

(51) International Patent Classification:
G06F 15/16 (2006.01) **G06Q 50/00** (2006.01)(21) International Application Number:
PCT/US2009/062743(22) International Filing Date:
30 October 2009 (30.10.2009)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
12/323,814 26 November 2008 (26.11.2008) US(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): **MICROSOFT CORPORATION** [US/US]; One Microsoft Way, Redmond, Washington 98052-6399 (US).(72) Inventors: **SUNKAMMURALI, Krishna Kumar**; c/o Microsoft Cororation, One Microsoft Way, Redmond, Washington 98052-6399 (US). **BURGER, Michel**; c/o Microsoft Cororation, One Microsoft Way, Redmond, Washington 98052-6399 (US). **BADWE, Ashutosh**; c/o Microsoft Cororation, One Microsoft Way, Redmond, Washington 98052-6399 (US). **KACHARIA, Jignesh**; c/o Microsoft Cororation, One Microsoft Way, Redmond, Washington 98052-6399 (US). **NAGASUBRAMANI, Rammohan**; c/o Microsoft Cororation, One Microsoft Way, Redmond, Washington 98052-6399 (US). **D'SOUZA, Roy Peter**; c/o Microsoft Cororation, One Microsoft Way, Redmond, Washington 98052-6399 (US).

(81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM, AO, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BH, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CL, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DO, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, GT, HN, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KM, KN, KP, KR, KZ, LA, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LY, MA, MD, ME, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MY, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PE, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RS, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SM, ST, SV, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, NA, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MC, MK, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, SM, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Declarations under Rule 4.17:

- as to applicant's entitlement to apply for and be granted a patent (Rule 4.17(ii))
- as to the applicant's entitlement to claim the priority of the earlier application (Rule 4.17(iii))

[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: ONLINE SERVICE SYNDICATION

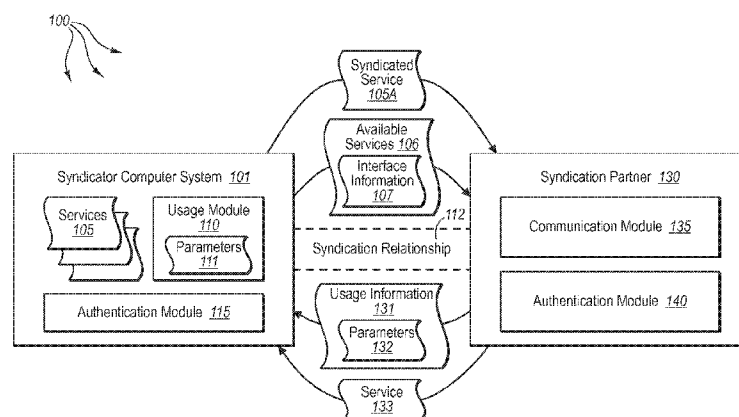


FIG. 1

(57) **Abstract:** Embodiments described herein are directed to syndicating an online service to at least one syndication partner of a syndicator. In one embodiment, a computer system determines that a syndication relationship has been established between a syndicator and a syndication partner, where the syndication relationship is established to provide syndicated services to syndication partners and clients. The computer system indicates which services provided by the syndicator are available for syndication to the syndication partner and which type of usage information the partner is to provide in order to use the syndicator's services. The computer system receives usage information from the syndication partner specifying which services are to be syndicated and specifying parameters for those services indicating operating parameters specific to the use of the syndicated services. Based on the received usage information, the computer system provides the service to the syndication partner in the manner indicated by the received usage information.



Published:

- *without international search report and to be republished
upon receipt of that report (Rule 48.2(g))*

ONLINE SERVICE SYNDICATION

BACKGROUND

[0001] Computers have become highly integrated in the workforce, in the home, in mobile devices, and many other places. Computers can process massive amounts of information quickly and efficiently. Software applications designed to run on computer systems allow users to perform a wide variety of functions including business applications, schoolwork, entertainment and more. Software applications are often designed to perform specific tasks, such as word processor applications for drafting documents, or email programs for sending, receiving and organizing email.

[0002] In many cases, software applications are designed to interact with other software applications or other computer systems. For example, a client computer system might connect to a server in a datacenter to access a service provided by the datacenter. The service could provide simple or very complex functionality, and may be able to communicate with other services in the process. Such services are often referred to as software as a service or SAAS.

[0003] In some cases, service developers may desire to offload the finalized service to another person or business for hosting. Such hosting businesses often have proprietary implementations in place, requiring the developer to add specific scripts or other code to enable communication between the hosting company's servers and the developer's service. Moreover, in many cases, hosting servers can only handle limited numbers of user-submitted services.

BRIEF SUMMARY

[0004] Embodiments described herein are directed to syndicating an online service to at least one syndication partner of a syndicator. In one embodiment, a computer system determines that a syndication relationship has been established between a syndicator and a syndication partner, where the syndication relationship is established to provide syndicated services to syndication partners and clients. The computer system indicates which services provided by the syndicator are available for syndication to the syndication partner and which type of usage information the partner is to provide in order to use the syndicator's services. The computer system

receives usage information from the syndication partner specifying which services are to be syndicated and specifying parameters for those services indicating operating parameters specific to the use of the syndicated services. Based on the received usage information, the computer system provides the service to the syndication partner in the manner indicated by the received usage information.

[0005] In another embodiment, a syndicator computer system in a computer networking environment includes a system for syndicating an online service to at least one syndication partner. The system includes a processor, system memory and a service delivery platform configured to establish a syndication relationship between a syndicator and a plurality of different syndication partners, where the syndication relationship is established to provide syndicated services to syndication partners and clients, and where each syndication relationship is established using metadata provided by each syndication partner to the syndicator.

[0006] The system also includes a mediation platform that allows each of the syndication partners to integrate with the syndicator through a single point of access. The integration includes providing a catalog listing of all the online services provided by the syndicator including built-in services for managing services syndicated through the syndication relationship, receiving an indication from a syndication partner including metadata that indicates which services are to be syndicated and further indicates parameters for providing the service, and providing those online services indicated in the metadata to the syndication partner, where the services are provided according to the parameters included in the received metadata.

[0007] This Summary is provided to introduce a selection of concepts in a simplified form that are further described below in the Detailed Description. This Summary is not intended to identify key features or essential features of the claimed subject matter, nor is it intended to be used as an aid in determining the scope of the claimed subject matter.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0008] To further clarify the above and other advantages and features of embodiments of the present invention, a more particular description of

embodiments of the present invention will be rendered by reference to the appended drawings. It is appreciated that these drawings depict only typical embodiments of the invention and are therefore not to be considered limiting of its scope. The invention will be described and explained with additional specificity and detail through the use of the accompanying drawings in which:

[0009] Figure 1 illustrates a computer architecture in which embodiments of the present invention may operate including syndicating an online service to at least one syndication partner of the syndicator.

[0010] Figure 2 illustrates a flowchart of an example method for syndicating an online service to at least one syndication partner of the syndicator.

[0011] Figure 3 illustrates an embodiment of the present invention in which various syndication partners interact with a syndicator computer system.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0012] Embodiments described herein are directed to syndicating an online service to at least one syndication partner of a syndicator. In one embodiment, a computer system determines that a syndication relationship has been established between a syndicator and a syndication partner, where the syndication relationship is established to provide syndicated services to syndication partners and clients. The computer system indicates which services provided by the syndicator are available for syndication to the syndication partner and which type of usage information the partner is to provide in order to use the syndicator's services. The computer system receives usage information from the syndication partner specifying which services are to be syndicated and specifying parameters for those services indicating operating parameters specific to the use of the syndicated services. Based on the received usage information, the computer system provides the service to the syndication partner in the manner indicated by the received usage information.

[0013] In another embodiment, a syndicator computer system in a computer networking environment includes a system for syndicating an online service to at least one syndication partner. The system includes a processor, system memory and a service delivery platform configured to establish a syndication relationship between a syndicator and a plurality of different syndication partners, where the

syndication relationship is established to provide syndicated services to syndication partners and clients, and where each syndication relationship is established using metadata provided by each syndication partner to the syndicator.

[0014] The system also includes a mediation platform that allows each of the syndication partners to integrate with the syndicator through a single point of access. The integration includes providing a catalog listing of all the online services provided by the syndicator including built-in services for managing services syndicated through the syndication relationship, receiving an indication from a syndication partner including metadata that indicates which services are to be syndicated and further indicates parameters for providing the service, and providing those online services indicated in the metadata to the syndication partner, where the services are provided according to the parameters included in the received metadata.

[0015] Embodiments of the present invention may comprise or utilize a special purpose or general-purpose computer including computer hardware, as discussed in greater detail below. Embodiments within the scope of the present invention also include physical and other computer-readable media for carrying or storing computer-executable instructions and/or data structures. Such computer-readable media can be any available media that can be accessed by a general purpose or special purpose computer system. Computer-readable media that store computer-executable instructions are physical storage media including recordable-type storage media. Computer-readable media that carry computer-executable instructions are transmission media. Thus, by way of example, and not limitation, embodiments of the invention can comprise at least two distinctly different kinds of computer-readable media: physical storage media and transmission media.

[0016] Physical storage media includes RAM, ROM, EEPROM, CD-ROM or other optical disk storage, magnetic disk storage or other magnetic storage devices, or any other medium which can be used to store desired program code means in the form of computer-executable instructions or data structures and which can be accessed by a general purpose or special purpose computer.

[0017] A “network” is defined as one or more data links that enable the transport of electronic data between computer systems and/or modules and/or other electronic devices. When information is transferred or provided over a network or another communications connection (either hardwired, wireless, or a combination of
5 hardwired or wireless) to a computer, the computer properly views the connection as a transmission medium. Transmission media can include a network and/or data links which can be used to carry or transport desired program code means in the form of computer-executable instructions or data structures and which can be accessed by a general purpose or special purpose computer. Combinations of the
10 above should also be included within the scope of computer-readable media.

[0018] However, it should be understood, that upon reaching various computer system components, program code means in the form of computer-executable instructions or data structures can be transferred automatically from transmission media to physical storage media. For example, computer-executable instructions or
15 data structures received over a network or data link can be buffered in RAM within a network interface card, and then eventually transferred to computer system RAM and/or to less volatile physical storage media at a computer system. Thus, it should be understood that physical storage media can be included in computer system components that also (or even primarily) utilize transmission media.

[0019] Computer-executable instructions comprise, for example, instructions and data which cause a general purpose computer, special purpose computer, or special purpose processing device to perform a certain function or group of functions. The computer executable instructions may be, for example, binaries, intermediate
20 format instructions such as assembly language, or even source code. Although the subject matter has been described in language specific to structural features and/or methodological acts, it is to be understood that the subject matter defined in the appended claims is not necessarily limited to the described features or acts
25 described above. Rather, the described features and acts are disclosed as example forms of implementing the claims.

[0020] Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the invention may be practiced in network computing environments with many types of computer system

configurations, including, personal computers, desktop computers, laptop computers, message processors, hand-held devices, multi-processor systems, microprocessor-based or programmable consumer electronics, network PCs, minicomputers, mainframe computers, mobile telephones, PDAs, pagers, routers, switches, and the like. The invention may also be practiced in distributed system environments where local and remote computer systems, which are linked (either by hardwired data links, wireless data links, or by a combination of hardwired and wireless data links) through a network, both perform tasks. In a distributed system environment, program modules may be located in both local and remote memory storage devices.

[0021] Figure 1 illustrates a computer architecture 100 in which the principles of the present invention may be employed. Computer architecture 100 includes syndicator computer system 101. As used herein, a syndicator refers generally to a provider of services that may be syndicated to syndication partners or other users. The process of syndication generally refers to a first party providing services that are usable by other parties, and that may, in turn, be provided to other parties. For example, a developer may submit a service developed by the developer to a hosting party. The hosting party may provide a group of services, from which the developer can specify which services are to be provided in conjunction with the developer's service. Thus, a third party may access the developer's service that is bundled with, or implements, services provided by the hosting service. In this manner, the developer's service and/or the hosting party's services may be syndicated to a third party. This process will be explained in greater detail below.

[0022] Syndicator computer system 101 may include any type of computing system or systems. For instance, syndicator computer system 101 may comprise a single computing system or may be distributed among multiple computing systems. The services and other modules of syndicator computer system 101 may be distributed among a plurality of different computing systems. In a datacenter scenario, various computers in the datacenter may be configured to provide the services of or act as a syndicator computer system.

[0023] Syndicator computer system 101 includes services 105, usage module 110 with parameters 111, and authentication module 115. Services 105 may include any type of computer service that provides computing functionality including applets, functions, methods, and/or full software applications. Usage module 110
5 may be configured to receive usage information 131 including parameters 132 from syndication partner 130. The usage information may include indications of which syndicator-provided services are to be used in conjunction with developer-provided (syndication partner-provided) service 133. It should be noted that syndication partner 130 may or may not be the developer of any services uploaded to or
10 provided to syndicator computer system 101. As mentioned above, a syndication partner may upload service 133 to syndicator computer system 101 for hosting. The partner may also indicate in usage information 131 which syndicator-provided services 105 are to be provided in conjunction with service 133. Parameters 132 may indicate various settings or configurations which are to be used when hosting
15 service 133. Parameters 111 may include received parameters 132 and/or other stored parameters from other syndication partners.

[0024] Syndication relationship 112 represents the relationship between syndicator computer system 101 (hereinafter referred to as syndicator 101) and syndication partner 130. Syndicator 101 may establish syndication relationships with multiple
20 different syndication partners (hereinafter simply “partners”). Partner 130 may initiate communication with syndicator 101 using communication module 135. In some cases, partner 130 may use authentication module 140 to authenticate to syndicator 101 which responds using authentication module 115. Once syndication relationship 112 is established, communication between syndicator 101 and partner
25 130 may occur without login or further authentication. Syndicator 101 may indicate to partner 130 which services are available (e.g., in available services 106) and may send interface information 107 indicating how a partner may interface with and use the services of syndicator 101. Upon receiving usage information and/or service 133, syndicator 101 may provide a syndicated service 105A to
30 syndication partner 130 and/or any other third party users or syndicatees of

syndication partner 130. This process will be explained in greater detail below with regard to method 200 of Figure 2.

[0025] Figure 2 illustrates a flowchart of a method 200 for syndicating an online service to at least one syndication partner of the syndicator computer system. The method 200 will now be described with frequent reference to the components and data of environment 100.

[0026] Method 200 includes an act of determining that a syndication relationship has been established between a syndicator and a syndication partner, the syndication relationship being established to provide syndicated services to syndication partners and clients (act 210). For example, syndicator 101 may determine that syndication relationship 112 has been established between the syndicator and syndication partner 130. Syndication relationship 112 may be established to provide syndicated services 105/105A to syndication partners and other (third party) clients. In some cases, syndicator 101 and partner 130 authenticate to each other in a mutual authentication to establish the syndication relationship. For example, partner 130 may use authentication module 140 to send login credentials or other authentication information to authentication module 115 of syndicator 101. In other cases, relationship 112 may be established through a trusted third party, where both the syndicator 101 and the syndication partner 130 are authenticated by the trusted third party.

[0027] In some embodiments, all, or at least a portion, of the syndication partners may establish syndication relationships with syndicator 101 through a single syndicator process. Such a process may also define how information is to be communicated between the syndicator and other syndication partners. Moreover, this process may define escalation rules and alternative paths of communication between partners and the syndicator. For example, if a communication error or other problem occurred, syndicator 101 may determine how such problems are to be handled and/or how to divert communication to another working path.

[0028] In some cases, syndicator 101 may, after establishing a syndication relationship with syndication partner 130, receive updated information from a syndication partner. This updated information may change the authentication

credentials, usage information, parameters or any other information previously associated with the established syndication relationship between the syndicator and syndicatee (partner 130). Each partner's information may be stored in some type of information store on (or accessible by) syndicator 101. This information may be updated automatically upon receiving updated usage information from the syndication partner. Thus, the syndication relationship may be continually updated upon receiving new information from partner 130.

[0029] Method 200 includes an act of the syndicator indicating which services provided by the syndicator are available for syndication to the syndication partner and which type of usage information the partner is to provide in order to use the syndicator's services (act 220). For example, syndicator 101 may indicate in indication 106 which services 105 are available for syndication to syndication partner 130 and may further indicate in interface information 107 which type of usage information 131 the partner is to provide to implement services 105. In this manner, a partner may be able to determine which services are available for syndication to the partner and other users. Moreover, the partner may be able to determine from services information 106 which services are best suited to work in combination with the partner's uploaded service(s) 133.

[0030] In some embodiments, syndicator 101 may maintain a catalog of all of the services provided by the syndicator that can be syndicated to a syndication partner. This catalog may be provided to the various syndication partners and may be updated periodically as the services provided by the syndicator change. After such updates, all (or a portion) of the syndication relationships may be configured to synchronize between the syndicator and the syndication partner such that the syndication partner is updated and made aware of any changes to the syndicator's offerings (e.g., services 105).

[0031] Method 200 includes an act of receiving usage information from the syndication partner specifying which services are to be syndicated and specifying parameters for those services indicating operating parameters specific to the use of the syndicated services (act 230). For example, syndicator 101 may receive usage information 131 from partner 130 specifying which services are to be syndicated

and further specifying parameters 132 for those services indicating operating parameters specific to the use of syndicated service(s) 105A. In this manner, partner 130 has control over which services are provided in addition to the partner's service 133. Moreover, partner 130 has control over various configurations and settings associated with the other services provided by syndicator 101. As such, syndicator 101 can provide the partner's service 133 in conjunction with other specified syndicator-provided services 105 as a service bundle. This bundle may be provided to a plurality of different syndication partners and other users.

[0032] For example, from the perspective of a third party user, the third party user (or simply, user) may access a services bundle over an internet connection such as the internet or other network connection. The services bundle may include partner-provided service 133 along with any other syndicator-provided services 105 specified by the partner. This bundle of services may be provided to the user according to the configurations and settings specified by parameters 132. The user may be entirely unaware that one or more of the services originated from partner 130 and that one or more of the services in the bundle originated from syndicator 101. Thus, a partner 130 may enter in a syndication relationship with syndicator 101 to provide various services to clients where some (or none) of the services are provided by the partner and some (or none) of the services are provided by the syndicator. Any combination of partner-provided and syndicator-provided services may be used, as indicated by partner 130.

[0033] In some cases, syndicator 101 may provide a billing service capable of implementing a partner-specified customized billing scheme for each syndicated service. For example, syndicator 101 may bill partner 130 for each service used by or provided to a client or other partner. Additionally or alternatively, the partner may simply pay for the number of partner-provided services hosted by syndicator 101. Each service may have a different billing level or billing method and may be fully customizable by either the syndicator or the syndication partner, as established in the syndication relationship.

[0034] In addition to billing methods and arrangements for various services, the syndicator may also enable the syndication partner to select an appropriate support

model for each syndicated service. For instance, partner 130 may determine that a specified support model is to be used with the partner-provided service(s) 133, but that a different support model is to be used with the syndicator-provided service(s) 105. The support model may specify how problems are to be resolved in

5 conjunction with a given service and/or how more serious problems are to be escalated to someone or to a department that can solve the problem. In one specific example, a partner may be able to specify in usage data the action to take if communication fails a certain number (e.g., 5) times. The partner does not have to know how the syndicator will implement that instruction—the partner only has to
10 indicate what they want to have happen in regard to any particular service provided.

[0035] Syndicator 101 may also enable the syndication partner to select an appropriate service level agreement for each syndicated service. Thus, for time-critical applications or services such as live video or voice, the partner may specify that a certain level of service is to be guaranteed (e.g., a quality of service (QoS)
15 agreement). For other, less time-critical services, a lower service level agreement may be used. Again, as with the other options mentioned above, service level agreement may be specified on a per-service level, and even on a particular service, may be downgraded or upgraded as the partner or syndicator sees fit.

[0036] Continuing with other optional services, the syndicator may enable the
20 syndication partner to select a geo-affinity preference for compliance with appropriate local regulations for each syndicated service. Additionally, the syndicator may enable the syndication partner to select a branding model for each syndicated service, such that each syndicated service can be individually labeled. As outlined above, partner 130 may desire to upload service 133 and have

25 syndicator 101 provide service 133 in combination with other syndicator-provided services 105 to other computer users as a service bundle. In some cases, partner 130 may be able to apply a particular brand name, sound, symbol, etc., to the partner-provided service(s) and/or the entire services bundle. In cases where the partner's brand name is applied to the entire bundle of services, an indication may
30 be provided to the user(s) that some of the services are syndicated and are not owned by or developed by the partner. Rather, that the services were developed by

another buy are provided under the partner's brand name due to the syndication relationship.

[0037] In some cases, a partner's usage information 131 and/or parameters 132 may be communicated to syndicator 101 in a manner or format that is not

5 understandable by the syndicator. For example, the syndicator may expect that any usage information is sent in extensible markup language (XML) format, and may receive usage information in another format. In such cases, as illustrated in environment 300 of Figure 3, mediation platform 320 may provides transformation rules for transforming usage information and/or parameters received from the
10 partner into parameters 111 and use information understandable by syndicator 101. In this manner, data fields in use information 131 may be matched the syndicator's corresponding data fields. Mediation platform 320 may be configured to receive and interpret a variety of different information and format types including information stored as metadata.

15 [0038] As further illustrated in Figure 3, syndicator computer system 301 (which may be the same as or different than syndicator computer system 101) includes service delivery platform 310. Service delivery platform 310 may comprise an online service configured to provide services to other users over a network. The service delivery platform and the mediation platform may both be modular and may
20 be configured for operation on the same computer system, on different computer systems or on a distributed computer system. Service delivery platform 310 may be configured to provide services provided by any of syndication partners 325A, 325B, 325C and 325D, as well as services provided by syndication computer system 301. In some embodiments, the mediation platform is configured to interact
25 with partners at a business process level (as opposed to the application programming interface (API) level), and interactions between the process level and the API level are taken care of by the mediation platform. The mediation platform may also allow a partner to change the way in which they provide use information. Because the mediation platform is configured to translate information included in
30 the use data to information usable by the syndicator 301, partners 325A-D need only provide information in a manner compatible with interface information 107,

and do not need to inform syndicator 301 when they make changes to the manner in which they provide use information.

[0039] Method 200 includes, based on the received usage information, an act of providing the service to the syndication partner in the manner indicated by the received usage information (act 240). For example, syndicator 101 may, based on
5 received usage information 131, provide syndicated service(s) 105A to partner 130 (and/or any other partners and other users) in the manner indicated by usage information 131. As mentioned above, partner-provided service 133 may be provided to other partners or users by itself, or in conjunction with one or more
10 other syndicator-provided services. The services may be provided in accordance with an established syndication relationship 112 between the partner and the syndicator.

[0040] In some cases, as illustrated in Figure 3, a syndication partner (e.g., 325A) may establish such a relationship with syndicator 301 by first establishing a
15 relationship with trusted third party authenticator 350. In such cases, authenticator 350 is trusted by both syndicator 301 and partner 325A. In other cases, a syndication partner (e.g., 325B or 325C) may directly establish such a syndication relationship with syndicator 301. In yet other cases, a syndication partner (e.g., 325D) may establish a syndication relationship with another partner (325C) who, in
20 turn, has an established relationship with the syndicator. Thus, one syndication partner (325C) may syndicate a service provided by the syndicator to a different syndication partner (325D). Syndication to other partners may continue to substantially any level, with each partner potentially adding new, different services which may be provided by syndicator in conjunction with other syndicator-
25 provided services. Along these lines, various different authentication means may be implemented at any point in the syndication relationship establishment process, between the different syndication partners and between the partners and the syndicator.

[0041] Syndicator 301 may provide listings of offerings for subscription by
30 partners, such that syndication partners can subscribe to various syndicator offerings by group, or individually. In such scenarios, a partner may select a group

such as a billing service, a support model service and a service level agreement service to be used in conjunction with a partner-provided service 133. Many other services and service combinations are possible, and the examples above should not be read as limiting the number or type of service combinations that may be

5 provided by a syndicator. In some cases, the syndicator may reserve a portion of the syndicator's computer resources for providing the syndication partner's syndicated services. As such, the partner may agree to pay more to reserve a portion of resources to ensure that the partner's clients are properly served. Such computer resources may include hard drive space and/or accessing time, network
10 bandwidth, processing time, or any other controllable computer resource.

[0042] Thus, a syndication partner may be able to provide a service to a syndicator that is to be provided to other users and/or partners in conjunction with various syndicator-provided services. In addition to any uploaded services, the partner may specify in use information which syndicator services are to be provided and in
15 which manner. This combination of partner-provided and syndicator-provided services may be provided to various other users in accordance with the use information sent by the syndication partner.

[0043] The present invention may be embodied in other specific forms without departing from its spirit or essential characteristics. The described embodiments
20 are to be considered in all respects only as illustrative and not restrictive. The scope of the invention is, therefore, indicated by the appended claims rather than by the foregoing description. All changes which come within the meaning and range of equivalency of the claims are to be embraced within their scope.

CLAIMS

We claim:

1. At a syndicator computer system (101) in a computing networking environment, a method for syndicating an online service to at least one syndication partner (130) of the syndicator (101), the method comprising:

an act of determining that a syndication relationship (112) has been established between a syndicator (101) and a syndication partner (130), the syndication relationship being established to provide syndicated services (105A) to syndication partners and clients;

- an act of the syndicator (101) indicating which services provided by the syndicator (101) are available for syndication to the syndication partner (130) and which type of usage information (131) the partner is to provide in order to use the syndicator's services;

- an act of receiving usage information (131) from the syndication partner (130) specifying which services are to be syndicated and specifying parameters for those services indicating operating parameters specific to the use of the syndicated services; and

- based on the received usage information (131), an act of providing the service to the syndication partner (130) in the manner indicated by the received usage information.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the syndicator and the syndication partner authenticate to each other in a mutual authentication to establish the syndication relationship.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the syndication relationship is established through a trusted third party, wherein both the syndicator and the syndication partner are authenticated by the trusted third party.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

an act of receiving updated usage information from the syndication partner; and

based on received updated usage information, an act of updating the syndication relationship such that any changes provided in the received update are automatically applied to the established syndication relationship.

5 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the syndicator maintains a catalog of all of the services provided by the syndicator that can be syndicated to a syndication partner.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the syndicator defines how information is to be communicated between the syndicator and other syndication partners.

10 7. The method of claim 1, wherein escalation rules and alternative paths of communication are defined and validated by the syndicator.

8. The method of claim 1, further comprising an act of synchronizing the syndicator and at least one syndication partner such that the syndication partner is updated and made aware of any changes to the syndicator's offerings.

15 9. The method of claim 1, wherein the syndicator provides a billing service capable of implementing a partner-specified customized billing scheme for each syndicated service.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein the syndicator enables the syndication partner to select an appropriate support model for each syndicated service.

20 11. The method of claim 1, wherein the syndicator enables the syndication partner to select an appropriate service level agreement for each syndicated service.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the syndicator enables the syndication partner to select a geo-affinity preference for compliance with appropriate local regulations for each syndicated service.

25 13. The method of claim 1, wherein the syndicator enables the syndication partner to select a branding model for each syndicated service, such that each syndicated service can be individually labeled.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the syndicator's service offerings are provided for ordering by syndication partners, such that syndication partners can subscribe to various syndicator offerings.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein the syndicator reserves a portion of the syndicator's computer resources for providing the syndication partner's syndicated services.

16. At a syndicator computer system (101) in a computer networking
5 environment, a system for syndicating an online service to at least one syndication partner (130), the system comprising:

one or more processors;

system memory;

a service delivery platform configured to establish a syndication relationship
10 (112) between a syndicator (101) and a plurality of different syndication partners (130), the syndication relationship being established to provide syndicated services (105A) to syndication partners (130) and clients, wherein each syndication relationship is established using metadata provided by each syndication partner to the syndicator (101); and

15 a mediation platform that allows each of the plurality of syndication partners (130) to integrate with the syndicator (101) through a single point of access, the integration including:

an act of providing a catalog listing of all the online services provided
by the syndicator (101) including built-in services for managing services
20 syndicated through the syndication relationship (112);

an act of receiving an indication from at least one of the syndication
partners (130) comprising metadata that indicates which services are to be
syndicated and further indicates one or more parameters for providing the
service; and

25 an act of providing those online services indicated in the metadata to the syndication partner, wherein the services are provided according to the parameters included in the received metadata.

17. The system of claim 16, wherein the mediation platform provides
transformation rules for transforming parameters received in the metadata to
30 corresponding parameters of the syndicator, such that the parameters in the

syndicator's data fields correspond to the parameters in the syndication partner's data fields.

18. The system of claim 17, wherein the service delivery platform and the mediation platform are modular and are configured for operation on the same computer system, on different computer systems or on a distributed computer system.

19. The system of claim 17, wherein at least one of the syndication partners syndicates a service provided by the syndicator to a second, different syndication partner.

20. A computer program product for implementing a method for syndicating an online service to at least one syndication partner (130) of the syndicator (101), the computer program product comprising one or more computer-readable storage media having stored thereon computer-executable instructions that, when executed by one or more processors of the computing system, cause the computing system to perform the method, the method comprising:

an act of determining that a syndication relationship (112) has been established between a syndicator (101) and a syndication partner (130), the syndication relationship being established to provide syndicated services (105A) to syndication partners and clients;

an act of the syndicator (101) indicating which services provided by the syndicator (101) are available for syndication to the syndication partner (130) and which type of usage information (131) the partner is to provide in order to use the syndicator's services;

an act of receiving usage information (131) from the syndication partner (130) specifying which services are to be syndicated and specifying parameters for those services indicating operating parameters specific to the use of the syndicated services; and

based on the received usage information (131), an act of providing the service to the syndication partner (130) in the manner indicated by the received usage information.

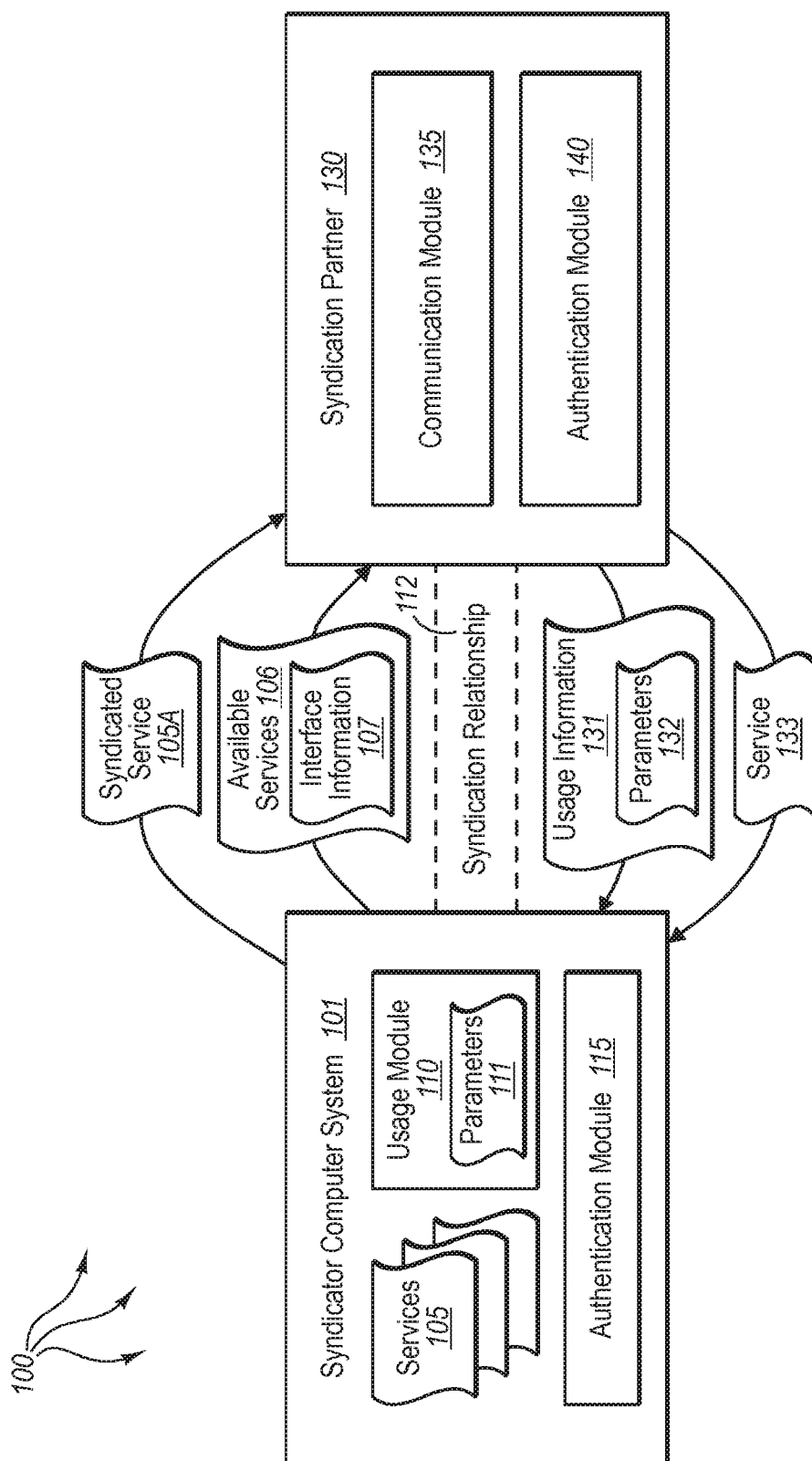
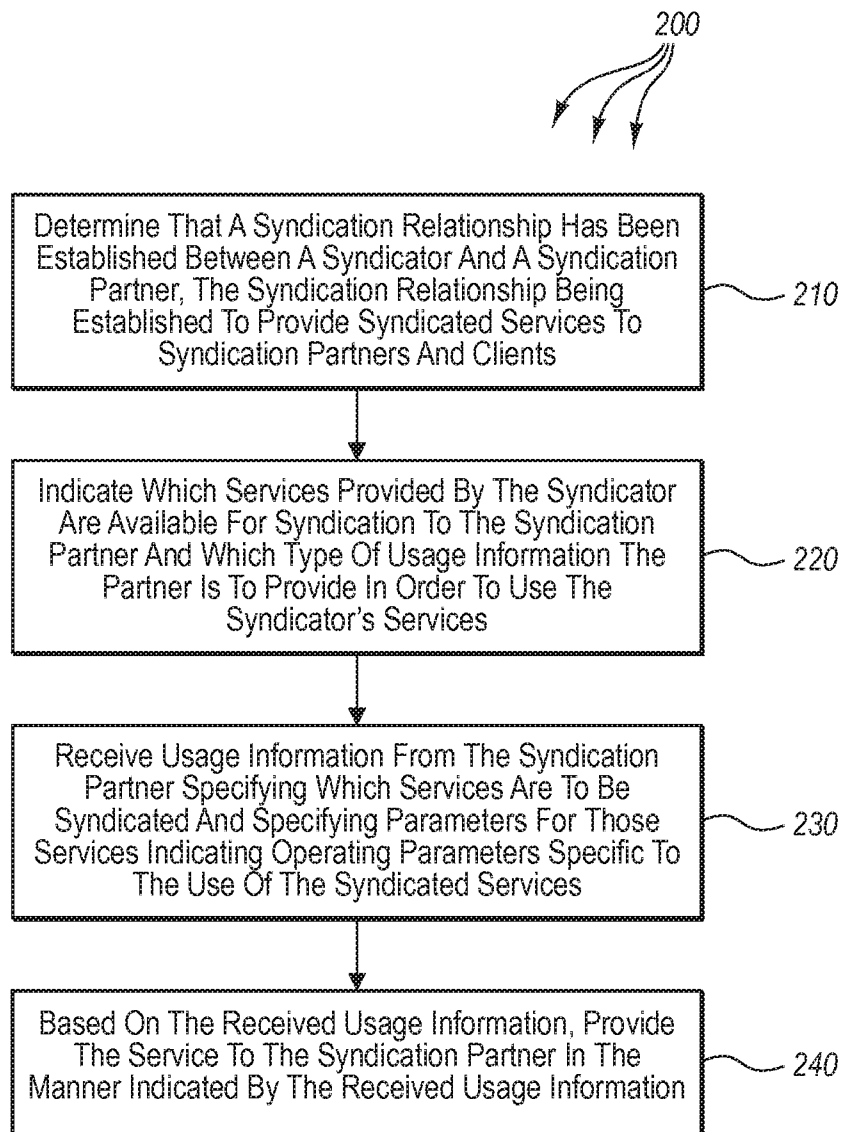


FIG. 1

**FIG. 2**

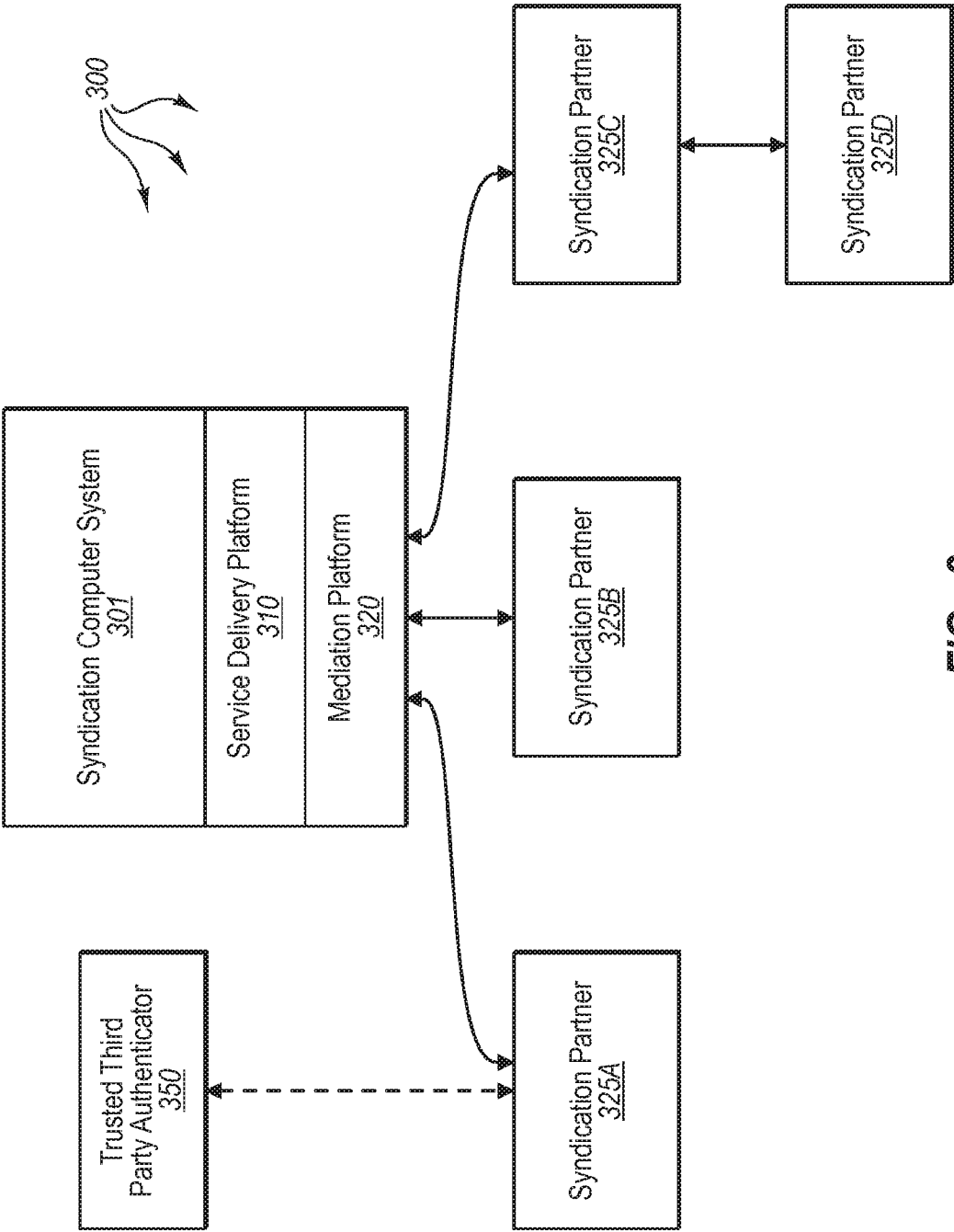


FIG. 3