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(54) **METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR PRODUCT COMPARISON**

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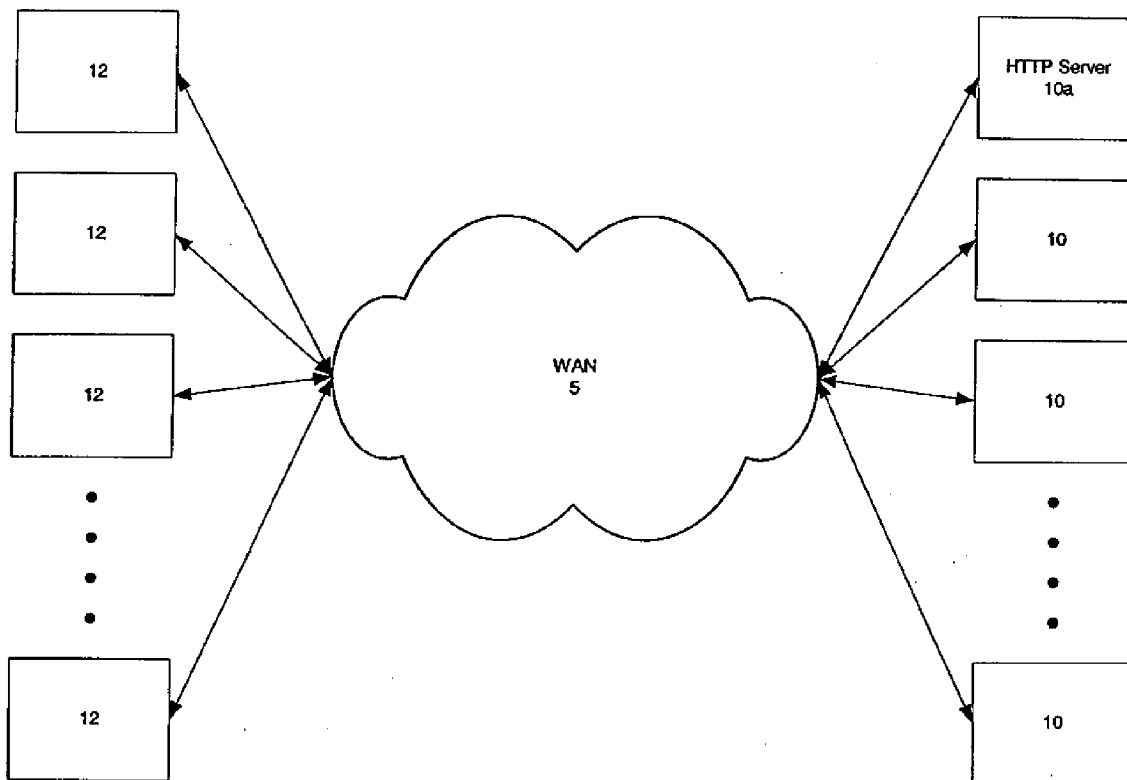
(22) Filed: **Oct. 26, 2006**

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation of application No. 09/760,062, filed on Jan. 12, 2001, now Pat. No. 7,130,821.

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A method of comparing products is disclosed. The method includes selecting a first configuration representing a first product with a first attribute, selecting a second configuration representing a second product with a second attribute, and displaying the first attribute and the second attribute. As will be noted, the first attribute is defined in the first configuration, and the second attribute is defined in the second configuration.



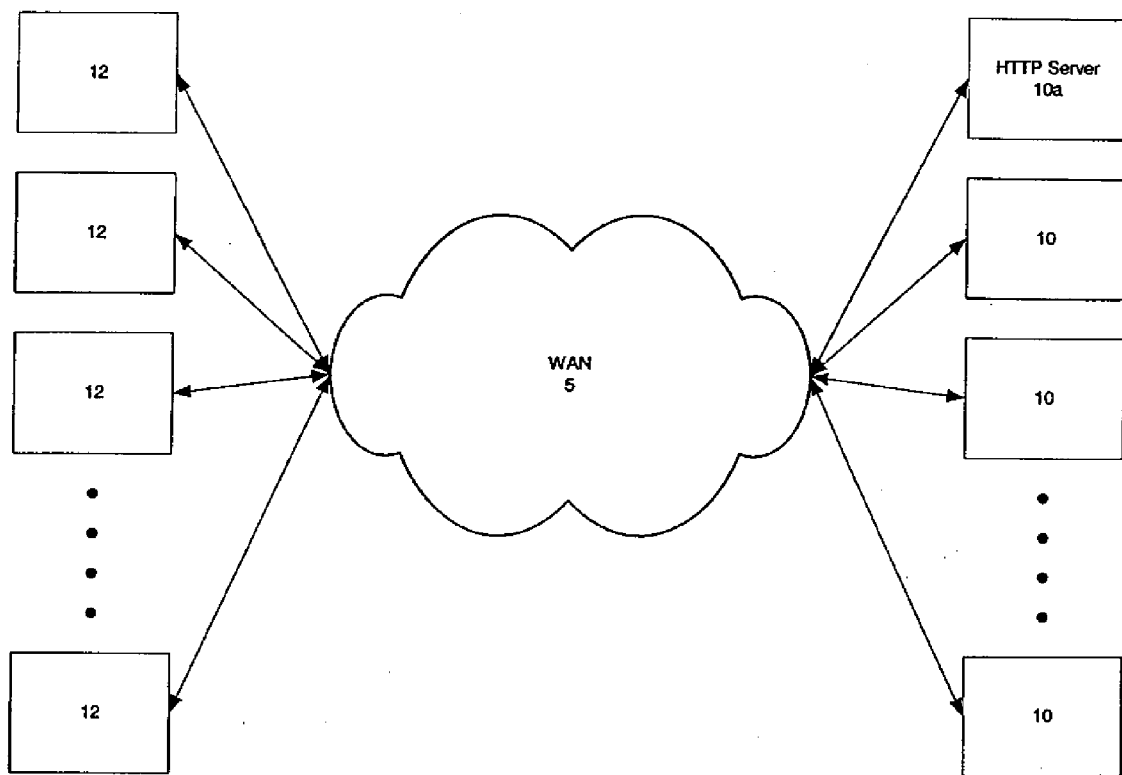


Fig. 1

14

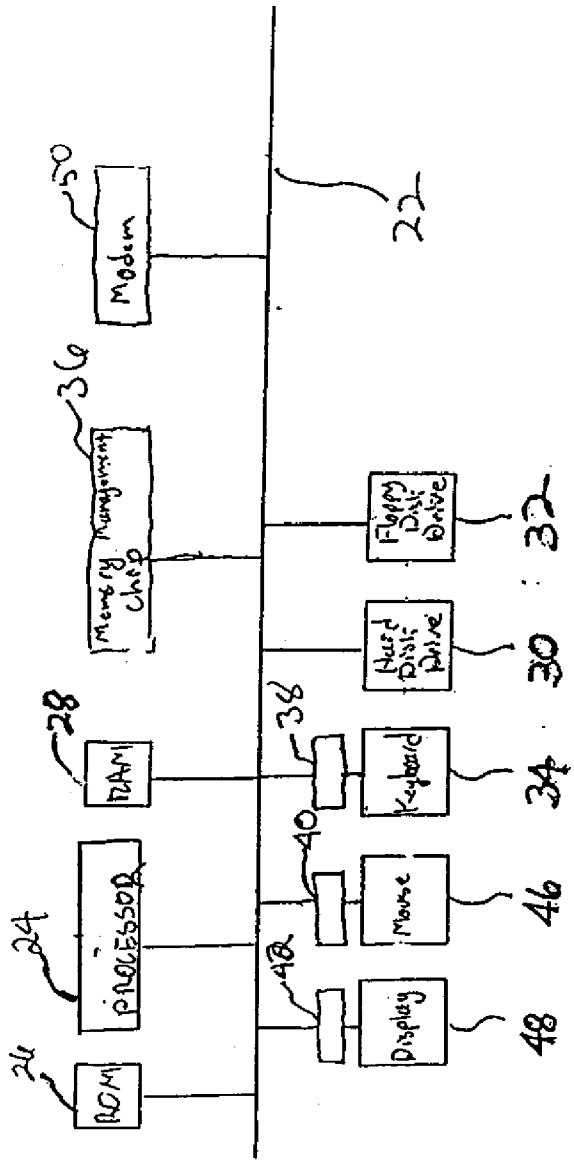


Fig. 2



We're now nationwide and have added new tools and features to provide Happy Car Buying to everyone.

enter the site ~ 58



Time to clean out the Garage?

If you previously created a Virtual Garage on our old site, you'll need to create a new User Account and rebuild any cars you saved to your Virtual Garage to take advantage of new features and functionality on our new site. Accounts created on the previous carOrder site are not compatible with our new site.

However, if you built and saved a car on the old site in the last 7 days and would like to purchase it now, a customer Service Advisor will gladly help you place the order for that car. Please contact them at: 1.888.657.2277.

We are currently unable to sell cars in the state of Texas. Feel free to browse the site.



our site works best using IE 4.0 or greater.
<< get it here.

Fig. 3

60
questions@carOrder.com | 1.888.657.CARS (2277)

62a 62b 62c
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61

carOrder.com™



happy car buying

A refreshing alternative to the traditional car buying experience.

62d 62e
See and Hear what our customers are saying.

Quick Start

Ready to jump right in?
Select a car to build:

select make

select model

GO

62f
 don't see it? [tell us](#)

Find My Car

62h
Use our Side-By-Side Compare, Feature Based Search, or take your time browsing our Current Models.

>> start here

Build My Car

62i
You know what you want, now Build It your way. Compare Lease and Finance Rates, and get a great deal.

>> start here

Our Latest Editions



62j
It Has Arrived
The new Audi TT
[learn more](#)



62k
Monster Truck!
Compare SUVs
or any other car

carOrder.com in the News

- 62p [Press Release: 11.09.99 - carOrder.com, World's First Automotive eDealer, Launches Nationwide](#)
- 62q [Press Release: 11.03.99 - carOrder.com Forms Strategic Relationship with Chase Manhattan Bank to Offer Online Financing...](#)
- 62r [Press Release: 9.29.99 - carOrder.com Announces \\$100 Million Investment To Lead The Future of Online Car Retailing](#)
- 62s [read more in our Press Room](#)

My Virtual Garage

To access your garage, enter your account information

Username:

Your Password:

62l 62m 62n
already logged in? Enter

Need Some Help?

Talk to one of our Helpful Customer Service Advisors right now.

62z

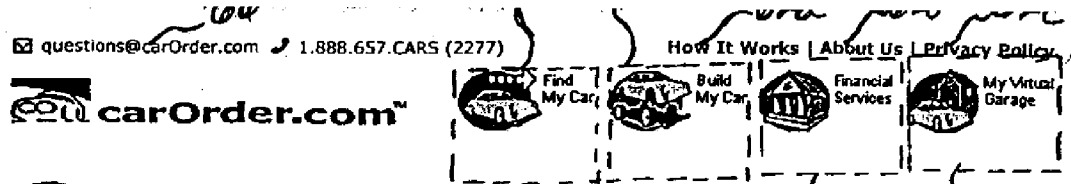
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62t 62u 62v 62w 62x 62y
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Fig. 4



 **User Profile: Create a New carOrder.com Account** 70c 70d

Please complete the fields below to obtain a carOrder.com account. Logging into your account will provide access to configurations you've saved.

Required Account Information

Please fill out these fields to create your carOrder.com account. You may also complete the Optional Account Information (below), but only the items marked with the red asterisk (*) are required to create your account.

Please enter your First Name: * ~b5a

Please enter your Last Name: * ~b5b

Please enter a unique name to identify yourself: * ~b5c

This is the "user name" you'll use to log into your carOrder.com account when you return.

Please enter a 5 to 10 character password: * ~b5d

Select a password that you will remember; you'll need it to log into your carOrder.com account when you return.

Please re-enter your password for verification: * ~b5e

Please enter a valid email address: * ~b5f

We'll use this address to contact you during the delivery process, so it's important that this be a valid email address.

Please enter your zip code: * ~b5g

Be sure to provide your correct zip code; we use it to calculate local taxes and fees (such as state vehicle registration) on the vehicles you configure.

You will be able to change your zip code later, but remember that **calculating your final price is dependent on region**. Changing your zip code requires re-pricing your car. If you change your Zip Code, you may also have to change the State, County, and Municipality where this purchase will incur taxes or other fees, such as Vehicle Registration.

(carOrder.com is not responsible for pricing errors resulting from incorrect information supplied by the customer.)

~b6a please send me email about special offers and other carOrder.com news.

~b6b don't share my specific information with reputable carOrder.com partners.

Fig.5a

How did you hear about carOrder.com? *

radio ad

television ad

magazine ad

newspaper ad

friend

radio news story

television news story

magazine news story

newspaper news story

other

[Create my Account](#)

Optional Account Information

The following information is maintained in your user profile. You may fill it out now if you'd like, but it's not required to establish your account. This information will be used when you place an order with carOrder.com.

Street Address:

Apartment/Suite:

City:

Daytime Phone Number:

() -

b5h b5k b5m

Evening Phone Number:

() -

b5n b5o b5p

Date of Birth:


, ,

b5q b5r b5s





[Create my Account](#)


Fig. 5b

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 Find My Car
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  Financial Services
  My Virtual Garage

 **Virtual Garage®**

Welcome to your Virtual Garage® , where you'll save and retrieve vehicles and their configurations.

[>>Edit your User Profile](#)

There are currently no cars parked in your Virtual Garage®.

*note: Due to periodic data updates, vehicle prices may fluctuate. carOrder.com will honor prices of cars saved to your Virtual Garage for 7 days from the time they were originally saved. However, if you choose to modify a saved configuration, the car will be subject to these changes and may be re-priced. Upon re-saving it to your Virtual Garage, we will guarantee the new price for an additional 7 days.

Typographical Errors

In the event a product is listed at an incorrect price due to typographical error or error in pricing information, carOrder.com has the right to refuse or cancel any orders placed for product listed at the incorrect price. carOrder.com shall have the right to refuse or cancel any such orders whether or not the order has been confirmed.

Fig. 6

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Find My Car

Use the tools below to research the many options and features each car offers, to find the right one for you.

80a




Browse Current Models

Learn about our complete selection of cars, trucks, and SUVs.

>> start Here *80d*

80b



Side-By-Side Compare

Compare features on Base Models and Saved Cars from your Virtual Garage.

>> start Here *80e*

80c



Search By Feature

Find cars that meet the specific criteria you're looking for.

>> start Here *80f*

Fig. 7

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82



Browse: Select Manufacturer

<<< back to Find My Car 82b

Pick a Model from the selections below

Manufacturers				
Acura	Audi	BMW	Buick	Cadillac
Chevrolet	Chrysler	Daewoo	Dodge	Ford
GMC	Honda	Hyundai	Infiniti	Jaguar
Jeep	Kia	Land Rover	Lexus	Lincoln
Mazda	Mercedes	Mercury	Mitsubishi	Nissan
Oldsmobile	Pontiac	Suzuki	Toyota	Volkswagen
Volvo				

82a

Are we missing a manufacturer you're interested in?
Click [here](#) to tell us what you'd like to see.

Fig. 8

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Find My Car Build My Car Financial Services My Virtual Garage

84

Browse: Select Model

82b <<< back to Find My Car or pick a new Manufacturer 84a

Pick a Model from the selections below		
Ford		
84b	2000 Contour The mid-level Ford Contour sedan comes with 5-speed manual transmission and is available in two different trims.	Learn More... 84c Build It... 84d
84c	2000 Crown Victoria The rear-wheel drive Crown Victoria, Ford's largest sedan, has automatic transmission and seats six adults.	Learn More... 84f Build It... 84g
84h	2000 Escort The two-door Escort coupe, Ford's most affordable model, comes in a single trim with a choice of manual or automatic transmission.	Learn More... 84i Build It... 84j
84k	2000 Expedition The Expedition, Ford's largest sport-utility vehicle after the Excursion, seats nine and comes with rear-wheel or standard four-wheel drive.	Learn More... 84l Build It... 84m
84n	2000 Focus Ford's partnership with racing specialist Cosworth Racing results in the new Focus, a leader in space, dynamics and control.	Learn More... 84o Build It... 84p
84q	2000 Taurus The mid-level Taurus performance sedans and wagons were Ford's best-selling car in 1998.	Learn More... 84r Build It... 84s
84t	2000 Windstar The Windstar, Ford's only minivan, comes equipped with four-speed automatic transmission and seven passenger seating.	Learn More... 84u Build It... 84v

Are we missing a model you're interested in? Click [here](#) to tell us what you'd like to see.

Fig. 9

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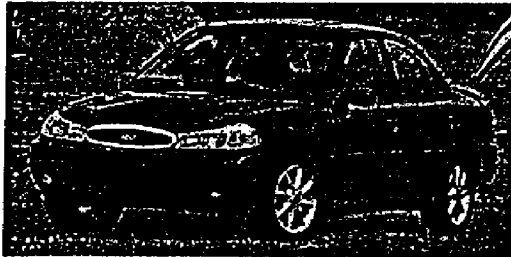
carOrder.com™



85



Browse: Learn More: 2000 Ford Contour



- vehicle type: 4-door sedan
- performance: 2.5L, 170hp V6, manu w/auto
opt. 2.5L, 200hp V6, manu.
- features: Dual airbags, child safety locks,
ABS brakes (opt. on Sport)
- compare to: Chevrolet Malibu, Honda Civic,
Pontiac Grand Am

Overview

Performance | Features

85a

A slightly updated version of last year's Contour, the 2000 model features a 2.5-liter, 170hp V6 or 2.5-liter, 200hp V6 engine with 5-speed manual transmission. Advanced safety features of the Contour include dual airbags and child safety locks, and anti-lock brakes on the SVT. A passive anti-theft system comes complete with a multi-function remote for illuminated keyless entry. Amenities include a tilt steering column, air conditioning, power windows and door locks, and AM/FM cassette stereo. A rear spoiler is standard on the Sport, and optional on the SVT. A CD player and power moonroof are available on both trims.

Live

got a question?
<< ask here

84a 85b
Pick a new Make or Model

84d
continue Build This Car

Fig. 10

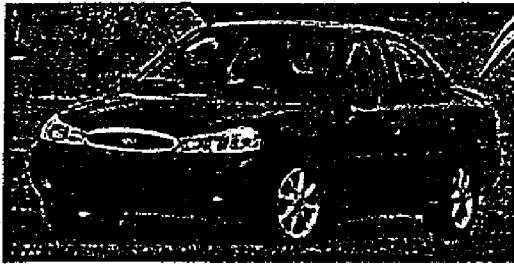
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Browse: Learn More: 2000 Ford Contour

86



vehicle type: 4-door sedan

performance: 2.5L, 170hp V6, manu w/auto
opt. 2.5L, 200hp V6, manu.

features: Dual airbags, child safety locks,
ABS brakes (opt. on Sport)

compare to: Chevrolet Malibu, Honda Civic,
Pontiac Grand Am

86b Overview | Features 85b

Performance

- 86a {
- Sport: 2.5-liter, 170hp V6 engine
 - SVT: 2.5-liter, 200hp V6 engine
 - 5-speed manual overdrive
 - Sequential port fuel injection
 - Independent front suspension
 - Power front disc/rear drum brakes
 - Power rack-and-pinion steering
 - Aluminum wheels
 - Sport: Optional 4-speed automatic overdrive
 - SVT: Performance tires



got a question? << ask here

Pick a new Make or Model

continue Build This Car

Fig. 11

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Browse: Learn More: 2000 Ford Contour



vehicle type: 4-door sedan
 performance: 2.5L, 170hp V6, manu w/auto
 opt. 2.5L, 200hp V6, manu.
 features: Dual airbags, child safety locks,
 ABS brakes (opt. on Sport)
 compare to: Chevrolet Malibu, Honda Civic,
 Pontiac Grand Am

87

reb ~85a
Overview | Performance

Features

- Passive anti-theft system
- Fog lights and halogen headlights
- Remote keyless entry system
- Sport bucket seats
- Leather steering wheel and shift knob
- Steering wheel-mounted cruise control
- Air conditioning
- AM/FM cassette stereo
- Sport: Rear spoiler
- SVT: 10-way power driver's seat



got a question?
<< ask here

Pick a new Make or Model

continue Build This Car

Fig. 12

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carOrder.com™ Find My Car Build My Car Financial Services My Virtual Garage

Find My Car: Search By Feature
 Use the menus below to identify vehicles offered with the features you'd like.

70a 70b 70c 70d 92h 90
 92e 92f 92g 90g

price range	select a price range for your vehicle:	
vehicle type	less than \$15,000	\$15,000 to \$19,999
engine	\$20,000 to \$29,999	\$30,000 to \$39,999
fuel economy	\$40,000 to \$49,999	\$50,000 to \$59,999
interior	\$60,000 to \$69,999	more than \$70,000
safety		

92 vehicles found:

- Acura
- 2000 RL
- 2000 TL
- Audi
- 2000 A6
- 2000 S4
- 2000 TT
- 2000 A4
- BMW
- 2000 Z3
- 2000 3 Series
- 2000 5 Series
- Buick
- 2000 Regal
- Cadillac
- 2000 De Ville
- 2000 Escalade
- 2000 Seville
- Chevrolet
- 2000 Tracker
- 2000 Impala
- 2000 Metro
- 2000 Lumina
- 2000 Monte Carlo
- 2000 Malibu
- 2000 Tahoe
- 2000 Corvette
- 2000 Prizm
- Chrysler
- 2000 Concorde
- 2000 Cirrus
- 2000 300M
- 2000 LHS
- Daewoo
- 2000 Nubira
- 2000 Leganza
- 2000 Lanos
- Dodge
- 2000 Avenger
- 2000 Neon

90

Fig. 13a

2000 Intrepid
Ford
2000 Escort
2000 Expedition
2000 Focus
2000 Windstar
2000 Crown Victori
2000 Taurus
GMC
2000 Yukon
2000 Envoy
Honda
2000 Civic
Hyundai
2000 Elantra
2000 Accent
2000 Sonata
2000 Tiburon
Infiniti
2000 Q45
2000 QX4
Jaguar
2000 S-Type
Kia
2000 Sephia
Lexus
2000 GS 400
2000 LX 470
2000 GS 300
2000 ES 300
2000 RX 300
2000 LS 400
2000 SC 400
2000 SC 300
Lincoln
2000 LS
2000 Navigator
Mazda
2000 Protege
2000 MPV
Mercedes
2000 M-Class
2000 S-Class
2000 SLK-Class
2000 C-Class
Mercury
2000 Cougar
2000 Mystique
2000 Sable
Mitsubishi

Fig. 13b

[2000 Galant](#)
[2000 Mirage](#)
[2000 Eclipse](#)
[2000 Diamante](#)
Nissan
[2000 Xterra](#)
[2000 Altima](#)
Oldsmobile
[2000 Bravada](#)
[2000 Intrique](#)
Pontiac
[2000 Bonneville](#)
[2000 Grand Am](#)
Suzuki
[2000 Swift](#)
Toyota
[2000 Corolla](#)
[2000 Celica](#)
[2000 Avalon](#)
Volkswagen
[2000 Passat](#)
[2000 Eurovan](#)
[2000 Golf](#)
[2000 GTI](#)
[2000 Jetta](#)
[2000 New Beetle](#)
Volvo
[2000 S40](#)
[2000 S80](#)
[2000 V40](#)
[2000 S70](#)

Are we missing a model you're interested in?
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Fig. 13c

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Find My Car: Search By Feature

Use the menus below to identify vehicles offered with the features you'd like:

price range

vehicle type

engine 93b

fuel economy 93d

interior 93f

safety 93h

select a body style

sedan wagon

coupe convertible

pickup sports utility

select an engine

front engine mid engine

rear engine

select a drivetrain type

front wheel drive rear wheel drive

all wheel drive four wheel drive

92 vehicles found

- Acura
- 2000 RL
- 2000 TL
- Audi
- 2000 A6
- 2000 S4
- 2000 TT
- 2000 A4
- BMW
- 2000 Z3
- 2000 3 Series
- 2000 5 Series
- Buick
- 2000 Regal
- Cadillac
- 2000 DeVille
- 2000 Escalade
- 2000 Seville
- Chevrolet
- 2000 Tracker
- 2000 Impala
- 2000 Metro
- 2000 Lumina
- 2000 Monte Carlo
- 2000 Malibu
- 2000 Tahoe
- 2000 Corvette
- 2000 Prizm
- Chrysler
- 2000 Concorde
- 2000 Cirrus
- 2000 300M
- 2000 LHS
- Daewoo
- 2000 Nubira
- 2000 Leganza
- 2000 Lanos
- Dodge
- 2000 Avenger
- 2000 Neon

93j

93k

93m

93a

93c 93e

93

Fig. 14a

2000 Intrepid
Ford
2000 Escort
2000 Expedition
2000 Focus
2000 Windstar
2000 Crown Victori
2000 Taurus
GMC
2000 Yukon
2000 Envoy
Honda
2000 Civic
Hyundai
2000 Elantra
2000 Accent
2000 Sonata
2000 Tiburon
Infiniti
2000 Q45
2000 QX4
Jaguar
2000 S-Type
Kia
2000 Sephia
Lexus
2000 GS 400
2000 LX 470
2000 GS 300
2000 ES 300
2000 RX 300
2000 LS 400
2000 SC 400
2000 SC 300
Lincoln
2000 LS
2000 Navigator
Mazda
2000 Protege
2000 MPV
Mercedes
2000 M-Class
2000 S-Class
2000 SLK-Class
2000 C-Class
Mercury
2000 Cougar
2000 Mystique
2000 Sable
Mitsubishi

Fig. 146

[2000 Galant](#)
[2000 Mirage](#)
[2000 Eclipse](#)
[2000 Diamante](#)
Nissan
[2000 Xterra](#)
[2000 Altima](#)
Oldsmobile
[2000 Bravada](#)
[2000 Intrigue](#)
Pontiac
[2000 Bonneville](#)
[2000 Grand Am](#)
Suzuki
[2000 Swift](#)
Toyota
[2000 Corolla](#)
[2000 Celica](#)
[2000 Avalon](#)
Volkswagen
[2000 Passat](#)
[2000 Eurovan](#)
[2000 Golf](#)
[2000 GTI](#)
[2000 Jetta](#)
[2000 New Beetle](#)
Volvo
[2000 S40](#)
[2000 S80](#)
[2000 V40](#)
[2000 S70](#)

Are we missing a model you're interested in?
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Fig. 1Ac

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carOrder.com™ Find My Car Build My Car Financial Services My Virtual Garage



Find My Car: Search By Feature

Use the menus below to identify vehicles offered with the features you'd like:

94

price range	select an engine type <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Cylinders <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Cylinders <input type="checkbox"/> 8 Cylinders <input type="checkbox"/> 10 cylinders <input type="checkbox"/> 12 Cylinders <input type="checkbox"/> more than 12 Cylinders select a horsepower range <input type="checkbox"/> less than 80 hp <input type="checkbox"/> 81 hp to 120 hp <input type="checkbox"/> 121 hp to 175 hp <input type="checkbox"/> 176 hp to 225 hp <input type="checkbox"/> 226 hp to 275 hp <input type="checkbox"/> more than 276 hp	92 vehicles found!
vehicle type 94b		Acura
engine 94c		<u>2000 RL</u>
fuel economy 94d		<u>2000 TL</u>
interior 94h		Audi
safety 94j		<u>2000 A6</u>
		<u>2000 S4</u>
		<u>2000 TT</u>
		<u>2000 A4</u>
		BMW
		<u>2000 Z3</u>
		<u>2000 3 Series</u>
		<u>2000 5 Series</u>
		Buick
		<u>2000 Regal</u>
		Cadillac
		<u>2000 De Ville</u>
		<u>2000 Escalade</u>
		<u>2000 Seville</u>
		Chevrolet
		<u>2000 Tracker</u>
		<u>2000 Impala</u>
		<u>2000 Metro</u>
		<u>2000 Lumina</u>
		<u>2000 Monte Carlo</u>
		<u>2000 Malibu</u>
		<u>2000 Tahoe</u>
		<u>2000 Corvette</u>
		<u>2000 Prizm</u>
		Chrysler
		<u>2000 Concorde</u>
		<u>2000 Cirrus</u>
		<u>2000 300M</u>
		<u>2000 LHS</u>
		Daewoo
		<u>2000 Nubira</u>
		<u>2000 Leganza</u>
		<u>2000 Lanos</u>
		Dodge
		<u>2000 Avenger</u>
		<u>2000 Neon</u>

94a

Fig. 15a

Fig. 15b

- 2000 Intrepid
- Ford
- 2000 Escort
- 2000 Expedition
- 2000 Focus
- 2000 Windstar
- 2000 Crown Victori
- 2000 Taurus
- GMC
- 2000 Yukon
- 2000 Envoy
- Honda
- 2000 Civic
- Hyundai
- 2000 Elantra
- 2000 Accent
- 2000 Sonata
- 2000 Tiburon
- Infiniti
- 2000 Q45
- 2000 QX4
- Jaguar
- 2000 S-Type
- Kia
- 2000 Sephia
- Lexus
- 2000 GS 400
- 2000 LX 470
- 2000 GS 300
- 2000 ES 300
- 2000 RX 300
- 2000 LS 400
- 2000 SC 400
- 2000 SC 300
- Lincoln
- 2000 LS
- 2000 Navigator
- Mazda
- 2000 Protege
- 2000 MPV
- Mercedes
- 2000 M-Class
- 2000 S-Class
- 2000 SLK-Class
- 2000 C-Class
- Mercury
- 2000 Cougar
- 2000 Mystique
- 2000 Sable
- Mitsubishi

- [2000 Galant](#)
- [2000 Mirage](#)
- [2000 Eclipse](#)
- [2000 Diamante](#)
- Nissan
- [2000 Xterra](#)
- [2000 Altima](#)
- Oldsmobile
- [2000 Bravada](#)
- [2000 Intrique](#)
- Pontiac
- [2000 Bonneville](#)
- [2000 Grand Am](#)
- Suzuki
- [2000 Swift](#)
- Toyota
- [2000 Corolla](#)
- [2000 Celica](#)
- [2000 Avalon](#)
- Volkswagen
- [2000 Passat](#)
- [2000 Eurovan](#)
- [2000 Golf](#)
- [2000 GTI](#)
- [2000 Jetta](#)
- [2000 New Beetle](#)
- Volvo
- [2000 S40](#)
- [2000 S80](#)
- [2000 V40](#)
- [2000 S70](#)

Are we missing a model you're interested in?
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Fig. 15c

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95



Find My Car: Search By Feature

Use the menus below to identify vehicles offered with the features you'd like:

price range	select a highway fuel economy range for your vehicle	<p>92 vehicles found:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Acura</u> <u>2000 RL</u> <u>2000 TL</u> <u>Audi</u> <u>2000 A6</u> <u>2000 S4</u> <u>2000 TT</u> <u>2000 A4</u> <u>BMW</u> <u>2000 Z3</u> <u>2000 3 Series</u> <u>2000 5 Series</u> <u>Buick</u> <u>2000 Regal</u> <u>Cadillac</u> <u>2000 De Ville</u> <u>2000 Escalade</u> <u>2000 Seville</u> <u>Chevrolet</u> <u>2000 Tracker</u> <u>2000 Impala</u> <u>2000 Metro</u> <u>2000 Lumina</u> <u>2000 Monte Carlo</u> <u>2000 Malibu</u> <u>2000 Tahoe</u> <u>2000 Corvette</u> <u>2000 Prizm</u> <u>Chrysler</u> <u>2000 Concorde</u> <u>2000 Cirrus</u> <u>2000 300M</u> <u>2000 LHS</u> <u>Daewoo</u> <u>2000 Nubira</u> <u>2000 Leganza</u> <u>2000 Lanos</u> <u>Dodge</u> <u>2000 Avenger</u> <u>2000 Neon</u>
vehicle type 95b	<input type="checkbox"/> less than 20 mpg <input type="checkbox"/> 21 mpg to 25 mpg <input type="checkbox"/> 26 mpg to 30 mpg <input type="checkbox"/> more than 31 mpg	
engine 95d	select a city fuel economy range for your vehicle	
fuel economy	<input type="checkbox"/> less than 16 mpg <input type="checkbox"/> 17 mpg to 20 mpg <input type="checkbox"/> 21 mpg to 24 mpg <input type="checkbox"/> more than 25 mpg	
interior 95f		
safety 95h		

95a

Fig. 16a

Fig. 16b

2000 Intrepid
Ford
2000 Escort
2000 Expedition
2000 Focus
2000 Windstar
2000 Crown Victori
2000 Taurus
GMC
2000 Yukon
2000 Envoy
Honda
2000 Civic
Hyundai
2000 Elantra
2000 Accent
2000 Sonata
2000 Tiburon
Infiniti
2000 Q45
2000 QX4
Jaguar
2000 S-Type
Kia
2000 Sephia
Lexus
2000 GS 400
2000 LX 470
2000 GS 300
2000 ES 300
2000 RX 300
2000 LS 400
2000 SC 400
2000 SC 300
Lincoln
2000 LS
2000 Navigator
Mazda
2000 Protege
2000 MPV
Mercedes
2000 M-Class
2000 S-Class
2000 SLK-Class
2000 C-Class
Mercury
2000 Cougar
2000 Mystique
2000 Sable
Mitsubishi

- [2000 Galant](#)
- [2000 Mirage](#)
- [2000 Eclipse](#)
- [2000 Diamante](#)
- Nissan
- [2000 Xterra](#)
- [2000 Altima](#)
- Oldsmobile
- [2000 Bravada](#)
- [2000 Intrigue](#)
- Pontiac
- [2000 Bonneville](#)
- [2000 Grand Am](#)
- Suzuki
- [2000 Swift](#)
- Toyota
- [2000 Corolla](#)
- [2000 Celica](#)
- [2000 Avalon](#)
- Volkswagen
- [2000 Passat](#)
- [2000 Eurovan](#)
- [2000 Golf](#)
- [2000 GTI](#)
- [2000 Jetta](#)
- [2000 New Beetle](#)
- Volvo
- [2000 S40](#)
- [2000 S80](#)
- [2000 V40](#)
- [2000 S70](#)

Are we missing a model you're interested in?
Click [here](#) to tell us what you'd like to see.

Fig. 16c

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96

Find My Car: Search By Feature

Use the menus below to identify vehicles offered with the features you'd like:

price range	select the seat features for your vehicle	92 vehicles found
vehicle type <i>96b</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> bench seats <input type="checkbox"/> bucket seats <input type="checkbox"/> power adjustable seats <input type="checkbox"/> lumbar support	
engine <i>96d</i>	select an upholstery material	
fuel economy <i>96e</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> cloth <input type="checkbox"/> vinyl <input type="checkbox"/> leather	
interior	select a sound system or other audio components	
safety <i>96i</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> am-fm stereo <input type="checkbox"/> cassette <input type="checkbox"/> in-dash cd player <input type="checkbox"/> cd changer <input type="checkbox"/> cellular phone <input type="checkbox"/> trip computer	

96c (handwritten above the seat features section)

96a (handwritten below the audio components section)

96k (handwritten next to the interior section)

96m (handwritten next to the safety section)

Fig. 17a

2000 Intrepid
Ford
2000 Escort
2000 Expedition
2000 Focus
2000 Windstar
2000 Crown Victori
2000 Taurus
GMC
2000 Yukon
2000 Envoy
Honda
2000 Civic
Hyundai
2000 Elantra
2000 Accent
2000 Sonata
2000 Tiburon
Infiniti
2000 Q45
2000 QX4
Jaguar
2000 S-Type
Kia
2000 Sephia
Lexus
2000 GS 400
2000 LX 470
2000 GS 300
2000 ES 300
2000 RX 300
2000 LS 400
2000 SC 400
2000 SC 300
Lincoln
2000 LS
2000 Navigator
Mazda
2000 Protege
2000 MPV
Mercedes
2000 M-Class
2000 S-Class
2000 SLK-Class
2000 C-Class
Mercury
2000 Cougar
2000 Mystique
2000 Sable
Mitsubishi

Fig. 176

- [2000 Galant](#)
- [2000 Mirage](#)
- [2000 Eclipse](#)
- [2000 Diamante](#)
- Nissan
- [2000 Xterra](#)
- [2000 Altima](#)
- Oldsmobile
- [2000 Bravada](#)
- [2000 Intrigue](#)
- Pontiac
- [2000 Bonneville](#)
- [2000 Grand Am](#)
- Suzuki
- [2000 Swift](#)
- Toyota
- [2000 Corolla](#)
- [2000 Celica](#)
- [2000 Avalon](#)
- Volkswagen
- [2000 Passat](#)
- [2000 Eurovan](#)
- [2000 Golf](#)
- [2000 GTI](#)
- [2000 Jetta](#)
- [2000 New Beetle](#)
- Volvo
- [2000 S40](#)
- [2000 S80](#)
- [2000 V40](#)
- [2000 S70](#)

Are we missing a model you're interested in?
Click [here](#) to tell us what you'd like to see.

Fig. 17c

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Find My Car: Search By Feature

97

Use the menus below to identify vehicles offered with the features you'd like:

	price range
	vehicle type <i>97b</i>
	engine <i>97d</i>
	fuel economy <i>97f</i>
	interior <i>97h</i>
	safety

97c

select safety features for your vehicle

<input type="checkbox"/> driver side airbag	<input type="checkbox"/> passenger side airbag
<input type="checkbox"/> side impact airbag	<input type="checkbox"/> seat belt pretensioners
<input type="checkbox"/> side mirror protection	<input type="checkbox"/> traction assistance
<input type="checkbox"/> integrated child safety seat	

92 vehicles found:

- Acura
- 2000 RL
- 2000 TL
- Audi
- 2000 A6
- 2000 S4
- 2000 TT
- 2000 A4
- BMW
- 2000 Z3
- 2000 3 Series
- 2000 5 Series
- Buick
- 2000 Regal
- Cadillac
- 2000 De Ville
- 2000 Escalade
- 2000 Seville
- Chevrolet
- 2000 Tracker
- 2000 Impala
- 2000 Metro
- 2000 Lumina
- 2000 Monte Carlo
- 2000 Malibu
- 2000 Tahoe
- 2000 Corvette
- 2000 Prizm
- Chrysler
- 2000 Concorde
- 2000 Cirrus
- 2000 300M
- 2000 LHS
- Daewoo
- 2000 Nubira
- 2000 Leganza
- 2000 Lanos
- Dodge
- 2000 Avenger
- 2000 Neon



97a

Fig. 18a

2000 Intrepid
Ford
2000 Escort
2000 Expedition
2000 Focus
2000 Windstar
2000 Crown Victori
2000 Taurus
GMC
2000 Yukon
2000 Envoy
Honda
2000 Civic
Hyundai
2000 Elantra
2000 Accent
2000 Sonata
2000 Tiburon
Infiniti
2000 Q45
2000 QX4
Jaguar
2000 S-Type
Kia
2000 Sephia
Lexus
2000 GS 400
2000 LX 470
2000 GS 300
2000 ES 300
2000 RX 300
2000 LS 400
2000 SC 400
2000 SC 300
Lincoln
2000 LS
2000 Navigator
Mazda
2000 Protege
2000 MPV
Mercedes
2000 M-Class
2000 S-Class
2000 SLK-Class
2000 C-Class
Mercury
2000 Cougar
2000 Mystique
2000 Sable
Mitsubishi

Fig. 18b

[2000 Galant](#)
[2000 Mirage](#)
[2000 Eclipse](#)
[2000 Diamante](#)
Nissan
[2000 Xterra](#)
[2000 Altima](#)
Oldsmobile
[2000 Bravada](#)
[2000 Intrigue](#)
Pontiac
[2000 Bonneville](#)
[2000 Grand Am](#)
Suzuki
[2000 Swift](#)
Toyota
[2000 Corolla](#)
[2000 Celica](#)
[2000 Avalon](#)
Volkswagen
[2000 Passat](#)
[2000 Eurovan](#)
[2000 Golf](#)
[2000 GTI](#)
[2000 Jetta](#)
[2000 New Beetle](#)
Volvo
[2000 S40](#)
[2000 S80](#)
[2000 V40](#)
[2000 S70](#)

Are we missing a model you're interested in?
Click [here](#) to tell us what you'd like to see.

Fig. 18c

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100



Find My Vehicle: Compare Vehicles

Please select two cars for comparison. Choose from base models or saved models from your Virtual Garage®.

Vehicle One

Do you want to compare a base model or a saved car?

Base model.

100g

Saved model from my Virtual Garage®.

(You must be logged in & have cars saved in your Virtual Garage® to use this feature.)

100h

Please select a manufacturer, model, and trimline:

select make

100a

select model

100b

select trim

100c

How would you like this vehicle equipped?

basic equipment

100i

well equipped

100j

loaded

100k

Vehicle Two

Do you want to compare a base model or a saved car?

Base model.

100l

Saved model from my Virtual Garage®.

(You must be logged in & have cars saved in your Virtual Garage® to use this feature.)

100m

Please select a manufacturer, model, and trimline:

select make

100d

select model

100e

select trim

100f

How would you like this vehicle equipped?

basic equipment

100n

well equipped

100o

loaded

100p

Are we missing a model you're interested in? Click [here](#) to tell us what you'd like to see.

Fig. 19

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102

1



Find My Vehicle: Compare Vehicles

Please select two cars for comparison. Choose from base models or saved models from your Virtual Garage®.

Vehicle One

Do you want to compare a base model or a saved car?

- Base model.
- Saved model from my Virtual Garage®.

(You must be logged in & have cars saved in your Virtual Garage® to use this feature.)

Please select a saved car from your Virtual Garage®:

101b

100a

How would you like this vehicle equipped?

- basic equipment
- well equipped
- loaded

Vehicle Two

Do you want to compare a base model or a saved car?

- Base model.
- Saved model from my Virtual Garage®.

(You must be logged in & have cars saved in your Virtual Garage® to use this feature.)

Please select a manufacturer, model, and trimline:

How would you like this vehicle equipped?

- basic equipment
- well equipped
- loaded

Are we missing a model you're interested in?
Click [here](#) to tell us what you'd like to see.

Fig. 20

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103



Find My Vehicle: Compare Vehicles

Please select two cars for comparison. Choose from base models or saved models from your Virtual Garage@.

Vehicle One

Do you want to compare a base model or a saved car?

- Base model.
- Saved model from my Virtual Garage@.
(You must be logged in & have cars saved in your Virtual Garage@ to use this feature.)

Please select a manufacturer, model, and trimline:

How would you like this vehicle equipped?

- basic equipment
- well equipped
- loaded

Vehicle Two

Do you want to compare a base model or a saved car?

- Base model.
- Saved model from my Virtual Garage@.
(You must be logged in & have cars saved in your Virtual Garage@ to use this feature.)

Please select a manufacturer, model, and trimline:

How would you like this vehicle equipped?

- basic equipment
- well equipped
- loaded

100r
} compare...

Are we missing a model you're interested in?
Click [here](#) to tell us what you'd like to see.

Fig. 21

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Find My Vehicle: Compare Vehicles: Side by Side

Base Models

My Saved Cars ^{104o}

Base Models

My Saved Cars ^{104p}



^{104a} Ford
 2000 Contour
 SVT Sedan



Chevrolet ^{104d}
 2000 Lumina ^{104e}
 Base Sedan ^{104f}

^{104j} base ^{104b} well-equipped ^{104c} loaded
 auto-generate a comparable car

^{104l} base ^{104m} well-equipped ¹⁰⁴ⁿ loaded
 auto-generate a comparable car

104e

General Data	
Base Invoice Price:	N/A
Invoice Price as Equipped:	N/A
Body Style:	N/A
Transmission:	N/A
Drivetrain:	N/A
Engine	
Layout:	N/A
Configuration:	N/A
Orientation:	N/A
Capacity:	N/A
Cylinders:	N/A
Valves per Cylinder:	N/A
Horsepower:	N/A
RPM at max power:	N/A
Torque (ft/lb):	N/A
Interior	
Seating Capacity:	N/A
Front Seat Type:	N/A
Power Adjustable Seats:	N/A
Heated Front Seat:	N/A
Lumbar Support:	N/A
Seating Surfaces:	N/A

^{104g} ^{104k} ^{104c} ^{105c}

General Data	
Base Invoice Price:	\$18,037
Invoice Price as Equipped:	\$18,037
Body Style:	Sedan
Transmission:	4 Speed Automatic front wheel drive
Engine	
Layout:	front engine
Configuration:	V
Orientation:	transverse
Capacity:	3.1
Cylinders:	6
Valves per Cylinder:	2
Horsepower:	175
RPM at max power:	5200
Torque (ft/lb):	190
Interior	
Seating Capacity:	6
Front Seat Type:	split bench
Power Adjustable Seats:	no
Heated Front Seat:	no
Lumbar Support:	no
Seating Surfaces:	cloth Radio, AM-FM with

^{104h}

105a

Fig. 22a

105b

Cassette:	N/A	Cassette:	Cassette
In-dash CD:	N/A	In-dash CD:	yes
CD Changer:	N/A	CD Changer:	no
Cellular Phone:	N/A	Cellular Phone:	no
Trip Computer:	N/A	Cellular Phone:	not available
Sunroof /	N/A	Trip Computer:	not available
Moonroof:	N/A	Sunroof /	not available
Safety		Moonroof:	not available
Side Impact Air	N/A	Safety	
Bags:	N/A	Side Impact Air	not available
Driver Side Air	N/A	Bags:	not available
Bag:	N/A	Driver Side Air	standard
Passenger Side Air	N/A	Bag:	standard
Bag:	N/A	Passenger Side Air	standard
Seat Belt	N/A	Bag:	standard
Pretensioners:	N/A	Seat Belt	NA
Roadside	N/A	Pretensioners:	NA
Assistance:	N/A	Roadside	standard
Integrated Child	N/A	Assistance:	standard
Seats:	N/A	Integrated Child	not available
Security		Seats:	not available
Antitheft	N/A	Security	
System:	N/A	Antitheft	NA
Brakes		System:	NA
Disc Brakes:	N/A	Brakes	
Number of Disc	N/A	Disc Brakes:	standard
Brakes:	N/A	Number of Disc	2
ABS:	N/A	Brakes:	2
ABS Location:	N/A	ABS:	NA
Chassis		ABS Location:	NA
Rim Type:	N/A	Chassis	
Rim Diameter:	N/A	Rim Type:	steel
Rim Width:	N/A	Rim Diameter:	15
Tire Rating:	N/A	Rim Width:	6.0
Dimensions		Tire Rating:	S
Overall length	N/A	Dimensions	
(cm):	N/A	Overall length	5103
Overall width	N/A	(cm):	5103
(cm):	N/A	Overall width	1842
Overall height	N/A	(cm):	1842
(cm):	N/A	Overall height	1402
Wheelbase (cm):	N/A	(cm):	1402
Front track	N/A	Wheelbase (cm):	2731
(cm):	N/A	Front track	1511
Rear track (cm):	N/A	(cm):	1511
Front headroom:	N/A	Rear track (cm):	1499
Rear headroom:	N/A	Front headroom:	975
Front leg room:	N/A	Rear headroom:	950
Rear leg room:	N/A	Front leg room:	1077
Interior Volume	N/A	Rear leg room:	930
(cm3):	N/A	Interior Volume	2846
Fuel		(cm3):	2846
		Fuel	

Fig. 22b

Highway EPA: N/A
City EPA: N/A
Tank Capacity (l): N/A
Recommended Fuel: N/A
Paint
Paint type: N/A
Multicoat paint: N/A
Twotone paint: N/A

Highway EPA: NA
City EPA: NA
Tank Capacity: 63
Recommended Fuel: unleaded
Paint
Paint type: NA
Multicoat paint: NA
Twotone paint: NA

Are we missing a model you're interested in?
Click [here](#) to tell us what you'd like to see.

configure






105x


configure

105g

Fig. 22c

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 Find My Car
  Build My Car
  Financial Services
  My Virtual Garage


2000 Ford Contour SVT Sedan

Invoice MSRP carOrder
 My Total Price: \$21,116 \$23,275 **\$21,574**


Payment Estimator: finance (terms): \$360.73
 lease (terms): \$192.09

select a new [make](#), [model](#), or [trimline](#)

 **Custom-Build My Car: Select Colors** 106

included with your selections conflicts with a current selection, but you may select

Exterior Color	Interior Color
106b <input checked="" type="radio"/> Black Clearcoat 106c <input type="radio"/> Tropic Green Paint 106d <input type="radio"/> Silver Frost Paint 106e <input type="radio"/> Toreador Red Paint	106f <input type="radio"/> Medium Prairie Tan 106g <input checked="" type="radio"/> Midnight Blue

 got a question? << ask here
 106a Save to My Virtual Garage
106h continue Pick My Options

[Home](#) | [FAQs](#) | [Contact](#) | [Press](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Terms](#)
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Fig. 23

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[Find My Car](#) [Build My Car](#) [Financial Services](#) [My Virtual Garage](#)

2000 Ford Contour SVT Sedan

Invoice MSRP carOrder
 My Total Price: \$21,116 \$23,275 **\$21,574**

Payment Estimator: finance (terms): \$360.73
 lease (terms): \$192.09

select a new [make](#), [model](#), or [trimline](#)

Custom-Build My Car: Select Options

← back to [Select Colors](#)
 see all [Standard Parts](#)

	invoice	MSRP	carOrder
Trim <i>108a</i>			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SVT	\$20,556	\$22,715	\$21,014
Audio <i>108b</i>			
<input type="checkbox"/> AM-FM Stereo with CD and Premium Sound - Stereo audio system with radio and CD player	no chrg	no chrg	no chrg
Engine Equipment <i>108c</i>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Block heater	\$18	\$20	\$18
Roof <i>108d</i>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Sunroof	no chrg	no chrg	no chrg
Brakes <i>108e</i>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Power Front and Rear Disc Brakes	no chrg	no chrg	no chrg
Other Accessories <i>108f</i>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Licence plate bracket	no chrg	no chrg	no chrg
<input type="checkbox"/> Spoiler <i>108g</i>	\$218	\$245	\$218
Packages <i>108h</i>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Smokers Package - Front ashtray - Front seats cigar lighter	\$13	\$15	\$13
Charges <i>108c</i>			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Destination Charge	\$560	\$560	\$560

got a question? << ask here

108j Save to My Virtual Garage

108k continue Price My Car

[Home](#) | [FAQs](#) | [Contact](#) | [Press](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Terms](#)

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Fig. 24

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Custom-Build My Car: Vehicle Selection

110

◀◀◀ [back to Find My Car](#)

Use the menus below to specify your car, next you'll configure it
Your Car

Manufacturer:

 110a

[Research Here](#) 110d

Model:

 110b

Trimline/Style:

 110c

Fig. 25

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Custom-Build My Car: Vehicle Selection

///

back to [Find My Car](#)

Use the menus below to specify your car, next you'll configure it
Your Car

Manufacturer: *110a*

Model: *110b*

Trimline/Style: *110c*

Do you need more info on the **Models and Trimlines** a manufacturer has to offer?

[Research Here](#) *110d*

111e }



2000 Ford Contour SVT Sedan

Ford's Contour SVT sedan is a sportier version of the Sport sedan featuring a 2.5-liter, 200-horsepower V6 engine and upgrades such as a 10-way power driver's seat, steering wheel-mounted cruise control, and 4-wheel anti-lock brakes.

[Learn More...](#) *111c*

[Configure...](#) *111d*

Fig. 26

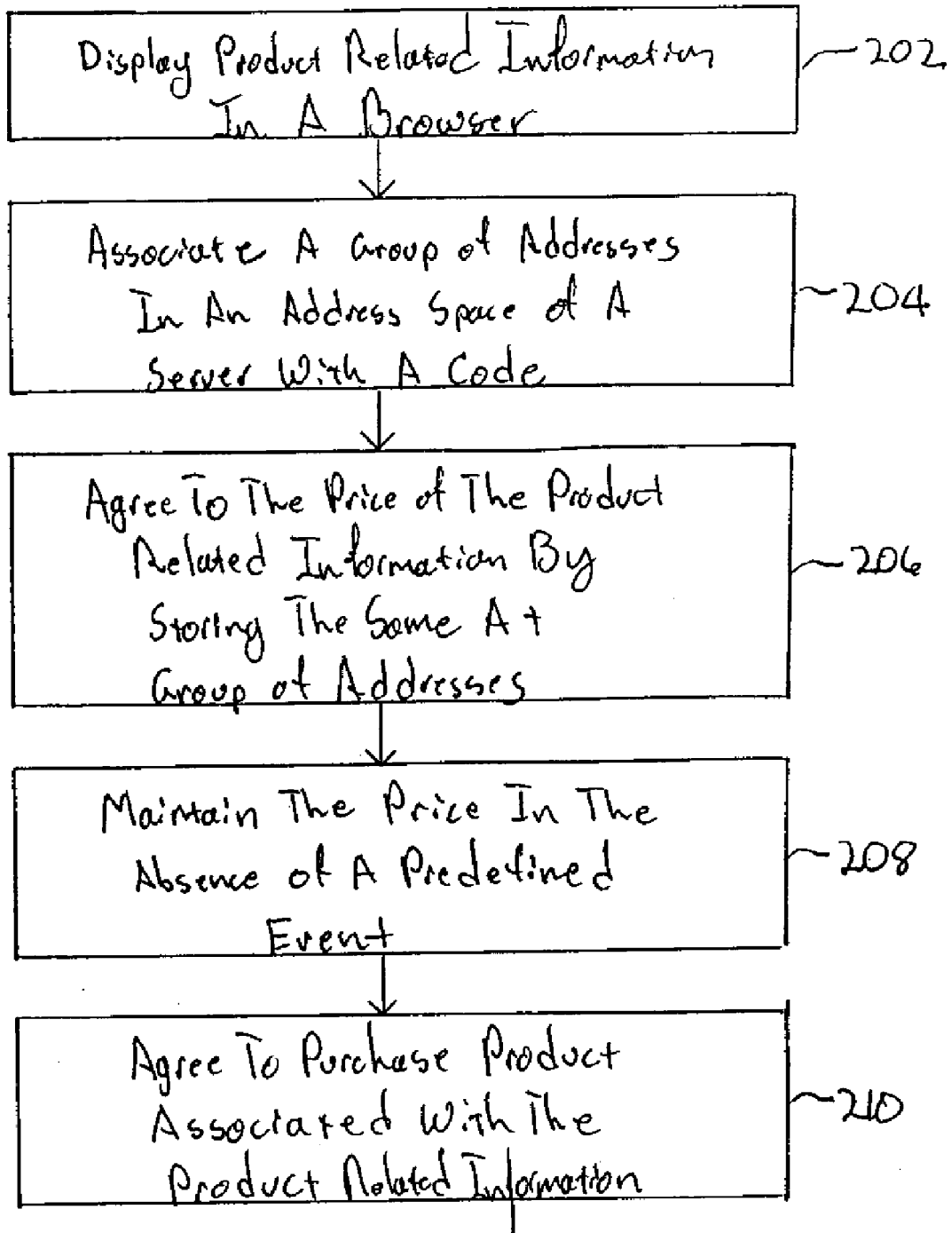


Fig. 27

METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR PRODUCT COMPARISON

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims priority from Provisional Patent Application No. 60/176,117, entitled "System And Method For Facilitating Commercial Transactions Over A Data Network," filed Jan. 14, 2000, and having Joshua Walsky as inventor. This application is assigned to Trilogy Development Group, Inc., the assignee of the present invention, and is hereby incorporated by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] The present invention relates to communication over a data network. Specifically, the present invention is directed to facilitating commercial transactions over a wide area data network.

[0004] 2. Description of the Related Art

[0005] Historically, product-related information, such as a description of the nature of a product, price of the product, warranties covering a product, customer service associated with a product, and the like, was disseminated using various types of media. The media chosen was typically independent of the mode in which the actual transaction concerning the product was to occur. Rather, the media was chosen based upon the anticipated market for the product. For example, advertisements for mining tools would typically be found in a trade journal, as opposed to be displayed on television. However, the popularity of commercial transactions over wide area data networks, such as the Internet, has caused companies to disseminate product-related information through the same media through which the transactions concerning the products occur. As a result, companies are investing enormous amounts of time, money and effort to provide product-related information over the Internet.

[0006] Companies have been assisted in the endeavor to provide product-related information over wide area networks by the technology available on the Internet. The Internet typically includes a number of users employing client terminals communicating with a remote server computer to transfer information therebetween. To facilitate the transfer, the client terminals have a "web" browser that provides graphical user interface (GUI)-based communication with a "web page" obtained from a server. One popular collection of servers uses a standardized Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) to provide information and is known as the "World Wide Web." The information is typically presented as web pages written as text with standardized formatting and control symbols known as Hypertext Mark-up Language (HTML). HTML provides basic document formatting and allows a server to specify "links" to other servers and files. Use of an HTML-compliant browser involves specification of a link via a Uniform Resource Locator (URL). Upon such specification, the user's client terminal makes a TCP/IP request to the server identified in the link and receives an HTML file that is interpreted by the browser so that an electronic HTML document made up of one or more web pages may be displayed on the client's terminal.

[0007] One difficulty with commercial transactions over the Internet concerns shopping for items based on price (i.e., comparison-price shopping). Comparison-price shopping

involves a user comparing prices for similar products to determine which the user desires. There are major factors endemic to the Internet that frustrate comparison-price shopping. First, the quantity of information frustrates the identification of a single product, much less multiple products having similar or analogous characteristics. A second difficulty is that the accuracy of the information on the Internet is often compromised by various conditions, such as the rapidity with which product-related information changes and the difficulty with updating large amounts of product-related information on the Internet. In addition, the accuracy of product-related information may be supplier-dependent. If a substitute supplier of a product is used, certain characteristics of product-related information may change (e.g., price).

[0008] With respect to finding information concerning specific products, the area is replete with attempts to augment the probability that the product-related information will be perceived by a user. For example, U.S. Pat. No. 5,937,390 to Hyodo discloses a method for determining the effectiveness of advertisements accessed over the Internet using a WWW browser. When accessing an advertisement, the user receives a toll-free telephone number of a store and calls the toll-free telephone number. A toll-free call control system connects the call to a store in which the desired product is available to determine whether the user would like to buy the advertised product. At the same time, information concerning the access is recorded as log information. This log information is posted to the service provider, and the service provider analyzes the hit rate from this log information and the WWW browser access log. From this result, the on-line service provider, or advertiser, can determine the effectiveness of the given advertisement. However, a user cannot complete the transaction concerning the purchasing of the product entirely over the Internet, thereby requiring additional retail infrastructure.

[0009] U.S. Pat. No. 5,918,214 to Perkowski discloses a system and method for finding product and service related information the Internet. The system includes Internet Servers that contain information pertaining to Universal Product or Service Number (e.g., UPC number) preassigned to each product and service registered in the system, with Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) that point to the location of one or more information resources on the Internet (e.g., World Wide Web (WWW) websites). A user is provided with an "Internet Product/Service Information (IPSI) Finder" feature and a "Universal Product/Service Number (UPSN) Search" feature. The system enters its "IPSI Finder Mode" when the "IPSI Finder" feature is activated enters the "UPSN Search Mode" when the "UPSN Search" feature is activated. When the system is in its IPSI Finder Mode, a predesignated information resource (e.g., advertisement, product information, etc.) pertaining to any commercial product or service registered with the system is automatically accessed from the Internet and displayed from the Internet browser by simply entering the registered product's UPN or the registered service's USN into the Internet browser. When the system is in its "UPSN Search Mode", a predesignated information resource pertaining to any commercial product or service registered with the system is automatically accessed from the Internet and displayed from the Internet browser by simply entering the registered product's trademark(s) or (service mark) and/or associated company name into the Internet browser.

[0010] U.S. Pat. No. 5,745,681 to Levine, et al., discloses an invention for maintaining a record of items selected for

purchase from a group of selectable items. The invention includes a browser at a client station having a request module to send a shopping page request to a server. A shopping page module in the server sends a shopping page file to the browser in response to the shopping page request. The shopping page file contains items selectable by a user using the browser. A shopping module at the browser generates an add request and sends the add request to the server. This add request contains selected items from the items that were selectable in the shopping page file. A receiver at the server receives the add request from the browser, and a cart list module at the server initializes a shopping cart list. An add module at the server adds the selected items to the shopping cart list. A shopping page module at the server converts the cart list to a cart field, generates a new shopping page file, embeds the cart field in the new shopping page file and sends the new shopping page file to the browser. In this way, the shopping cart field is in a shopping page file that may be managed by the browser at the client station.

[0011] While both Perkowski and Levine, et al., facilitate identification of products that a user is interested in purchasing, neither Perkowski nor Levine, et al., ensure the accuracy of the product-related information provided. What is needed, therefore, is a technique for easily identifying multiple products of similar characteristics that ensures the information corresponding to the products is accurate.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0012] In one embodiment of the present invention, a method of comparing products is disclosed. The method includes selecting a first configuration representing a first product with a first attribute, selecting a second configuration representing a second product with a second attribute, and displaying the first attribute and the second attribute. As will be noted, the first attribute is defined in the first configuration, and the second attribute is defined in the second configuration.

[0013] In one aspect of this embodiment, the first product is a first vehicle and the second product is a second vehicle. Given this, the method may further include selecting the first configuration from at least one stored configuration. Also, given this aspect, the method can further include generating the first configuration by performing actions such as selecting a make of the first vehicle, selecting a model of the first vehicle, and selecting a trim level of the first vehicle, as well as selecting an equipment level of the first vehicle.

[0014] In another aspect of this embodiment, the method can further include generating a third configuration. Such a third configuration can be comparable to the first configuration with regard to a vehicle type. Additionally, the third configuration can also be comparable to the first configuration with regard to a vehicle price.

[0015] These and other embodiments of the present invention, along with many of its advantages and features, are described in more detail below and are shown in the attached drawings. The foregoing is a summary and thus contains, by necessity, simplifications, generalizations and omissions of detail; consequently, those skilled in the art will appreciate that the summary is illustrative only and is not intended to be in any way limiting. As will also be apparent to one of skill in the art, the operations disclosed herein may be implemented in a number of ways, and such changes and modifications may be made without departing from this invention and its broader aspects. Other aspects, inventive features, and advan-

tages of the present invention, as defined solely by the claims, will become apparent in the non-limiting detailed description set forth below.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0016] The present invention may be better understood, and its numerous objects, features, and advantages made apparent to those skilled in the art by referencing the accompanying drawings.

[0017] FIG. 1 is simplified plan view of a data network;

[0018] FIG. 2 is a block diagram of a client terminal shown above in FIG. 1;

[0019] FIG. 3 is a plan view of a first web page having a visual representation of a hypertext link which can be employed in accessing a Virtual Garage™;

[0020] FIG. 4 is a plan view of a second web page having a visual representation of a hypertext link and data entry regions which can be employed in accessing a Virtual Garage™;

[0021] FIGS. 5a-c is a plan view of a web page employed to allow users to register to gain access to a Virtual Garage™;

[0022] FIG. 6 is a plan view of a web page that is uniquely associated with a user and on which product-related information stored on a server is accessed;

[0023] FIG. 7 is a plan view of a first web page through which a user can access product-related information that may be associated with the web page shown above in FIG. 6;

[0024] FIG. 8 is a plan view of a second web page through which a user can access product-related information that may be associated with the web page shown above in FIG. 6;

[0025] FIG. 9 is a plan view of a third web page through which a user can access product-related information that may be associated with the web page shown above in FIG. 6;

[0026] FIG. 10 is a plan view of a fourth web page through which a user can access product-related information that may be associated with the web page shown above in FIG. 6;

[0027] FIG. 11 is a plan view of a fifth page through which a user can access product-related information that may be associated with the web page shown above in FIG. 6;

[0028] FIG. 12 is a plan view of a sixth web page through which a user can access product-related information that may be associated with the web page shown above in FIG. 6;

[0029] FIGS. 13a-c are plan views of a seventh web page through which a user can access product-related information that may be associated with the web page shown above in FIG. 6;

[0030] FIGS. 14a-c are plan views of a eighth web page through which a user can access product-related information that may be associated with the web page shown above in FIG. 6;

[0031] FIGS. 15a-c are plan views of a ninth web page through which a user can access product-related information that may be associated with the web page shown above in FIG. 6;

[0032] FIG. 16a-c are a plan views of a tenth web page through which a user can access product-related information that may be associated with the web page shown above in FIG. 6;

[0033] FIGS. 17a-c are plan views of an eleventh web page through which a user can access product-related information that may be associated with the web page shown above in FIG. 6;

[0034] FIG. 18*a-c* are plan views of a twelfth web page through which a user can access product-related information that may be associated with the web page shown above in FIG. 6;

[0035] FIG. 19 is a plan view of a thirteenth web page through which a user can access product-related information that may be associated with the web page shown above in FIG. 6;

[0036] FIG. 20 is a plan view of a web page through which a user can access product comparison features that may be associated with the web page shown above in FIG. 6;

[0037] FIG. 21 is a second plan view of a web page through which a user can access product comparison features that may be associated with the web page shown above in FIG. 6;

[0038] FIG. 22*a-c* is a plan view of a fourteenth web page through which a user can access product-related information that may be associated with the web page shown above in FIG. 6;

[0039] FIG. 23 is a plan view of a fifteenth web page through which a user can access product-related information that may be associated with the web page shown above in FIG. 6;

[0040] FIG. 24 is a plan view of a sixteenth web page through which a user can access product-related information that may be associated with the web page shown above in FIG. 6;

[0041] FIG. 25 is a plan view of a seventeenth web page through which a user can access product-related information that may be associated with the web page shown above in FIG. 6;

[0042] FIG. 26 is a plan view of an eighteenth web page through which a user can access product-related information that may be associated with the web page shown above in FIG. 6; and

[0043] FIG. 27 is a flow diagram showing a method in accordance with the present invention.

[0044] The use of the same reference symbols in different drawings indicates similar or identical items.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0045] The following is intended to provide a detailed description of an example of the invention and should not be taken to be limiting of the invention itself. Rather, any number of variations may fall within the scope of the invention which is defined in the claims following the description.

Introduction

[0046] Embodiments of the present invention include a method of comparing products. Typically, products are compared by a potential buyer of the products by performing some sort of feature-by-feature comparison (e.g., price, amenities, options, colors, etc.). The method described herein supports such comparisons and includes selecting a first configuration and a second configuration. The first configuration represent a first product with a first attribute. The second configuration represents a second product with a second attribute. Finally, the first and the second attributes are displayed so that the potential buyer can easily compare the two products' features. Thus, each product is represented by a configuration of that product (the product with a given set of

features). As will be noted, the first attribute is defined in the first configuration, and the second attribute is defined in the second configuration.

An Example Computing and Network Environment

[0047] FIG. 1 is a block diagram of a wide area network (WAN) 5 (e.g., the Internet), which includes a number of networked servers 10 that are accessible by client terminals 12. Communication between servers 10 and client terminals 12 typically occurs over a publicly accessible network, such as a public switched telephone network (PSTN) over ASDL telephone lines or large bandwidth trunks (e.g., T1 or OC3). Client terminals 12 access servers 10 through an Internet service provider (ISP) by executing application specific software (e.g., a "browser") on a computer 14, shown in detail in FIG. 2.

[0048] FIG. 2 is a block diagram illustrating a computer such as computer 14. Computer 14 includes one or more system buses 22, which place various components of computer 14 in data communication. For example, a microprocessor 24 is placed in data communication with both a read only memory (ROM) 26 and a random access memory (RAM) 28 via system bus 22. ROM 26 contains, among other code, a Basic Input-Output System (BIOS), which controls basic hardware operations such as the interaction with peripheral components such as disk drives 30 and 32, as well as a keyboard 34. RAM 28 is the main memory into which the operating system and application programs are loaded. A memory management chip 36 is in communication with system bus 22 to control direct memory access (DMA) operations. DMA operations include passing data between RAM 28, and hard disk drive 30 and floppy disk drive 32. Also in communication with system bus 22 are various I/O controllers: a keyboard controller 38, a mouse controller 40, a video controller 42, and an audio controller 44. Keyboard controller 38 provides a hardware interface for keyboard 36, mouse controller 40 provides the hardware interface for a mouse 46, or other point-and-click device, and video controller 40 provides a hardware interface for a display 48. A modem 50 enables data communication over WAN 5, preferably facilitating data transmission speeds of at least 28.8 Kbps. The operating system of computer 14 may be MS-DOS™, WINDOWS™ 3.x, WINDOWS™ 95, WINDOWS™ NT 4.0, OS/2™, or other known operating system. Computer 14 also supports a number of Internet access tools, including, for example, an HTTP-compliant web browser, such as Netscape Navigator™, Microsoft Explorer™ or the like.

[0049] Referring to FIGS. 1 and 2, browser 54 employs, for example, a TCP/IP connection to pass a request to an HTTP server 10*a* running an HTTP "service" (e.g., under the WINDOWS™ operating system) or a "daemon" (e.g., under a UNIX™ operating system). The request is typically satisfied by contacting HTTP server 10*a* using a protocol that can be used to communicate between server 10*a* and one or more of client terminals 12 (e.g., HTTP). One of servers 10 then responds to the request, typically by sending a "web page" formatted as an HTML file. The browser interprets the HTML file and displays a visual representation of the web page using local resources (e.g., fonts, colors and the like).

An Example of a System Facilitating Commercial Transactions Over a Network

[0050] Referring to FIGS. 2, 3 and 4, a visual representation of a "web page" 56 is depicted as web page 56 would be

presented, for example, on display 48. Web page 56 includes, inter alia, a hypertext link 58 (entitled “enter the site”). Employing mouse 46, a cursor 60 may be placed proximate to hypertext link 58, and a cursor event is effectuated (i.e., hypertext link 58 is activated). Activating hypertext link 58 results in a visual representation of a web page 61 being presented on display 48. In this manner, hypertext link 58 allows navigation to web page 61 by having the same displayed on display 48. Web page 61 includes a number of hypertext links 62a-z, as well as a number of data entry fields 64a-d. Also included on webpage 61 is a link 66, which allows navigation to facilities that allow the propagation of information (e.g., over the Internet, via a file-transfer-protocol (FTP) or e-mail).

[0051] Hypertext links 62a, 62b, 62c, 62t, 62u, 62v, 62w, 62x and 62y are provide to inform users of certain information not germane to the present invention. For example, hypertext links 62a and 62u allow navigation to webpages that discuss how to use the website. Hypertext links 62b, 62w, 62x and 62v provide company information, such as summary of the company and its services, press releases, jobs available, and how to contact the company. Hypertext link 62c describes how privacy is maintained on the website. Hypertext link 62t allows navigation to web page 61, and hypertext link 62y allows navigation to information that discusses the terms and conditions for gaining access to the website.

[0052] Access to the present invention is gained through webpage 61 by activating a hypertext link 62n. Before activating hypertext link 62n, a user must either enter information corresponding to a preexisting account in data entry fields 64c and 64d, or register a new account. In this manner, a user may be associated with a subportion of the addresses in the address space of HTTP server 10a, and referred to herein as a Virtual Garage™. To restrict access to the aforementioned subportion of addresses, a code that corresponds to the user is associated with the Virtual Garage™. The aforementioned code includes a user-name and a password. To gain access to the Virtual Garage™, the user’s user-name is entered in data entry field 64c, and the user’s password is entered in data entry field 64d. As is standard with most password security, the user’s password is not displayed in data entry field 64d.

[0053] In the case where a user attempts to gain access to the present invention for the first time, a hypertext link 62o allows navigation to an account registration webpage 65, shown in FIGS. 5a-5c. Account registration webpage 65 includes a number of data entry fields 65a-s, in which the user’s personal information can be entered. Also included on account registration webpage 65 are data fields 66a-b and 67a-j. Data entry fields 66a-b indicate the level of restriction on dissemination of the information provided in data fields 65a-s. Information entered in data fields 67a-i indicates how the user came to obtain knowledge of the existence of account registration webpage 65.

[0054] A number of hypertext links can also be included on account registration webpage 65. For example, hypertext links 62a, 62b, 62c, 62t, 62u, 62v, 62w, 62x and 62y are the same as shown on webpage 62, and are as discussed above. Hypertext links 70a-c allow navigation to additional websites that may be in data communication with databases having information concerning products that are the subject of commercial transactions over the data network. For example, were automobiles to be sold, hypertext link 70a includes information concerning various models of automobiles; hypertext link 70b includes information concerning custom

ordering an automobile to have desired features; and hypertext link 70c includes information concerning financing of an automobile to be purchased. Hypertext link 70d, on the other hand, allows navigation to a webpage having information concerning automobiles already selected by the user as being suitable for purchase, which is discussed more fully below.

[0055] Upon acceptance of the registration data entered into data entry fields 65a-g, Virtual Garage™ on server 10a is accessed by activating hypertext link 62n. Activation of hypertext link 62n causes navigation to a webpage 75, shown in FIG. 6. Web page 75 includes information concerning products that a user is interested in purchasing. To that end, web page 75 facilitates comparison price shopping by allowing a user to store product-related information concerning multiple products and examine that information. Information concerning various products (in this example, automobiles) can be obtained by activating either of hypertext links 70a or 70b. Activating hypertext link 70a navigates to a web page 80, shown in FIG. 7, which includes, inter alia, a number of hypertext links that enable access to a database of information related to automobiles. For example, hypertext links 80a and 80d allow access to a database concerning information organized by the make and model of the available automobiles. Hypertext links 80c and 80f allow access to the same database, but facilitate searching based upon the features associated with automobiles in the database. Hypertext links 80b and 80e facilitate comparison of automobiles associated with the aforementioned database with other automobiles associated therewith or with information stored by the user in the user’s Virtual Garage™.

[0056] Referring to FIGS. 7, 8 and 9, the activation of hypertext links 80a or 80d allows navigation to a webpage 82. Webpage 82 includes a matrix 82a of hypertext links having titles associated with various automobile manufactures. In addition, a hypertext link 82b is present on webpage 82 that allows navigation to webpage 80. Activating the hypertext links in matrix 82a navigates to webpages having a listing of models of cars fabricated by the manufacturer associated with the hypertext link thus activated. For example, activating the hypertext link entitled “Ford” allows navigation to a webpage 84, which includes a brief description of different models of automobiles sold or manufactured under the “Ford” trademark. In addition, webpage 84 includes hypertext links 84a-v and 82b. Hypertext link 84a allows navigation to webpage 82 to allow a user to view models of automobiles associated with a different manufacturer.

[0057] Referring to FIGS. 9, 10, 11 and 12, hypertext links 84b-v allow a user to obtain more specific information concerning particular automobiles sold/fabricated by the given manufacturer. For example, hypertext links 84b and 84c allow navigation to a webpage 85 that recites more detailed information concerning the Taurus model of automobile in text region 85a entitled “overview.” Webpage 85 also includes various hypertext links that facilitate obtaining additional information concerning the Taurus model of automobile (shown as hypertext links 85b and 85c).

[0058] For example, hypertext link 85b allows navigation to a webpage 86. Webpage 86 is similar to webpage 85, excepting recitations 86a concerning the performance characteristics of the Taurus model and the presence of hypertext link 86a that allows navigation to webpage 85. Hypertext link 85c allows navigation to a webpage 87, which is similar to webpage 85, excepting recitations 86a concerning the features available on the Taurus model. Also, unlike webpages

85 and **86**, webpage **87** includes both hypertext links **85a** and **86b** that allow navigation to webpages **85** and **86**, respectively.

[0059] Additionally, webpage **85** includes hypertext link **84a** that allows a user to navigate to webpage **82** to choose information concerning automobiles associated with a different manufacturer. A hypertext link **85d** allows a user to navigate to webpage **84** to obtain information related to a different model offered by the same manufacturer. Activating hypertext link **84d** allows a user to choose different groups of features for the present model of automobile that are provided by the manufacturer, referred to as option packages. In this manner, a user is able to “build” a model of an automobile having the desired features.

[0060] Referring to FIGS. **7**, **13a-c** and **14a-c**, from webpage **80**, a user may search for a particular automobile based upon the features desired. To that end, hypertext links **80c** and **80f** allow navigation to a webpage **90**. Webpage **90** includes a number of hypertext links **90a-f** that allow navigation to different webpages containing information concerning various features available on a list of automobiles recited in a column **90g**. Also included on webpage **90** are hypertext links **70a-d**, as well as a hypertext link **66**. Webpage also includes a data entry region **90h** having a number of data entry fields **92a-h**. Each of the data entry fields **92a-h** corresponds to a range of values. One or more of data entry fields **92a-h** can have data entered therein to indicate the price of a vehicle in which a user is interested. Hypertext link **90b** allows navigation to a webpage **93**. Webpage **93** is similar to webpage **90**, excepting a data entry region **93a** which includes a number of data entry fields **93b-n** that correspond to characteristics of an automobile, such as different body styles, drive trains and engine locations.

[0061] Referring to FIGS. **13a** and **15a-c**, hypertext link **90c** allows navigation to a web page **94**. Webpage **94** is similar to webpage **90**, excepting a data entry region **94a** which includes a number of data entry fields **94b-m** that correspond to the characteristics of the engine associated with the automobile being configured. The aforementioned characteristics include the horsepower and the number of cylinders.

[0062] Referring to FIGS. **13a** and **16a-c**, hypertext link **90d** allows navigation to a web page **95**. Webpage **95** is similar to webpage **90**, excepting data entry region **95a** that includes a number of data entry fields **95b-i** that correspond to fuel economy of the automobile being configured. As a result, a user may select an automobile based upon a desired fuel economy that the automobile must achieve.

[0063] Referring to FIGS. **13a** and **17a-c**, hypertext link **90e** allows navigation to web page **96**. Webpage **96** is similar to webpage **90**, excepting data entry region **96a** which includes a number of data entry fields **94b-n** that correspond to the characteristics an automobile’s interior. The aforementioned characteristics may include the type of seats included with the automobile (e.g., bench or bucket seats), as well as the upholstery thereof. Additionally, the type of sound system may be chosen from data entry regions **96i-n**.

[0064] Referring to FIGS. **13a** and **18a-c**, hypertext link **90f** allows navigation to a web page **97**. Webpage **97** is similar to webpage **90**, excepting a data entry region **97a**, which includes a number of data entry fields **97b-h** that correspond to the safety characteristics of the automobile being configured. This allows selecting automobiles based upon the avail-

able safety restraint systems associated therewith (e.g., driver-side airbag, integrated child safety seat, roadside assistance, and the like).

[0065] Referring to FIGS. **7** and **19**, from webpage **80a** user may also select automobiles based upon side-by-side comparisons. To that end, hypertext links **80b** and **80e** allow navigation to a webpage **100**. Webpage **100** has a number of floating frames **100a-f** and data entry regions **100g-p**. A subset of floating frames **100a-f** (floating frames **100a-c**) and a subset of data entry regions **100g-p** (data entry regions **100g-k**) are associated with product information concerning a first automobile. The remaining ones of floating frames **100a-f** (floating frames **100d-f**) and the remaining ones of data entry regions **100g-p** (data entry regions **100l-p**) are associated with product information concerning a second automobile.

[0066] To compare product-related information of two automobiles, one of data entry regions **100g** and **100h** is selected. For example, to compare information stored in the user’s Virtual Garage™, data entry region **100h** is activated. For the present discussion, it is assumed that data entry region **100g** is activated. Floating frame **100a** is entitled “select make” and includes a virtual button **101a**. Activating the virtual button expands floating frame **100a**. This enables a user to scroll through a list of automobile manufacturers and select a particular manufacture, for the first automobile, by highlighting the same and effectuating a cursor event. The remaining floating frames (floating frames **101b** and **101c**), entitled select model and select trim, respectively, operate in a manner similar to floating frame **101a**. This enables a user to select the first automobile based upon the manufacturer, model and trim. The second automobile is selected in a similar fashion using floating frames **100d-f** and data entry regions **100l-p**.

[0067] Referring to FIGS. **7** and **19**, if the user desires to compare product-related information concerning the second automobile with product-related information stored in the Virtual Garage™, data entry region **100h** is made the subject of a cursor event, navigating to a web page **102**. Webpage **102** is identical to webpage **100**, excepting for the absence of floating frames **100a-c**. In place of floating frames **100a-c**, a floating frame **100q** is present and is entitled “select garage car”. Activating virtual button **101b** that is associated with floating frame **100q** expands floating frame **100q** to enable a user to scroll through a list of automobiles for which information is stored in the user’s Virtual Garage™.

[0068] Referring to FIGS. **20**, **21** and **22a-c**, after selecting the make, model and trim for the two automobiles to be compared on webpage **102**, the user navigates to a webpage **103**. Webpage **103** is identical to webpage **102** except for the inclusion of a hypertext link **100r** entitled “compare”. Hypertext link **100r** allows navigation to a webpage **104**. In addition to including product-related information, webpage **104** includes six floating frames **104a-f** that correspond to floating frames **100a-f**, as well as six data entry regions **104i-n** that correspond to data entry regions **100i-k** and **100n-p**. Two additional floating frames are included on webpage **104** (floating frames **104g** and **104h**), entitled “auto-generate a comparable car”, as well as two hypertext links (hypertext links **104o** and **104p**). The product-related information is arranged in two columns (columns **105a** and **105b**), with information concerning the first automobile recited in column **105a** and that concerning the second automobile recited in column **105b**. The information is preferably arranged so that analogous, or common, characteristics of the two automo-

biles are recited in a common row. For example, information concerning the transmission of the first automobile in column **105a** should be directly across from the transmission information concerning the second automobile recited in column **105b**. In this manner, a user may quickly and easily compare the characteristics of the two (or more) automobiles.

[0069] Should the user desire to vary the product-related information being compared, the user can change the information in either of columns **105a** and **105b**. To that end, the user can use floating frames **104a-104f** to select a different manufacturer and/or model, as well as a trim, as discussed above with respect to webpage **100**. Alternatively, hypertext links **104o** and/or **104p** can be activated to obtain product-related information stored in the Virtual Garage™. Finally, the user can employ floating frame **104g** to cause server **10a** (which hosts software implementing the Virtual Garage™) to automatically generate information concerning an automobile that is comparable to that for which information is displayed in column **105a**. To effect such generation, a user activates a virtual button **105c** to select a criteria by which to seek a comparable automobile. The criteria can include, for example, price and/or features. In a similar fashion, the product-related information in column **105b** can also be varied through the use of floating frame **104h**.

[0070] Referring to FIGS. **22a-c**, **23** and **24**, hypertext links **105f** and **105g** can be activated in order to save product-related information in column **105a** and column **105b**, respectively. For example, hypertext link **105f** allows navigation to a webpage **106**, which includes a hypertext link **106a**. Activation of hypertext link **106a** saves the product-related information concerning the first automobile, recited in column **105a**, in the user's Virtual Garage™. From webpage **106**, a user may also vary the product-related information concerning the first automobile before saving that vehicle to the user's Virtual Garage™. To that end, a number of data entry regions **106b-g** corresponding to differing exterior and interior colors are provided. Additionally, by activating a hypertext link **106h**, information concerning the first automobile can be varied by selecting differing option packages associated with the model selected for the first automobile. Hypertext link **106h** allows navigation to a webpage **108**, which includes data entry regions **108a-i**. Data entry regions **108a-i** allow selection between different options provided by the manufacturer. From webpage **108**, information concerning the first automobile can be saved to the user's Virtual Garage™ by activation of a hypertext link **108j**. Finally, activation of a hypertext link **108k** allows a user to obtain an updated price for the vehicle.

[0071] Referring to FIGS. **6**, **7**, **24**, **25** and **26**, a user may obtain product-related information concerning an automobile by activating hypertext link **70b**, and in so doing navigates to a webpage **110**. Webpage **110** includes floating frames **110a**, **110b** and **110c** that serve functions identical to floating frames **100a**, **100b** and **100c** (shown on webpage **100**). Also included on webpage **110** is a hypertext link **110d** that allows navigation to webpage **80** to facilitate researching information concerning product-related information, as discussed above. Once the desired information is selected in floating frames **110a**, **110b** and **110c**, the user navigates to a webpage **111**. Webpage **111** is identical to webpage **110** except that additional hypertext links (hypertext links **111a**, **111b**, **111c** and **111d**) are provided. In addition, summary product-related information **111e** (corresponding to the make, model and trim selected) is also displayed on webpage **111**. Hyper-

text link **111a** allows navigation to webpage **84**, providing a list of models associated with the manufacturer selected in floating frame **110a**. Hypertext link **111b** allows navigation to a webpage **112**, which provides a list of option packages provided by the manufacturer selected in floating frame **110a**. Hypertext link **110c** allows navigation to webpage **85**, which includes the information discussed above, and hypertext link **111d** allows navigation to webpage **106**. As mentioned above, webpage **106** includes data entry regions **106b-g**, which correspond to differing exterior and interior colors that are provided by the manufacturers, as well as a hypertext link **106h** that allows navigation to webpage **108** to facilitate selection of different options provided by the manufacturer selected in floating frame **110a**. In this manner, a user may save the product-related information thus generated to the user's Virtual Garage™.

[0072] To that end, referring to FIGS. **1** and **27**, a user views product-related information displayed in a browser window (step **202**). The user then associates a group of the addresses of the address space of server **10a** with a code (step **204**). The product-related information includes the product's price. The user then agrees to the price of the product associated with the product-related information by storing the same in the aforementioned group of addresses (step **206**). The aforementioned price is maintained in the absence of a predefined system event, such as the expiration of a predetermined time period (step **208**). For example, were the product-related information stored in the aforementioned group of addresses for longer than seven days without the user agreeing to purchase the product associated therewith, the price associated therewith might then be modified at server **10a**. Additionally, changes in any of the information associated with the product-related information stored in the aforementioned group of addresses prior to the user agreeing to purchase the product associated therewith can also result in modification of the price stored at server **10a**. This is demonstrated by assuming product-related information concerning an automobile is stored at the aforementioned subgroup of addresses and then the trim associated with the automobile changes before the user agrees to purchase the automobile. In this scenario, the price of the automobile can be changed at server **10a**, resulting in the user having to pay the new price. Otherwise, the price agreed to by the user is the price of the product associated with the product-related information at the time the user agreed to the purchase (step **210**).

[0073] Although the foregoing method has been described with step **204** occurring after step **202**, step **204** could occur at any point during the method so long as step **204** precedes step **206**. In addition, the embodiment discussed above illustrates a use of the present invention for facilitating commercial transactions over a data network involving automobiles. It should be understood, however, that the present invention can also be applied to commercial transactions involving any product, such as furniture, cleaning products, maid services, travel services and the like.

[0074] Thus, while particular embodiments of the present invention have been shown and described, it will be obvious to those skilled in the art that, based upon the teachings herein, changes and modifications may be made without departing from this invention and its broader aspects and, therefore, the appended claims are to encompass within their scope all such changes and modifications as are within the

true spirit and scope of this invention. Furthermore, it is to be understood that the invention is solely defined by the appended claims.

1. A method of comparing products comprising:
selecting a first configuration, wherein said first configuration represents a first products with a first attribute;
selecting a second configuration, wherein said second con-

figuration represents a second product with a second attribute; and
displaying said first attribute and said second attribute, wherein said first attribute is defined in said first configuration and said second attribute is defined in said second configuration.

2-28. (canceled)

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