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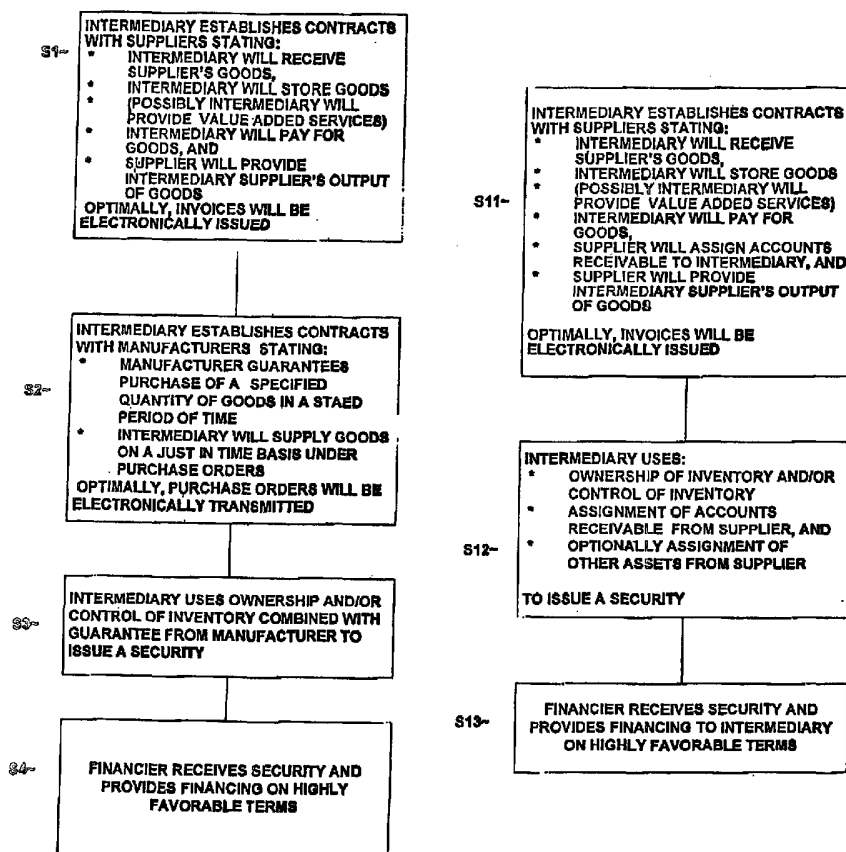
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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR MANAGEMENT, FINANCING AND SUPPLY IN AN INTEGRATED SUPPLY CHAIN SYSTEM



(57) Abstract: A method and apparatus for providing trade financing to inventory suppliers (210), manufacturers (230), or both, on the basis of a zero inventory model. The method and apparatus involves the generation of a security on the basis of inventory ownership combined with either or both of a purchase guarantee from an inventory purchaser and an assignment of accounts receivable by an inventory supplier (210). The invention also involves an integrated supply chain process (S1-S4-S11-S13) and event notification interface (30) that can perform financial transactions and electronic proof of delivery in support of such zero inventory model financing.

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*For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.*

## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/SG02/00278

**A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER**Int. Cl. <sup>7</sup>: G06F 17/60

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

**B. FIELDS SEARCHED**

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

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

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

WPAT: Keywords - SUPPLY CHAIN, PURCHASE GUARANTEE, FINANCE, ZERO, INVENTORY, JUST IN TIME, OWNERSHIP

**C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT**

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 6167385 A (HARTLEY-URQUHART) 26 December 2000	
Y	Entire document	1, 11, 17, 21, 27, 37
		2-10, 12-16, 18-20, 22-26, 28-36, 38-40
X	WO 01/52158 A (ISUPPLY CORPORATION) 19 July 2001	
Y	Entire document	1, 11, 17, 21, 27, 37
		2-10, 12-16, 18-20, 22-26, 28-36, 38-40
X	US 5732400 A (MANDLER et al.) 24 March 1998	
Y	Entire document	1, 11, 17, 21, 27, 37
		2-10, 12-16, 18-20, 22-26, 28-36, 38-40

☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C☒ See patent family annex

* Special categories of cited documents:	
"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
"E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date	"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means	"&" document member of the same patent family
"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed	

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27 March 2003

Date of mailing of the international search report

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## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/SG02/00278

C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	US 6157915 A (BHASKARAN et al.) 5 December 2000 Entire document	1-40
Y	WO 00/42556 A (VOLVO COMMERCIAL FINANCE THE AMERICAS) 20 July 2000 Entire document	1-40
Y	WO 00/77708 A (C#MINOR SOFTWARE INC.) 21 December 2000 Entire document	1-40
Y	US 6041310 A (GREEN et al.) 21 March 2000 Entire document	1-40

## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/SG02/00278

**Box I Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)**

This international search report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. ☒ Claims Nos : 1-26

because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:

They define a method of doing business which is excluded from searching under Rule 39.1(iii). **This office has, however, chosen to search this subject matter in line with National Laws.**

2. ☐ Claims Nos :

because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out, specifically:

3. ☐ Claims Nos :

because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a)

**Box II Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 3 of first sheet)**

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

1. **Claims 1-20, directed to a method of financing provision by at least one supplier of goods to at least one manufacturer through a supply chain intermediary, are characterised by the intermediary owning and controlling the goods in inventory, securing purchase guarantee from the manufacturer and finance from a financing entity based on the ownership and guaranteed security.**

*[Continued in Supplemental Box]*

1. ☐ As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims

2. ☒ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, this Authority did not invite payment of any additional fee.

3. ☐ As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:

4. ☐ No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

**Remark on Protest**

☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest.

☐ No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

**Supplemental Box**

(To be used when the space in any of Boxes I to VIII is not sufficient)

**Continuation of Box No: II**

2. Claims 21-26, directed to a method of securitization involving a supply chain intermediary taking similar ownership, are similarly characterised, not by a manufacturer or financial entity, but does issue a financial instrument similarly based on the ownership and guaranteed security.
3. Claims 27-36, directed to a supply chain system to support a zero inventory model financing (at variance with claim 1 for example), are characterised by a supply chain management system controller coupled to a communication means operative to send and receive messages to and from remote financial institution and inventory units for example, with the inventory units disposable at an intermediary site.

Although these sets of claims do not contain matter constituting entirely separate "special technical features", they nevertheless only have the **financing of an inventory controller intermediary chain supplier** in common.

4. Claims 37-40 directed to a method of implementing proof of delivery process to an order for delivery of inventory in a supply chain involving at least an intermediary and one of an inventory supplier and purchaser, are characterised by directing movement of the inventory to and from an intermediary location/intermediary purchaser location and transmission of information regarding such movement.

All that this last set of claims has in **common** with the other sets is **an inventory controller intermediary chain supplier**. This merely **constitutes a clearing house or third party in a business transaction** and is considered to be well used, well known, common general knowledge, and is not new. The claims are therefore considered **to lack unity a' posteriori**.

## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No.

PCT/SG02/00278

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

Patent Document Cited in Search Report		Patent Family Member	
US 6167385	AU 62879/99	WO 200033220	
WO 200152158	AU 200130936	EP 1254420	US 2002184084
	US 2002194043	US 2002194057	US 2002019761
US 5732400	AU 48547/96	EP 804772	WO 9621192
US 6157915	NONE		
WO 200042556	AU 200026114	EP 1145162	
WO 200077708	AU 200053336		
US 6041310	NONE		
END OF ANNEX			