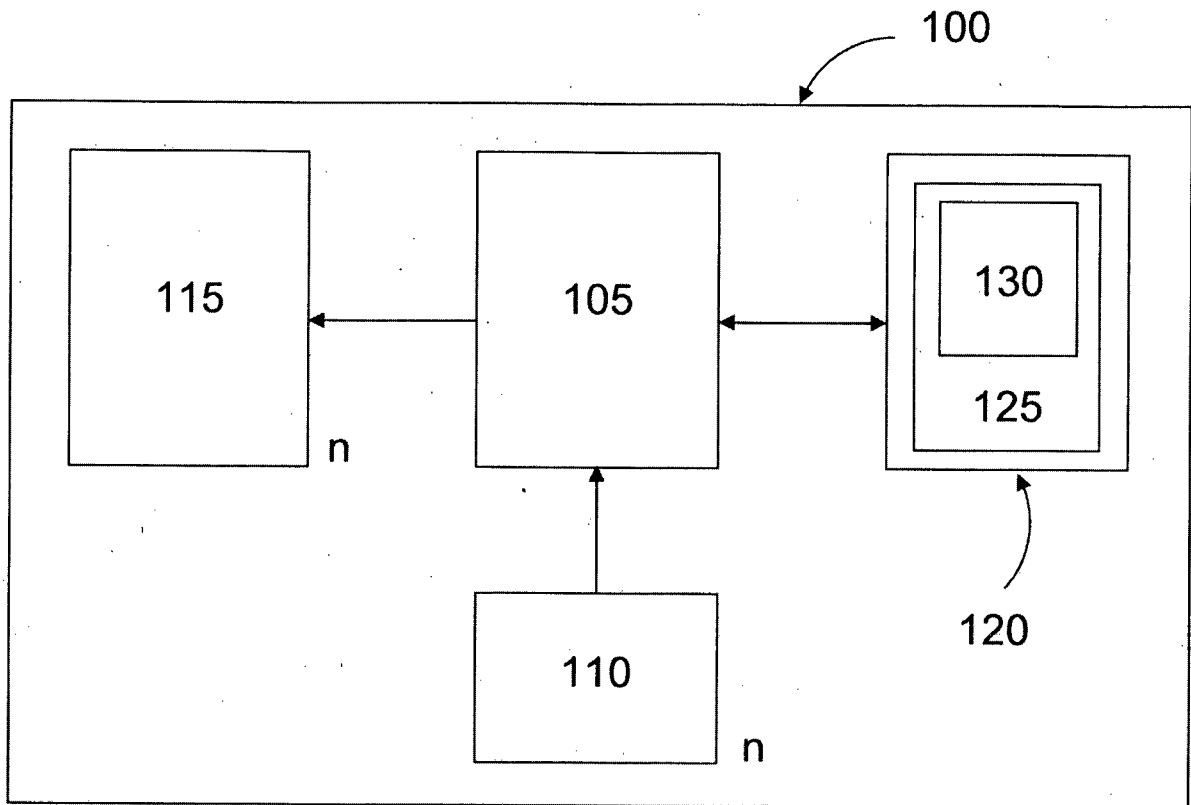


FIG. 1

2/9

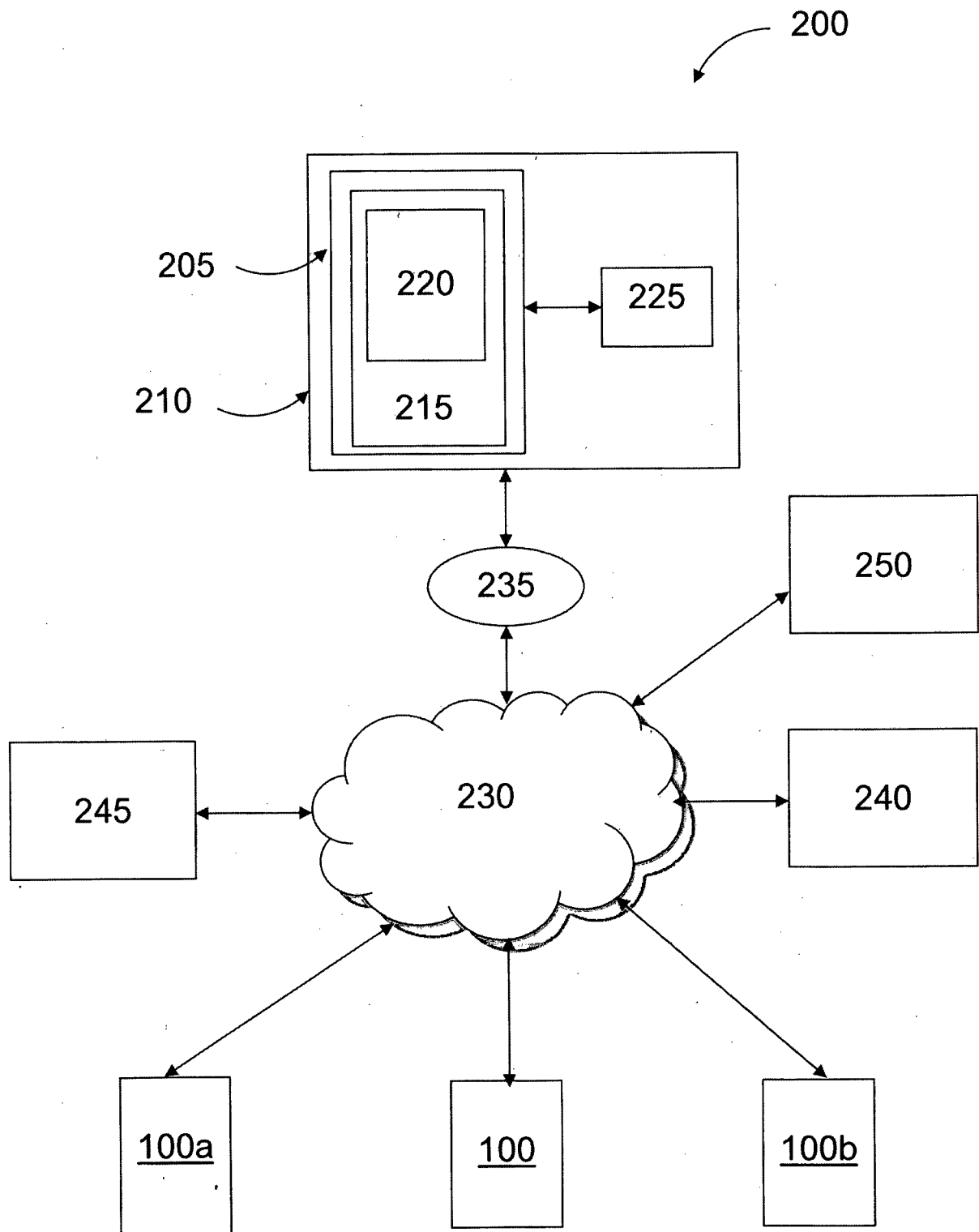


FIG. 2

3/9

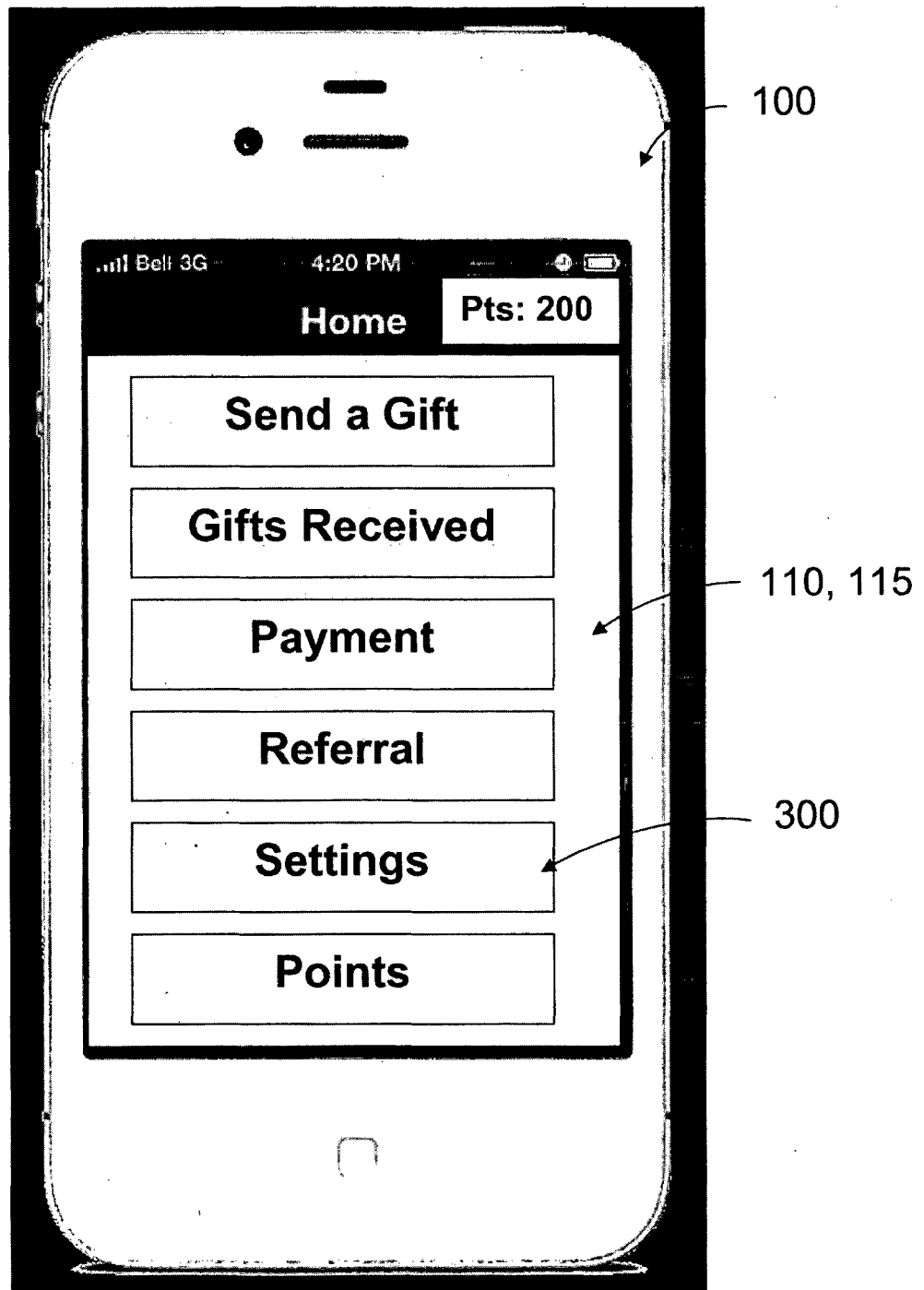


FIG. 3

4/9

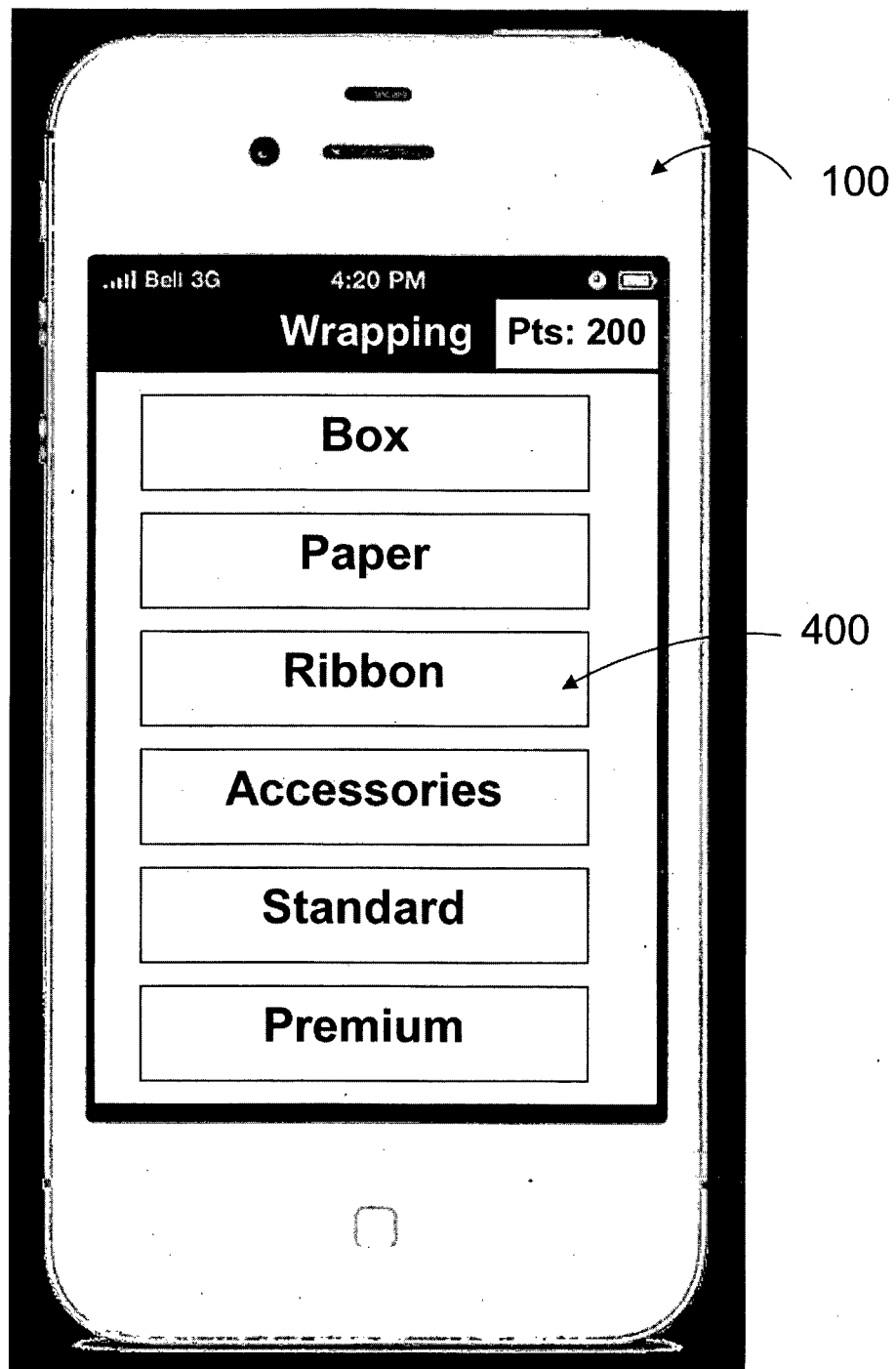


FIG. 4

5/9

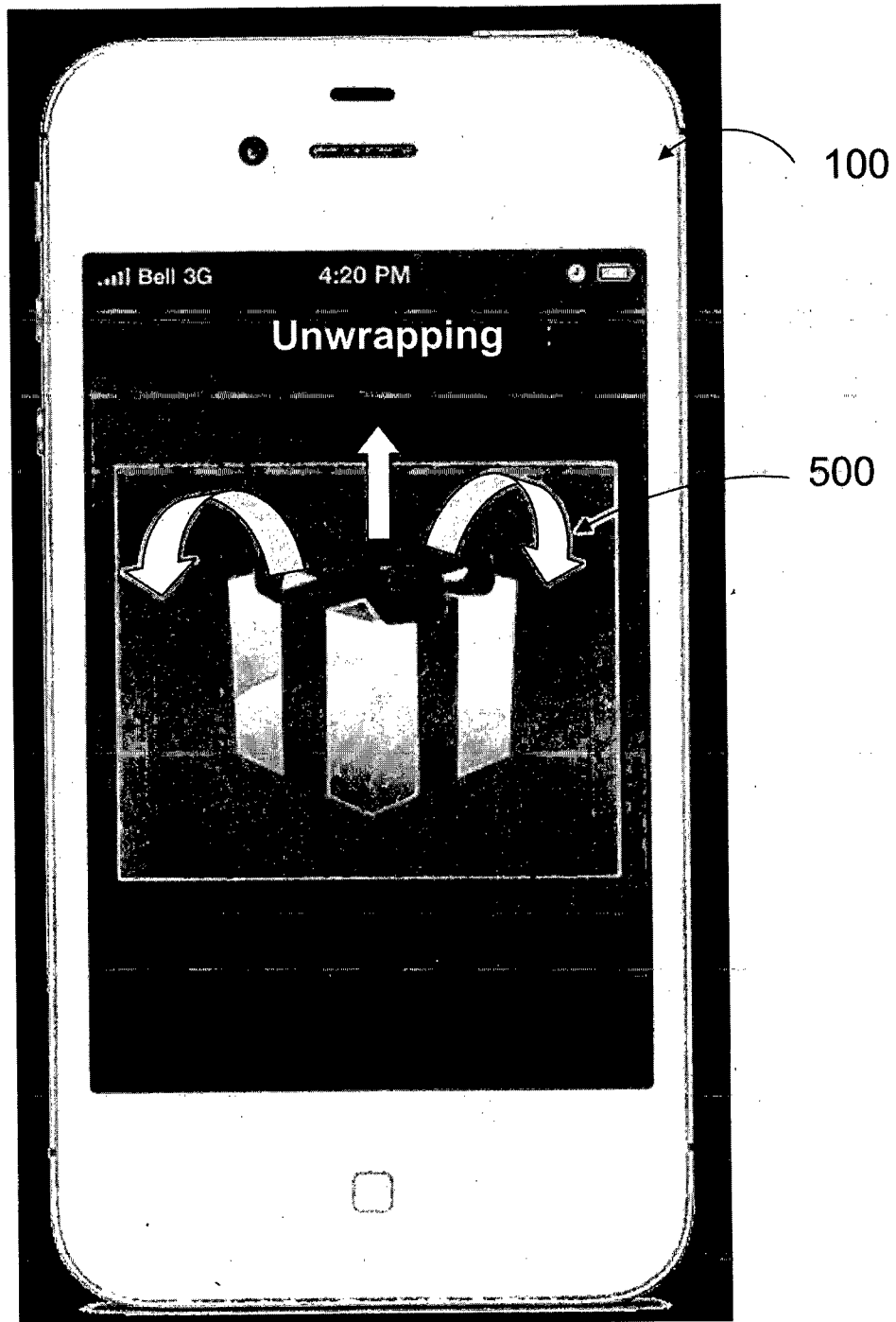


FIG. 5

6/9

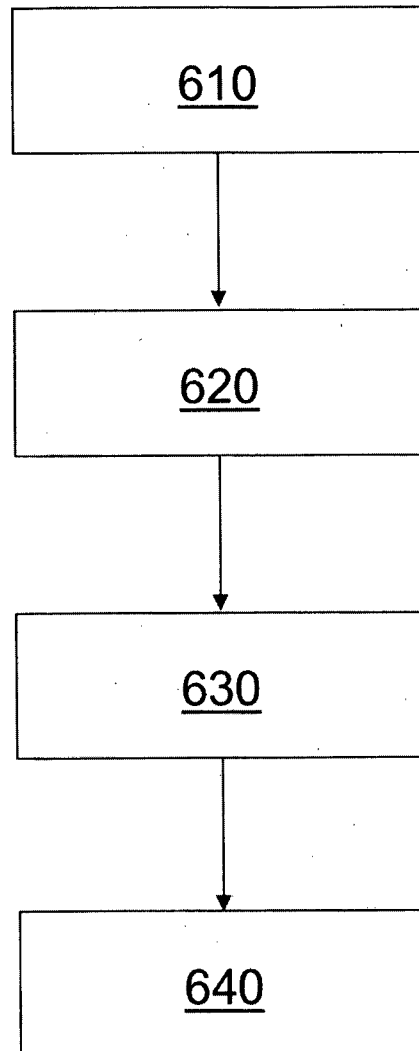


FIG. 6

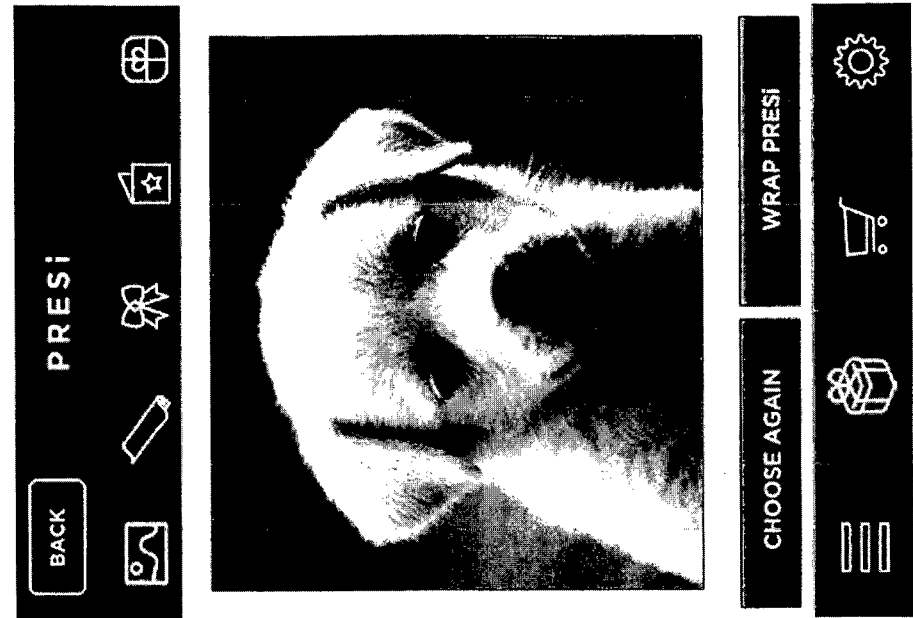


FIG. 8

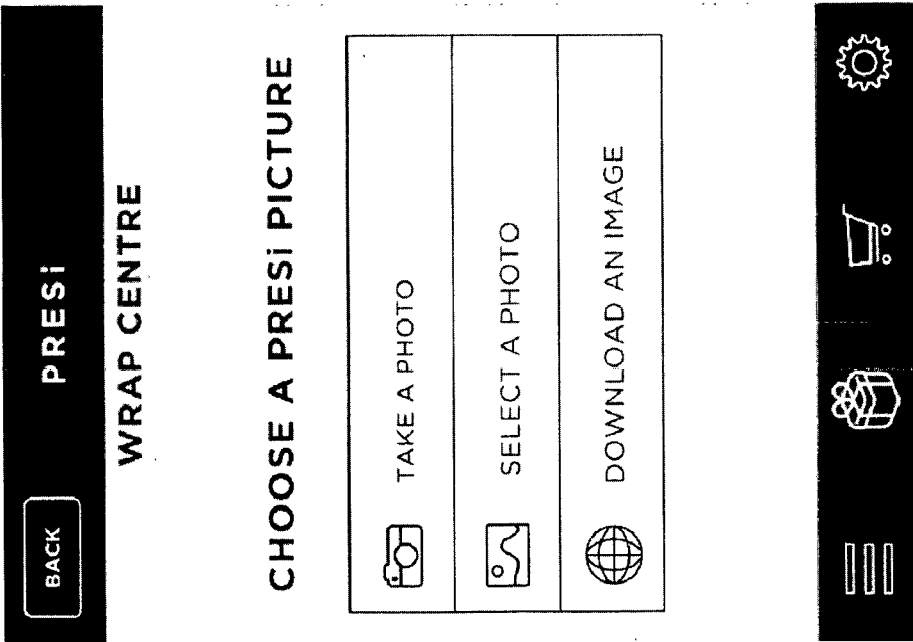


FIG. 7



FIG. 9



FIG. 10



FIG. 11

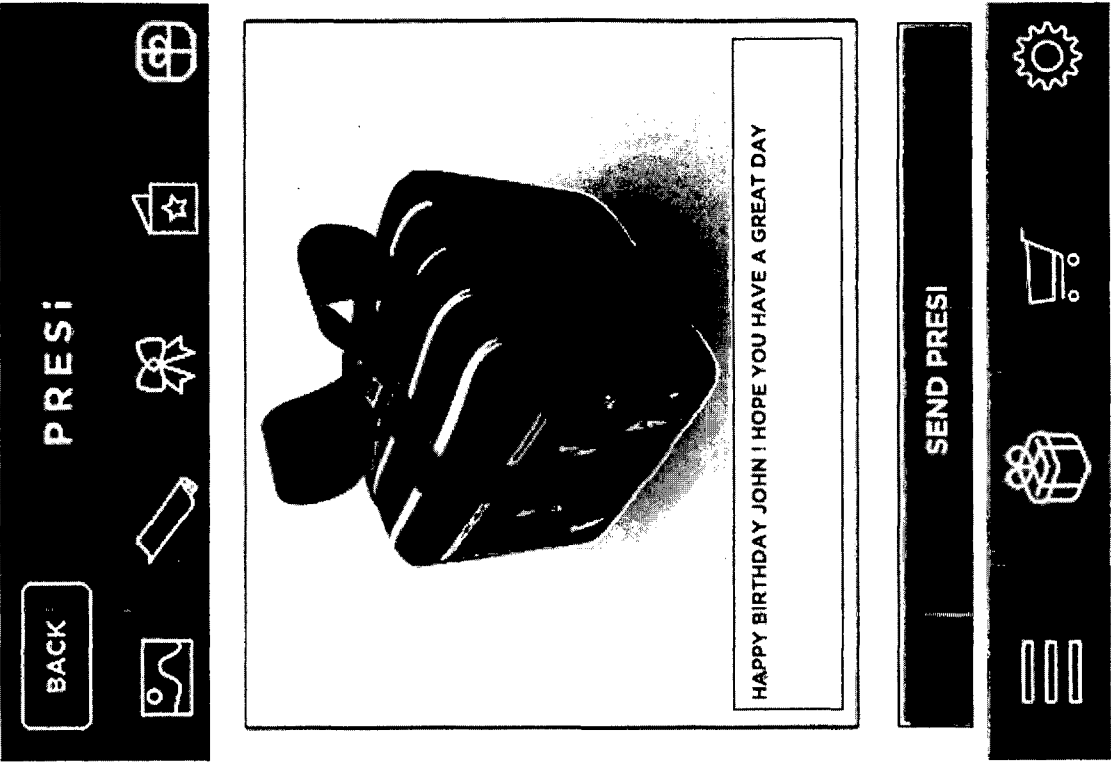


FIG. 12

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/AU2013/000807

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

G06Q 30/00 (2012.01) G06Q 30/06 (2012.01) 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)

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

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

WPI, EPODOC, Patent Lens, Google, key words include: G06Q, G06F, gift, present, virtual, digital, wrapping, paper (and similar terms)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
	Documents are listed in the continuation of Box C	



Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C



See patent family annex

* "A"	Special categories of cited documents: document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	"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
"E"	earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date	"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
"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)	"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
"O"	document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means	"&"	document member of the same patent family
"P"	document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed		

Date of the actual completion of the international search
19 September 2013

Date of mailing of the international search report
19 September 2013

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT		International application No.
C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		PCT/AU2013/000807
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US 2012/0179620 A1 (FLIDERMAN et al.) 12 July 2012 paragraphs [0003], [0010]	1-23
A L	Second Life Marketplace, Gift Box ~ 15 Animated Gift Boxes, 16 February 2002 (see date of review comments). retrieved 16 August 2012 from the internet, https://marketplace.secondlife.com/p/Gift-Box-15-Animated-Gift-Boxes-Variety-Pack-Top-Comes-Off-When-Touched-Your-Gift-Is-Delivered/2592130 see title and main picture	1-23
A L	Virtual Gifts 4U, 11 May 2011. retrieved 16 August 2012 from the internet, http://web.archive.org/web/20110511152043/http://www.virtualgifts4u.com/sendv1.htm see page 1	1-23
A L	BERK, A. 'Virtual wrapping paper', 22 October 2011. retrieved 16 August 2012 from the internet, http://tmip.blogspot.com.au/2010/10/virtual-wrapping-paper.html see heading: virtual wrapping paper	1-23
A L	Facebook features, Gifts, 14 July 2011. retrieved 16 August 2012 from the internet, http://web.archive.org/web/20110714173711/http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook_features see section 6.2, Gifts	1-23

Form PCT/ISA/210 (fifth sheet) (July 2009)

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT Information on patent family members		International application No. PCT/AU2013/000807
This Annex lists known 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/s Cited in Search Report		Patent Family Member/s
Publication Number	Publication Date	Publication Number
		Publication Date
US 2012/0179620 A1	12 Jul 2012	None
End of Annex		
Due to data integration issues this family listing may not include 10 digit Australian applications filed since May 2001.		