



(22) Date de dépôt/Filing Date: 2012/12/10

(41) Mise à la disp. pub./Open to Public Insp.: 2014/06/10

(51) Cl.Int./Int.Cl. *G06Q 10/10* (2012.01),
H04W 4/00 (2009.01), *G06K 9/18* (2006.01),
H04B 5/00 (2006.01)

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(54) Titre : PROCEDE D'ECHANGE D'INFORMATION DE CONTACT MIS EN ŒUVRE PAR ORDINATEUR

(54) Title: METHOD OF COMPUTER IMPLEMENTED CONTACT INFORMATION EXCHANGE

(57) **Abrégé/Abstract:**

A method of computer implemented contact information exchange. A first step involves providing a remote server with a database accessible having a plurality of blank contact information templates. A second step involves assigning to each of the blank contact information templates a unique identifier code by means of which each of the blank contact information templates may be individually accessed through the world wide web. A third step involves providing to an individual member of the public a machine readable version of the unique identifier code for a particular one of the blank contact information templates and inviting the individual member of the public to populate the particular blank contact information template with their contact information. Individual member of the public may share their contact information by allowing the third party to save the unique identifier code which allows the third party to receive contact information from the remote server.



ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method of computer implemented contact information exchange. A first step involves providing a remote server with a database accessible having a plurality of blank contact information templates. A second step involves assigning to each of the blank contact information templates a unique identifier code by means of which each of the blank contact information templates may be individually accessed through the world wide web. A third step involves providing to an individual member of the public a machine readable version of the unique identifier code for a particular one of the blank contact information templates and inviting the individual member of the public to populate the particular blank contact information template with their contact information. Individual member of the public may share their contact information by allowing the third party to save the unique identifier code which allows the third party to receive contact information from the remote server.

TITLE

[0001] Method of computer implemented contact information exchange

FIELD

5 [0002] There is described a method of computer implemented contact information exchange.

BACKGROUND

[0003] A relatively new development with business cards is the addition to the face of the
10 business card of a QR code. There are computer programs, such as SCANLIFE™, that can be downloaded to a mobile phone and used to scan the QR code. The QR code takes the reader to the business website, where a wealth of additional information may be accessed. It should be noted that these systems can also be implemented with other code forms, the QR code being merely one of the more common forms of codes currently in use.

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[0004] There are computer programs, such as SCANBIZCARDS business card reader, which are used to scan and organize business cards for future reference.

[0005] There will hereinafter be described an alternative method of computer
20 implemented contact information exchange, which can be implemented by a potential user, even if the user does not have a business card and does not have a website. There will also be described how this method can be adapted for the business environment.

SUMMARY

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[0006] There is provided a method of computer implemented contact information exchange. A first step involves providing a remote server with a database accessible by computers, mobile phones and other computing devices through the world wide web; the database having a plurality of blank contact information templates. A second step involves
30 assigning to each of the blank contact information templates a unique identifier code by means of which each of the blank contact information templates may be individually accessed through the world wide web. A third step involves providing to an individual member of the public a machine readable version of the unique identifier code for a particular one of the

blank contact information templates and inviting the individual member of the public to populate the particular blank contact information template with their contact information, such that the individual member of the public may selectively chose to share their contact information with a third party by allowing the third party to use their mobile phones to save
5 the unique identifier code which allows the third party to receive contact information for the individual member of the public from the remote server.

[0007] When we meet persons in a business setting, the established etiquette is to exchange business cards. The business cards provide business contact information to
10 facilitate future business communications. In contrast, when we meet persons in a social setting a business card with business contact information is usually not appropriate. A social setting requires the exchange of personal contact information, such as our home address and our home phone number. At the present time, personal contact information is usually communicated verbally or provided ad hoc by writing such personal contact information on a
15 slip of paper. The current method facilitates a computer implemented contact information exchange in which the individual member of the public may selectively chose to share their contact information with a third party by merely allowing the third party to use their mobile phone to save the machine readable unique identifier code.

20 [0008] It is recognized that in order for this method to be useful, the unique identifier codes must readily available on the person of the individual member of the public. There are a number of ways in which this can be done. One way is for the unique identifier code to be provided to the individual member of the public as an adhesive sticker, along with instructions regarding mounting the adhesive sticker to a back of a mobile telephone.
25 Another way is for the unique identifier code is provided to the individual member of the public as a plastic credit card sized card, which can be stored in the wallet of the individual member.

[0009] Although the described method has strong advantages for the exchange of personal
30 contact information in a social contact, it will be appreciated that there is no reason why the method may not also be used for the exchange of business contact information. It is envisaged that for the exchange of business contact information that the unique identifier code

will be placed on a business card that is given to and retained by the third party. In a business context, a company may reserve a block of unique identifier codes for employees of the company, with each of the unique identifier codes providing access to one of the blank contact information templates. As a new employee joins the company, he or she is provided
5 with one of the unique identifier codes and asked to populate the blank contact information template associated with that particular unique identifier code with his or her business contact information. It will also be appreciated that in a business context, the contact information template may include information that differs slightly from that which the contact information template for a social exchange requires.

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[0010] The present method has a unique aspect when viewed from the point of view of a third party who has received contact information. When programs, such as SCANBIZCARDS business card reader, are used; a major concern is making sure that the information in the database is kept current. The task of keeping the information current falls
15 upon the third party. However, when one exchanges contact information in accordance with the present method, keeping information in the database current is not a concern. The information is always provided from the contact information template. The information in the contact information template is maintained by the individual to whom the contact information template has been assigned. Presumably, this will always result in the information in the
20 contact information template being updated on a timely basis.

[0011] There are a number of different machine readable technologies that can be used to implement the present method. QR technology is one that is presently being used on business cards and appears to be a logical choice. There are, however, older bar code technologies that
25 would work. There are technologies currently used in the retail industry that would work. There are also technologies that are currently gaining popularity, such as Near Field Communication (NFC), that would work.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

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[0012] These and other features will become more apparent from the following description in which reference is made to the appended drawings, the drawings are for the purpose of illustration only and are not intended to be in any way limiting, wherein:

[0013] **FIG. 1** is a flow chart of an contact information activation process.

[0014] **FIG. 2** is a flow chart of an automatic contact information update feature, with blocking capabilities.

5 DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0015] A method of computer implemented contact information exchange will now be described with reference to **FIG. 1** and **2**.

Operation:

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[0016] As described above, the method involves three steps. A first step involves providing a remote server with a database accessible by computers, mobile phones and other computing devices through the world wide web; the database having a plurality of blank contact information templates. A second step involves assigning to each of the blank contact information templates a unique identifier code by means of which each of the blank contact information templates may be individually accessed through the world wide web. A third step involves providing to an individual member of the public a machine readable version of the unique identifier code for a particular one of the blank contact information templates and inviting the individual member of the public to populate the particular blank contact information template with their contact information, such that the individual member of the public may selectively chose to share their contact information with a third party by allowing the third party to save the unique identifier code which allows the third party to receive contact information for the individual member of the public from the remote server. The method will now be further described.

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[0017] The present method is a complete system that allows an inactive QR code or any form of image recognition (element) to be placed on an adhesive sticker, a credit card sized plastic card or any medium for that matter and then be distributed. This inactive element can then be activated by going to a web site. The element is inactive because when it is scanned by a smartphone, it takes the user to "blank or not found web page". Basically, there is not data at the destination address or assigned to the element. All that the element contains

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(encoded with) is a web address and a unique identifier for that specific element.

[0018] A user (individual or business) can go to a web site and type, either on a PC or through their smartphone and activate the element by typing in a serial number that
5 accompanies the element. The serial number is an alternative, user friendly way of uniquely identifying the element. Alternatively, the user could use the unique identifier that is encoded in the element. The primary method will be the serial number; however, the unique identifier should be cited as well. Upon typing the serial number into a web site and having the web site validate that the serial number as being valid, the user can proceed to create and account and
10 setup a contact information profile. This contact information profile contains any and all relevant contact information such as phone number, email address, physical address, fax number, etc. The profile can also contain a link to a web site, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or YouTube page. Upon successfully completing the activation process, the element becomes active and the next time it is scanned by a smartphone user, it will display the profile which
15 was setup for it.

Application to Business

[0019] This same concept of pre-generated elements for individuals, can also be used for
20 businesses. The profile information that can be assigned to the element varies depending on whether the profile is for an individual or business. Individuals have information that businesses do not and vice versa. It is therefore preferred that there be pre-generated elements for individuals and pre-generated elements for businesses. It will be appreciated that we can have an infinite number of element types that could be tailored for specific applications. In a
25 business context, the pre-generated element will usually be placed on a business card. It could, of course, be on a brochure or other piece of material that is handed out to potential customers.

[0020] Additionally, by having multiple types of pre-generated elements for specific
30 purposes (individuals and businesses) it allows us to pre-generate what we call “business packs”. A business pack comprises of a parent element (for the business), the primary element

with the serial number, as well as “sub elements”, which are intended for employees and are associated (owned by/belong to) the parent element. This allows a business that gets business cards printed to have a unique element placed on every employees business card. Once the parent element is activated and an account created, the inactivated elements on each employees business card can be activated through the parent account. Employee activation takes place by the owner of the parent account logging into a web site and then providing the unique employment details for each inactive employee code.

[0021] The purpose of distributing inactive elements on cards for consumers is it allows us to potentially create millions of inactive cards that can be distributed to consumers, who can then activate these cards and use them to share/exchange their contact information. For businesses, it allows partner companies to place/offer the option of having an element that can be scanned to access their business and employee information without having to make any form of financial commitment. A customer can choose to have the elements placed on their business cards and then activate them at their convenience, when they’re ready; or never. This makes it much easier for partners to convince a customer to place the element on their business cards, since there is no up-front commitment.

[0022] I will note at this point that the purpose of the system is once activated, an element can be scanned by any scanning application on any smartphone in order to access a virtual profile for the individual or business. A third party can scan the element and then save the contact information for the individual or business directly to their smartphones contacts. This is quick and convenient. In addition, our application keeps a contact that was added by scanning one of our elements up-to-date, when the owner of the element updates their information. This process is a way to get cards with these elements out to the masses.

[0023] Users who have activated elements have the ability to login to a web site and manage the profiles that are attached to the elements. They can change/update their information so that anyone who scans their element always see the latest information. Business users can manage all of their employee elements, terminate and reassigning elements as required. This falls outside of the core activation process and is more into the post activation management side of things.

[0024] It is possible for retail companies to purchase cards with pre-generated (inactive) elements on them, which they can distribute to their customers. The model is the customer is being given something of value, a card they can activate to be able to conveniently exchange
5 contact information. The retail company can offer promotions (discounts, free items, etc.) to customers who activate their cards. This promotion can be offered during the activation process, from the website. When the customer activates their card with an element they received from the retail company, they will automatically opt in to receive SMS (text message) marketing from the retail company. This allows the retail company to market to any
10 opted in customer who has activated a card they've distributed.

[0025] When an individual user adds another contact to their contacts using this application, the app keeps that contact information current. In this scenario, individuals and businesses are maintaining their own information and this application is keeping those details
15 updated. This automatic updating feature will now be further described.

[0026] Once registered, the user maintains a contact profile, which contains their information. Users who use the associated mobile application can by using a unique a unique ID for another user, access a profile on his or her mobile device and save the
20 corresponding profile details to their mobile devices contacts. Upon saving a profile to a user's contacts on their mobile device, the mobile application also saves that user as a contact in a remote database and web application. The mobile application requires the user to be "logged in", in order to identify their account on the remote web application and be able to save contacts to this remote web application. This form of authentication is a
25 username and password that can be used to log into the mobile application as well as the web application.

[0027] The web application provides users with a contacts view that shows every contact they have saved. In addition, they are able to see every user that has saved them to
30 their contacts. These would be others users who have accessed their profile using the mobile application and saved them to their contacts. In summary, users can see everyone they've saved and everyone who has saved them.

[0028] At certain interval's the mobile application checks the remote web application for any changes to the contact list and if the mobile application finds a record or contact that has updated their information, the mobile application will update the contact record
5 on the mobile device with the new information and notify the user that it has done so.

[0029] To protect users privacy, if a user has been added to someone's contacts and they no longer want that user to have access to their new information, they can disable/block that user from receiving new profile changes. This is intended to prevent
10 unwanted individuals from having new information they are not entitled to.

[0030] In addition, the mobile application provides a restoration feature if they lose or replace the smartphone. By simply downloading the mobile application and selecting a "restore" option, the mobile application will download all contacts previously saved to the
15 users contacts, restoring their data.

[0031] In this patent document, the word "comprising" is used in its non-limiting sense to mean that items following the word are included, but items not specifically mentioned are not
20 excluded. A reference to an element by the indefinite article "a" does not exclude the possibility that more than one of the element is present, unless the context clearly requires that there be one and only one of the elements.

[0032] The scope of the claims should not be limited by the preferred embodiments set
25 forth in the examples, but should be given a broad purposive interpretation consistent with the description as a whole.

What is Claimed is:

1. A method of computer implemented contact information exchange, comprising:
 - 5 providing a remote server having a database accessible by computers, mobile phones and other computing devices through the world wide web, the database having a plurality of blank contact information templates;
 assigning to each of the blank contact information templates a unique identifier code by means of which each of the blank contact information templates may be individually
10 accessed through the world wide web;
 providing to an individual member of the public a machine readable version of the unique identifier code for a particular one of the blank contact information templates and inviting the individual member of the public to populate the particular blank contact information template with their contact information, such that the individual member of the
15 public may selectively chose to share their contact information with a third party by allowing the third party to use their mobile phones to save the unique identifier code which allows the third party to receive contact information for the individual member of the public from the remote server.
 - 20 2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the unique identifier code is provided to the individual member of the public as an adhesive sticker, along with instructions regarding mounting the adhesive sticker to a back of a mobile telephone.
 3. The method of Claim 1, wherein the unique identifier code is provided to the individual
25 member of the public as a plastic credit card sized card.
 4. The method of Claim 1, wherein the machine readable unique identifier code is based upon one of bar code technology, QR code technology, or Near Field Communication (NFC) technology.
 - 30 5. The method of Claim 1, wherein the remote server records in the database an outgoing

contact information listing of every third party that has received the contact information of the individual member of the public.

5 6. The method of Claim 5, wherein upon the individual member of the public updating his or her contact information in the database, the remote server updates the records of every third party on the outgoing contact information listing as the third party logs on to the remote server.

10 7. The method of Claim 5, wherein remote server enables the individual member of the public to view the outgoing contact information listing stored in the database of every third party that has saved the contact information of the individual member of the public.

15 8. The method of Claim 6, wherein the remote server enables the individual member of the public to designate any third party on the outgoing contact information listing as being blocked from receiving further automatic updates.

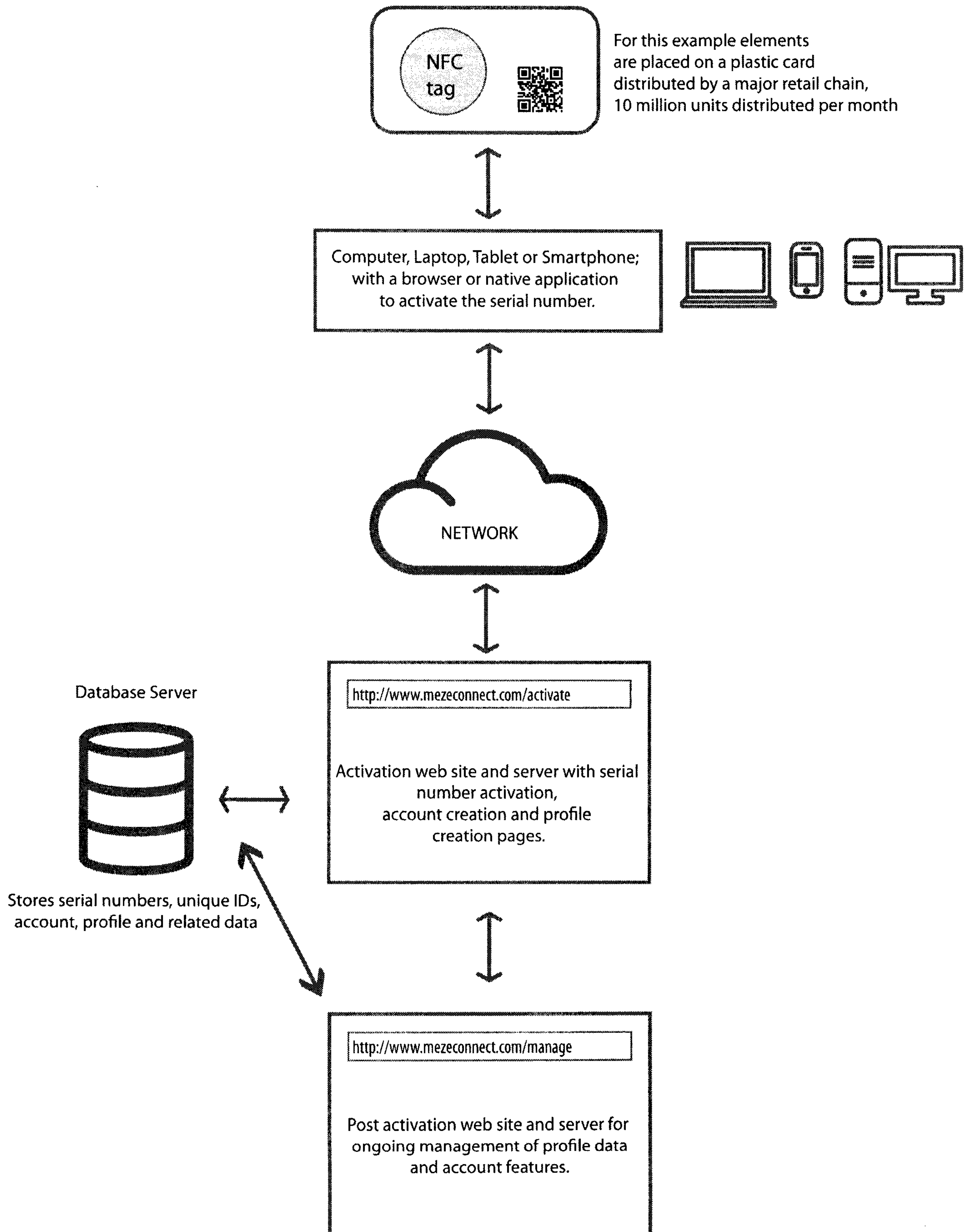
9. The method of Claim 1, wherein the remote server records in the database an incoming contact information listing of every third party who has given his or her contact information to the individual member of the public.

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10. The method of Claim 9, wherein the remote server permits the individual member of the public to download to their mobile phone the incoming contact information listing.

Activation Process

Inactive Serial Number and Unique ID Stored in a NFC and 2D Element (SN# XXXX-XXXX)



Synchronization Process

