

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization  
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date  
17 July 2008 (17.07.2008)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number  
**WO 2008/085953 A1**

(51) International Patent Classification:  
**G06Q 40/00** (2006.01)

(21) International Application Number:  
PCT/US2008/000225

(22) International Filing Date: 7 January 2008 (07.01.2008)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:  
60/883,664 5 January 2007 (05.01.2007) US

(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): **CORPORATE IMAGE GROUP** [US/US]; 780 Lee Street, Des Plaines, IL 60016 (US).

(72) Inventor; and

(75) Inventor/Applicant (for US only): **OZGEN, Sami** [US/US]; 360 North Pondview Drive, Palatine, IL 60067 (US).

(74) Agents: **RAUCH, Christopher, P.** et al.; Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal LLP, P.O. Box 061080, Wacker Drive Station, Sears Tower, Chicago, IL 60606-1080 (US).

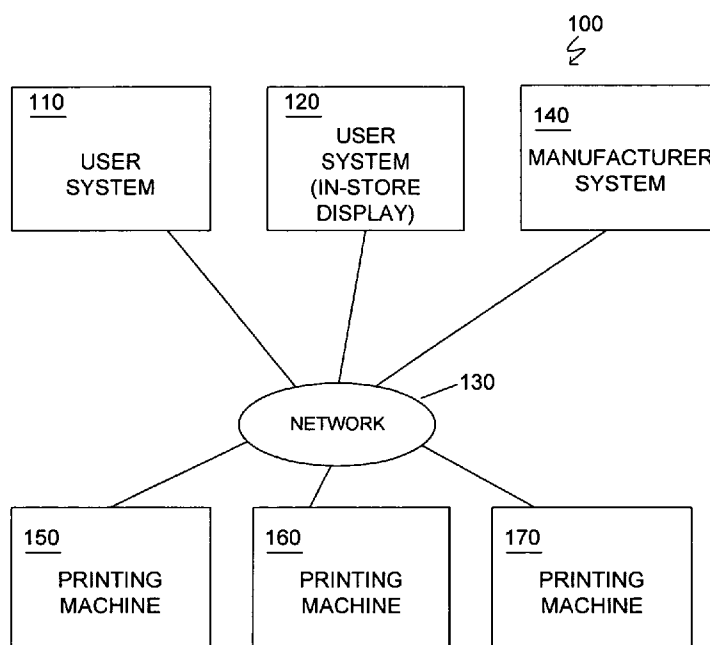
(81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM, AO, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BH, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DO, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, GT, HN, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KM,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

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

Published:

- with international search report
- before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of receipt of amendments

(54) Title: SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR DISTRIBUTING CUSTOMIZED ITEMS



(57) Abstract: Systems and methods for creating and distributing customized items are provided. Items are paid for with pre-purchased gift cards. These gift cards may be purchased at retailers, or provided to users as gift, prizes, advertisements, or promotional items.

WO 2008/085953 A1

## **SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR DISTRIBUTING CUSTOMIZED ITEMS**

### **RELATED APPLICATION DATA**

[0001] This application claims the benefit of the filing date and priority to the following patent application, which is incorporated herein by reference to the extent permitted by law:

U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/883,664, entitled "System and Method for Distributing Customized Items," filed January 5, 2007.

### **FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

[0002] The present invention generally relates to manufacturing and distributing customized items and more particularly relates to selling customized items using pre-purchased gift cards.

### **BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

[0003] Traditionally, it has been difficult to give a customized item as a gift. For example, for custom-printed clothing, it is difficult for the gift giver to determine what the gift receiver would like to have printed on the article of clothing. Alternatively, the gift giver could let the receiver design the gift and pay for it with cash received from the giver. Thus, there is a need for a convenient way to give a pre-paid customized item.

### **SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

[0004] Methods, systems, and articles of manufacture consistent with the present invention provide for distributing customized and personalized items and branded items online. Items may be paid for with pre-purchased cards, such as gift cards. These gift cards may be purchased at retailers, online, or provided to users as gift, prizes, advertisements, or promotional items. The gift cards may be redeemed at customized item web sites that are branded with a brand or organization associated with the card. A user creates a customized item using the web site and receives. Then, the item is delivered to the user.

[0005] In accordance with methods consistent with the present invention, a method in a data processing system having a program for providing customized items. The method comprises the steps of: providing a web site via which a user may design a customized item; receiving user input for designing the customized item; receiving an order for the customized item from the user; receiving a user inputted payment identifier as at least partial payment for the customized

item, the payment identifier being associated with a pre-paid gift card provided to the user; and processing the order for the customized item.

[0006] In accordance with articles of manufacture consistent with the present invention, a computer-readable medium is provided that contains instructions that cause a data processing system to implement a method for providing customized items. The method comprises the steps of: providing a web site via which a user may design a customized item; receiving user input for designing the customized item; receiving an order for the customized item from the user; receiving a user inputted payment identifier as at least partial payment for the customized item, the payment identifier being associated with a pre-paid gift card provided to the user; and processing the order for the customized item

[0007] In accordance with systems consistent with the present invention, a data processing system for providing customized items is provided. The data processing system comprises: a memory having a program that provides a web site via which a user may design a customized item, receives user input for designing the customized item, receives an order for the customized item from the user, receives a user inputted payment identifier as at least partial payment for the customized item, the payment identifier being associated with a pre-paid gift card provided to the user, and processes the order for the customized item; and a processing unit that runs the program.

[0008] Other systems, methods, features, and advantages consistent with the present invention will become apparent to one with skill in the art upon examination of the following figures and detailed description. It is intended that such additional systems, methods, features, and advantages be included within this description and be within the scope of the invention.

## **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

[0009] The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated in and constitute a part of this specification, illustrate an implementation of methods and systems consistent with the present invention and, together with the description, serve to explain advantages and principles consistent with the invention. In the drawings,

[0010] Figure 1 is a block diagram that depicts a data processing system consistent with the present invention;

[0011] Figure 2 is a block diagram of an illustrative user system;

[0012] Figure 3 is a block diagram of an illustrative manufacturer system;

[0013] Figure 4 is a flow diagram that depicts illustrative steps for distributing customized items consistent with the present invention;

[0014] Figure 5 depicts an illustrative web site screen shot consistent with the present invention;

[0015] Figure 6 is a flow diagram that depicts illustrative steps for creating the item design;

[0016] Figure 7 depicts an illustrative store administration user interface;

[0017] Figure 8 depicts an illustrative orders interface;

[0018] Figure 9 depicts an illustrative checkout interface; and

[0019] Figure 10 depicts an illustrative inventory interface.

## **DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PRESENTLY PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS**

[0020] Reference will now be made in detail to an implementation consistent with the present invention as illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

[0021] Systems, methods, and articles of manufacture consistent with the present invention provide for creating and distributing customized items. Items may be paid for with pre-purchased gift cards. These gift cards may be purchased at retailers, or provided to users as gift, prizes, advertisements, promotional items, and the like. In the illustrative example, the gift cards may be redeemed via a web site, such as a customized-item web site that is branded with a brand or organization associated with the card. One having skill in the art will appreciate that the term “gift card” as used herein may include cards and the like that are not received as gifts, but may be for example, purchased cards, prizes, promotional items, and the like. A gift card may cover some or all of the price of the item, as well as shipping. Further, the gift card may be used with other promotional items, such as discount codes. The gift card can take on any shape and is not necessarily shaped like a card.

[0022] Figure 1 depicts an illustrative data processing system 100 suitable for use with methods, systems, and articles of manufacture consistent with the present invention. Data processing system 100 includes one or more user systems 110 and 120 that can be used by a gift carder holder to redeem a customized item using the gift card. The user systems include a variety of devices such as cellular telephones, personal computers, in-store computing systems, and the like. In the illustrative example, user system 110 is a personal computer, for example at the user's home and user system 120 is a computing system at a store location, such as an in-store display.

[0023] The user systems are coupled to a network 130, such as the Internet, to facilitate communication with a manufacturer system 140. In the illustrative example, the manufacturer system comprises a web server that presents a web page to the user's system, so that the user may obtain the customized item using the gift card. The manufacturer system also communicates with devices that create and distribute the customized item, as will be described in more detail below.

[0024] In the illustrative example, the various components communicate via the Internet using cable modems, dial-up modems, and the like. Users access the data processing system through a web browser interface on the user systems. The information displayed in the web browser is transmitted from the manufacturer system using TCP/IP and other protocols.

[0025] The manufacturer system also communicates with one or more printing machines 150, 160, and 170. Each of the printing machines may be dedicated to a particular type of customized item such t-shirts of the same size or t-shirts of the same color. The program routes orders for customized items to the appropriate printing machine. In one embodiment consistent with the present invention, the printing machines are Kornit printing machines. One having ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that there is no limit to the number or types of printing machines used. Further, in the illustrative example, the manufacturer system and the printing machines communicate via network 130. The various devices may communicate different or alternative communication systems, such as hard-wired communication or other networks.

[0026] Figures 2 and 3 depict more detailed views of illustrative user and manufacturer systems, respectively. Figure 2 depicts a more detailed view of user system 110, but may also represent user system 120. The user system comprises a central processing unit (CPU) 202, an input/output (I/O) unit 204, a display device 206, a secondary storage device 208, and a memory 210. The zoning system may further comprise standard input devices such as a keyboard, a mouse or a speech processing means (each not illustrated). Memory 210 includes a web browser program 220 that allows a user to access the manufacturer system's web site via the network.

[0027] Figure 3 depicts a more detailed view of the manufacturer system. The manufacturer system comprises a central processing unit (CPU) 302, an input/output (I/O) unit 304, a display device 306, a secondary storage device 308, and a memory 310. The manufacturer system may further comprise standard input devices such as a keyboard, a mouse or a speech processing means (each not illustrated). Memory 310 includes a manufacturer program 320 that allows a

manufacturer to receive user input, and create and distribute the customized item. A database 330 may be located, for example, in the manufacturer system secondary storage or remotely from the manufacturer system. In the illustrative example, the database 330 is located in the manufacturer system secondary storage. The database includes, for example, designs for the customized item. The database may also store shipping information, order information, payment information, gift card information for cross-referencing user-supplied gift card numbers with valid gift card numbers and their associated value amounts, and the like.

[0028] One having skill in the art will appreciate that each program and module described herein can be a stand-alone program and can reside in memory on a data processing other than the described systems. The program and modules may comprise or may be included in one or more code sections containing instructions for performing their respective operations. While the programs and modules are described as being implemented as software, the present implementation may be implemented as a combination of hardware and software or hardware alone. Also, one having skill in the art will appreciate that the programs and modules may comprise or may be included in a data processing device, which may be a client or a server, communicating with the described system.

[0029] Although aspects of methods, systems, and articles of manufacture consistent with the present invention are depicted as being stored in memory, one having skill in the art will appreciate that these aspects may be stored on or read from other computer-readable media, such as secondary storage devices, like hard disks, floppy disks, and CD-ROM; or other forms of ROM or RAM either currently known or later developed. Further, although specific components of data processing system 100 have been described, one skilled in the art will appreciate that a data processing system suitable for use with methods, systems, and articles of manufacture consistent with the present invention may contain additional or different components.

[0030] One having skill in the art will appreciate that the user and manufacturer systems can themselves be implemented as client-server data processing systems. In that case, a program or module can be stored on, for example, the manufacturer system as a client, while some or all of the steps of the processing of the program or module described below can be carried out on a remote server, which is accessed by the manufacturer system over the network. The remote server can comprise components similar to those described above with respect to the zoning system, such as a CPU, an I/O, a memory, a secondary storage, and a display device.

**[0031]** Figure 4 is a flowchart that depicts illustrative steps performed by the program for creating and distributing customized items consistent with an embodiment of the invention. Initially, the user obtains a gift card. The gift card may be purchased, for example, at a retailer such as a department store, an on-line store, a pharmacy, a grocery store, and the like. Alternatively, the gift card may be provided to the user as a gift, prize, or promotional item. Conventional gift cards have a shape that is similar to that of a credit card and may carry the design of a specific brand or organization. However, the gift card may have a different shape, such as a shape that is associated with the brand or item. For example, a gift card that is designated for the purchase of a custom t-shirt may have the shape of a t-shirt. This item associated with the gift card may be any type of item. For example, the item may be an article of clothing, a hat, a publication, a picture, a cup, a mug, a key chain, a banner, a promotional item, two dimensional, three dimensional, and the like.

**[0032]** After obtaining the gift card, the user uses a user system, such as user system 110, to log on to the manufacturer system's web site (step 410). The manufacturer program receives a request to access the web site from the user system and presents the web site to the user. To access the web site, the user may, for example, input the URL of the web site, which may be printed on the gift card. Alternatively, the user may access the web site, for example, via an in-store display that automatically accesses the web site.

**[0033]** Then, the user designs and orders a customized item using the user system (step 420). Figure 5 depicts an illustrative screen shot or interface that the user may see on the user system display. In the illustrative example, the interface presented to the user contains various input devices, such as button, tabs, drop down menus, and the like, that may be selected by the user to configure the item being designed. One having skill in the art will appreciate that the various items presented in the depicted interface are illustrative, and different or additional items may be presented.

**[0034]** Drop down box 502 is selected by the user to choose a product type, such as t-shirt, crew shirt, sweatshirt, coffee mug, and the like. The customized item 508 appears in design area 503. The user may click on the graphics tabs 504, text tab 512, or the upload graphic tab 513 to view various graphics, text or uploaded graphics that can be imported into the item design. In the illustrative example, the user can drag and drop the desired design feature, such as a graphic image, from a pattern area 505 onto the item 508. Pattern area 305 presents various patterns

such as logos depicting an organization's name or mark from which the user may select a preferred choice. The user may also be presented with artwork, designs, logos, photos, or other images for implementation onto the item. By selecting tab 312, the user may add text to the customized item 308. Alternatively, a custom graphic may be uploaded and applied to the design by selecting tab 313. The user can also select a color from a plurality of color buttons 511, a size from drop down box 509, and a quantify from selection box 510.

**[0035]** After designing the item, the user may place the newly-designed item in a shopping cart by selecting button 507 or proceed to checkout to purchase the item by selecting button 506.

**[0036]** The program may also present ready-made suggestions for the design to user for a variety of design options. For example, the item may include a particular layout with a logo in an upper portion and text in a lower portion. The user may choose among the options or he or she may customize the apparel in any way he or she chooses. The ready-made suggestions are not limited to, but may include the most popular design selection placed by customers using the site. As the user is selecting the design options among the various layers, the user may view in real-time the placement of the selected design options on the front and back of the customized item 308.

**[0037]** Figure 6 is a flow diagram that depicts illustrative steps performed by the program for receiving and implementing the user's design choices. First, the program receives input of the user selected product type (step 602). In response, the program displays the desired item 508 in the display area 503. If the program receives an input to change the displayed patterns 505 (step 604), for example by receiving user input to display graphics 504, text 512, or an uploaded image 513, then the program displays the appropriate patterns (step 606). The user selects a pattern item, such as a graphic by clicking on the pattern item and dragging and dropping it onto the item (step 608). The program receives input for item color when the user selects a color button 511 (step 610). When the user selects the size (*e.g.*, clothing or hat size) using drop down box 509, the program identifies appropriate size (step 612). And when the user selects the quantity using the selector 510, the program identifies the appropriate quantity of items (step 614). The user may also rotate, resize, stretch, or skew the text or images and move them around on the item.

**[0038]** The user can continue to make design changes or modifications to the existing design until the user places the item in the cart or purchases the item (step 616). After the item has been



placed in the cart, the user can further go back and make changes to the design until the user purchases the item.

[0039] Referring back to Figure 4, after designing the item, the user may then order the item (step 430). At step 440, the user submits shipping information, payment information, and an identifier that is associated with the gift card. The identifier may be, for example, a serial number or other identifier printed on the gift card or its associated packaging. In one embodiment consistent with the present invention, the payment information is credit card information. In another embodiment consistent with the present invention, the payment information is a number printed on the gift card. The gift card value covers some or all of the price of the item, and may include the cost for shipping. Further, the user may use the gift card in combination with other value items, such as other gift cards, promotional discount codes, and the like. Accordingly, the user may need to only provide the gift card identifier to complete the transaction, without having to use additional funds. Alternatively, the user may need to provide additional payment information, such as a credit card number that is verified by the program. The program verifies the authenticity of the payment information at step 450. A record of the transaction is stored in the database (step 460). The customized item design is then sent to one of the printing machines for production of the customized item (step 470). The finished product may then be shipped to the user.

[0040] Communication between the manufacturer system and the printing machine may be done utilizing a protocol, such as TCP/IP, RS-232, RS-422, hard wire connection, and the like. The item design is received by the printing machine and converted into an image, such as a raster image, that may be applied to the item. Printing machines and their receipt of designs and printing are known in the art and will not be described in more detail herein.

[0041] In an embodiment, the item may be printed along with a related item, such as a membership card. The membership card, for example, may entitle the user to a discount at the establishment associated with the advertisement, promotional item, or packaging. Item and its related item may be shipped to the user.

[0042] The system, methods, and articles of manufacture consistent with the present invention may be used to sell customized items to consumers through internet web applications or interfaces. This allows the fulfillment of sales directly to a more targeted end consumer and provides flexible designs. Because the inventive system and methods give users full or partial

access to the design criteria, constraints and possibilities, issuers of the gift cards can customize the offering to their end consumer as they see fit. This kind of participation on the part of the user allows for further personalization of the product offering. Further, by creating network-based applications accessible through web sites, marketing directly to an end consumer can be more targeted and can be less expensive to acquire a customer. Therefore, this issuer may obtain lower operating costs and create higher margins than those associated with traditional online commerce-oriented web sites.

**[0043]** Figures 7-10 depict illustrative interfaces used by the manufacturer to manage item creation and distribution. These interfaces are displayed, for example, on the manufacturer system display device. The interfaces provide the ability to upload and manage product information and details, upload and manage customer information, create various checkout processes, retrieve orders, submit orders to the printing machines, and the like. The interfaces may be displayed for a particular web site or provide global access to a plurality of web sites.

**[0044]** Figure 7 depicts an illustrative store administration menu interface 700. In the illustrative example, the manufacturer program displays menus for displaying orders 702, manage checkout processes 704, check inventory 704, identify customers, modify the web site design interface using a design manager, and perform various administrative tasks, such as generate reports, and manage plug-ins.

**[0045]** Figure 8 depicts the orders sub-menu 702 of the store administration menu interface in more detail. In the illustrative example, the orders sub-menu allows one to view orders, search for orders using for example search terms, view shopping carts, order invoice print settings, edit order numbers, edit order status, and enter an web-based or e-mail based message system via which the manufacturer may, for example, provide order status to the customer. Information related to each of these respective functions is stored, for example, in the database.

**[0046]** Figure 9 depicts the checkout sub-menu 704 of the store administration menu interface in more detail. In the illustrative example, the checkout sub-menu allows one to view new orders, check shipping status for orders, manage taxes, manage custom payments, manage online payments, manage checkout settings, view a credit card list, view and respond to checkout questions, and manage shopping cart events.

**[0047]** Figure 10 depicts the inventory sub-menu 706 of the store administration menu interface in more detail. In the illustrative example, the inventory sub-menu allows one to view new

orders, manage inventory, manage product categories, manage warehousing, manage manufacturing, manage products, manage discount codes, manage price discounts, manage price levels, manage gift certificates, and manage e-products.

**[0048]** The following are additional illustrative examples that describe ways in which the gift cards may be used:

**[0049]** Example 1 - The gift cards may be used for direct sales. For example, Company A is a t-shirt manufacturer that has stores as well as a variety of product websites, such as Site A, Site B, and Site C. The gift cards are tailored for a particular type of product, such as a custom t-shirt. Customers could buy the cards as a gift or for themselves at Company A's stores or on one of the web sites. Then, the person receiving the card uses a user system to access a web site for that particular product. For example, the manufacturer computer administers a plurality of web sites, each for a different brand or branded product. The brand web site has that brand's products as items that a user can select to customize. Therefore, each web site's products will be unique. The user then picks from the products and designs that are already available to put on the item or the user may upload their own. The program generates the item design and effects printing of the design on the item.

**[0050]** Example 2 - The gift cards may be used for retail using single branding or co-branding. For example, item manufacturer Company B may have relationships with Store A, Store B, and Store C. Company B sells gift cards at these stores. The gift cards may be branded with Company B's brand, or may be co-branded with the relevant store's brand. Similar to the example described above, a customer purchases the gift card in the store, such as Store A. The gift card may be a co-branded gift card.

**[0051]** Example 3 - Company A sells gift cards through retailers that it typically does not use. For example, Company A is a t-shirt manufacturer that sells custom gift cards through Pet Store. A customer purchases a gift card at Pet Store and may, for example, upload their pets image to a t-shirt using the user system. To the user, the web site appears unique to Company A or Pet Store. This allows Company A to sell products to Pet Store customers through the gift cards and web site.

**[0052]** Example 4 - Company B gives away advertising cards to potential customers, such as patrons at bars or restaurants. The advertising cards invite the customer to design a product on line and receive a coupon or a membership to a particular business, such as the bar or restaurant.

The products include a logo for Company B, such as on the arm of a t-shirt, while the user can design the remaining area of the product. The advertising cards may have a variety of forms, such as flyers, credit-card-shaped cards, or other forms. For example, at a restaurant, the advertising cards may have the form of a meal wrapper, which includes an advertisement to go to the web site to purchase a t-shirt. The t-shirt includes the restaurant logo.

**[0053]** Example 5 – Provide gift cards and related web sites to distributors of advertising materials. Conventional distributors place logos on items and send them to target customers. Using the system consistent with the present invention, gift cards and their related web sites are provided to the distributors, who are then able to allow customers to customize each item.

**[0054]** Example 6 – Provide gift cards to e-commerce based companies. For example, gift cards are provided through on-line vendors and portals, such as Google, Amazon, and the like.

**[0055]** While there has been illustrated and described embodiments consistent with the present invention, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that various changes and modifications may be made and equivalents may be substituted for elements thereof without departing from the true scope of the invention. Therefore, it is intended that this invention not be limited to any particular embodiment disclosed, but that the invention will include all embodiments falling within the scope of the appended claims.

**What is Claimed:**

1. A method in a data processing system having a program for providing customized items, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a web site via which a user may design a customized item;  
receiving user input for designing the customized item;  
receiving an order for the customized item from the user;  
receiving a user inputted payment identifier as at least partial payment for the customized item, the payment identifier being associated with a pre-paid gift card provided to the user; and  
processing the order for the customized item.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the gift card is one of a gift, a promotional item, an advertisement, a prize, and a card purchased by the user.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:  
printing the user inputted design on the customized item.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:  
shipping the item to the customized item to the user.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the customized item is one of an article of clothing, a hat, a publication, a picture, a cup, a mug, a key chain, a promotional item, a prize, a and a banner.

6. A computer-readable medium containing instructions that cause a data processing system to implement a method for providing customized items, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a web site via which a user may design a customized item;  
receiving user input for designing the customized item;  
receiving an order for the customized item from the user;  
receiving a user inputted payment identifier as at least partial payment for the customized item, the payment identifier being associated with a pre-paid gift card provided to the user; and

processing the order for the customized item.

7. The computer-readable medium of claim 6, wherein the gift card is one of a gift, a promotional item, an advertisement, a prize, and a card purchased by the user.

8. The computer-readable medium of claim 6, further comprising the step of: printing the user inputted design on the customized item.

9. The computer-readable medium of claim 6, further comprising the step of: shipping the item to the customized item to the user.

10. The computer-readable medium of claim 6, wherein the customized item is one of an article of clothing, a hat, a publication, a picture, a cup, a mug, a key chain, a promotional item, a prize, a and a banner.

11. A data processing system for providing customized items, the data processing system comprising:

a memory having a program that provides a web site via which a user may design a customized item, receives user input for designing the customized item, receives an order for the customized item from the user, receives a user inputted payment identifier as at least partial payment for the customized item, the payment identifier being associated with a pre-paid gift card provided to the user, and processes the order for the customized item; and

a processing unit that runs the program.

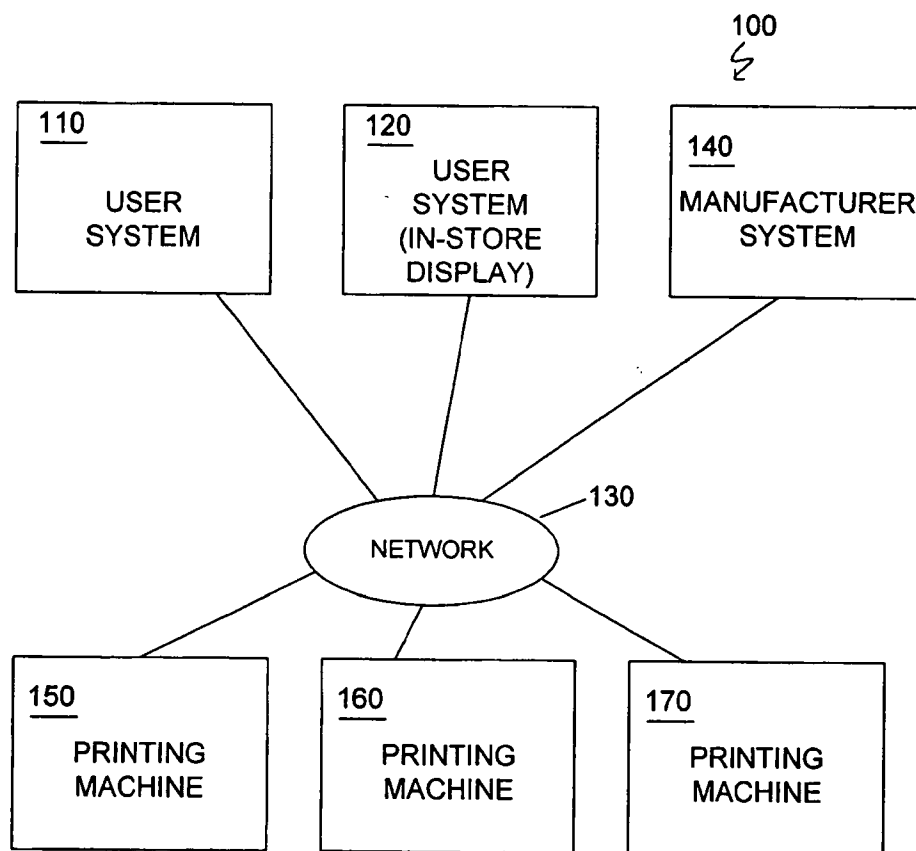
12. The data processing system of claim 11, wherein the gift card is one of a gift, a promotional item, an advertisement, a prize, and a card purchased by the user.

13. The data processing system of claim 11, wherein the program prints the user inputted design on the customized item.

14. The data processing system of claim 11, wherein the program ships the item to the customized item to the user.

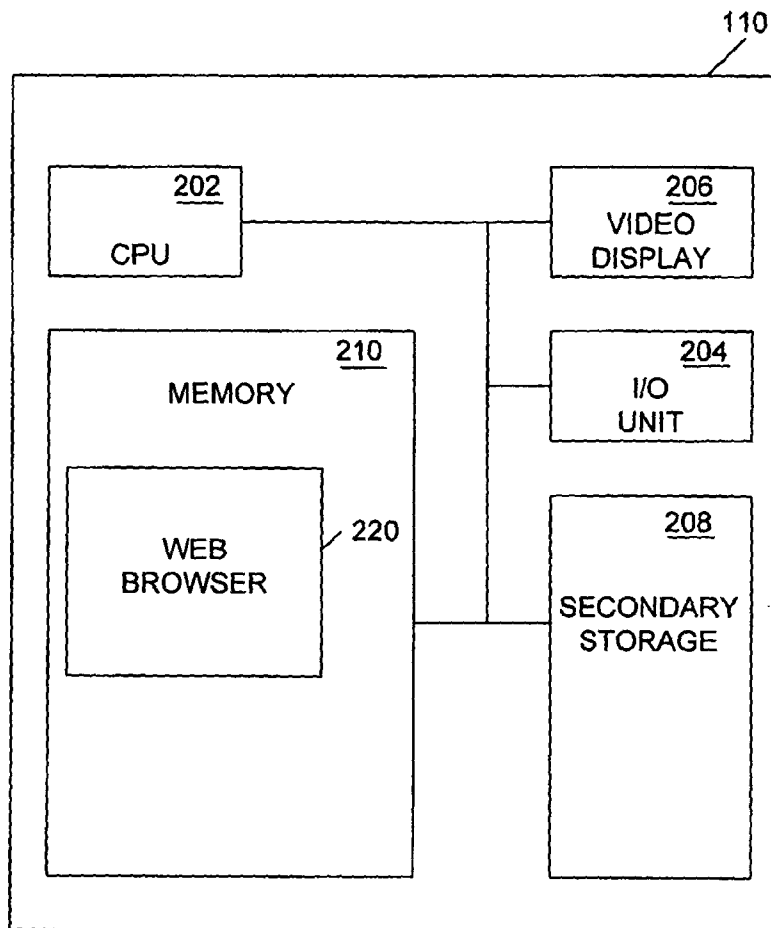
15. The data processing system of claim 11, wherein the customized item is one of an article of clothing, a hat, a publication, a picture, a cup, a mug, a key chain, a promotional item, a prize, a and a banner.

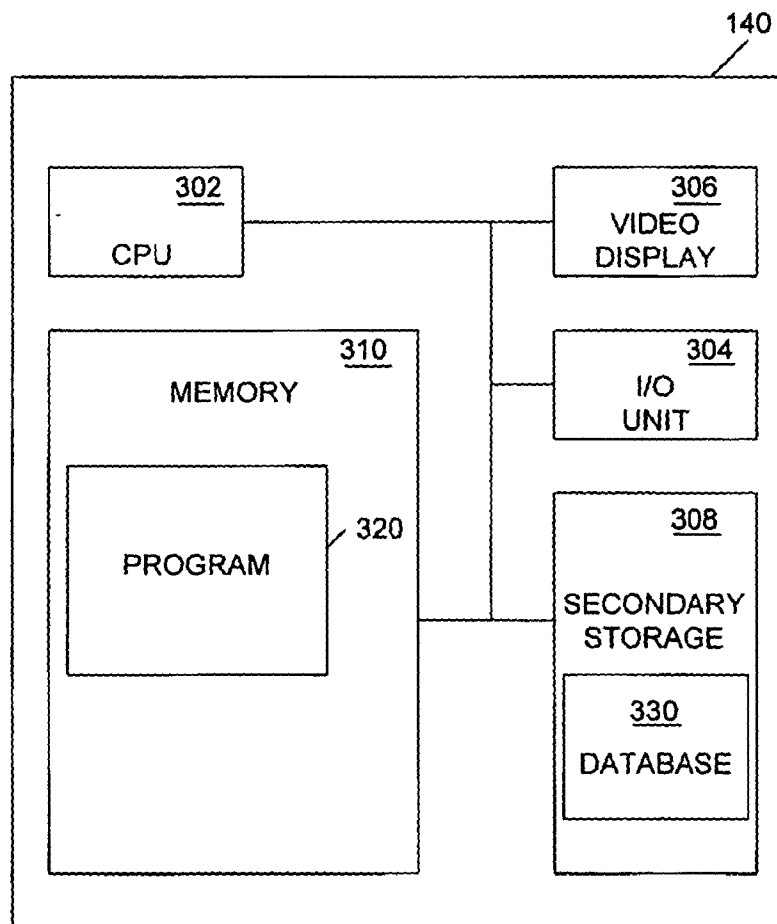
16. The data processing system of claim 11, wherein the data processing system communicates the order to a printing machine to print the user inputted design on the customized item.

**FIGURE 1**

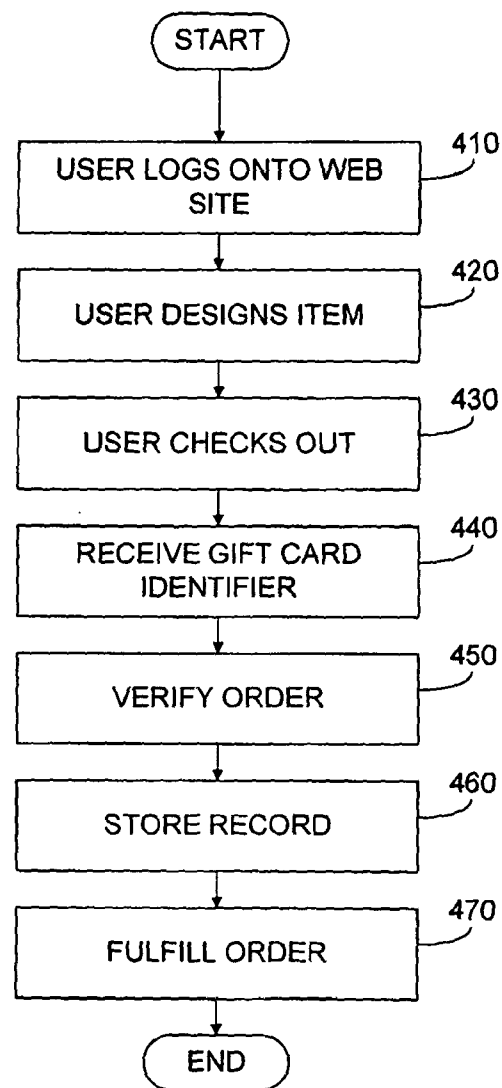


2/10

**Figure 2**

**Figure 3**

4/10

**FIGURE 4**

5/10

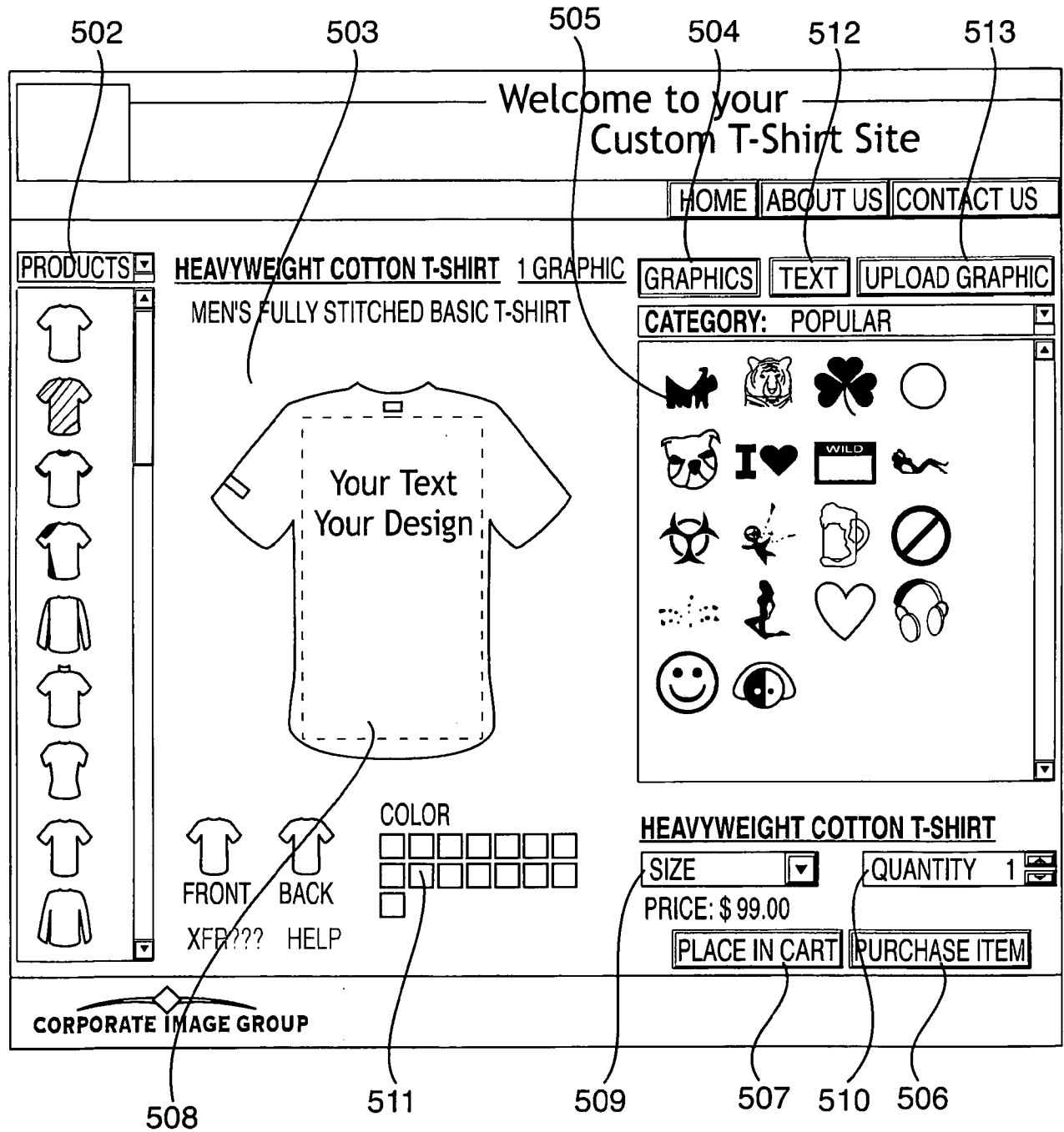


Figure 5

6/10

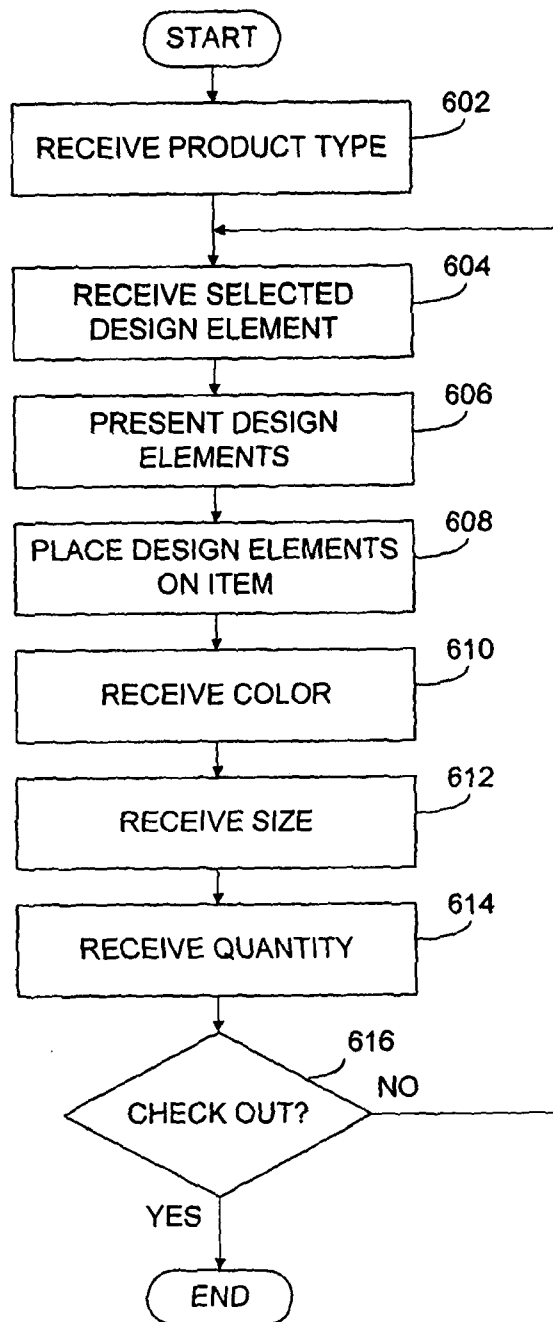
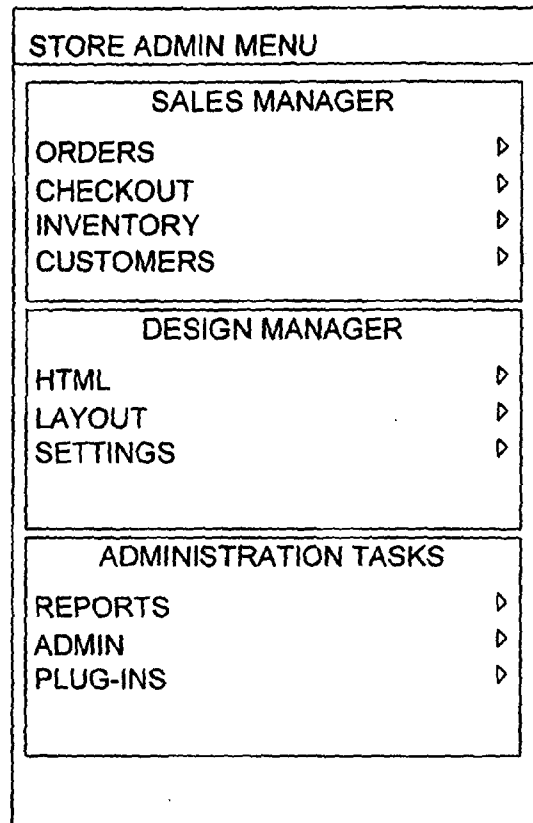


FIGURE 6

7/10

**FIGURE 7**

8/10

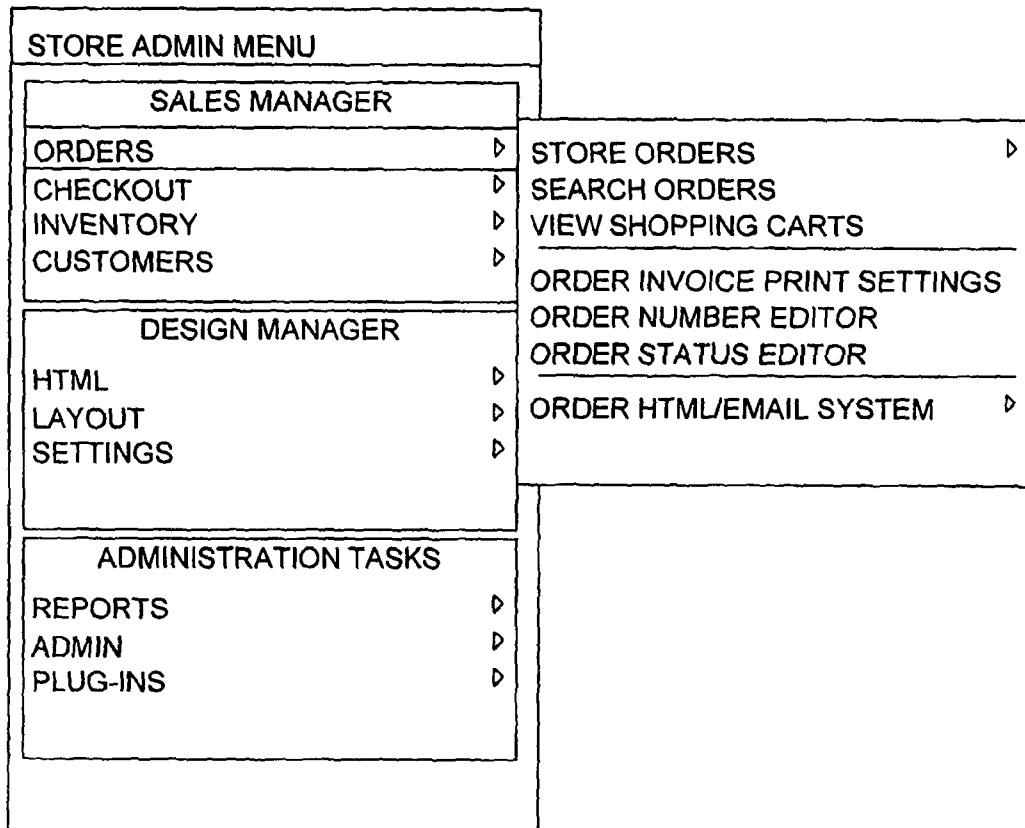
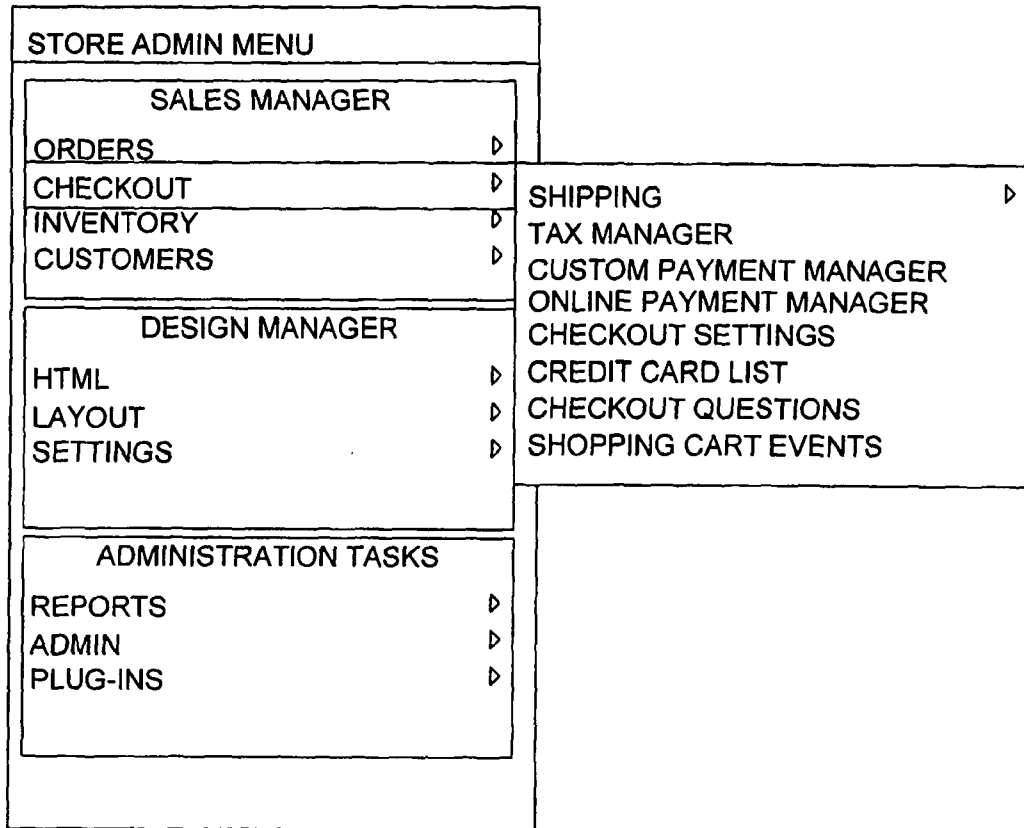


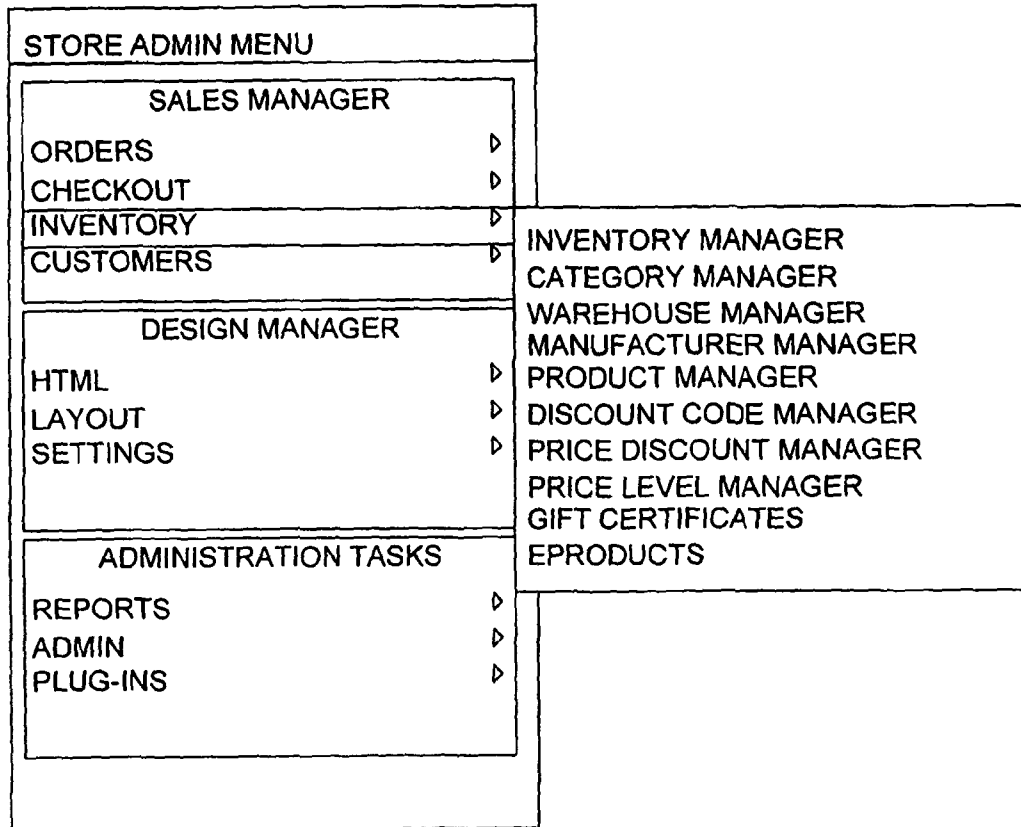
FIGURE 8

9/10

**FIGURE 9**



10/10

**FIGURE 10**

## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US 08/00225

## A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(8) - G06Q 40/00 (2008.04)

USPC - 705/41

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)

USPC: 705/41

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched  
USPC: 705/1, 16, 17, 26, 35, 500 (see also text search below)

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

Electronic Databases Searched: PubWEST(USPT,PGPB,EPAB,JPAB); USPTO, Google, Answers.com, Google Patents, WIPO

Search Terms Used: custom, design, user, input, computer, processor, website, URL, gift, card, prepaid, payment, identifier, number, clothing, mug, cup, picture, hat, promotional, prize, banner, advertisement

## C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 2005/0116027 A1 (ALGIENE et al.) 02 June 2005 (02.06.2005) para [0005]-[0006], [0008], [0010]-[0017], [0027]-[0029], [0031]-[0033], [0039], [0044]-[0046], [0048], [0050], [0052] and [0059]-[0061]	1-16
A	US 2005/0275870 A1 (ELARDE et al.) 15 December 2005 (15.12.2005), see entire doc	1-16

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

\* Special categories of cited documents:

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

"E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date

"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)

"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"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

"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

"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

"&amp;" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

16 April 2008 (16.04.2008)

Date of mailing of the international search report

16 MAY 2008

Name and mailing address of the ISA/US

Mail Stop PCT, Attn: ISA/US, Commissioner for Patents

P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450

Facsimile No. 571-273-3201

Authorized officer:

Lee W. Young

PCT Helpdesk: 571-272-4300

PCT OSP: 571-272-7774