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(54) **WHOLE MODULE ITEMS IN A SIDEBAR**

(76) Inventors: **Marc Bishop**, Palo Alto, CA (US); **Stephen Miller**, San Francisco, CA (US)

Correspondence Address:
GREENBERG TRAURIG, LLP
MET LIFE BUILDING
200 PARK AVENUE
NEW YORK, NY 10166 (US)

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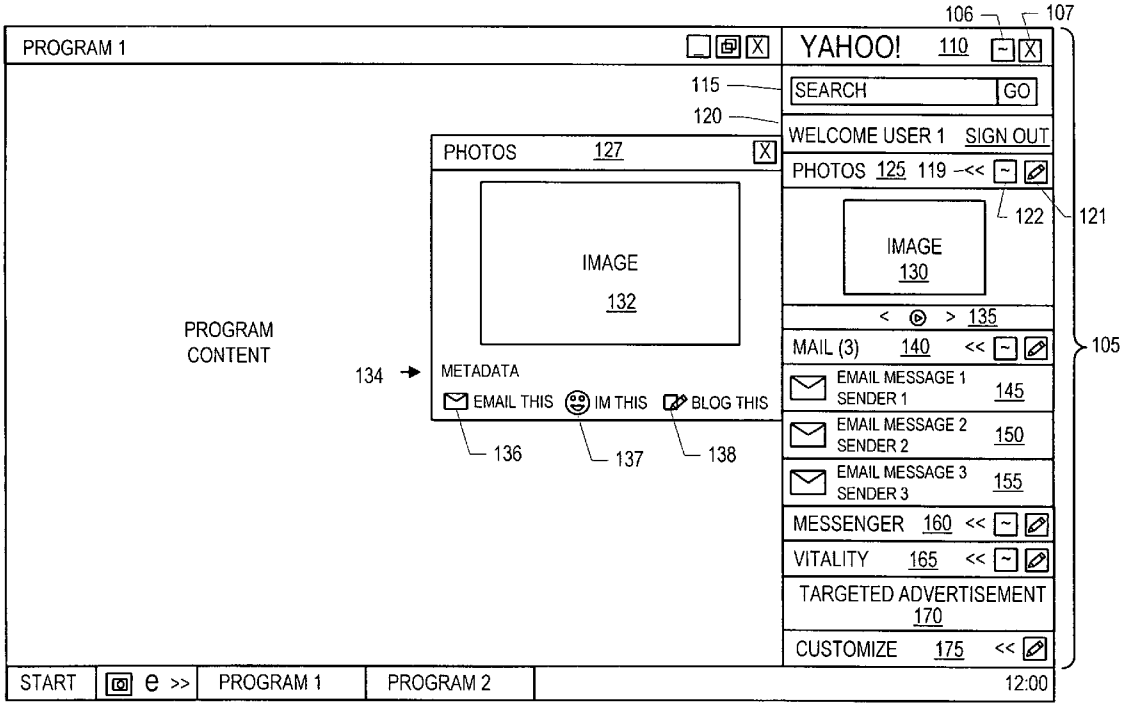
G06F 17/00 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **715/787**; 715/788

(57) **ABSTRACT**

Some application modules of a sidebar comprise a list of items. For example, an email module comprises message items while a photo slideshow does not comprise items. In known sidebars, the number of items in an application module display area is not discrete. For example, in an email module the last item in the list can be partially displayed. In one embodiment, application modules that comprise items are forced to display a whole number of menu items. When a user resizes an application module, the application module will "snap" to fully include or fully exclude an item as opposed to displaying a partial item. A whole item display format can also be implemented in an application module's slidesheet.



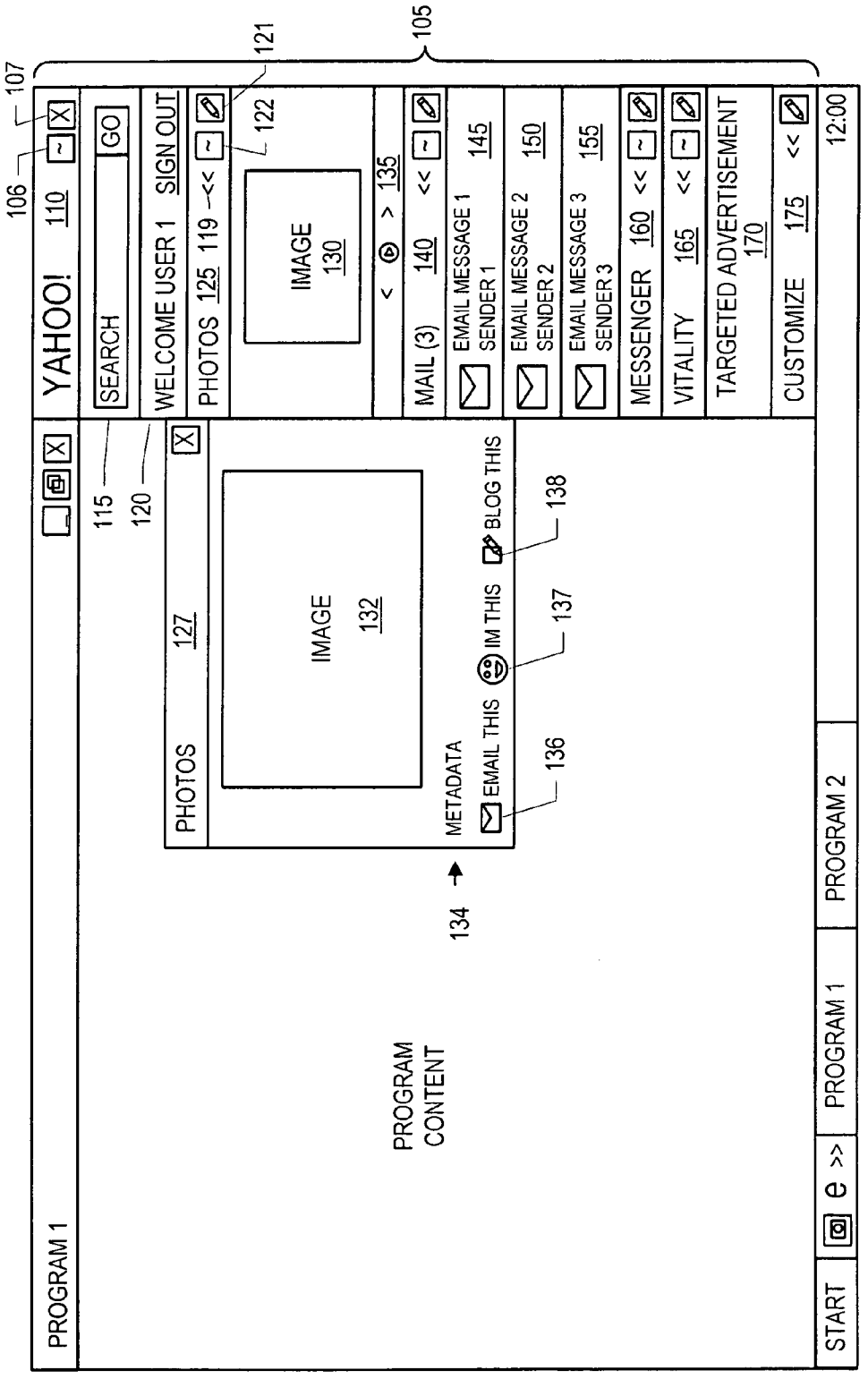

105
107
106
121
YAHOO! 110
SEARCH
GO
WELCOME USER 1 SIGN OUT
PHOTOS 125 119 <<
122
IMAGE 130
< > 135
MAIL (3) 140 <<
EMAIL MESSAGE 1 SENDER 1 145
EMAIL MESSAGE 2 SENDER 2 150
EMAIL MESSAGE 3 SENDER 3 155
MESSENGER 160 <<
VITALITY 165 <<
TARGETED ADVERTISEMENT 170
CUSTOMIZE 175 <<
12:00
PROGRAM 1
115
120
PHOTOS 127
IMAGE 132
METADATA
EMAIL THIS
IM THIS
BLOG THIS
138
137
136
134
PROGRAM CONTENT
START
PROGRAM 1
PROGRAM 2

FIG. 1

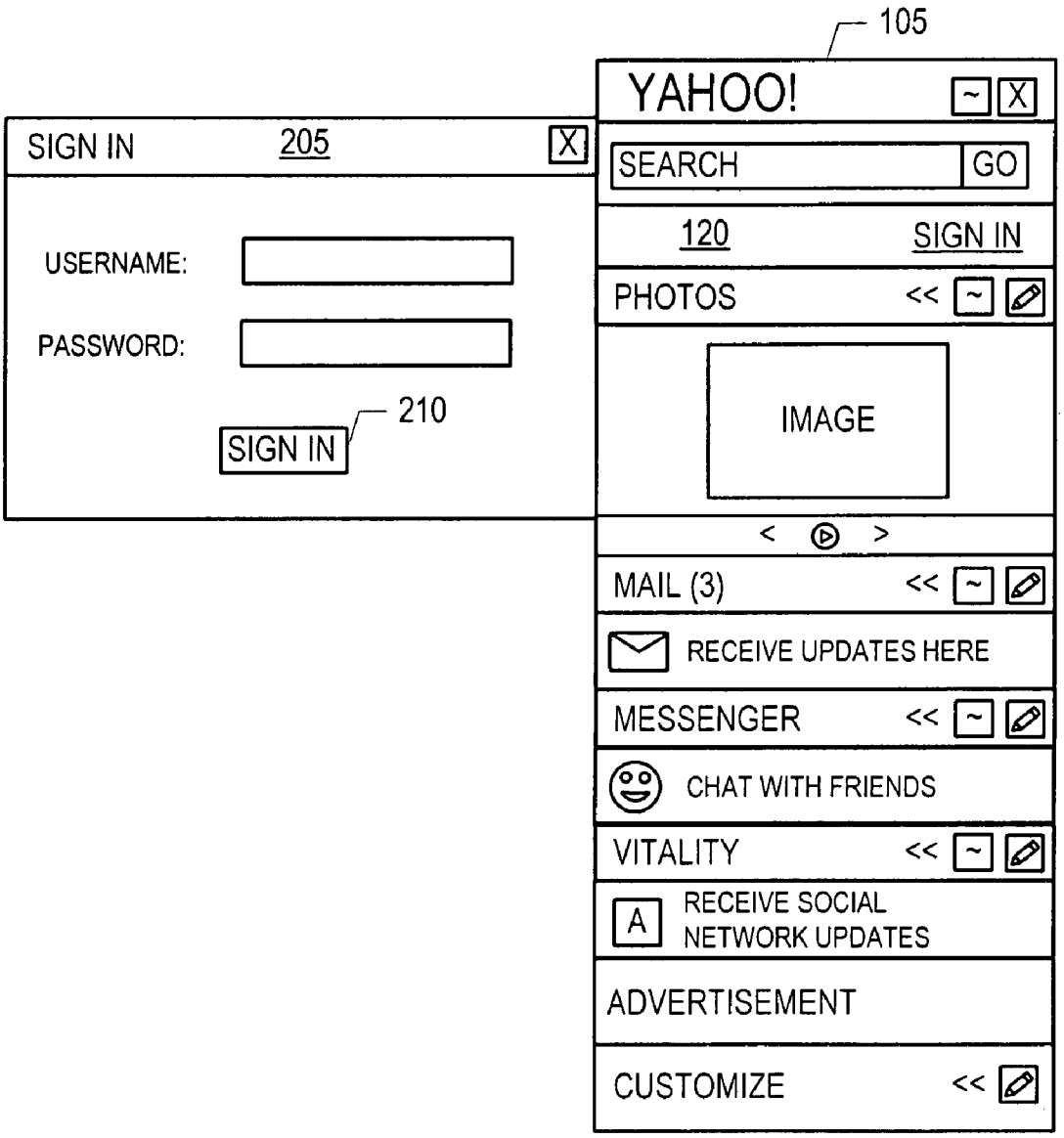

105
YAHOO!
SIGN IN
205
SEARCH
GO
USERNAME:
120
SIGN IN
PASSWORD:
PHOTOS
IMAGE
210
SIGN IN
MAIL (3)
RECEIVE UPDATES HERE
MESSENGER
CHAT WITH FRIENDS
VITALITY
RECEIVE SOCIAL NETWORK UPDATES
ADVERTISEMENT
CUSTOMIZE

FIG. 2

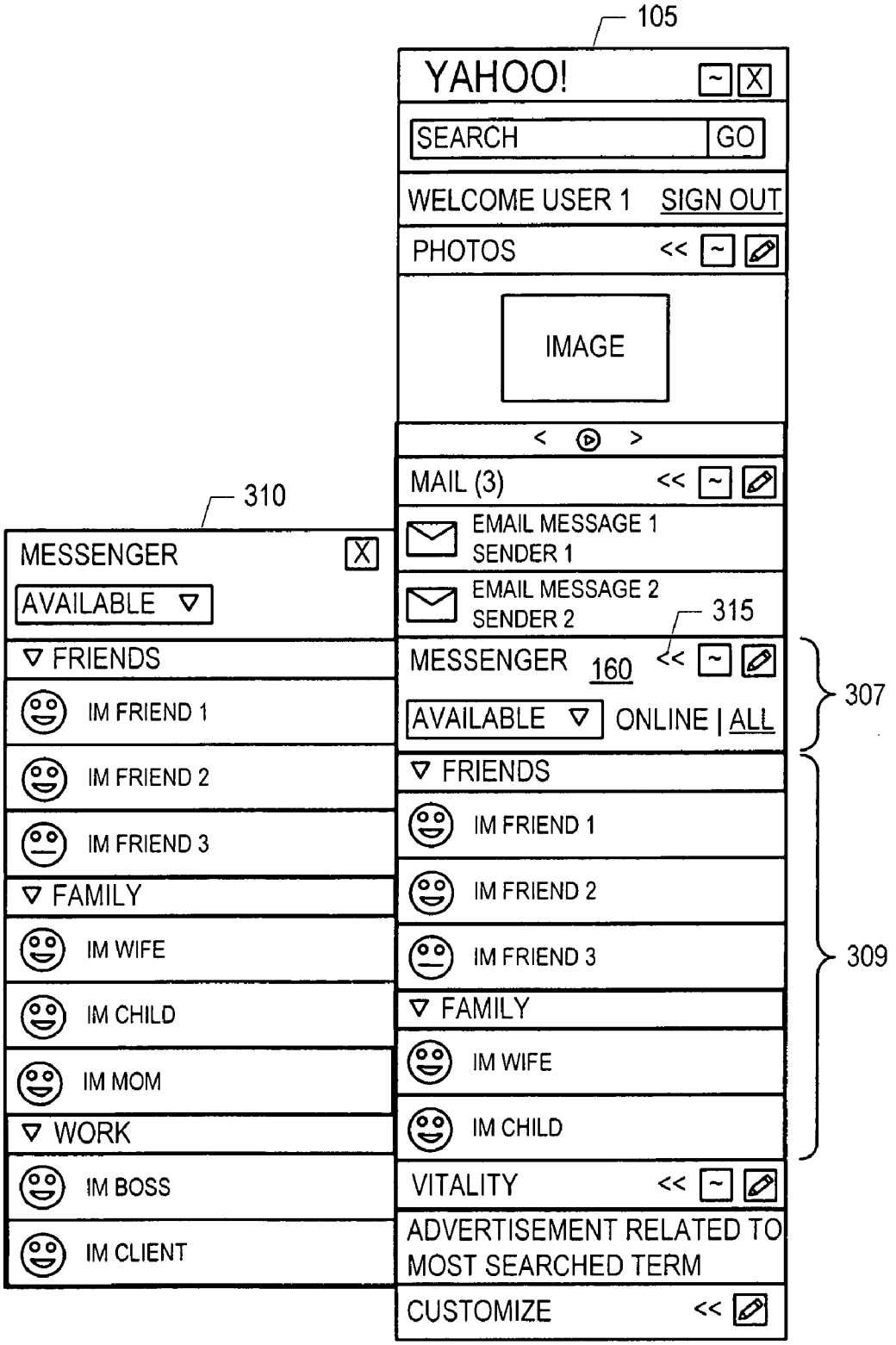

105
YAHOO!
SEARCH
GO
WELCOME USER 1
SIGN OUT
PHOTOS
IMAGE
MAIL (3)
EMAIL MESSAGE 1
SENDER 1
EMAIL MESSAGE 2
SENDER 2
315
MESSENGER 160
AVAILABLE
ONLINE | ALL
307
FRIENDS
IM FRIEND 1
IM FRIEND 2
IM FRIEND 3
FAMILY
IM WIFE
IM CHILD
309
VITALITY
ADVERTISEMENT RELATED TO MOST SEARCHED TERM
CUSTOMIZE
310
MESSENGER
AVAILABLE
FRIENDS
IM FRIEND 1
IM FRIEND 2
IM FRIEND 3
FAMILY
IM WIFE
IM CHILD
IM MOM
WORK
IM BOSS
IM CLIENT

FIG. 3

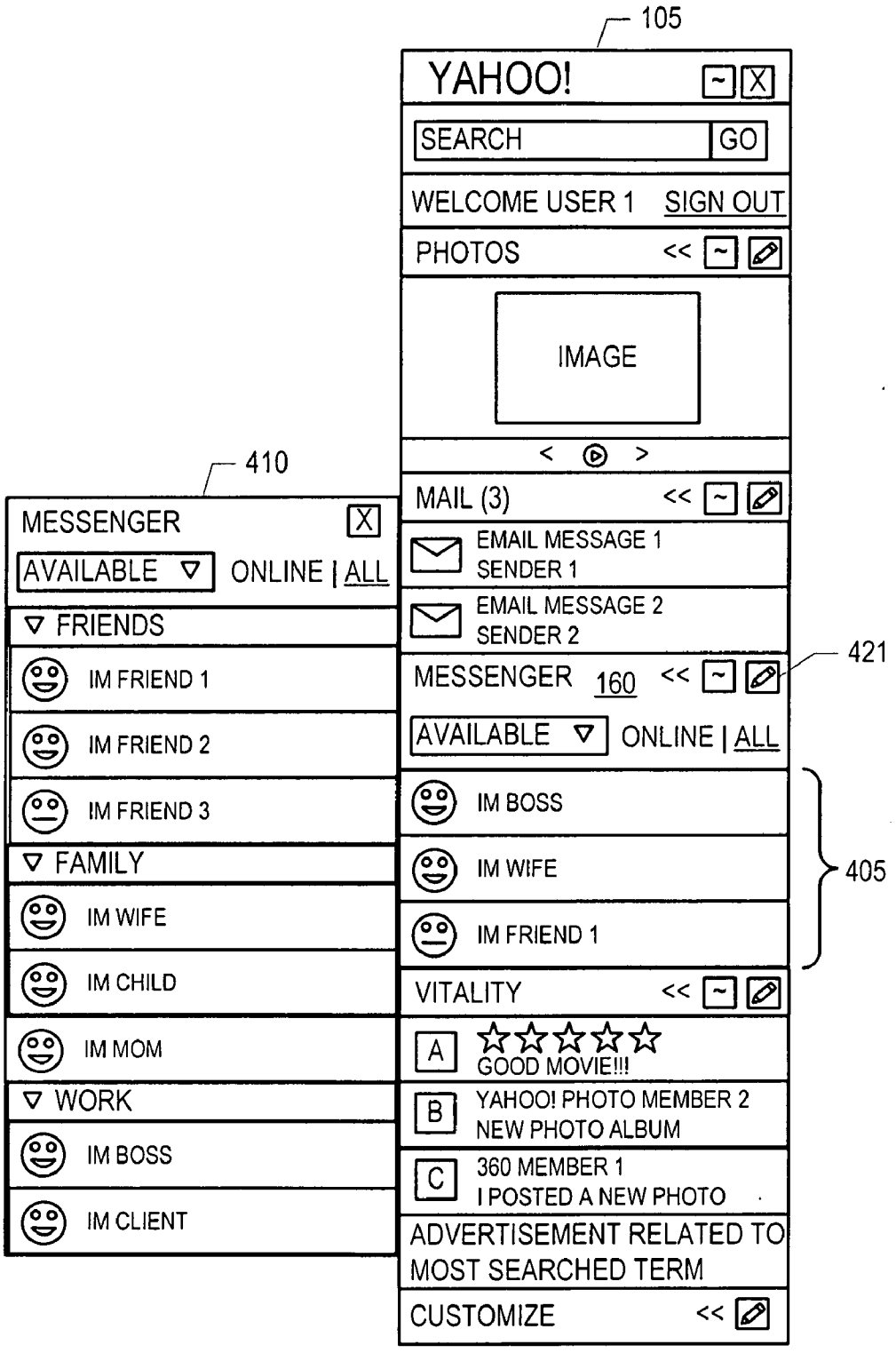

105
YAHOO!
SEARCH
GO
WELCOME USER 1
SIGN OUT
PHOTOS
IMAGE
MAIL (3)
EMAIL MESSAGE 1
SENDER 1
EMAIL MESSAGE 2
SENDER 2
MESSENGER 160
421
AVAILABLE
ONLINE | ALL
IM BOSS
IM WIFE
IM FRIEND 1
405
VITALITY
GOOD MOVIE!!!
YAHOO! PHOTO MEMBER 2
NEW PHOTO ALBUM
360 MEMBER 1
I POSTED A NEW PHOTO
ADVERTISEMENT RELATED TO MOST SEARCHED TERM
CUSTOMIZE
410
MESSENGER
AVAILABLE
ONLINE | ALL
FRIENDS
IM FRIEND 1
IM FRIEND 2
IM FRIEND 3
FAMILY
IM WIFE
IM CHILD
IM MOM
WORK
IM BOSS
IM CLIENT

FIG. 4

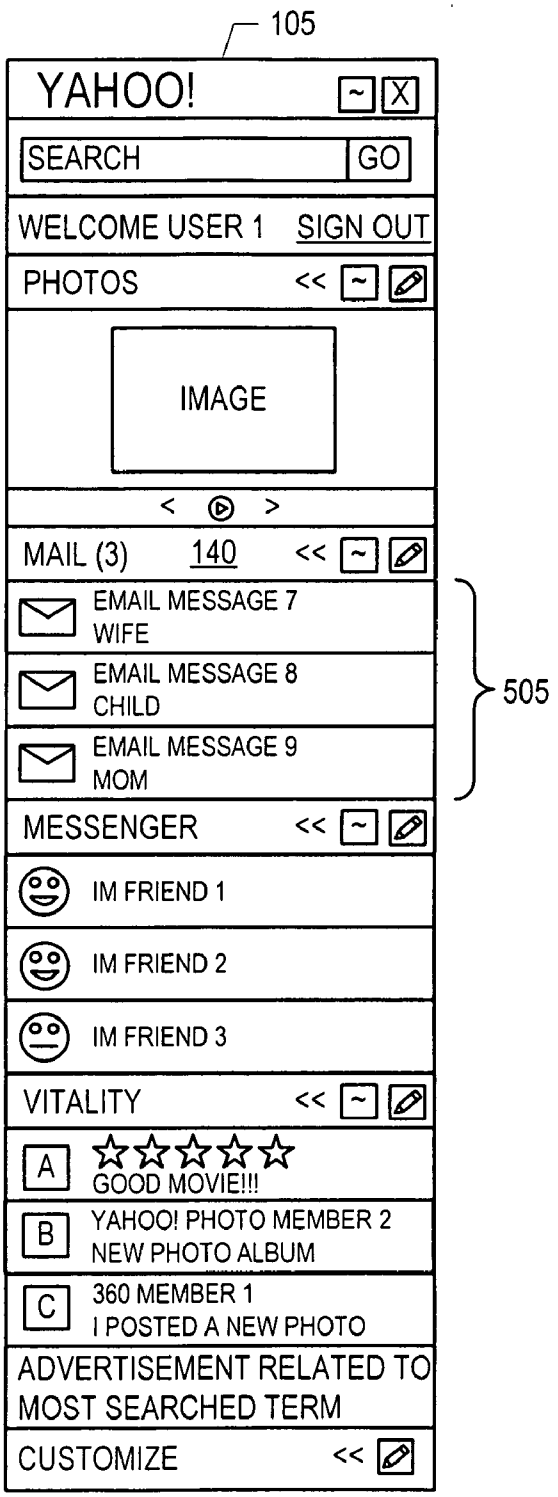

105
YAHOO!
SEARCH
GO
WELCOME USER 1
SIGN OUT
PHOTOS
<<
IMAGE
<
>
MAIL (3)
140
<<
EMAIL MESSAGE 7
WIFE
EMAIL MESSAGE 8
CHILD
EMAIL MESSAGE 9
MOM
505
MESSENGER
<<
IM FRIEND 1
IM FRIEND 2
IM FRIEND 3
VITALITY
<<
A
GOOD MOVIE!!!
B
YAHOO! PHOTO MEMBER 2
NEW PHOTO ALBUM
C
360 MEMBER 1
I POSTED A NEW PHOTO
ADVERTISEMENT RELATED TO MOST SEARCHED TERM
CUSTOMIZE
<<

FIG. 5

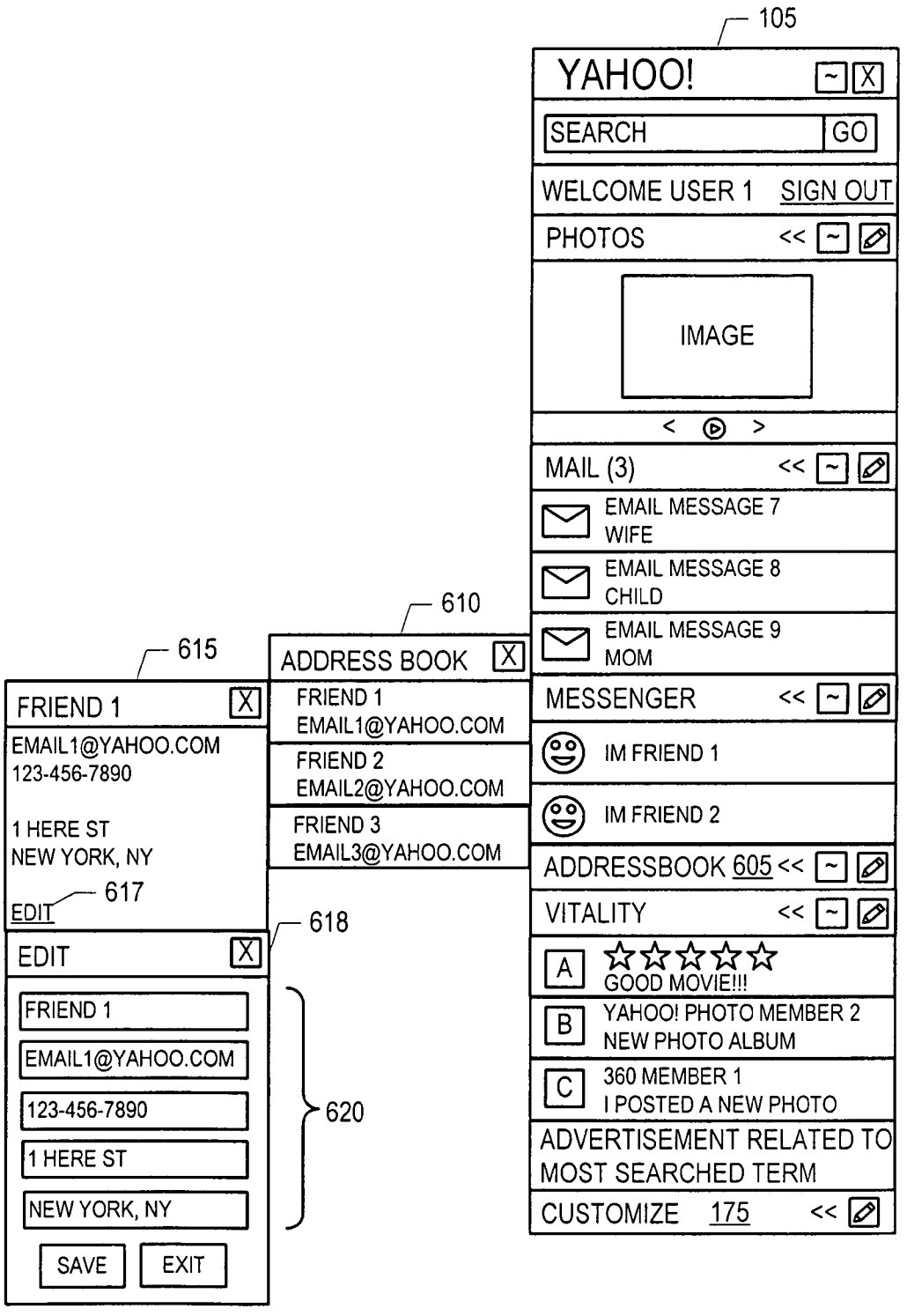

105
YAHOO!
SEARCH
GO
WELCOME USER 1 SIGN OUT
PHOTOS
IMAGE
MAIL (3)
EMAIL MESSAGE 7
WIFE
EMAIL MESSAGE 8
CHILD
EMAIL MESSAGE 9
MOM
MESSENGER
IM FRIEND 1
IM FRIEND 2
ADDRESSBOOK 605
VITALITY
GOOD MOVIE!!!
YAHOO! PHOTO MEMBER 2
NEW PHOTO ALBUM
360 MEMBER 1
I POSTED A NEW PHOTO
ADVERTISEMENT RELATED TO MOST SEARCHED TERM
CUSTOMIZE 175
610
ADDRESS BOOK
FRIEND 1
EMAIL1@YAHOO.COM
FRIEND 2
EMAIL2@YAHOO.COM
FRIEND 3
EMAIL3@YAHOO.COM
615
FRIEND 1
EMAIL1@YAHOO.COM
123-456-7890
1 HERE ST
NEW YORK, NY
EDIT
617
618
EDIT
FRIEND 1
EMAIL1@YAHOO.COM
123-456-7890
1 HERE ST
NEW YORK, NY
SAVE
EXIT
620

FIG. 6

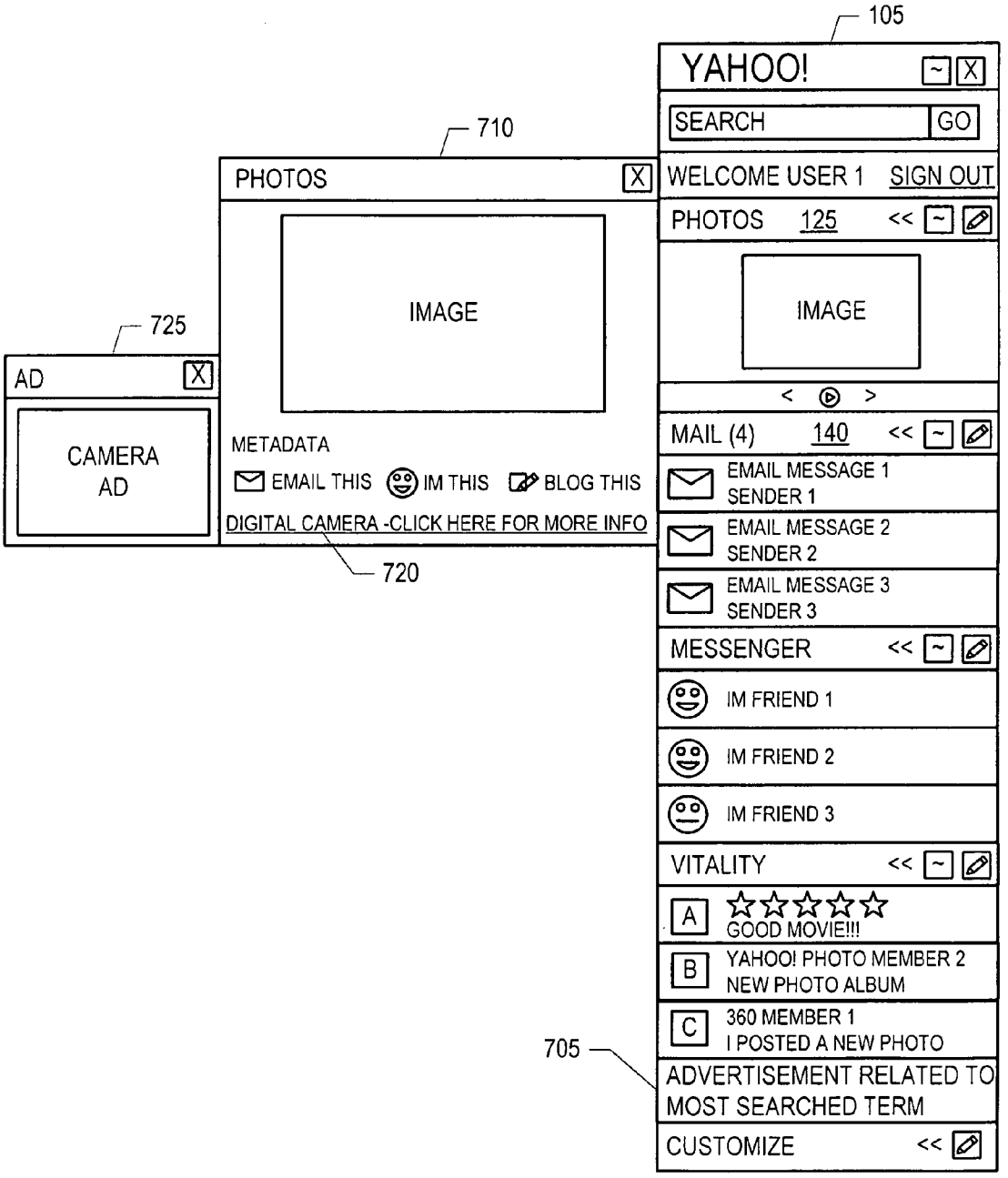

105
YAHOO!
SEARCH
GO
WELCOME USER 1
SIGN OUT
PHOTOS 125
<<
IMAGE
710
PHOTOS
IMAGE
725
AD
CAMERA AD
METADATA
EMAIL THIS
IM THIS
BLOG THIS
DIGITAL CAMERA -CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO
720
MAIL (4) 140
EMAIL MESSAGE 1
SENDER 1
EMAIL MESSAGE 2
SENDER 2
EMAIL MESSAGE 3
SENDER 3
MESSENGER
IM FRIEND 1
IM FRIEND 2
IM FRIEND 3
VITALITY
A
GOOD MOVIE!!!
B
YAHOO! PHOTO MEMBER 2
NEW PHOTO ALBUM
C
360 MEMBER 1
I POSTED A NEW PHOTO
705
ADVERTISEMENT RELATED TO MOST SEARCHED TERM
CUSTOMIZE

FIG. 7

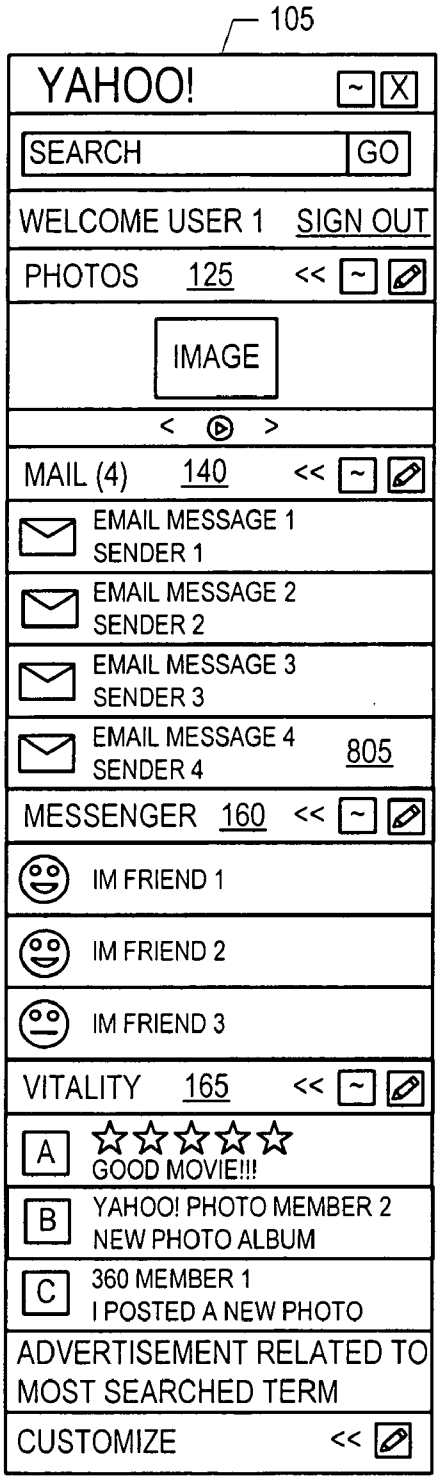

105
YAHOO!
SEARCH
GO
WELCOME USER 1
SIGN OUT
PHOTOS 125
IMAGE
MAIL (4) 140
EMAIL MESSAGE 1
SENDER 1
EMAIL MESSAGE 2
SENDER 2
EMAIL MESSAGE 3
SENDER 3
EMAIL MESSAGE 4
SENDER 4
805
MESSENGER 160
IM FRIEND 1
IM FRIEND 2
IM FRIEND 3
VITALITY 165
A
GOOD MOVIE!!!
B
YAHOO! PHOTO MEMBER 2
NEW PHOTO ALBUM
C
360 MEMBER 1
I POSTED A NEW PHOTO
ADVERTISEMENT RELATED TO MOST SEARCHED TERM
CUSTOMIZE

FIG. 8

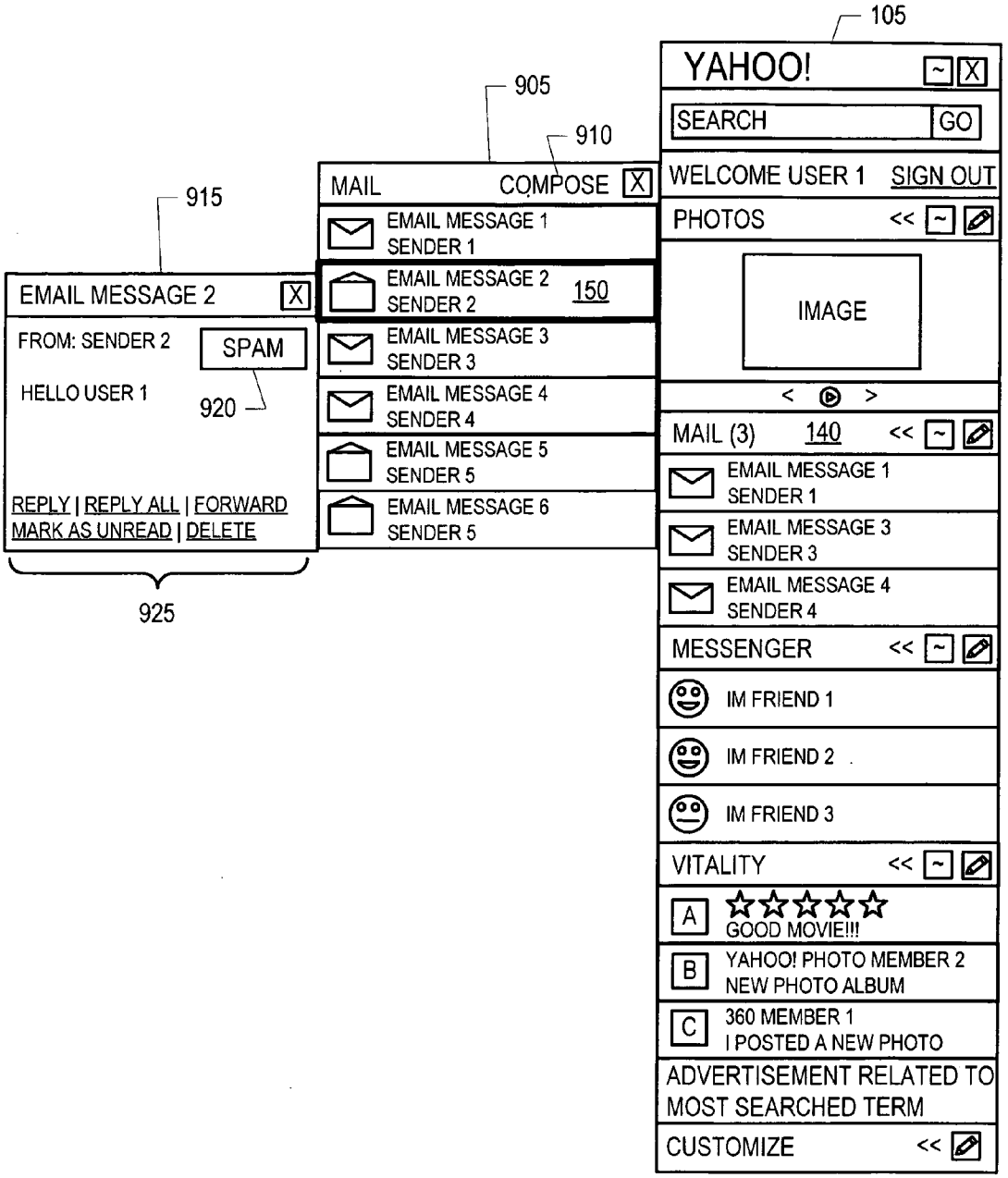

105
YAHOO!
SEARCH
GO
WELCOME USER 1
SIGN OUT
PHOTOS
IMAGE
MAIL (3)
140
EMAIL MESSAGE 1
SENDER 1
EMAIL MESSAGE 3
SENDER 3
EMAIL MESSAGE 4
SENDER 4
MESSENGER
IM FRIEND 1
IM FRIEND 2
IM FRIEND 3
VITALITY
GOOD MOVIE!!!
YAHOO! PHOTO MEMBER 2
NEW PHOTO ALBUM
360 MEMBER 1
I POSTED A NEW PHOTO
ADVERTISEMENT RELATED TO MOST SEARCHED TERM
CUSTOMIZE
905
910
MAIL
COMPOSE
EMAIL MESSAGE 1
SENDER 1
EMAIL MESSAGE 2
SENDER 2
150
EMAIL MESSAGE 3
SENDER 3
EMAIL MESSAGE 4
SENDER 4
EMAIL MESSAGE 5
SENDER 5
EMAIL MESSAGE 6
SENDER 5
915
EMAIL MESSAGE 2
FROM: SENDER 2
SPAM
HELLO USER 1
920
REPLY | REPLY ALL | FORWARD
MARK AS UNREAD | DELETE
925

FIG. 9

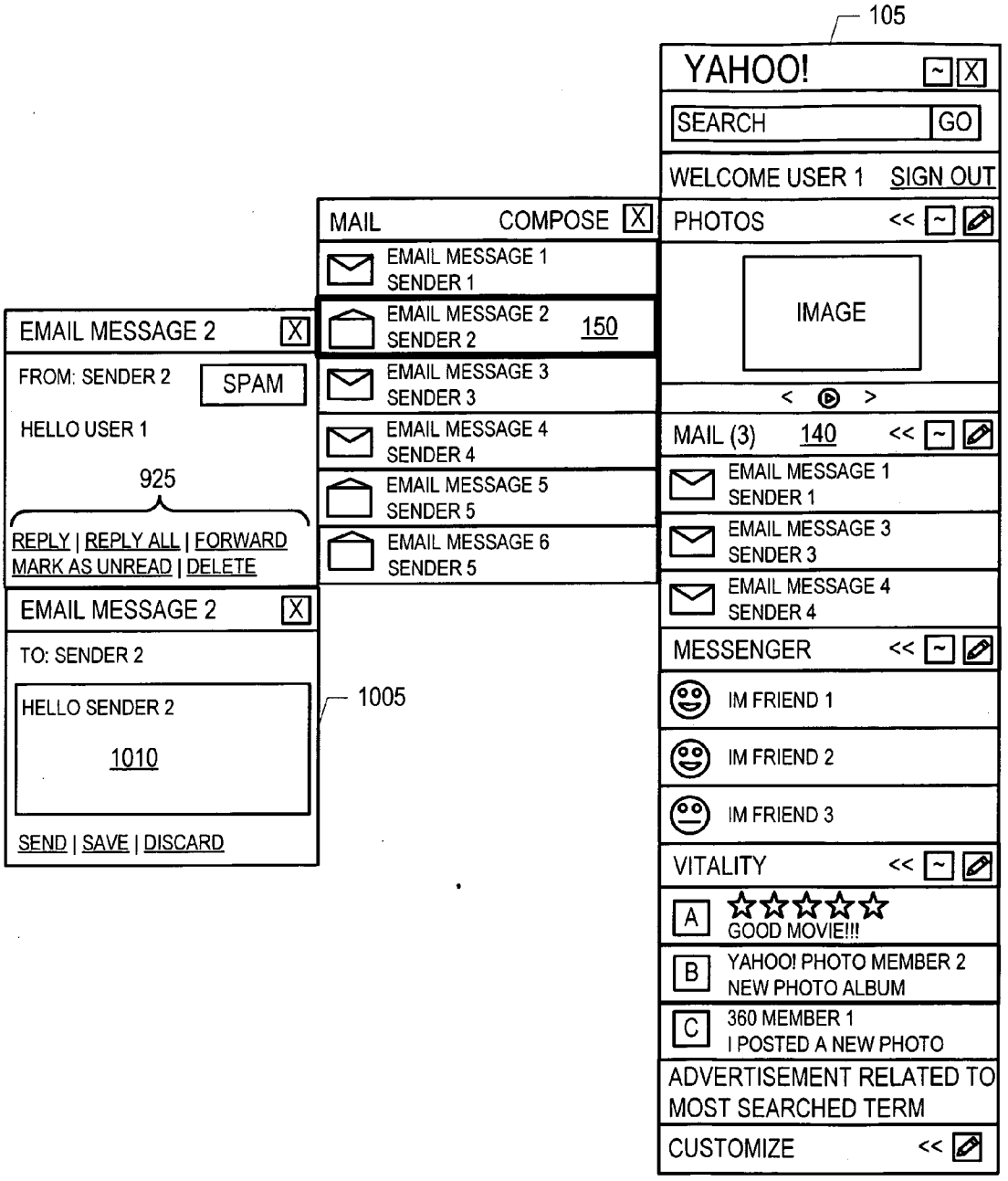

105
YAHOO!
SEARCH
GO
WELCOME USER 1
SIGN OUT
MAIL
COMPOSE
PHOTOS
EMAIL MESSAGE 1
SENDER 1
EMAIL MESSAGE 2
SENDER 2
150
EMAIL MESSAGE 3
SENDER 3
EMAIL MESSAGE 4
SENDER 4
EMAIL MESSAGE 5
SENDER 5
EMAIL MESSAGE 6
SENDER 5
IMAGE
MAIL (3)
140
EMAIL MESSAGE 2
FROM: SENDER 2
SPAM
HELLO USER 1
925
REPLY | REPLY ALL | FORWARD
MARK AS UNREAD | DELETE
EMAIL MESSAGE 2
TO: SENDER 2
HELLO SENDER 2
1010
1005
SEND | SAVE | DISCARD
MESSENGER
IM FRIEND 1
IM FRIEND 2
IM FRIEND 3
VITALITY
A
GOOD MOVIE!!!
B
YAHOO! PHOTO MEMBER 2
NEW PHOTO ALBUM
C
360 MEMBER 1
I POSTED A NEW PHOTO
ADVERTISEMENT RELATED TO
MOST SEARCHED TERM
CUSTOMIZE

FIG. 10

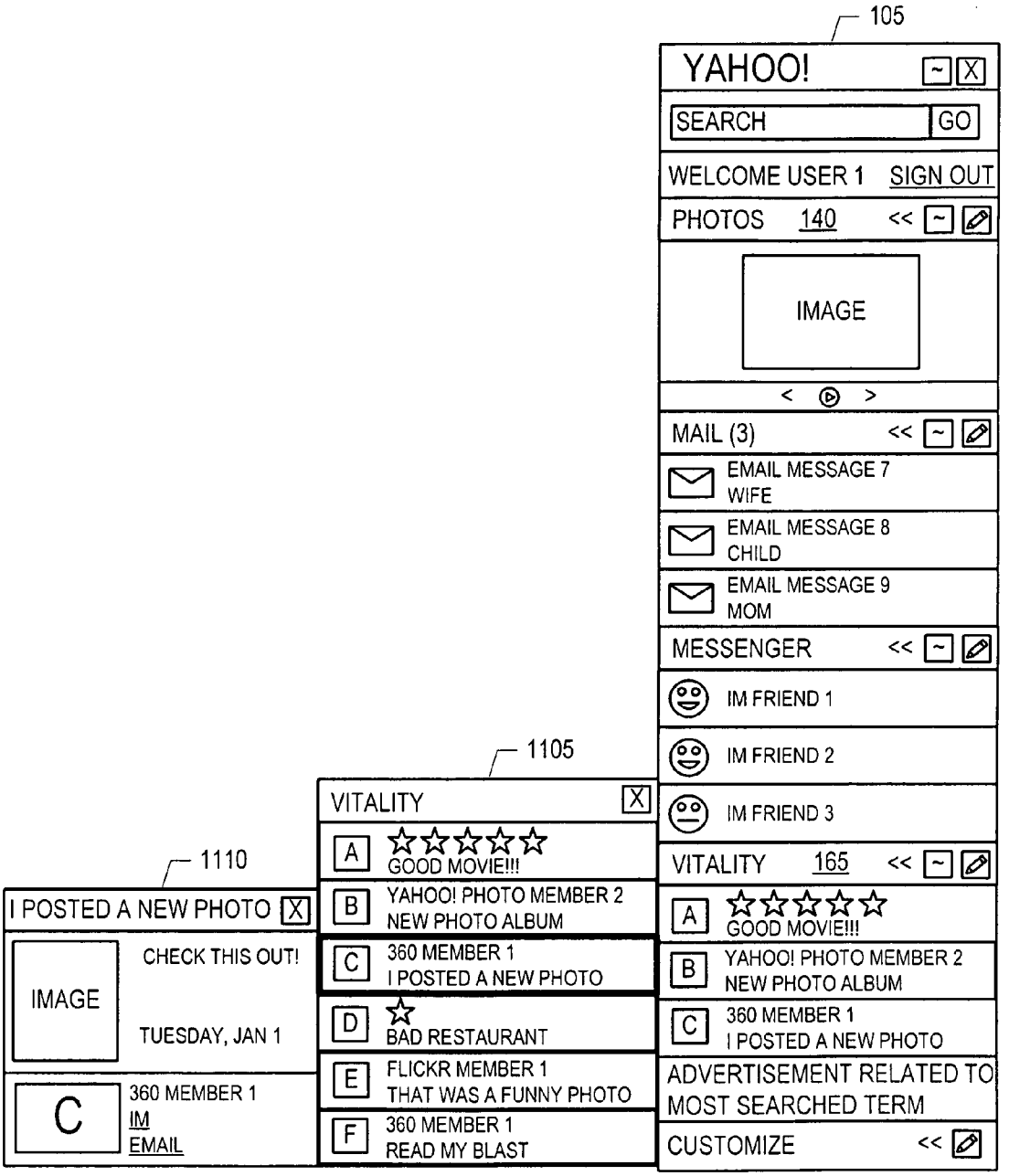

105
YAHOO!
SEARCH
GO
WELCOME USER 1
SIGN OUT
PHOTOS 140
IMAGE
MAIL (3)
EMAIL MESSAGE 7
WIFE
EMAIL MESSAGE 8
CHILD
EMAIL MESSAGE 9
MOM
MESSENGER
IM FRIEND 1
IM FRIEND 2
IM FRIEND 3
VITALITY 165
GOOD MOVIE!!!
YAHOO! PHOTO MEMBER 2
NEW PHOTO ALBUM
360 MEMBER 1
I POSTED A NEW PHOTO
ADVERTISEMENT RELATED TO
MOST SEARCHED TERM
CUSTOMIZE
1105
VITALITY
GOOD MOVIE!!!
YAHOO! PHOTO MEMBER 2
NEW PHOTO ALBUM
360 MEMBER 1
I POSTED A NEW PHOTO
BAD RESTAURANT
FLICKR MEMBER 1
THAT WAS A FUNNY PHOTO
360 MEMBER 1
READ MY BLAST
1110
I POSTED A NEW PHOTO
IMAGE
CHECK THIS OUT!
TUESDAY, JAN 1
C
360 MEMBER 1
IM
EMAIL

FIG. 11

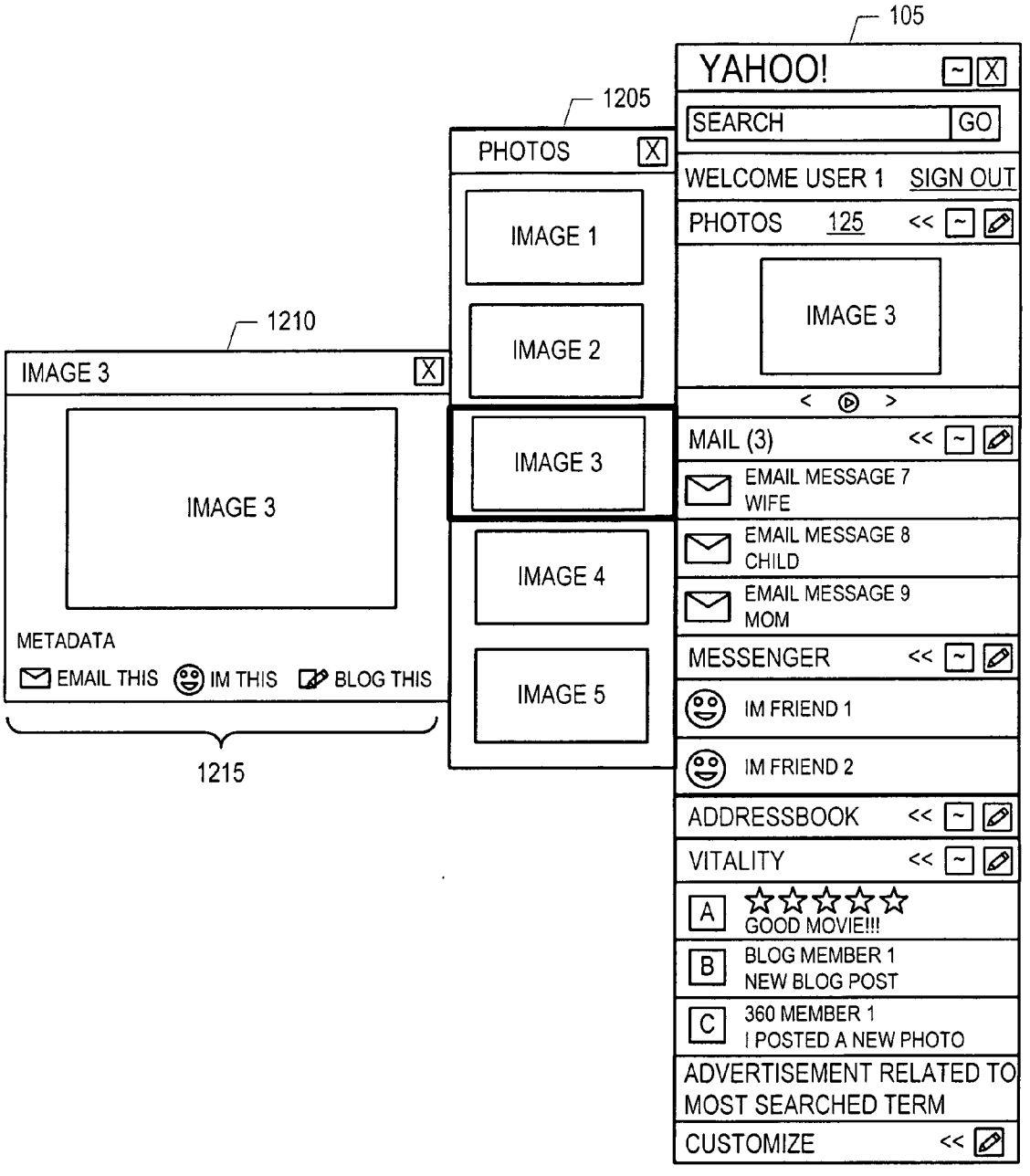

105
YAHOO!
SEARCH
GO
WELCOME USER 1
SIGN OUT
PHOTOS 125
1205
PHOTOS
IMAGE 1
IMAGE 2
IMAGE 3
IMAGE 4
IMAGE 5
IMAGE 3
1210
IMAGE 3
IMAGE 3
METADATA
EMAIL THIS
IM THIS
BLOG THIS
1215
MAIL (3)
EMAIL MESSAGE 7
WIFE
EMAIL MESSAGE 8
CHILD
EMAIL MESSAGE 9
MOM
MESSENGER
IM FRIEND 1
IM FRIEND 2
ADDRESSBOOK
VITALITY
A
GOOD MOVIE!!!
B
BLOG MEMBER 1
NEW BLOG POST
C
360 MEMBER 1
I POSTED A NEW PHOTO
ADVERTISEMENT RELATED TO
MOST SEARCHED TERM
CUSTOMIZE

FIG. 12

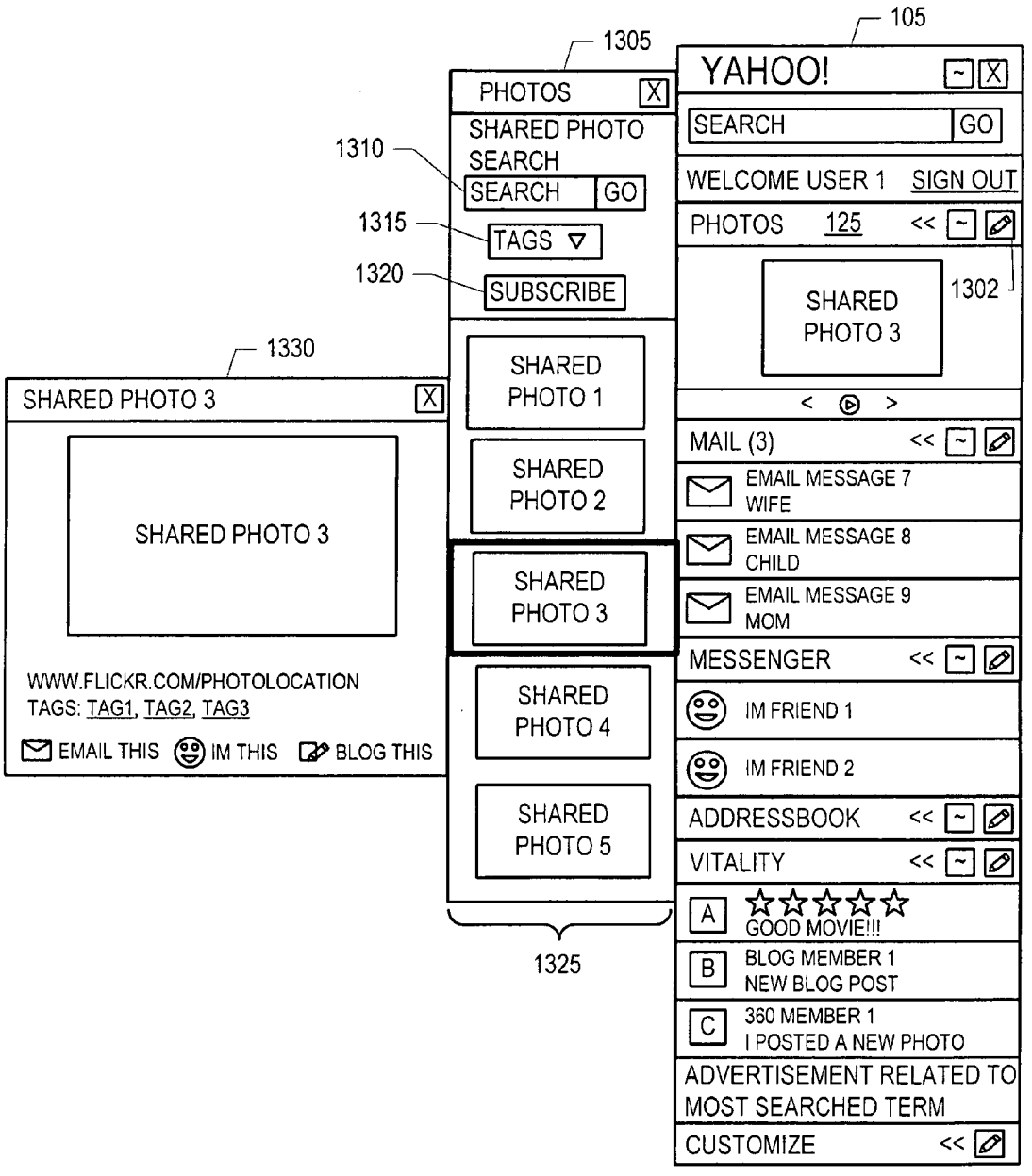

105
1305
YAHOO!
PHOTOS
SEARCH
GO
SHARED PHOTO SEARCH
1310
SEARCH
GO
WELCOME USER 1
SIGN OUT
1315
TAGS
PHOTOS 125
1320
SUBSCRIBE
SHARED PHOTO 3
1302
1330
SHARED PHOTO 1
SHARED PHOTO 3
SHARED PHOTO 2
SHARED PHOTO 3
MAIL (3)
EMAIL MESSAGE 7 WIFE
EMAIL MESSAGE 8 CHILD
EMAIL MESSAGE 9 MOM
SHARED PHOTO 3
WWW.FLICKR.COM/PHOTOLOCATION
TAGS: TAG1, TAG2, TAG3
EMAIL THIS
IM THIS
BLOG THIS
MESSENGER
IM FRIEND 1
SHARED PHOTO 4
IM FRIEND 2
ADDRESSBOOK
SHARED PHOTO 5
VITALITY
A
GOOD MOVIE!!!
B
BLOG MEMBER 1 NEW BLOG POST
C
360 MEMBER 1 I POSTED A NEW PHOTO
ADVERTISEMENT RELATED TO MOST SEARCHED TERM
CUSTOMIZE
1325

FIG. 13

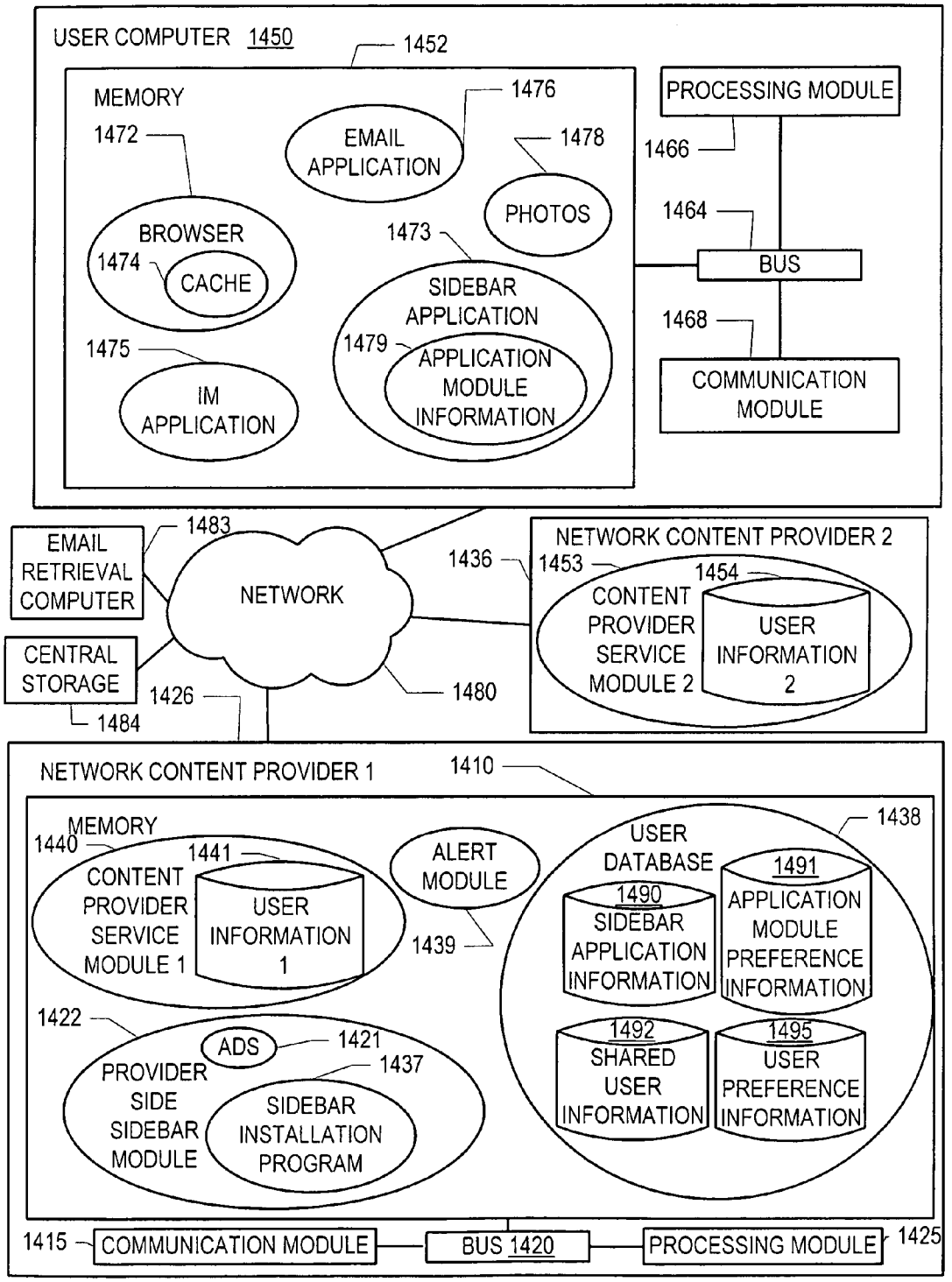

USER COMPUTER 1450
1452
MEMORY
1472
1476
EMAIL APPLICATION
1478
PHOTOS
BROWSER
1474
CACHE
1473
SIDEBAR APPLICATION
1479
APPLICATION MODULE INFORMATION
1475
IM APPLICATION
PROCESSING MODULE
1466
1464
BUS
1468
COMMUNICATION MODULE
EMAIL RETRIEVAL COMPUTER
1483
NETWORK
CENTRAL STORAGE
1484
1426
1480
1436
NETWORK CONTENT PROVIDER 2
1453
1454
CONTENT PROVIDER SERVICE MODULE 2
USER INFORMATION 2
NETWORK CONTENT PROVIDER 1
1410
MEMORY
1440
1441
CONTENT PROVIDER SERVICE MODULE 1
USER INFORMATION 1
ALERT MODULE
1439
1438
USER DATABASE
1491
APPLICATION MODULE PREFERENCE INFORMATION
1490
SIDEBAR APPLICATION INFORMATION
1492
SHARED USER INFORMATION
1495
USER PREFERENCE INFORMATION
1422
ADS
1421
1437
PROVIDER SIDE SIDEBAR MODULE
SIDEBAR INSTALLATION PROGRAM
1415
COMMUNICATION MODULE
BUS 1420
PROCESSING MODULE
1425

FIG. 14

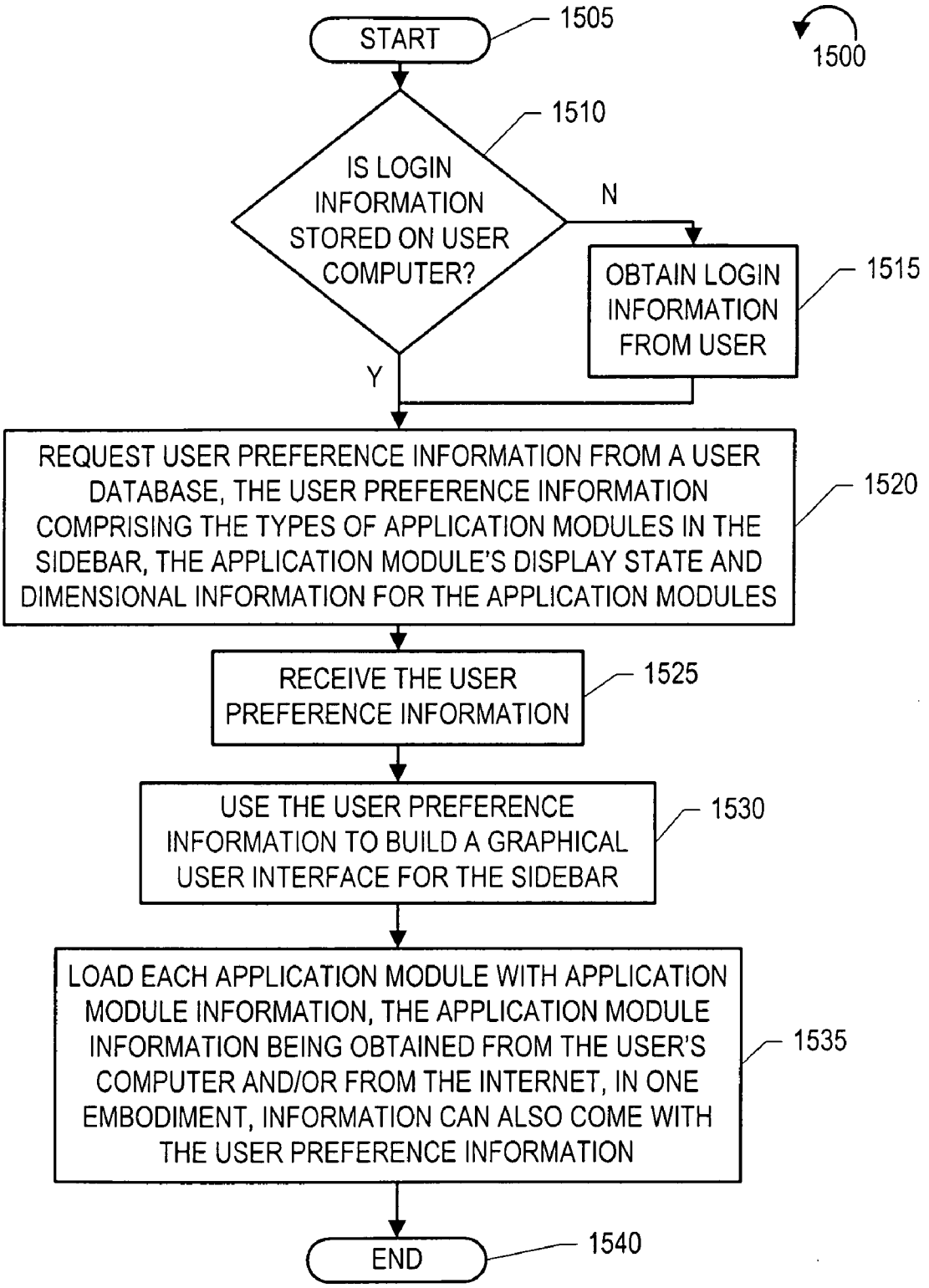

START
1505
1500
1510
IS LOGIN INFORMATION STORED ON USER COMPUTER?
N
Y
OBTAIN LOGIN INFORMATION FROM USER
1515
REQUEST USER PREFERENCE INFORMATION FROM A USER DATABASE, THE USER PREFERENCE INFORMATION COMPRISING THE TYPES OF APPLICATION MODULES IN THE SIDEBAR, THE APPLICATION MODULE'S DISPLAY STATE AND DIMENSIONAL INFORMATION FOR THE APPLICATION MODULES
1520
RECEIVE THE USER PREFERENCE INFORMATION
1525
USE THE USER PREFERENCE INFORMATION TO BUILD A GRAPHICAL USER INTERFACE FOR THE SIDEBAR
1530
LOAD EACH APPLICATION MODULE WITH APPLICATION MODULE INFORMATION, THE APPLICATION MODULE INFORMATION BEING OBTAINED FROM THE USER'S COMPUTER AND/OR FROM THE INTERNET, IN ONE EMBODIMENT, INFORMATION CAN ALSO COME WITH THE USER PREFERENCE INFORMATION
1535
END
1540

FIG. 15

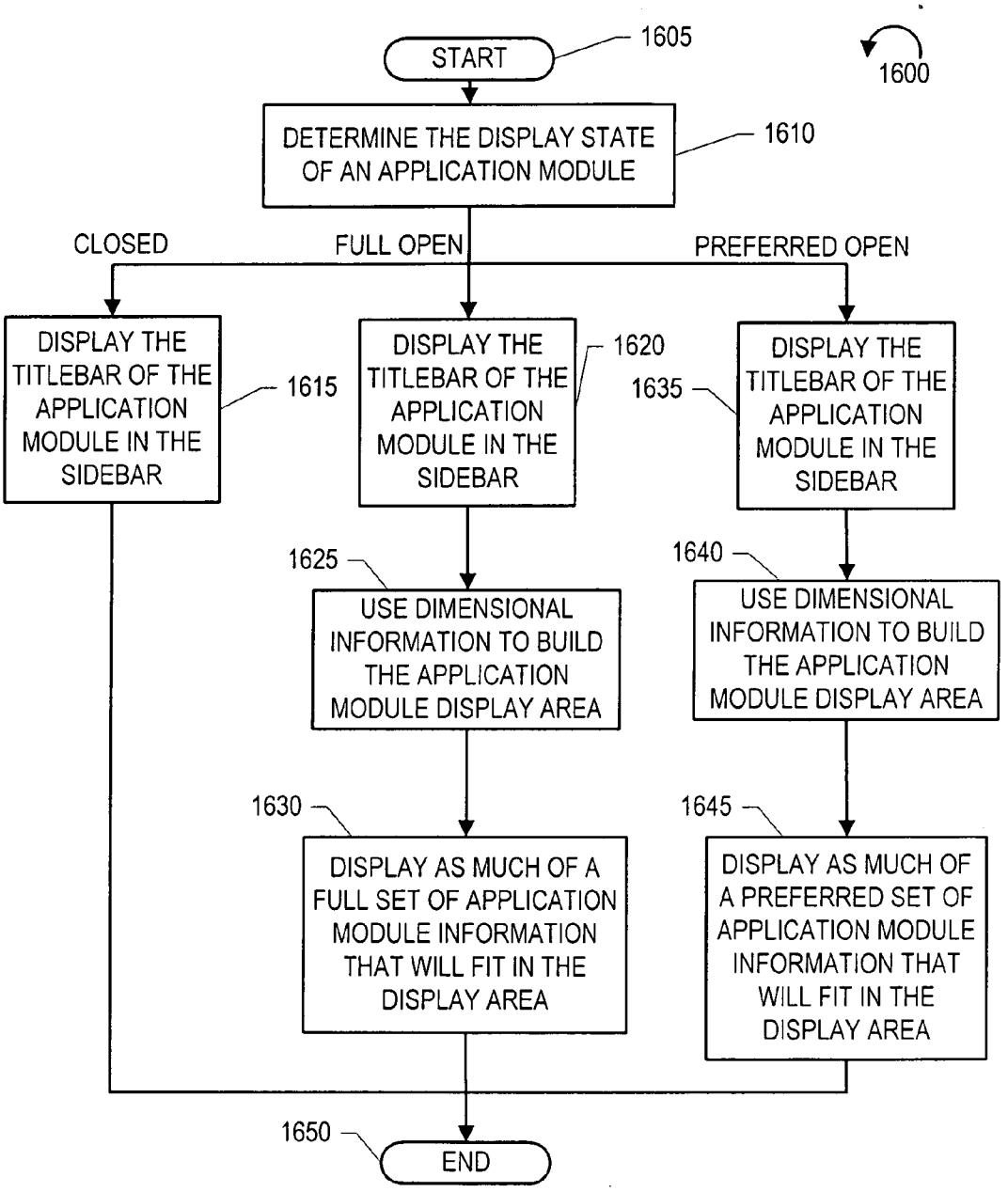

START
1605
1600
DETERMINE THE DISPLAY STATE OF AN APPLICATION MODULE
1610
CLOSED
FULL OPEN
PREFERRED OPEN
DISPLAY THE TITLEBAR OF THE APPLICATION MODULE IN THE SIDEBAR
1615
DISPLAY THE TITLEBAR OF THE APPLICATION MODULE IN THE SIDEBAR
1620
DISPLAY THE TITLEBAR OF THE APPLICATION MODULE IN THE SIDEBAR
1635
1625
USE DIMENSIONAL INFORMATION TO BUILD THE APPLICATION MODULE DISPLAY AREA
1640
USE DIMENSIONAL INFORMATION TO BUILD THE APPLICATION MODULE DISPLAY AREA
1630
DISPLAY AS MUCH OF A FULL SET OF APPLICATION MODULE INFORMATION THAT WILL FIT IN THE DISPLAY AREA
1645
DISPLAY AS MUCH OF A PREFERRED SET OF APPLICATION MODULE INFORMATION THAT WILL FIT IN THE DISPLAY AREA
1650
END

FIG. 16

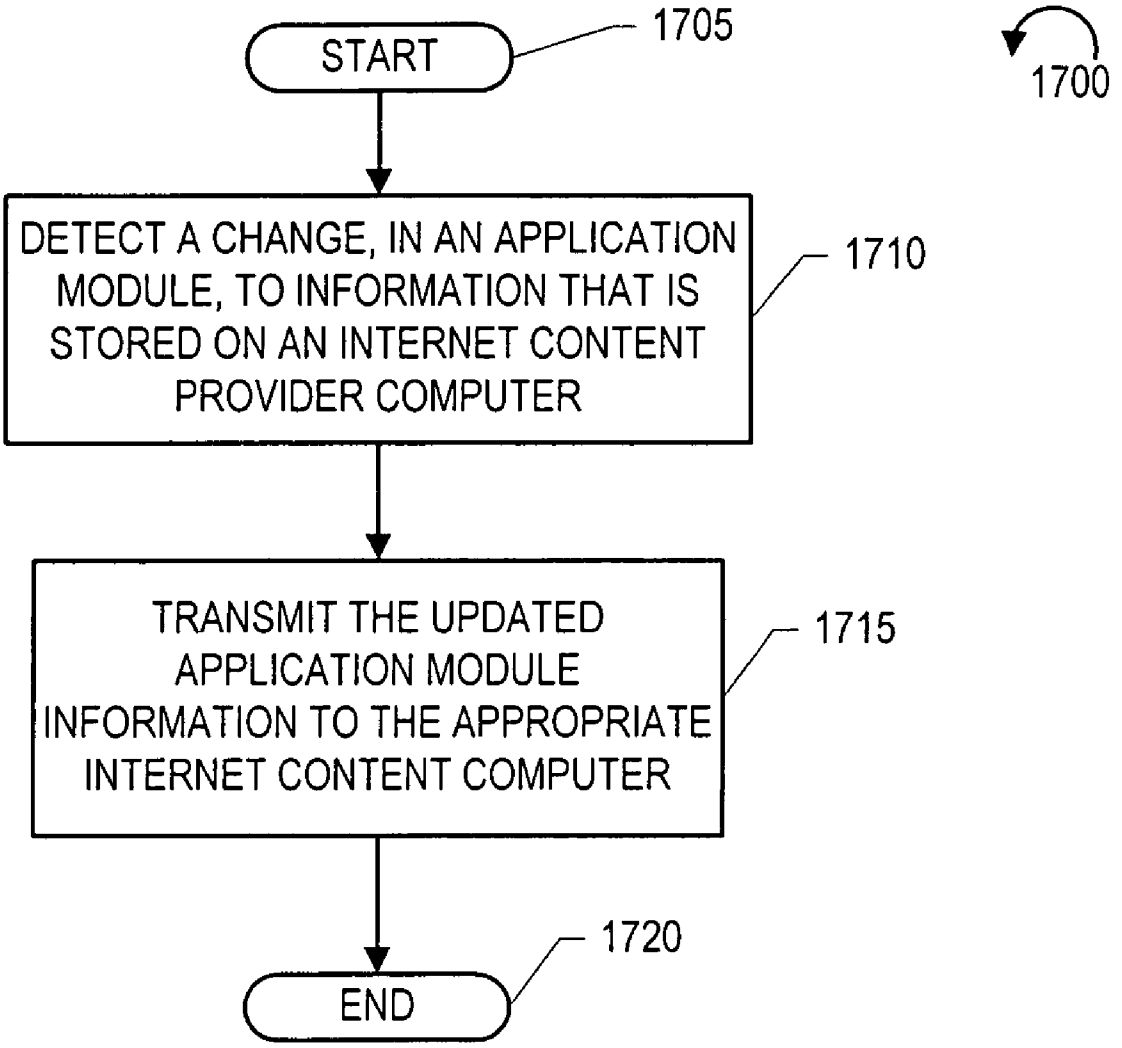

START
1705
1700
DETECT A CHANGE, IN AN APPLICATION MODULE, TO INFORMATION THAT IS STORED ON AN INTERNET CONTENT PROVIDER COMPUTER
1710
TRANSMIT THE UPDATED APPLICATION MODULE INFORMATION TO THE APPROPRIATE INTERNET CONTENT COMPUTER
1715
END
1720

FIG. 17

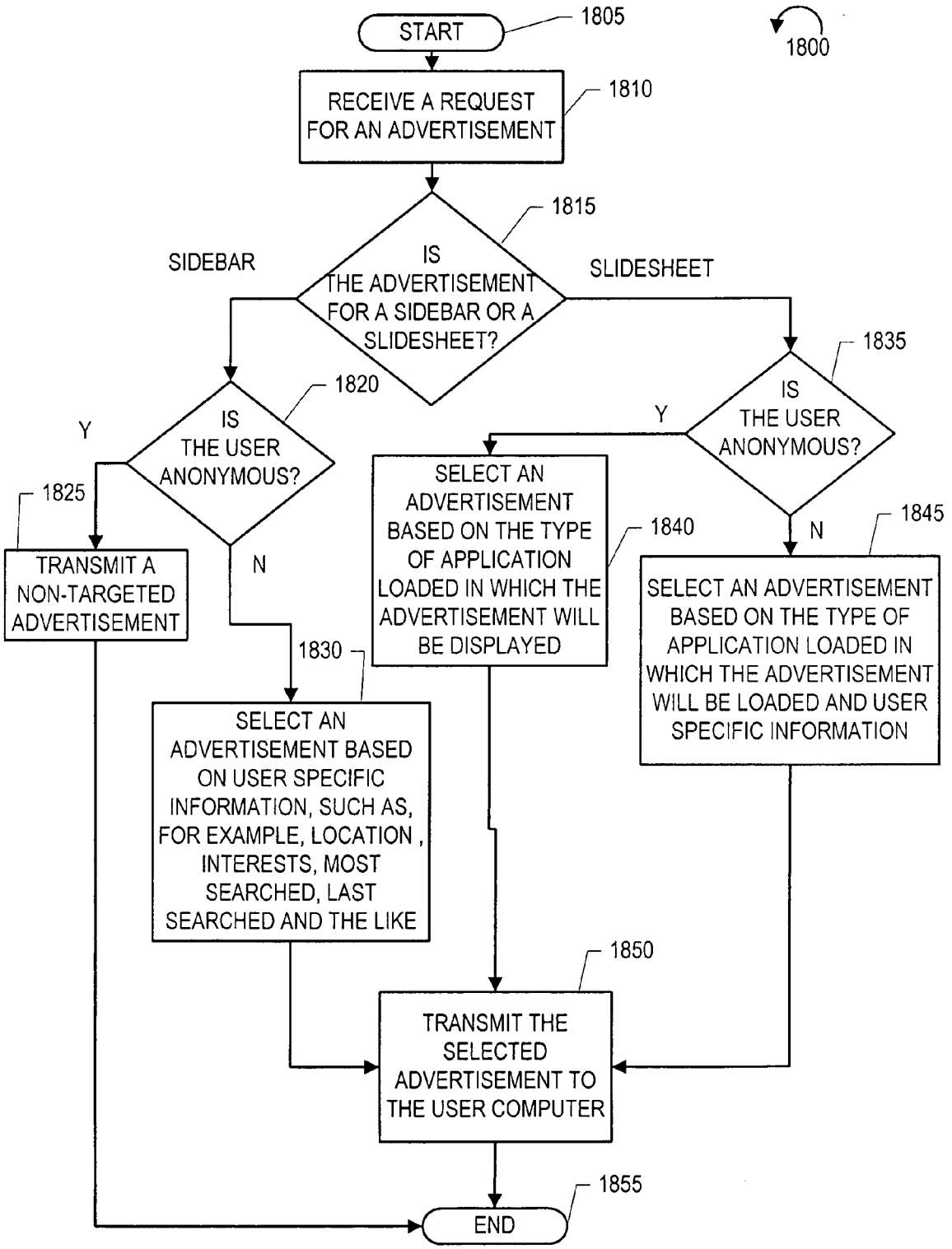

START
1805
1800
RECEIVE A REQUEST FOR AN ADVERTISEMENT
1810
IS THE ADVERTISEMENT FOR A SIDEBAR OR A SLIDESHEET?
1815
SIDEBAR
SLIDESHEET
IS THE USER ANONYMOUS?
1820
Y
N
TRANSMIT A NON-TARGETED ADVERTISEMENT
1825
SELECT AN ADVERTISEMENT BASED ON USER SPECIFIC INFORMATION, SUCH AS, FOR EXAMPLE, LOCATION , INTERESTS, MOST SEARCHED, LAST SEARCHED AND THE LIKE
1830
IS THE USER ANONYMOUS?
1835
Y
N
SELECT AN ADVERTISEMENT BASED ON THE TYPE OF APPLICATION LOADED IN WHICH THE ADVERTISEMENT WILL BE DISPLAYED
1840
SELECT AN ADVERTISEMENT BASED ON THE TYPE OF APPLICATION LOADED IN WHICH THE ADVERTISEMENT WILL BE LOADED AND USER SPECIFIC INFORMATION
1845
TRANSMIT THE SELECTED ADVERTISEMENT TO THE USER COMPUTER
1850
END
1855

FIG. 18

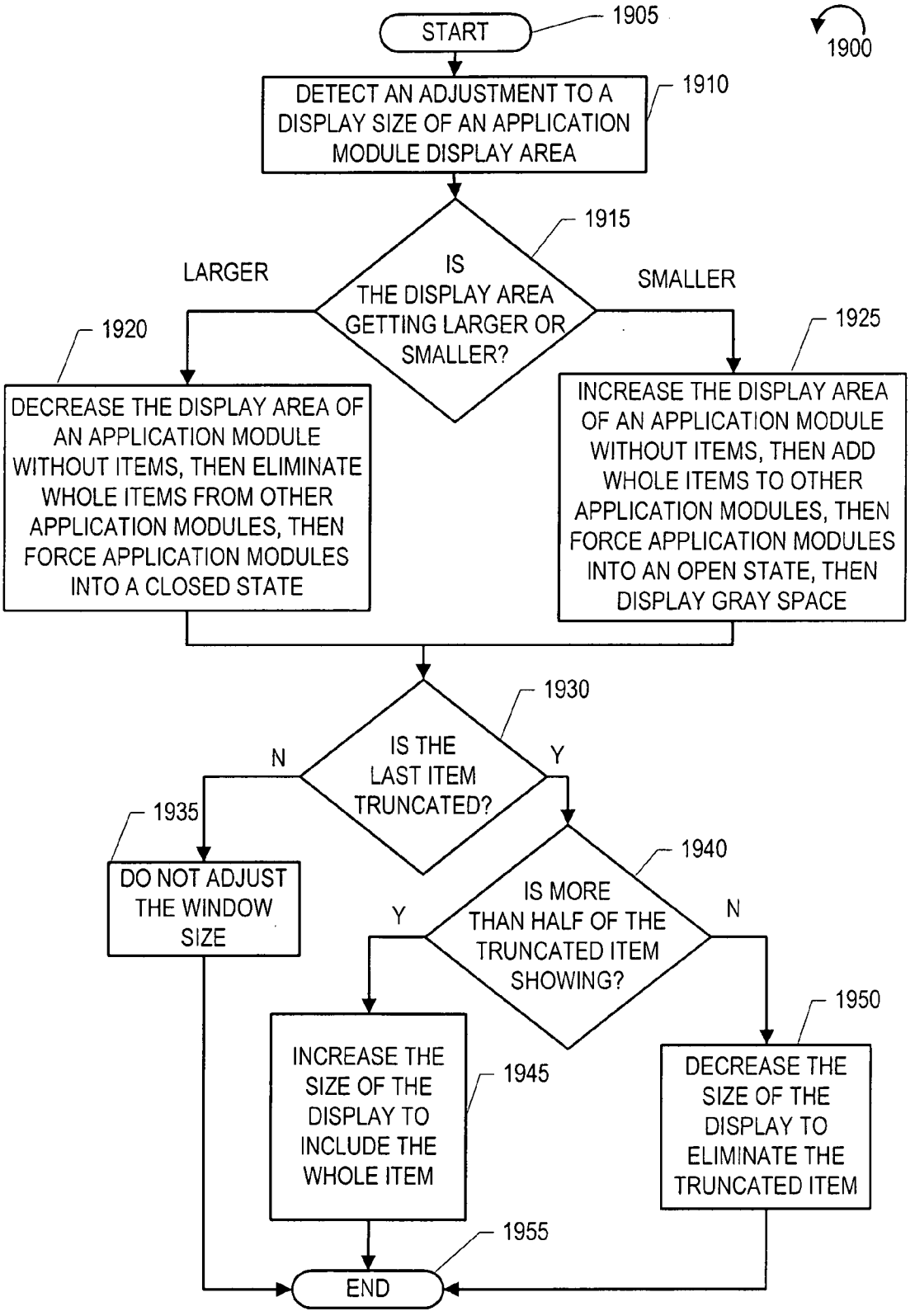

START
1905
1900
DETECT AN ADJUSTMENT TO A DISPLAY SIZE OF AN APPLICATION MODULE DISPLAY AREA
1910
IS THE DISPLAY AREA GETTING LARGER OR SMALLER?
1915
LARGER
SMALLER
1920
DECREASE THE DISPLAY AREA OF AN APPLICATION MODULE WITHOUT ITEMS, THEN ELIMINATE WHOLE ITEMS FROM OTHER APPLICATION MODULES, THEN FORCE APPLICATION MODULES INTO A CLOSED STATE
1925
INCREASE THE DISPLAY AREA OF AN APPLICATION MODULE WITHOUT ITEMS, THEN ADD WHOLE ITEMS TO OTHER APPLICATION MODULES, THEN FORCE APPLICATION MODULES INTO AN OPEN STATE, THEN DISPLAY GRAY SPACE
IS THE LAST ITEM TRUNCATED?
1930
N
Y
1935
DO NOT ADJUST THE WINDOW SIZE
IS MORE THAN HALF OF THE TRUNCATED ITEM SHOWING?
1940
Y
N
INCREASE THE SIZE OF THE DISPLAY TO INCLUDE THE WHOLE ITEM
1945
DECREASE THE SIZE OF THE DISPLAY TO ELIMINATE THE TRUNCATED ITEM
1950
END
1955

FIG. 19

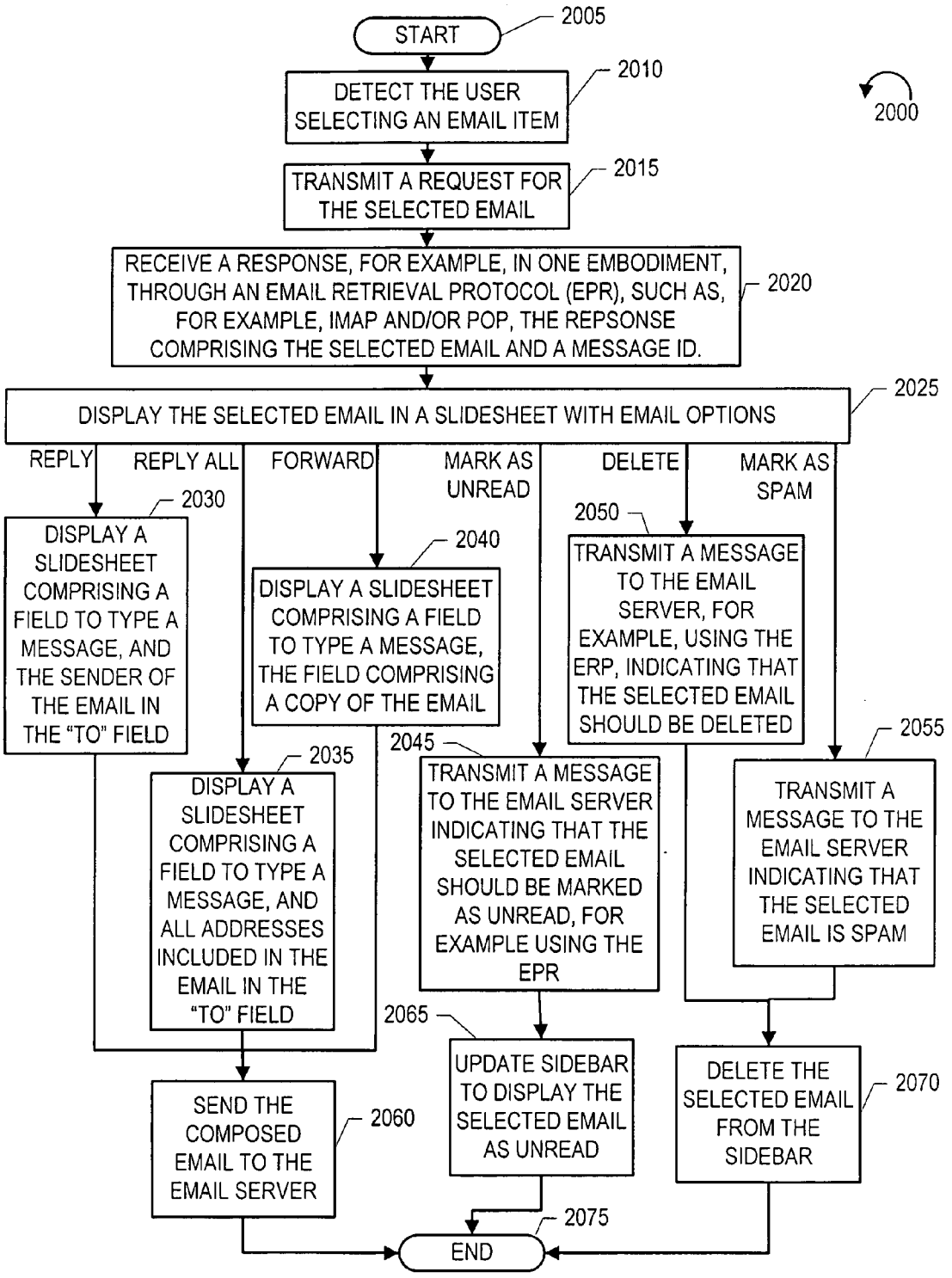

START
2005
DETECT THE USER SELECTING AN EMAIL ITEM
2010
2000
TRANSMIT A REQUEST FOR THE SELECTED EMAIL
2015
RECEIVE A RESPONSE, FOR EXAMPLE, IN ONE EMBODIMENT, THROUGH AN EMAIL RETRIEVAL PROTOCOL (EPR), SUCH AS, FOR EXAMPLE, IMAP AND/OR POP, THE REPSONSE COMPRISING THE SELECTED EMAIL AND A MESSAGE ID.
2020
DISPLAY THE SELECTED EMAIL IN A SLIDESHEET WITH EMAIL OPTIONS
2025
REPLY
REPLY ALL
FORWARD
MARK AS UNREAD
DELETE
MARK AS SPAM
2030
DISPLAY A SLIDESHEET COMPRISING A FIELD TO TYPE A MESSAGE, AND THE SENDER OF THE EMAIL IN THE "TO" FIELD
2040
DISPLAY A SLIDESHEET COMPRISING A FIELD TO TYPE A MESSAGE, THE FIELD COMPRISING A COPY OF THE EMAIL
2050
TRANSMIT A MESSAGE TO THE EMAIL SERVER, FOR EXAMPLE, USING THE ERP, INDICATING THAT THE SELECTED EMAIL SHOULD BE DELETED
2035
DISPLAY A SLIDESHEET COMPRISING A FIELD TO TYPE A MESSAGE, AND ALL ADDRESSES INCLUDED IN THE EMAIL IN THE "TO" FIELD
2045
TRANSMIT A MESSAGE TO THE EMAIL SERVER INDICATING THAT THE SELECTED EMAIL SHOULD BE MARKED AS UNREAD, FOR EXAMPLE USING THE EPR
2055
TRANSMIT A MESSAGE TO THE EMAIL SERVER INDICATING THAT THE SELECTED EMAIL IS SPAM
2065
SEND THE COMPOSED EMAIL TO THE EMAIL SERVER
2060
UPDATE SIDEBAR TO DISPLAY THE SELECTED EMAIL AS UNREAD
DELETE THE SELECTED EMAIL FROM THE SIDEBAR
2070
2075
END

FIG. 20

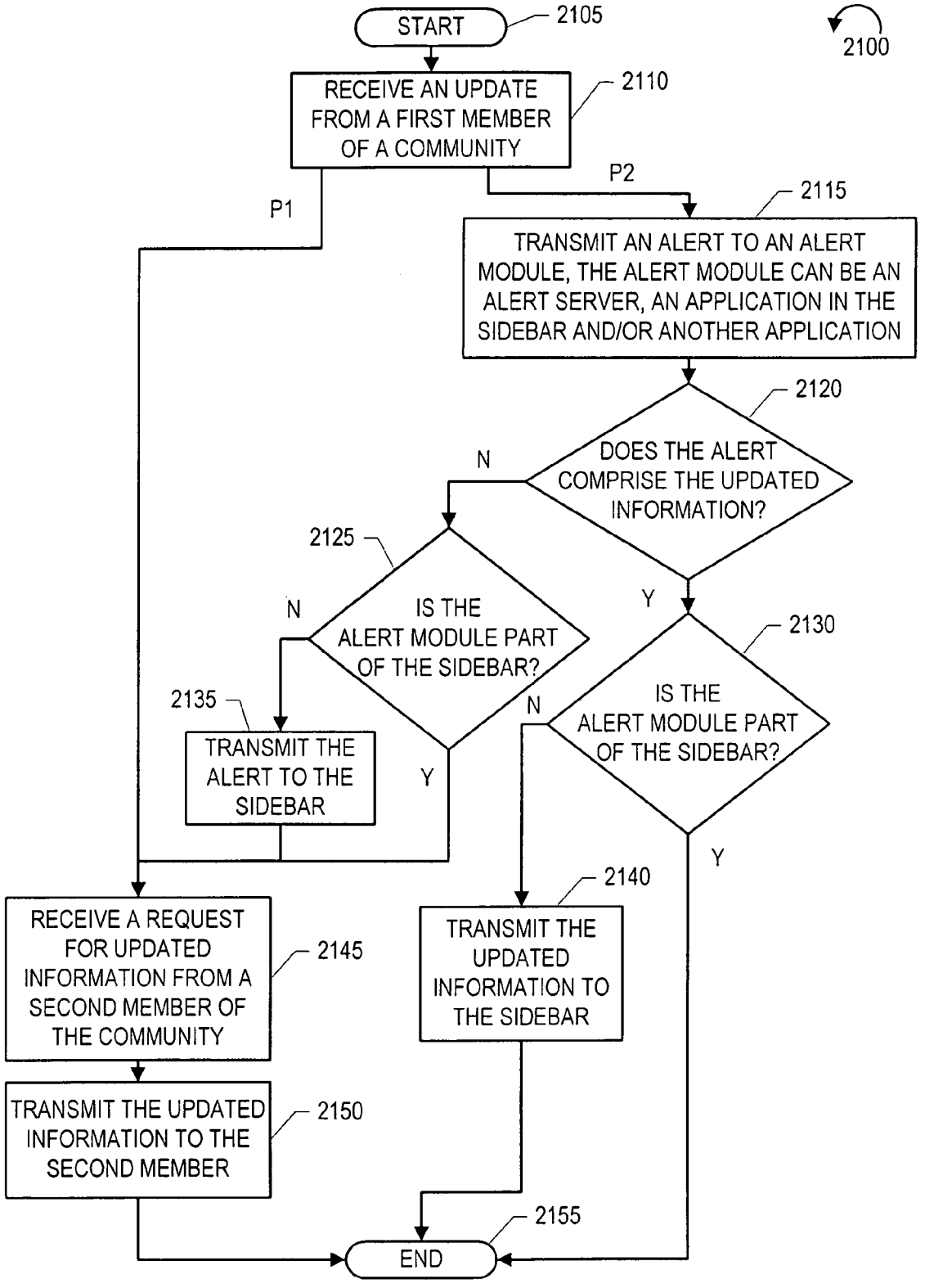

START
2105
2100
RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM A FIRST MEMBER OF A COMMUNITY
2110
P1
P2
2115
TRANSMIT AN ALERT TO AN ALERT MODULE, THE ALERT MODULE CAN BE AN ALERT SERVER, AN APPLICATION IN THE SIDEBAR AND/OR ANOTHER APPLICATION
2120
DOES THE ALERT COMPRISE THE UPDATED INFORMATION?
N
Y
2125
IS THE ALERT MODULE PART OF THE SIDEBAR?
N
Y
2130
IS THE ALERT MODULE PART OF THE SIDEBAR?
N
Y
2135
TRANSMIT THE ALERT TO THE SIDEBAR
2140
TRANSMIT THE UPDATED INFORMATION TO THE SIDEBAR
RECEIVE A REQUEST FOR UPDATED INFORMATION FROM A SECOND MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY
2145
TRANSMIT THE UPDATED INFORMATION TO THE SECOND MEMBER
2150
2155
END

FIG. 21

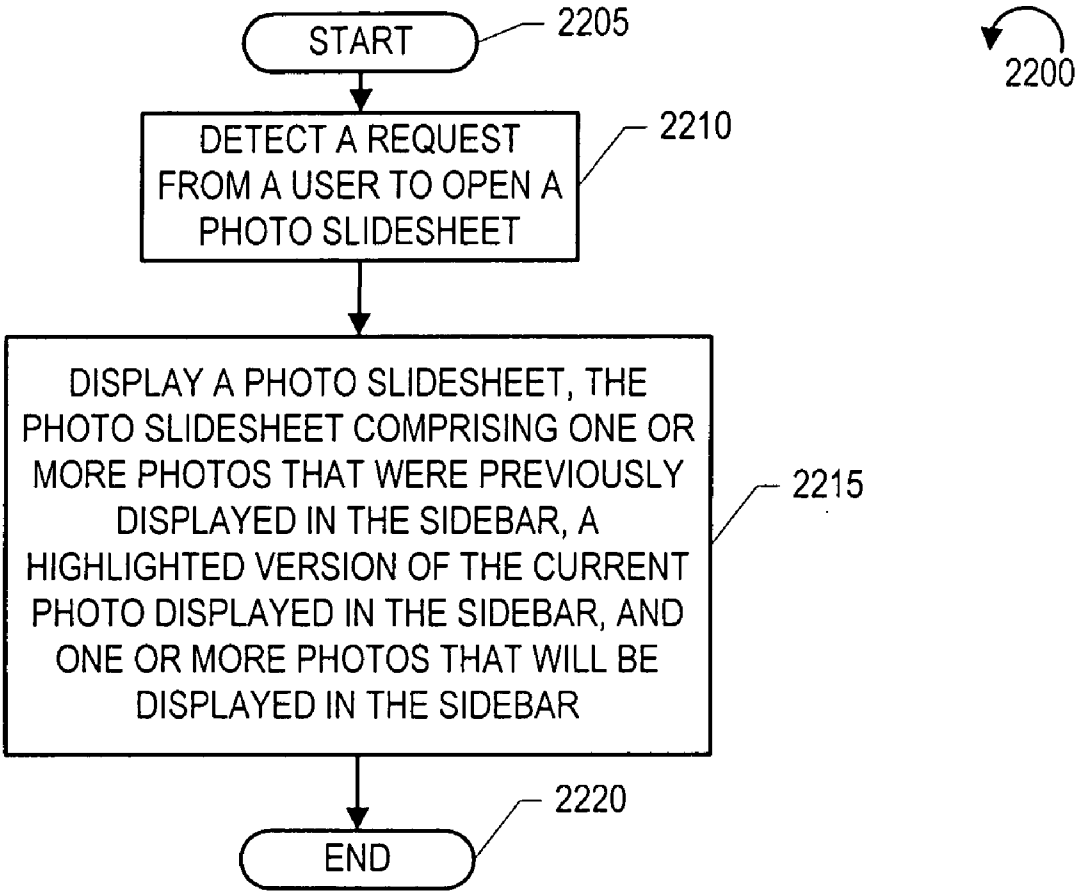

START
2205
2200
DETECT A REQUEST FROM A USER TO OPEN A PHOTO SLIDESHEET
2210
DISPLAY A PHOTO SLIDESHEET, THE PHOTO SLIDESHEET COMPRISING ONE OR MORE PHOTOS THAT WERE PREVIOUSLY DISPLAYED IN THE SIDEBAR, A HIGHLIGHTED VERSION OF THE CURRENT PHOTO DISPLAYED IN THE SIDEBAR, AND ONE OR MORE PHOTOS THAT WILL BE DISPLAYED IN THE SIDEBAR
2215
END
2220

FIG. 22

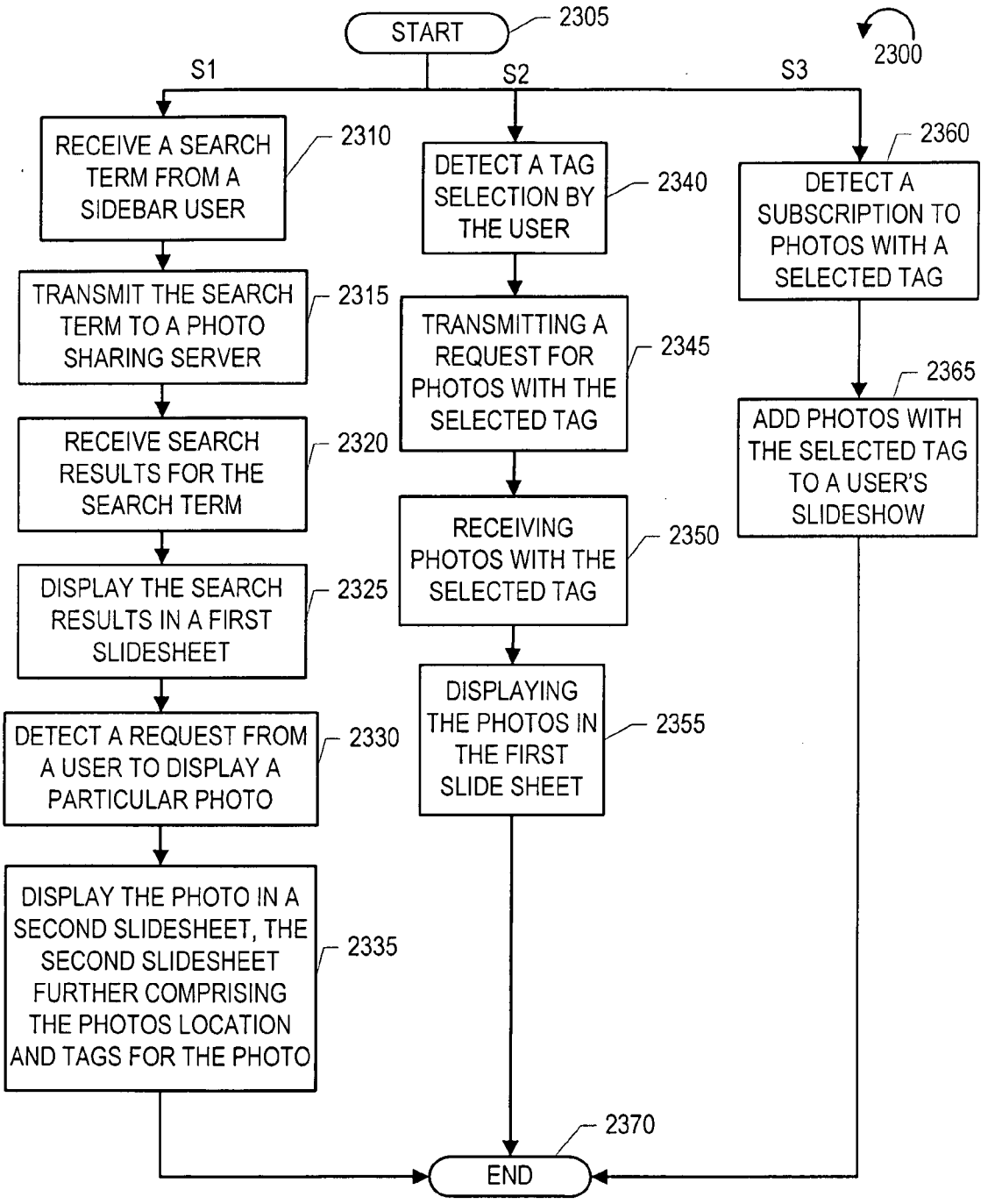

START
2305
2300
S1
S2
S3
RECEIVE A SEARCH TERM FROM A SIDEBAR USER
2310
TRANSMIT THE SEARCH TERM TO A PHOTO SHARING SERVER
2315
RECEIVE SEARCH RESULTS FOR THE SEARCH TERM
2320
DISPLAY THE SEARCH RESULTS IN A FIRST SLIDESHEET
2325
DETECT A REQUEST FROM A USER TO DISPLAY A PARTICULAR PHOTO
2330
DISPLAY THE PHOTO IN A SECOND SLIDESHEET, THE SECOND SLIDESHEET FURTHER COMPRISING THE PHOTOS LOCATION AND TAGS FOR THE PHOTO
2335
DETECT A TAG SELECTION BY THE USER
2340
TRANSMITTING A REQUEST FOR PHOTOS WITH THE SELECTED TAG
2345
RECEIVING PHOTOS WITH THE SELECTED TAG
2350
DISPLAYING THE PHOTOS IN THE FIRST SLIDE SHEET
2355
DETECT A SUBSCRIPTION TO PHOTOS WITH A SELECTED TAG
2360
ADD PHOTOS WITH THE SELECTED TAG TO A USER'S SLIDESHOW
2365
END
2370

FIG. 23

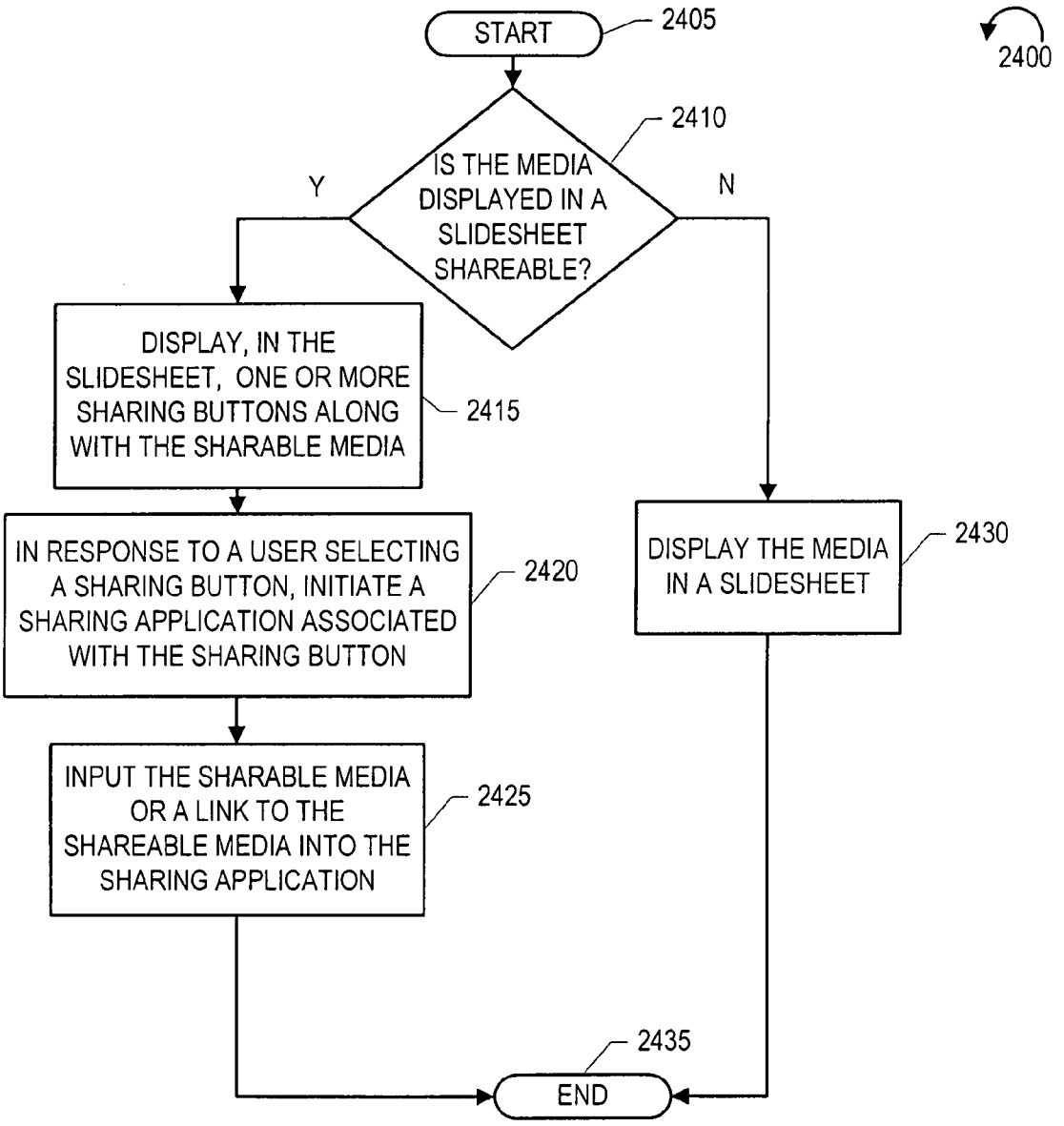

START
2405
2400
2410
IS THE MEDIA DISPLAYED IN A SLIDESHEET SHAREABLE?
Y
N
DISPLAY, IN THE SLIDESHEET, ONE OR MORE SHARING BUTTONS ALONG WITH THE SHARABLE MEDIA
2415
IN RESPONSE TO A USER SELECTING A SHARING BUTTON, INITIATE A SHARING APPLICATION ASSOCIATED WITH THE SHARING BUTTON
2420
INPUT THE SHARABLE MEDIA OR A LINK TO THE SHAREABLE MEDIA INTO THE SHARING APPLICATION
2425
DISPLAY THE MEDIA IN A SLIDESHEET
2430
2435
END

FIG. 24

WHOLE MODULE ITEMS IN A SIDEBAR

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This continuation application claims the benefit of U.S. application Ser. No. _____, filed Jan. 4, 2006, entitled NETWORK USER DATABASE FOR A SIDEBAR, which is hereby incorporated herein by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] This disclosure is directed to computers and computer applications and, more particularly, to methods and systems of providing whole items in a module for a software tool that acts as an application aggregator for access to existing applications and that also adds additional features and functions, which in one embodiment, can be presented as a sidebar, the sidebar comprises a plurality of applications, such as, for example, Internet services and other computer applications.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Many Internet content providers, such as, for example, Yahoo!, Inc. of Sunnyvale, Calif., offer a large number of Internet services, such as, for example, searching, email, news, photo sharing, maps, finance, weather, calendars, address books, instant messaging and a plurality of other services. In order to offer these services to a user in a centralized manner, Internet content providers have created software programs that act as application aggregators that can be displayed on a user's desktop or as part of a browser. Such applications have come to be called sidebars because in many instances the user interface is displayed on one side of user's display Examples are the Google Sidebar, an application supplied by Google Inc. of Mountain View, Calif. and the Yahoo! Sidebar supplied by Yahoo!, Inc. of Sunnyvale, Calif. The sidebar typically comprises a plurality of visibly distinct regions or modules, typically grouped in a vertical stack, each module comprising or representing a different application or function. The applications are identified by a titlebar, the titlebar further comprising controls for initiating additional functionality, such as, for example, initiating a slidesheet, or calling a menu. A slidesheet is a window that appears to slide out of the sidebar and can comprise additional information related to the selected application or function.

[0004] In addition to offering services some Internet content providers also allow users to create Internet accounts with the content provider. The user account allows the content provider to maintain a user database (UDB) for the user. The UDB comprises personal information, application preferences and other application information that can be accessed and shared by the content provider's various services. Present sidebars do not fully utilize the potential of the UDB, however.

[0005] Sidebars are helpful to both an Internet user and an Internet content provider. The Internet user can use the sidebar to quickly and easily access their web services and the Internet content provider can use the sidebar to introduce users to new services and various types of new media.

[0006] Accordingly, there is a desire for novel implementations of the sidebar, which improve usability and customizability.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] The invention as described and claimed herein satisfies this and other needs, which will be apparent from the teachings herein.

[0008] Some application modules comprise a list of items, while other application modules do not display items. For example, an email application module comprises items while a photo slideshow that resizes images based on the size of the application module display area, does not. In known sidebars, the number of items in an application module display area is not discrete. For example, in an email application module the last email item in the list can be truncated or only partially displayed. In one embodiment, application modules that comprise items are forced to comprise a whole number of menu items. Thus, when a user resizes an application module, the application module will "snap" to fully include or fully exclude an item as opposed to displaying a partial item. A whole item display format can also be implemented in an application module's slidesheet.

[0009] In one embodiment, a browser independent sidebar, associated with a content provider, comprises an application module, displayed in the sidebar, through which a user can access functions associated with the application module, the application module being selected from a plurality of possible application modules, wherein the sidebar displays the application module based on sidebar application information; and computer code, the computer code being operable to execute an operation that retrieves the sidebar application information from a location on a network.

[0010] In one embodiment, the sidebar application information is part of user specific information maintained by the content provider, the user specific information comprising additional information related to the user.

[0011] In one embodiment, the sidebar application information comprises instructions to display an application module in the sidebar, the displayed application module being selected by the content provider based on user specific information.

[0012] In one embodiment, the user specific information comprises information related to the user's usage of other content provider services.

[0013] In one embodiment, the user specific information comprises user preference information.

[0014] In one embodiment, the sidebar application information comprises instructions to display an application module in the sidebar, the displayed application module being selected by the content provider based upon content provider's preferences.

[0015] In one embodiment, the sidebar application information comprises an application module functionality, an application module display state and dimensional information that defines a dimension of the application module.

[0016] In one embodiment, the sidebar application information further comprises a desktop position.

[0017] In one embodiment, the computer code is further operable to execute an operation that retrieves application module preference information.

[0018] In one embodiment, the sidebar application information is retrieved at the same time as the application module preference information.

[0019] In one embodiment, the application module comprises module computer code the module computer code being operable to execute an operation that retrieves application module preference information.

[0020] In one embodiment, the sidebar further comprises a second application module, the application modules being positioned in a vertical stack.

[0021] In one embodiment, a functionality of the application module is an Internet address book. In one embodiment, a functionality of the application module is an instant messaging service. In one embodiment, a functionality of the application module is an email service. In one embodiment, a functionality of the application module is a photo service.

[0022] In one embodiment, the sidebar further comprises additional computer code, the additional computer code being operable to retrieve application module information associated with a function of the application module.

[0023] In one embodiment, the retrieved application module information is shared user information.

[0024] In one embodiment, the application module information is retrieved from the same location as the sidebar application information.

[0025] In one embodiment, the application module further comprises a slidesheet associated with the application module, said slidesheet comprising further application module functionality.

[0026] In one embodiment, a slidesheet further comprises a field through which the sidebar can accept edits to a user's user specific information.

[0027] In one embodiment, the sidebar further comprises edit computer code, the edit computer code being operable to execute an operation to transmit edited application module information to the content provider.

[0028] In one embodiment, the sidebar further comprises update computer code, the update computer code being operable to periodically execute an operation which requests updated application module information for an application module.

[0029] In one embodiment, the update computer code is further executable to periodically poll the content provider for updated application module information.

[0030] In one embodiment, the sidebar further comprises alert computer code, the alert computer code being operable to execute an operation to receive an alert when application module information is updated through another program.

[0031] In one embodiment, the computer code is further executable to retrieve the updated application module information in response to receiving an alert.

[0032] In one embodiment, the alert comprises the updated application module information.

[0033] In one embodiment, the application module comprises a whole number of items.

[0034] In one embodiment, the dimensional information is associated with the number of whole items in the application module.

[0035] In one embodiment, the user specific information is associated with the user's network user name and password.

[0036] In one embodiment, the sidebar further comprises caching computer code, the caching computer code being operable to execute an operation for caching the sidebar application information.

[0037] In one embodiment, a browser independent sidebar obtainable from a content provider, comprises an application module displayed in the sidebar through which a user can access functions associated with the application module, the application module being selected from a plurality of possible application modules, the sidebar displaying the application module based upon information, the information comprising user specific information; and computer code, the computer code being operable to execute an operation that retrieves said user specific information from a content provider location on a network.

[0038] In one embodiment, the user specific information comprises sidebar application information.

[0039] In one embodiment, the user specific information further comprises application module preference information.

[0040] In one embodiment, the user specific information further comprises user preference information.

[0041] In one embodiment, the user specific information further comprises shared user information.

[0042] In one embodiment, a sidebar, obtainable from a content provider offering other plural services to a user, comprises a module displayed in the sidebar, the module being selected from a plurality of possible modules, the sidebar displaying the module based in part on sidebar application information and user specific preference information maintained by said content provider in connection with said user and related to said user's interactions with one or more of said other plural services of said content provider; and computer code, the computer code being operable to execute an operation that retrieves said sidebar application information and said user specific preference information from a content provider location on a network.

[0043] In one embodiment, the user specific preference information is obtained by the content provider from the user based upon explicit preference indications made by the user during interactions with one or more of the other plural services.

[0044] In one embodiment, the explicit preference indication is a music preference indication made during interaction with a music service of the content provider.

[0045] In one embodiment, the explicit preference indication is a product preference indication made during interaction with a shopping service of the content provider.

[0046] In one embodiment, the explicit preference indication is based upon a recently used search term entered by said user during interaction with a search service of the content provider.

[0047] In one embodiment, the user specific preference information is obtained by the content provider based upon implicit preference indications derived utilizing data collected by the content provider related to the user's activities during interactions with one or more of the other plural services.

[0048] In one embodiment, the module displayed is selected by said content provider based upon information comprising the user specific preference information.

[0049] In one embodiment, the user specific preference information further comprises information related to said user's interactions with said sidebar.

[0050] In one embodiment, the selected module comprises an advertisement.

[0051] In one embodiment, the module comprises module functions available to the user, and wherein the functions are made available to the user based in part upon the user specific preference information.

[0052] In one embodiment, a method of populating a browser independent sidebar associated with a content provider comprises, requesting sidebar application information from a location on a network, the sidebar application information comprising information used to build a graphical user interface for the browser independent sidebar, wherein the sidebar application information informs the sidebar to display an application module, through which a user can access functions associated with the application module, the application module being selected from a plurality of possible application modules; receiving the sidebar application information; and using the sidebar application information to build a graphical user interface for the sidebar.

[0053] In one embodiment, the content provider selects the application module to display in the sidebar based on information, the information comprising user specific information.

[0054] In one embodiment, the user specific information comprises sidebar application information.

[0055] In one embodiment, the user specific information further comprises application module preference information.

[0056] In one embodiment, the user specific information further comprises user preference information.

[0057] In one embodiment, the user specific information further comprises shared user information.

[0058] In one embodiment, the populating method further comprises requesting application module information for the application module of the sidebar; receiving the application module information; and loading the application module information into the application module.

[0059] In one embodiment, the populating method further comprises requesting updated application module information for an application module.

[0060] In one embodiment, the populating method further comprises receiving an alert of updated application module information from another source.

[0061] In one embodiment, the populating method further comprises obtaining a user name and a password associated with a user.

[0062] In one embodiment, the populating method further comprises caching the received sidebar application information.

[0063] In one embodiment, the populating method further comprises receiving edited user specific information from a user; and transmitting the edited user specific information to the content provider.

[0064] In one embodiment, a system for providing a browser independent sidebar comprises a user computer communication application, coupled to a network, the communication application being operable to request sidebar application information, the sidebar application information comprising information used to build a graphical user interface for the browser independent sidebar, wherein the sidebar application information informs the sidebar to display an application module, through which a user can access functions associated with the application module, the application module being selected from a plurality of possible application modules; and a user database server, coupled to the network, the user database server having stored thereon user specific information as part of a user database, wherein the user specific information comprises the sidebar application information.

[0065] In one embodiment, the system further comprises an application module server from which the user computer can request application module information.

[0066] In one embodiment, the sidebar application information is created by the content provider based on information, the information comprising user specific information.

[0067] In one embodiment, the user database server is maintained by the sidebar provider.

[0068] In one embodiment, a sidebar displays targeted advertising in a sidebar and in the slidesheets of a sidebar. The advertisements can be targeted to the user based on user specific information and/or other information about the user.

[0069] In one embodiment, the targeted advertisement is related to a term most searched by the user. The user's search statistics can be gathered through the sidebar, a browser, or other search applications. In one embodiment the advertisement can be associated with a retailer website that the user frequently visits. In one embodiment, the advertisement can be for accessories for a product recently purchased by the user. In one embodiment, the advertisement can be associated with interests that the user previously selected in a profile built by the user, or through explicit preference selections made by a user during interaction with other services, for example, music or shopping services, or derived by the service provider through observed behavior of the user as the user interacts with the provider's services or other Internet or user computer activities. Thus, for example, by utilizing user preference information obtained through a user's interactions with a music service of the content provider, the content provider can offer personalized advertisements. For example, if a user has indicated a preference for metal music, this information can be used to generate an ad that features a new metal CD, concert, or other metal products. Similarly, shopping preferences can be obtained through product ratings or preferences indicated by a user interacting with a shopping service of the content provider. In one embodiment, the sidebar can perform a

keyword search on documents, currently open on the computer, currently being viewed by the user, and/or frequently or recently accessed by the user, and display advertisements associated with any matched keywords.

[0070] In addition to targeted advertisements in the main sidebar, targeted advertisements can also be included in the sidebar's slidesheets. The slidesheet advertisements can be associated with the type of application module that it is displayed in. In addition, if a user is signed into the sidebar, the slidesheet advertisement can be associated with the application module type selected, so that, for example, when the user selects the photo related application module in the sidebar, the targeted ad can be photo related, such as, for example, a camera ad or an ad for a photo editing program.

[0071] In one embodiment, email functions, such as, for example, reply, reply to all, forward, delete, mark as unread, and mark as spam can be accessed by a user through the sidebar. In one embodiment, the email retrieval protocol used by the sidebar is augmented to carry a second email identifier used by another email system. Thus, the sidebar can receive the second email identifier through the email retrieval protocol. Once the sidebar has the second email identifier, it can interact with systems that use the second email identifier, such as, for example, a spam control system.

[0072] The Internet allows people to connect and share thoughts in a number of different ways. For example, social networking communities allow users to add friends to their network, and thereby connected to many other people through their friends' friends. Social networking websites allow their users to post blogs, photos, blasts, and other media that a user wants to share with their group of friends, such as Yahoo! 360, offered by Yahoo! Inc. of Sunnyvale, Calif. Another example of a community network is an online photo sharing website. Photos are assigned tags and posted to a user's photo site. Other users can search for photos by user, group or tag. They can also comment on the photo. Yet another example of a community network is a review network. People know their friends tastes, so they can trust a friend's review more than another person's review. Many of these community networks provide email updates when a user's friend makes a new post. Vitality is an application module that, in one embodiment, seeks out updates to a user's community networks and lists them in a sidebar. Thus, the user can stay current with all their community networks without having to visit a number of different websites.

[0073] In one embodiment, a vitality module of a sidebar can work with a user's email alerts. For example, the vitality module can initiate a search for updated information in all of a user's community networks when an alert email is received from any one of the user's community networks. In one embodiment, the vitality module periodically polls the user's community networks for updated information. In one embodiment, the vitality module can receive an alert indicating that a user's community network has been updated. The alert can come from a general alert server, which manages all updates to a user's Internet services, and/or the alert can come from an alert application module in another application. The alert is not limited to an email, in one embodiment the alert can be a message from an alert server and/or from another application. In one embodiment, the alert also comprises the updated information.

[0074] In one embodiment, the vitality module only displays community information and only receives alerts from services offered by the same company that offers the sidebar, in order to promote the sidebar provider's services. In other embodiments, the sidebar can retrieve information and receive alerts from the sidebar provider's community sites and/or other content provider community sites by scraping, or by using the user's login and password for the specific site to collect updated information on behalf of the user. In one embodiment, emails received from third party community sites can be interpreted by the sidebar , and added to the vitality module. If the email comprises a URL that points to the updated information, the URL can be used by the sidebar to retrieve and display the updated information as part of a vitality slidesheet.

[0075] Other objects and features of the invention will become apparent from the following detailed description, considering in conjunction with the accompanying drawing figures. It is understood however, that the drawings are designed solely for the purpose of illustration and not as a definition of the limits of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING FIGURES

[0076] The drawing figures are not to scale, are merely illustrative, and like reference numerals depict like elements throughout the several views.

[0077] FIG. **1** illustrates a desktop comprising a sidebar implemented according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0078] FIG. **2** illustrates a sign in slidesheet implemented according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0079] FIG. **3** illustrates an instant message application module in a sidebar implemented according to one embodiment of the invention displaying a full open state.

[0080] FIG. **4** illustrates an instant message application module in a sidebar implemented according to one embodiment of the invention displaying a preferred open state.

[0081] FIG. **5** illustrates an email application module in a sidebar implemented according to one embodiment of the invention displaying a preferred open state.

[0082] FIG. **6** illustrates an editable slidesheet implemented according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0083] FIG. **7** illustrates a targeted advertisement in a sidebar and a targeted advertisement in a slidesheet implemented according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0084] FIG. **8** illustrates application modules implemented according to one embodiment of the invention, the application modules comprising a whole number of items.

[0085] FIG. **9** illustrates an email application module implemented according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0086] FIG. **10** illustrates an email "compose" slidesheet implemented according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0087] FIG. **11** illustrates a community activity updating application module implemented according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0088] FIG. **12** illustrates a photo application module implemented according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0089] FIG. **13** illustrates a slidesheet comprising easily accessible sharing buttons displayed on the same slidesheet as shareable media.

[0090] FIG. **14** illustrates a system implemented according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0091] FIG. **15** illustrates a sidebar-building method implemented according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0092] FIG. **16** illustrates a method for displaying an application module in a sidebar based on a display state of the application module.

[0093] FIG. **17** illustrates an application module information updating method implemented according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0094] FIG. **18** illustrates a targeted advertisement selection method implemented according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0095] FIG. **19** illustrates a method for displaying a whole number of items in application modules of a sidebar.

[0096] FIG. **20** illustrates an email application implemented according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0097] FIG. **21** illustrates a community activity updating application implemented according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0098] FIG. **22** illustrates a photo displaying method implemented according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0099] FIG. **23** illustrates a photo sharing method implemented according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0100] FIG. **24** illustrates a method for displaying sharing buttons with a shareable media implemented according to one embodiment of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF EXEMPLARY EMBODIMENTS

[0101] There will now be shown and described in connection with the attached drawing figures several embodiments of a sidebar and methods for providing the same.

[0102] The term Internet as used herein, unless otherwise specified expressly or by context, is intended to have a broad non-limiting definition, and refers, without limitation, to a global computer network and/or any other group or subgroup of computers or other computing devices communicatively coupled together.

[0103] The term sidebar as used herein unless otherwise specified expressly or by context, is intended to have a broad non-limiting definition, and refers, without limitation, to a software program that can be displayed to a user in a plurality of different states, and appears as, for example, a vertical stack, as a floating toolbar, a deskbar, a system tray icon and other forms, and that serves as a browser-independent resource through which a user can interact with sidebar specific applications and/or other application programs accessible on the user's computing device and/or the Internet, the sidebar offering features and functions complimentary to, the same as, or in addition to those found in the other application programs.

[0104] FIG. **1** illustrates a sidebar **105**, implemented according to one embodiment of the invention. The sidebar **105** comprises a titlebar **110** and a plurality of application modules **115**, **120**, **125**, **140**, **160**, **165**, **170**, **175** displayed in a vertical stack. An application module, as used herein, is a software application module, component or portion thereof, that implements a described feature or function of the sidebar. The application modules load with application specific information and each application module can preferably automatically update in a manner known in the art. In one embodiment, the sidebar **105** can also automatically receive updates. The sidebar **105** is a stand alone application that is not tied to a browser. The titlebar **110** comprises a title for the sidebar, a control **106** to minimize the sidebar **105**, and a control **107** to close the sidebar.

[0105] Below the titlebar **110** is a search application module **115**. A user can use the search application module **115** to perform searches on the Internet and/or on the user's computer. In one embodiment (not shown), when the user starts to type in the search field, a slidesheet, which is an extended user interface portion that appears to slide out from one vertical side of the sidebar, appears comprising search results. In one embodiment, computer searches will automatically update with each new letter added to the search field, and a web search is presented when the user selects the "go" button. In one embodiment, the search application module **115** is a permanent module of the sidebar, which cannot be removed by a user. In one embodiment, more specific searches, such as, for example, shopping, images, video and other topics can also be initiated through the slidesheet.

[0106] Sidebar **105** preferably also comprises a welcome module **120** or other sign-in area under the search module **115**. Some Internet content providers maintain a user database (UDB) that comprises a user's personal information, application settings, and other information. User information stored in a UDB can generally be accessed by and preferably be used to personalize some or all of that Internet content provider's services. In addition, the UDB can store a user's sidebar preferences. In one embodiment, a sidebar **105** uses a username and password to access a user's sidebar preferences from a UDB. In one embodiment, a copy of the user's sidebar preferences is stored on the user's computer, and can be retrieved from the computer, for example, in "off-line" situations, where an Internet connection is not available. In one embodiment, a user's sidebar preferences comprise the types of application modules that appear in the sidebar **105**, display states for the application modules and dimensional information for a display area of an application module. For example, a user preference can inform a sidebar **105** to add an email module in an open state, with a length of 100 pixels, an IM module in an open state, with a length of 500 pixels and a vitality module in a closed state.

[0107] In one embodiment, the sidebar **105** can obtain a username and password from a cache on the user's computer, which was saved, for example, on the computer when the user last signed into an Internet content provider's website or another application provided by the content provider. Thus, the user is provided with a Single Sign On (SSO) option. In one embodiment, for some application modules that require additional protection, the user is asked to reenter their password. In one embodiment, if a username and password are not readily available to the sidebar **105** (user not signed in), the sidebar **105** can request a username and password from the user.

[0108] In one embodiment, when a user first installs a sidebar **105** on their computer, a content provider chooses which application modules will populate the sidebar **105**. The content provider can choose the application modules based on user information in the UDB, and/or which content provider services a user uses. For example, if the user favors a particular service and/or if a user neglects a particular service, it can be added to the sidebar **105** for the user's convenience. In one embodiment, the content provider can measure the usage of a particular service by the amount of information stored in a UDB for that service. In addition, the content provider can load the sidebar **105** with services that they want to promote. If the user is an avid user of Instant Messenger, with a large number of friends in their friend list, the content provider can default an IM module in the sidebar. If the user is a part of a social networking service, and has a large network of friends, the content provider can add a vitality module to the sidebar **105**, so that the user can stay current with any updates made by friends in their community.

[0109] When a user is signed in, the welcome module **120** comprises a "sign out" link, which the user can select to sign out of the sidebar **105**. In one embodiment, when no one is signed into the sidebar **105**, an anonymous user is applied and the sidebar **105** is preferably loaded with a default set of information. The anonymous sidebar **105** can display images taken from the user's computer or from a random Internet photo sharing site. In addition, other application modules such as mail, instant messenger and vitality (discussed below) can give the user a preview of what the application module can provide for the user. Furthermore, in one embodiment, advertisements displayed in an anonymous sidebar **105** are selected at random.

[0110] FIG. **2** illustrates an exemplary sidebar **105** as would be experienced by an anonymous user. While an anonymous user is loaded in the sidebar **105**, the sidebar **105** comprises a "sign in" link, which the user can select to sign into the sidebar **105**. In one embodiment, when the user selects the "sign in" link a "sign in" slidesheet **205** appears from the left side of the sidebar **105**. The slidesheet **205** comprises a field for a username and a field for a user password.

[0111] After inputting a user name and password, the user can select the "sign in" button **210** to sign in to the sidebar **105**. The sidebar **105** sends the received information to an Internet content provider who verifies the user name and password. In response to a positive match between the username and password, the Internet content provider sends the user's sidebar **105** preferences, which are stored on the content provider's database, to the user. The sidebar **105** then uses the user preference information to build a customized or personalized graphical user interface (GUI), which is tailored to the user in accordance with the user's preference or other data as found, for example, in the content provider's UDB. As mentioned above, the user's UDB information and the user's activities can be used to predict which application modules are important to the user. If the sidebar comprises application modules that are important to a user it will compel the user to continue to use the sidebar.

[0112] Since the user's preferences are stored with the Internet content provider on the Internet, the user's personalized sidebar **105** experience is available to them not just on their personal computer but on any computer with an Internet connection.

[0113] Returning to FIG. **1**, below the welcome module **120**, in the depicted embodiment the sidebar **105** comprises a photo module **125**. The titlebar of photos module **125** comprises a doubled arrow button **119**, which a user can select to initiate a slidesheet with further information regarding their photos. For example, in one embodiment, clicking the double arrow button initiates a slidesheet comprising the image **130** currently displayed in the sidebar **105**, one or more images that were previously displayed and one or more images that will be displayed.

[0114] The titlebar also comprises a minimize button **122** and an edit button **121**. In one embodiment, when the user selects the edit button **121**, a menu is generated (not shown). The menu can comprise options, which the user can select to edit the application module. For example, in a photo module **125**, a menu can comprise an option to add new photos to a slideshow.

[0115] By further example in FIG. **1**, in the depicted embodiment below the photos application module **125** titlebar, is an application module display area. The application module display area is where the application module displays its information to a user. The photos application module **125** comprises an image **130**. In one embodiment, the image **130** can be retrieved from the user's computer or the photos application module **125** can display images taken from the Internet. Also included in the application display area, below the image **130**, is a control bar **135**, which a user can use to control their slideshow. In one embodiment, the control bar **135** comprises one button to skip to the next photo, one button to rewind to a previous photo and one button to pause/play the slideshow.

[0116] In one embodiment, for example when a user clicks on the image **130**, a photos slidesheet **127** appears from the left side of the sidebar **105**. The photo slidesheet **127** comprises a larger version **132** of the image **130** displayed in the slidesheet **105**. In one embodiment, the photo slidesheet **127** also comprises metadata **134** associated with the image **132**. The metadata **134** can include, in one embodiment, the location of the photo. In one embodiment, the photo is located on the user's computer and the location is a local directory. In one embodiment, the photo is taken from an Internet photo sharing site and the location is a universal resource identifier (URI). In one embodiment, the metadata can also comprise tags associated with photos from a photo sharing site. The tags are used to categorize photos and find new photos with similar tags.

[0117] Below the metadata **134**, the photo slidesheet **127** also comprises sharing buttons **136**, **137**, **138**. In one embodiment, the sharing buttons comprise an "email this" button **136**, an "IM this" button **137** and a "blog this" button **138**. The user can use these buttons to share the photo **132** with other Internet users. The sharing buttons are not limited to these sharing options. Other sharing options, such as, for example, blasting on a social networking website, can also be added to the slidesheet **127**. In addition, sharing buttons are not limited to the photos module **125**. Any media, for example, images, articles, videos, reviews and other sharable media, which is display by the sidebar **105**, can include sharing buttons to provide the user with a quick and convenient tool for sharing content with their friends.

[0118] Returning to the main sidebar **105**, (FIG. **1**), below the photos module **125** is an email module **140**. The email module **140** comprises a titlebar with controls and a display area comprising unread emails from a user's inbox. The email module interacts with a user's email program(s) such as Outlook, Yahoo! Mail, and the like, to provide a compact interface and access to certain functions of the main email program. The email module **140** is in a preferred open state, and thus comprises a subset of a full set of application module information. The different display states of an application module are discussed below. The criteria for the subset of information can be chosen by the user, and in FIG. **1**, the example subset depicted is unread emails. In one embodiment, unread emails in a user's "bulk" folder are ignored when the unread emails are populated in the email module **140**. Thus, the user is protected from receiving spam in their sidebar **105**. In one embodiment, the subset of emails can be limited to family members. Application module display states are discussed further below.

[0119] As seen in the example depicted in FIG. **1**, the email module **140** comprises three messages **145**, **150** and **155**. In one embodiment, when a user selects one of the unread emails, a slidesheet appears for displaying more of, or all of, the text of the email. Email options, such as, for example, reply, forward and reply to all can also be provided to a user from a slidesheet. In one embodiment, when a user selects one of their unread emails, the email item disappears from the mail module **140** and the mail module **140** resizes. The email module **140** communicates with the email application on the user's machine or as administered by an email service made available by an Internet content provider so that changes made in the email module **140** are reflected in the user's principal email application. Thus, for example, an email forwarded via the sidebar mail module **140** will be indicated as forwarded should the user log on to their principal email application on-line.

[0120] In one embodiment, a sidebar **105** application module comprises a subset of all the services that are available through the full service counterpart of the application. In one embodiment, a user is redirected to the full service counterpart of an application, when a non- supported service is selected. Opening the full service counterpart of the application not only provides users with additional functionality, it can also be used by an Internet content provider to introduce users to new services and/or to new aspects of services that the user already uses. For example, in one embodiment, an email module only displays unread emails from a user's inbox. The user must use the full service email application to view read mail. In one embodiment, an email module can display the text of an email, but the user must use the full service email application to obtain an attachment to the email.

[0121] Returning to the example of FIG. **1**, the sidebar **105** also comprises an instant messenger (IM) module **160**. The IM module is in a closed state (described below). In one embodiment, a user can change the state of application modules by double clicking on the titlebar and/or selecting the double arrow button.

[0122] A vitality module **165** is displayed under the messenger module **160**. Vitality allows users of community services such as reviews, blogs or social networking sites to remain current with updates made to these community services. Vitality will be discussed below.

[0123] Below the vitality module **165** is a targeted advertisement **170**. The targeted advertisement **170** is selected based on one or more criteria associated with the user. For example, in one embodiment, the targeted advertisement can be selected based on information in a user's UDB and/or on recent user actions, such as, for example, recent searches and/or purchases.

[0124] Below the targeted advertisement **170** is a "customize" module **175**. In one embodiment, the user can select the "customize" module **175** to make changes to their sidebar **105**. For example, the user can add application modules and perform other preference setting functions.

[0125] A sidebar **105** typically has a limited amount of room to display its application modules, and each application module can have a large number of items that a user may wish to access. Thus, it will be recognized from the teachings presented herein that the particular deployment of a sidebar of the present disclosure can be modified to suit application specific needs or user requirements and still be within the scope of the inventions described herein. Thus, in one embodiment, an application module may exist in one of a plurality of states. FIGS. **3-5** illustrate a plurality of application modules in various states. The sidebar **105** depicted in FIGS. **3-5** are longer in vertical length than the sidebar **105** in FIGS. **1-2**, but the Figures represent the same sidebar **105** in different display states. In one embodiment, a user can increase the resolution of their display and thus provide more room for the sidebar to display additional information.

[0126] In a closed state, the application module displays a titlebar comprising a title identifying the application module. Application modules **160**, **165** and **175** of FIG. **1** are in a closed state. In one embodiment, the closed state can also comprise a limited amount of information, such as, for example, one stock quote, or a temperature for one location. In one embodiment, as shown in FIG. **3**, the IM module titlebar **307** can comprise a tool to display and adjust the current status of a user.

[0127] In a full open state, the application module displays as much of a full set of application module information that fits in or is designed for a display area **309**. FIG. **3** illustrates an IM module **160** in a full open state. In the full open state, the IM module display area **309** can display the user's entire friends list. As the display area **309** is increased in size, more of the user's friends list is displayed to the user. The full friends list can also be viewed by selecting the slidesheet button **315**, and initiating a slidesheet **310** comprising the friends list. In one embodiment, if a user's friends list extends beyond the vertical length of the slidesheet **310**, a scroll bar is displayed on the right side of the slidesheet **310**, so that the user can access all of their friends.

[0128] In a preferred open state, an application module display area comprises a subset of the application module information displayed in a full open state. A preferred open state allows the sidebar **105** to display a subset of information that is more important and/or useful to the user. The information included in the subset can be chosen by the user.

[0129] FIG. **4** illustrates an IM module **160** in a preferred open state. In one embodiment, in the preferred open state, the IM module display area **405** comprises the IM participants that the user most recently conversed with. In one

embodiment, the IM module **160**, updates the display area **405** with IM participants contacted through the sidebar **105** or through a stand alone messenger application. In one embodiment, both the messenger application and the sidebar **105** track a user's IM usage and stores the usage information in the user's UDB so that both applications have access to the user's most recent contacts. In one embodiment, when both applications are running, the applications can send messages to each other to keep updated. In one embodiment, one application can be allowed to track the operations of the other application so that the list can remain current. In one embodiment, as the user increases the size of the IM module **160**, additional IM participants are added to the list.

[**0130**] In one embodiment, an IM module **160** preferred open state can comprise the IM participants in one of the user's groups. In one embodiment, an IM module **160** preferred open state can comprise the "most active" IM participants.

[**0131**] In one embodiment, a slidesheet displayed from a preferred open state comprises a full set of application module information. Thus, in FIG. **4**, the slidesheet **410** comprises the entire friends list. In one embodiment, the slidesheet can comprise a more comprehensive subset of information and/or a plurality of different subsets of information. In one embodiment, the preferred open state is the only available open state for the sidebar. A full set of information can only be accessed through a slidesheet. In one embodiment, a user can switch between open states through a menu accessed from the menu button **421**. In one embodiment, the titlebar of the application can comprise a button for switching between states.

[**0132**] The preferred open state is not limited an IM module **160**. FIG. **5** illustrates an email module **140** in a preferred open state. In a full open state the IM module display area **505** can comprise all the email in a user's inbox (not shown). In a preferred open state, the display area **505** can comprise a subset of emails from the user's inbox. For example, in one embodiment, the display area **505** can be configured to comprise email only from the user's family. In one embodiment, the preferred open state can comprise only unread email.

[**0133**] The sidebar **105** can be used to access user information, such as, for example, an address book, a calendar, notes and other user information. FIG. **6** illustrates a sidebar **105** comprising an address book module **605**. In one embodiment, the address book module **605** can be added to the sidebar **105** through the customize module **175**. An Internet address book is a service provided by an Internet content provider which a user can use to save their contacts on a server. Saving contacts on a server allows the user to access their contacts from any computer that has access to the Internet. In one embodiment, the address book module **605**, can also search the user's local computer for contact information.

[**0134**] In one embodiment, when a user selects the double arrow button in the titlebar of the address book module **605**, an address book slidesheet **610** is displayed. The address book slidesheet **610** comprises a list of items comprising the user's contacts. In one embodiment, the items comprise the name of the contact, and the contact's email address, if available.

[**0135**] When a user selects one of the contacts in the slidesheet **610**, an individual contact slidesheet **615** is initiated. The individual contact slidesheet **610** comprises some or all of the information available to a user through a full address book service. For example, in FIG. **6**, the contact slidesheet **615** comprises the name of the contact in the titlebar an email, a physical address and a phone number. Other information can comprise an IM identifier, notes, mobile phone, birth date, and other contact information.

[**0136**] The contact slidesheet **615** also comprises a link **617** to edit the information. Selecting the edit link **617** initiates an edit slidesheet **618**. The edit slidesheet **618** provides a number of fields **620** that a user can type in to edit the contact information. Once the user has finished editing, they can select the save button to save their edits or the exit button to cancel their edits. In one embodiment, the edit slidesheet **618** can appear to the left of the contact slidesheet **615**. In one embodiment, the edit slidesheet **618** can replace the contact slidesheet **615**. In one embodiment, selecting the edit button **617**, initiates a full address book service, for example, through a browser.

[**0137**] Using the slidesheets of the sidebar **105**, a user can access their contact information, and other personal user information, such as, for example, a schedule and notes, directly from a desktop without opening another application or having to access an address book webpage through a browser. In addition, the user can edit their personal information directly through the sidebar **105**. The edits are transmitted to an Internet content provider and saved on a server so that changes made to the user's personal information, through the sidebar **105**, are available to the user and to other applications. An address book is just one example of an Internet service that can be accessed and edited through the sidebar. In other embodiments, the sidebar can have an application module for personal notes, news, maps, weather, a calendar and other personal Internet services that store user information.

[**0138**] In one embodiment, the sidebar can comprise a combination address book and IM module (not shown). A full vertical slidesheet for this combination module can comprise a tabbing structure. An address book tab comprises a list of the user's contacts, and an IM tab comprises a user's friends list. In one embodiment, the user can message an IM participant from either list. In one embodiment, if any of the user's address book contacts is an IM participant, their "sign-in" status is visible from the address book tab. For example, in one embodiment, an item in the address book tab can comprise a smiling face for a signed-in participant and a sleeping face for a signed-off participant.

[**0139**] Since the sidebar **105** has access to a user's personal information the sidebar **105** can offer targeted advertisements to the user. A targeted advertisement is more likely to be read and clicked on by a user and is less intrusive to the user because it is relevant to their interests. The sidebar **105** of FIG. **7** comprises a targeted advertisement **705**. In one embodiment, the targeted advertisement **705** is related to a term most searched by the user. Thus, if the user performs a number of searches for a particular car manufacturer, a fashion designer or an actor, the sidebar **105** can display advertisements that are associated with the user's search terms. The user's search statistics can be gathered through the sidebar **105**, a browser, or other search applications.

[**0140**] In one embodiment the advertisement **705** can be associated with a retailer website that the user frequently

visits. In one embodiment, the advertisement **705** can be for accessories for a product recently purchased by the user. In one embodiment, the advertisement can be associated with interests that the user previously selected in a profile built by the user, or through explicit preference selections made by a user during interaction with other services, for example, music or shopping services, or derived by the service provider through observed behavior of the user as the user interacts with the provider's services or other Internet or user computer activities. Thus, for example, by utilizing user preference information obtained through a user's interactions with a music service of the content provider, the content provider can offer personalized advertisements. For example, if a user has indicated a preference for metal music, this information can be used to generate an ad that features a new metal CD, concert, or other metal products. Similarly, shopping preferences can be obtained through product ratings or preferences indicated by a user interacting with a shopping service of the content provider. In one embodiment, the sidebar **105** can perform a keyword search on documents, currently open on the computer, currently being viewed by the user, and/or frequently or recently accessed by the user, and display advertisements associated with any matched keywords.

[**0141**] In addition to targeted advertisements in the main sidebar **105**, targeted advertisements can also be included in the sidebar's **105** slidesheets. The slidesheet advertisements can be associated with the type of application module that it is displayed in. In addition, if a user is signed into the sidebar **105**, the slidesheet advertisement can be associated with the application module type selected, so that, for example, when the user selects the photo related application module in the sidebar **105**, the targeted ad can be photo related, such as, for example, a camera ad or an ad for a photo editing program.

[**0142**] For example, in one embodiment, when a user opens a slidesheet for a photo module **125**, the photos slidesheet **710** comprises an advertisement **720** for a digital camera. In one embodiment, a weather module can display an advertisement for an umbrella if the weather is rainy, and advertisement for sunscreen if the weather is sunny and an advertisement for antifreeze if the weather is snowing. In one embodiment, a finance module can display an advertisement for an online brokerage house. These slidesheet advertisements **720** can be further targeted to the user by displaying a camera manufacturer that the user purchased in the past, or displaying new services from an online brokerage house that the user is a member of.

[**0143**] In one embodiment, selecting the advertisement **720** in the slidesheet **710** opens a new slidesheet **725** with additional information regarding the advertised product or service. In one embodiment, selecting the advertisement can open a browser window to the advertiser's homepage or to a retailer where the product can be purchased.

[**0144**] In one embodiment, the sidebar **105** can display an advertisement based on recent user interaction with the sidebar **105**. For example, which application module was recently added to the sidebar **105**, which application modules were recently placed in an open state, which application module is most frequently used by the user, and other sidebar **105** interactions.

[**0145**] Some application modules comprise a list of items, while other application modules do not display items. For example, an email application module comprises items while a photo slideshow that resizes images based on the size of the application module display area, does not. In known sidebars, the number of items in an application module display area is not discrete. For example, in an email application module the last email item in the list can be truncated or only partially displayed. In one embodiment, application modules that comprise items are forced to comprise a whole number of menu items. Thus, when a user resizes an application module, the application module will "snap" to fully include or fully exclude an item as opposed to displaying a partial item. A whole item display format can also be implemented in an application module's slidesheet.

[**0146**] For example, and as discussed further below, the email module **140** of FIG. **7** comprises three email messages while the email application module **140** of FIG. **8** comprises a whole fourth message **805**. The whole fourth message **805** would have appeared even if the user did not resize the application module to include the entire fourth message **805**.

[**0147**] Since the space available to the sidebar is finite, if one application module increases in size another application module shrinks in size. In one embodiment, when a user increases an application module with items the additional space is taken from an application module that does not comprise the items, such as, for example, a photo module or a notepad module. As shown in FIG. **8**, photo module **125** has shrunk to accommodate the additional email message **805**.

[**0148**] If the photo module cannot be shrunk further, then whole items are deleted from application modules with items. If all of the open application modules can no longer be shrunk, in one embodiment, the sidebar can force application modules into a closed state and/or the user is not allowed to increase the size of the application module any further. In one embodiment, the sidebar **105** can memorize the state of the application modules that were affected by the resize so that if the user undoes the resize the affected application module can be returned to their original state.

[**0149**] If an application module is increased in size, in one embodiment, the sidebar **105** restores the other modules in a reverse order in which they were shrunk. In one embodiment, the sidebar **105** can insert grace space on the bottom of the sidebar **105**, if necessary. **1501** If an application module without items is resized, the sidebar first takes space from another application module without items. If the other all application modules without items can no longer be shrunk, the sidebar **105**, in one embodiment, can delete whole items and snap the size of the resized application module to accommodate the available free space. In one embodiment, the sidebar **105** can insert grace space on the bottom of the sidebar **105**, if necessary.

[**0150**] In addition to using a whole number of items in the main sidebar **105**, a whole number of items can also be forced in a slidesheet. FIG. **9** illustrates a slidesheet **905** for an email module **140**. The mail folder slidesheet **905** comprises a whole number of messages. Increasing or decreasing the size of the slidesheet **905** produces the snapping effect of including or excluding a truncated email item.

[**0151**] FIGS. **9** and **10** illustrate an email application that can be accessed through a sidebar **105**. The email module **140** is displayed in a preferred open state comprising the

three most current unread emails. In one embodiment, a user can display a mail folder slidesheet **905** by selecting the double arrow button in the mail module's **140** titlebar. In one embodiment, the folder slidesheet **905** defaults to the user's inbox. In one embodiment, the folder slidesheet **905** can comprise a plurality of folders identified by subtitle bars. Emails listed under a subtitle bar belong to the folder identified in the subtitle bar. In one embodiment, the folder slidesheet **905** can display a drop down menu (not shown) comprising the name of email folders. When a user selects a particular folder the emails in the folder slidesheet **905** are updated to display the emails in the selected folder.

[**0152**] In one embodiment, the sidebar **105** periodically polls the user's email server to determine if the user received any new emails. In one embodiment, the sidebar **105** can monitor whether another email application running on the user's computer has received a new email. In one embodiment, the sidebar **105** can detect if another application has detected a new email or the application that detected the new email can alert the sidebar of the new email. In one embodiment, the sidebar **105** can receive an alert indicating that a new email has been received. The alert receiving module can be part of the sidebar **105**, or part of another application. If the alert is received by another application, the reception of the alert can be detected by the sidebar **105**, or the other application can inform the sidebar **105** that an alert was received. The alert can be sent by the email server or a more general alert server, which monitors for updates across all of a content provider's services.

[**0153**] In one embodiment, the user can receive emails informing the user that changes were posted to a community website by another community user. For example, a user can receive an email when a social networking member updates their blog, sends them an invitation, or performs other social networking activities. In one embodiment, the user can receive an email informing them that an update has been made to their online photo sharing service. For example, a new photo could have been posted and/or a new comment could have been made. These community update emails can comprise a link to the updated information. In one embodiment, selecting the link initiates a browser, where the user can access the full version of the updated community information. In one embodiment, selecting the link can open a vitality slidesheet, which will be discussed below.

[**0154**] In FIG. **9**, the user has selected email message **2150** in the folder slidesheet **905**. When the user selects the email item **150**, the email message is opened in an item level email slidesheet **915**. The email slidesheet **915** comprises the subject of the email message in the titlebar, a "from" field, the body of the message, a spam control button **920** and email controls **925**. Additionally, when the email message **150** is opened, the email item **150** is highlighted, the envelope is changed to an open envelope, email message **2150** is removed from the mail module **140** display area, and the number in the titlebar is decreased to reflect the new number of unread emails in the user's inbox. In one embodiment, user actions in the mail module **140**, such as, for example, opening an email, are sent to the full service mail server. Thus, changes made to a user's email in the sidebar **105** are reflected in the user's full service email application.

[**0155**] The email slidesheet **915** comprises a spam control button **920**, which provides the user with direct access to strengthen their full service spam controls by identifying spam from their sidebar **105**. If the user identifies an email as spam, they can select the spam control button **920**. In response to the selection of the spam control button **920**, the sidebar **105** sends a message to the full service email server indicating that the selected email is spam. Then the full service email server incorporates the received information into the user's spam settings thereby strengthening the user's spam protection.

[**0156**] In addition to spam controls, a user can access other mail functions through the sidebar **105** by selecting the email controls **925** or the compose link **910** in the folder slidesheet **905** titlebar. In one embodiment, selecting the compose link **910** opens the user's default email application so that the user can compose a message. In one embodiment, the sidebar **105** displays a slidesheet comprising a field in which the user can compose a new message, a field for a recipient and a field for a subject. The composed message is transmitted by the sidebar **105** to an email server for delivery. In one embodiment, selecting an email control **925** opens the user's default email application so that the user can perform the selected operation. In one embodiment, the sidebar displays a slidesheet from which the user can perform the selected operation.

[**0157**] FIG. **10** illustrates a message form slidesheet **1005** that can be displayed by the sidebar **105** when a user selects the reply link in the email controls **1025**. The slidesheet **1005** comprises a "to" field, which comprises the recipient of the email, a compose field **1010**, in which the user can type their message, and a plurality of controls to manipulate the reply message. For example, when the user is finished composing their message, the user can select the send link, to send the message to an email server for delivery.

[**0158**] The Internet allows people to connect and share thoughts in a number of different ways. For example, social networking communities allow users to add friends to their network, and thereby connected to many other people through their friends' friends. Social networking websites allow their users to post blogs, photos, blasts, and other media that a user wants to share with their group of friends, such as Yahoo! 360, offered by Yahoo! Inc. of Sunnyvale, Calif. Another example of a community network is an online photo sharing website. Photos are assigned tags and posted to a user's photo site. Other users can search for photos by user, group or tag. They can also comment on the photo. Yet another example of a community network is a review network. People know their friends tastes, so they can trust a friend's review more than another person's review. Many of these community networks provide email updates when a user's friend makes a new post. Vitality is an application module that, in one embodiment, seeks out updates to a user's community networks and lists them in a sidebar **105**. Thus, the user can stay current with all their community networks without having to visit a number of different websites.

[**0159**] In one embodiment, the vitality module **165** can work with a user's email alerts. For example, the vitality module **165** can initiate a search for updated information in all of a user's community networks when an alert email is received from any one of the user's community networks. In one embodiment, the vitality module **165** periodically polls the user's community networks for updated information. In

one embodiment, the vitality module **165** can receive an alert indicating that a user's community network has been updated. The alert can come from a general alert server, which manages all updates to a user's Internet services, and/or the alert can come from an alert application module in another application. The alert is not limited to an email, in one embodiment the alert can be a message from an alert server and/or from another application. In one embodiment, the alert also comprises the updated information.

[**0160**] In one embodiment, the vitality module **165** only displays community information and only receives alerts from services offered by the same company that offers the sidebar **105**, in order to promote the sidebar provider's services. In other embodiments, the sidebar **105** can retrieve information and receive alerts from the sidebar provider's community sites and/or other content provider community sites by scraping, or by using the user's login and password for the specific site to collect updated information on behalf of the user. In one embodiment, emails received from third party community sites can be interpreted by the sidebar **105**, and added to the vitality module **165**. If the email comprises a URL that points to the updated information, the URL can be used by the sidebar **105** to retrieve and display the updated information as part of a vitality slidesheet.

[**0161**] FIG. **11** illustrates a vitality module **165** in a full open state. The vitality module **165** display area comprises the three latest updates from a user's community networks. The vitality module **165** comprises a movie review, the movie review comprising a visible rating system, and a preview of the review. The vitality item also comprises an image "A" associated with the user. The vitality module **165** also comprises a new post to a photo sharing website, and a new post to a social networking website. In addition, since the vitality module is part of the sidebar **105**, the user can use their email module **140** for other purposes, such as, for example receiving emails exclusively from family members, as is illustrated in FIG. **11**.

[**0162**] When the user opens a full vertical slidesheet **1105** for the vitality application module **165**, for example, by selecting the double arrow button in the vitality module **165** titlebar, in one embodiment, the slidesheet **1105** comprises a list of recently updated community websites. In one embodiment, the update alerts can be grouped by a time received, by user and/or by community.

[**0163**] If the user selects an item in the vitality slidesheet **1105**, an item level slidesheet **1110** is displayed comprising additional information about the selected vitality item. The additional information slidesheet **1110** comprises a title of the update in the titlebar, and a preview of the updated information. In one embodiment, clicking on the image of slidesheet **1110** open a browser, which navigates to the updated community webpage.

[**0164**] The slidesheet **1110** also comprises an image "C" associated with the user who posted the update, the updating user's identifier and links to contact the updating user, for example, an IM link and an email link. The updating user's image "C" can be the same as their IM account image, their social networking image, or taken from another application and/or service.

[**0165**] A sidebar **105** can also comprise a photo module **125**, which can display a slideshow of images obtained, for example, from a user's computer, from a photo sharing service, from a photo database, and from other photo sources. FIG. **12** illustrates a photo slidesheet **1205** for a photo module **125**. The photo slidesheet **1205** displays a vertical column of photos that are part of the slideshow. In one embodiment, the photo currently displayed in the sidebar **105** is centered and highlighted in the photo slidesheet **1205**. In one embodiment, the photo is highlighted by a border around the image. In one embodiment, the brightness of the image can be adjusted to highlight the photo. In one embodiment, the photo slidesheet **1205** also comprises the last two images displayed in the sideshow and the next two images will be displayed in the sideshow.

[**0166**] Selecting one of the images opens an image slidesheet **1210**. The image slidesheet **1210** comprises the name of the photo in the titlebar, a larger version of the image, metadata associated with the image and sharing buttons **1215**, which the user can select to share the image. In one embodiment, the metadata is a file directory for the image. In one embodiment, the metadata can comprise a URL of the image.

[**0167**] The sidebar **105** allows the user to receive and view a variety of different media. For example, the sidebar **105** allows the user to view photos shared on an online site, read reviews from community users, obtain weather forecasts, obtain financial information and obtain other information. Currently, there is no convenient way for a user to share the information they access through the sidebar **105** with other people. Therefore, in one embodiment, the sidebar **105** and/or sidebar **105** slidesheets can comprise sharing buttons on the same slidesheet as sharable information. For example, slidesheet **1210** comprises sharing buttons **1215**. The user can select the email button to email the image to another user, the IM button to IM the image to another user, or the blog button to post the image on a blog. In one embodiment, selecting a sharing button initiates a full service

[**0168**] Sharing icons are not limited to a photo module. Any information, media or data that can be shared with other users can be displayed in a slidesheet with sharing buttons so that the user can easily share the data with other users.

[**0169**] In one embodiment selecting a sharing icon **1215** initiates a separate application associated with the desired action. For example, selecting the email button can open a user's default email application, selecting the IM button can open an IM program and selecting the blog button can open a browser which takes the user to their blogging webpage.

[**0170**] FIG. **13** illustrates one embodiment of a photo module **125** in which the slideshow comprises photos from a online photo sharing community, such as, for example, Flickr. Flickr uses tags to label the photos on its site, and users can search and view photos by tag. For example, searching for the term "cats" will show all images including the tag "cats" and/or images with tags similar to "cats". In one embodiment, a user can search for, and subscribe to tagged images through an editing dialog (not shown), which can be initiated from a drop down menu displayed when a user selects edit button **1302**. Subscribing to a tag adds photos with the tag to the user's slideshow. Since the online photo sharing community is continually updated the user's slideshow can display a large variety of photos.

[**0171**] In one embodiment, when a user selects the double arrow button in the photo module **125** titlebar, a photo

slidesheet **1305** comprising a shared photo search field **1310**, a tag drop down menu **1315**, a subscribe button **1320** and a photo display area **1325** is displayed. When the slidesheet **1305** is displayed the display area **1325** comprises photos from the use's slideshow.

[**0172**] In one embodiment, a user can enter a search term directly from the photo slidesheet **1305**. In one embodiment, the search results can be displayed in the image display area **1325**, as shown in FIG. **13**, and in one embodiment, the search results can be displayed in another slidesheet (not shown). If the user likes the photos from a search result, the user can select the "subscribe" button **1320** to add the tagged images to their slideshow. Past searches and tags which the user is currently subscribed to can be quickly accessed through the tag menu **1315**. Selecting the arrow in tag menu **1315** displays a drop down menu with a plurality of tags that the user can select.

[**0173**] When a user selects a photo in the photo slidesheet **1305**, an item level slidesheet **1330** comprising the selected photo is displayed. The slidesheet **1330** comprises the location of the photo and the tags that are associated with the photo. In one embodiment, when a user selects a tag in the slidesheet **1330**, a random selection of photos having the selected tag are displayed in the slidesheet **1305**.

[**0174**] FIG. **14** illustrates a block diagram of a system **100** implemented in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. System **100** comprises a user computer **1450**, an email retrieval computer **1483**, a network content provider one **1426**, and a network content provider two **1436**, each coupled to a network **1480**, such as, for example, the Internet **1480**. Although illustrated as one symbol, nodes of network **1480** may be coupled together by a combination of different networks. A network user can use computer **1450** to access content and/or services from providers **1426** and **1436** through the network **1480**.

[**0175**] Computer **150** comprises a processing module **1466**, a communication module **1468** and memory **1452** coupled together by bus **1464**. The modules of computer **1450** can be implemented as any combination of hardware, software, hardware emulating software and reprogrammable hardware. The bus **1464** need not be a single bus, but rather, illustrates the interoperability of the different modules of the computer **1450**. In one embodiment, there may be multiple busses. In one embodiment, some modules are directly coupled instead of coupled via a bus **1464**. Computer **1450** may be implemented as a desktop, a notebook computer, a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA), a handheld device, a wireless phone or any other computing device or item known or hereafter developed that is capable of implementing the features, and/or performing functions, as described herein.

[**0176**] In one embodiment, the processing module **1466** can be implemented as, one or more Central Processing Units (CPUs), Field-Programmable Gate Arrays (FPGA), or any other component capable of executing computer applications. Communication module **1468** comprises one or more I/O components used by the computer **1450** to communicate with users and other devices. For example, components such as, a monitor, a keyboard, a mouse and a disk drive, can be used by a user to input and output information to and from the computer **1450**.

[**0177**] In addition, the communication module **1468** facilitates two way communication between the computer and other electronic devices or systems, such as, for example, server computers provided by a network content provider one **1426** and/or two **1436**. Components such as a modem, a network interface card (NIC), a wireless adapter, a Universal Serial Bus (USB) adapter, etc., can be used by the computer **1450** to communicate with the network **1480**, and/or with peripheral devices. The computer **1450** may be communicatively connected to the network **1480** through the communication module **1468**, for example, over one or more transmission media including but not limited to coaxial cable, copper wires and fiber optic cables. Communication between the computer **1450** and the network **1480** may also be accomplished via wirelessly.

[**0178**] In one embodiment, memory **1452** provides electronic data storage using a combination of main memory (e.g., RAM) and drive storage. Any type of appropriate electronic memory can be used, including, without limitation, RAM, ROM, drive storage (hard, floppy, optical, etc.), non-volatile memory (e.g., flash) or any other memory that can store data. While memory **1452** is illustrated with single box around it in FIG. **14**, memory **1452** can comprise one, two or more different types of memory modules. In addition, memory **1452** can be part of other modules of computer **1450**, such as, for example, processing module **1466**, such as, for example in a processing module, which performs a specific purpose.

[**0179**] In one embodiment as illustrated in FIG. **14**, memory **152** has stored thereon a sidebar application **1473**, a browser **1472** with cache **1474**, a IM application, **1475**, an email application **1476**, photos **1478** and application module information **1479**. Specific implementations of the modules are described below. **1811** Network content provider one **1426** comprises communication module **1415**, processing module **1425** and memory **1410** coupled together by bus **1420**. Communication module **1415**, processing module **1425**, memory **1410** and bus **1420** can be implemented with components that are similar to the like named components of computer **1450**. The memory **1410** of network content provider **1426** has stored thereon, a sidebar installation module **1437**, a content provider service module one **1440** with user information **1441**, a user database **1438**, and an alert module **1439**. FIG. **14** illustrates one embodiment of a network content provider one **1426**, in alternate embodiments, the modules of network content provider one **1426**, can be split among a plurality of computers. For example, in one embodiment, network content provider two **1436**, also provides an Internet service, and therefore comprises a content provider service module two **1453** with user information **1454**. In one embodiment, network content provider one **1426** and network content provider two **1436** are run by the same company. In one embodiment, network content provider one **1426** and network content provider two **1436** are run by independent companies.

[**0180**] In one embodiment, the sidebar application **1473** can be operable to display a sidebar **105** on a user's computer as described above. The sidebar **105** comprises one or more application modules that provide some or all of the services of a principle application. For example, an email module can comprise unread emails sent to the user. In one embodiment, a user can obtain a sidebar application **1473** by using a browser **1472** to navigate to one of network content provider one's **1426** webpages. Through the webpage, the user gains access to a sidebar installation program **1437**,

which can be used to install the sidebar application **1473** onto the user computer **1450**.

[**0181**] In one embodiment, during installation, the sidebar application **1473** searches the user's computer for a usemame and password to the user's content provider account. For example, the sidebar application **1473** can search in the browser's cache, and/or in another application provided by the content provider, such as, for example, an IM application **1475** or a music engine (not shown). In one embodiment, the sidebar application **1473** can ask the user for a usemame and password.

[**0182**] If the user does not have an account or if no usemame and password are provided, the sidebar application **1473** can load a default setting. In addition, in one embodiment, the sidebar application **1473** can forward the user to a website from which the user can sign up with the content provider **1426**. The default sidebar settings for a non-member can comprise application modules that are most popular with member users, application modules for services that the content provider would like to promote, application modules based on the programs installed on the user's computer, random application modules, and other factors.

[**0183**] If the sidebar application **1473** obtains a valid username and password, it contacts the network content provider one **1426** for the user's sidebar preferences or sidebar application information **1490**, which, in one embodiment, are stored in the content provider's user database (UDB) **1438**. In one embodiment, the user's sidebar preferences **1490** comprise the types of application modules in the sidebar, the display state of the application modules and dimensional information for application modules in an open state.

[**0184**] In one embodiment, user database **1438** comprises user specific information that can comprise sidebar application information **1490**, application module preference information **1491**, shared user information **1492** and user preference information **1495**. User database **1438** information can be obtained through a user's interaction with network context provider one **1426**, either through explicit data collection or implicit data collection based upon user behavior, as well as interaction with the sidebar **1473** application.

[**0185**] In one embodiment, user database **1438** comprises sidebar application information **1490**, which can include, for example, information that defines how the sidebar **1473** is displayed to a user, e.g. the types of application modules that are loaded into the sidebar **1473**, whether the sidebar **1473** is on the left or right of the desktop, its size, and whether certain modules are initially in a particular state.

[**0186**] User database **1438** can also comprise user preference information **1495**, which comprises user preferences for other applications. For example, when a content provider offers multiple services, and they are utilized by a user, the user's interactions with these services can yield preference information regarding many categories, such as, for example, musical tastes, products used and/or purchased, topics researched, games played, sports followed, regions traveled, movies and restaurants reviewed, etc. This information can be yielded by direct or explicit data collection of preferences through rating selection for products and/or services, and/or by implicit data collection through observed behavior and interaction with a content providers' products and/or services.

[**0187**] User preference information **1495** can be used to select default modules and to select targeted advertisements to send to a user. In one embodiment, the user preference information **1495** is part of the shared user information **1492**, and in one embodiment, the user preference information **1495** is part of user information from an independent content provider service.

[**0188**] In one embodiment, user database information **1438** can be processed to yield other information useable by the sidebar **1473** and/or other applications. For example, user database information **1438** can reflect that a user uses a content provider's email service more than IM, so that in a default condition (e.g. a user's first interaction with the program) the sidebar program displays an email application module without asking a user for configuration information. In one embodiment, the sidebar **1473** can default a service that is never or rarely used by a user so that the content provider can encourage the user to use additional services.

[**0189**] The user database **1438** can also comprise application module preference information **1491** that specifies user options or preferences related to each application module the user interacts with. For example, if the user utilizes the email application module, the user's application module preference information **1491** can reflect that the user prefers to see only unread emails, for example, or for IM, only the last three friends the user messaged, or for photos which photos are to be viewed in a slideshow.

[**0190**] User database **1438** can also comprise shared user information **1492**. Shared user information is information in user database **1438** that is shared by other applications or services of a content provider(s). For example, the cities which a user wishes to see weather reports for, can be shared by a weather application module in the sidebar **1473**, as well as an Internet based weather program. Stocks to be tracked and addresses to be mapped are additional examples, of shared information. Other shared information can comprise the user's name, address, telephone number and other personal user information.

[**0191**] In one embodiment, the application module preference information **1491** can comprise preference information regarding the shared user information **1492**. For example, while the shared user information may comprise, the cities which a user wishes to see weather reports for, the application module preference information **1491** can comprise the order in which the cities appear in the sidebar **1473**. In one embodiment, each application module separately obtains application module preference information **1491**. In one embodiment, the sidebar **1473** retrieves the application module preference information **1491** and provides it to the application module.

[**0192**] In one embodiment, the user information one **1441** of content provider service module one **1140** may comprise all or a subset of information found in a user database **1438**, and may in implementation be the same data in a single database or two or more different data images that are routinely synchronized. In one embodiment, user information one **1441** is information that is specific to the content provider service module one **1140**, and comprises information that is not found in user database **1438**.

[**0193**] While these information types are described as discrete in the above example, it will be recognized from the

teachings herein that each information category can contain information useable by the sidebar **1473**, the application modules, or other programs or services, and such information may be stored at a single location or multiple locations as part of a single or distributed database or at any location on a network in any form or format.

[**0194**] If this is the first time the user is using the sidebar **1473**, the content provider **1426** can load the sidebar **1473** with a default set of application modules. As mentioned above, in one embodiment, the default set of application modules is created based on information in the UDB **1438**, user information from other network content provider services **1440**, applications on the user's computer, and from other sources.

[**0195**] As mentioned above the UDB **1438** can comprise user information from a plurality of different services. Thus, when creating the default set of sidebar application modules, the content provider **1426** can choose the application modules based on the principal applications that the user uses most or least, based on the principal applications that store the most information and/or based on other information stored on the UDB **1438**. For example, if a user frequently accesses their online address book, the sidebar **1473** can be loaded with an address book module. In one embodiment, the sidebar **1473** looks to the applications loaded on the user's computer **1450**, to set the default application modules for the sidebar **1473**. In one embodiment, an initial sidebar comprises application modules that the content provider **1426** wants to promote, such as, for example, new service or under utilized services.

[**0196**] Each application module in the sidebar **1473**, obtains application module information **1479** to display to the user. In one embodiment, the application module information **1479** is a subset of information available to the user in a principal application. In one embodiment, the sidebar **1473** stores a copy of the application module information **1479** on the user's computer **1450**. In one embodiment, the sidebar **1473** can access the subset of information it displays from the same source as the principal application, whether the application is a local application or an online service. As mentioned above, some of the application module information **1479** can be shared information, and some of the application module information **1479** can be application module specific. In one embodiment, the application module information **1479** comprises the application module preference information **1491**.

[**0197**] In one embodiment, an address book module can search a user's computer for application module information. In one embodiment, the sidebar **1473** can load information from one or more principal applications. For example, the user may have an online address book with a content provider **1426** and an address book on their local computer **1450**. In one embodiment, the sidebar **1473** can obtain address book information from one or both the online address book and the local address book. For example, Outlook (a program provided by Microsoft, Inc. of Redmond, Wash.) contact files can be searched and loaded into an address book module. In one embodiment, the complete Outlook user interface does not have to be displayed for the sidebar **1473** to retrieve a user's contact files. The sidebar can retrieve the information from an Outlook API. However, if Outlook is not running, and there is more than one profile in existence, the sidebar **1473** determines which profile to access. In one embodiment, the sidebar **1473** can use some logic to guess the correct profile, such as, for example, picking a profile with a similar name to the sidebar user. In one embodiment, the sidebar can ask the user to pick a profile. If the selected profile is password protected and the sidebar cannot retrieve the password from another source (e.g., a password storing application), then the sidebar **1473** retrieves the password from the user. Both profile and password information can be retrieved from a user by invoking a default MAPI logon dialog to prompt for the information.

[**0198**] A user can adjusts the preferences for the sidebar, such as, the types of application modules, their display states, their size, their order, which principal application(s) they retrieve information from, and other preferences. These preferences are transmitted to the content provider **1426** and saved on a server, for example on the UDB **1438**, so that the user can have the same sidebar experience on any computer with an Internet connection. In addition, in one embodiment, updates made to user information through the sidebar **1473** are sent to the content provider and stored in the appropriate location, i.e., the UDB, user information one **1441** and/or user information two **1454**, so that the user's updates are reflected in the principal application.

[**0199**] Targeted advertisements, email modules, community updates, information sharing and other sidebar functions are described in greater detail below.

[**0200**] The location and number of the network content provider computers, databases and modules in FIG. **14** illustrate one embodiment of the invention. In alternate embodiments, for example, for scalability, security or backup purposes the location and number of the network content provider computers, databases and modules can be omitted, expanded and interchanged without exceeding the scope of the invention.

[**0201**] FIG. **15** illustrates a method **1500** for building a sidebar implemented according to one embodiment of the invention. Method **1500** starts in step **1505**. Then, method **1500** proceeds to step **1510**, where a sidebar determines if login information is stored on a user's computer, for example, in a cookie in a browser cache. The login information can also be obtained from another content provider application. Searching for login information on the user's computer provides the user with a Single Sign On (SSO) experience across one content provider's services. If login information is not stored on a user's computer, method **1500** proceeds to step **1515**, where a sidebar obtains login information from a user. In one embodiment, the sidebar will display a slidesheet comprising fields for the user to enter their user name and password.

[**0202**] Returning to step **1510**, if login information is stored on the user's computer method **1500** proceeds directly to step **1520**, where a sidebar requests user preference information from a user database. In one embodiment, the user database is maintained by an Internet content provider who provides the sidebar **1473**, and the user's sidebar preferences are stored on a content provider computer **1426**. In one embodiment, the user preference information comprises the types of application modules in the user's sidebar **1473**, the application modules' display state, and dimensional information for the application modules.

[0203] Following step **1520**, method **1500** proceeds to step **1525**, where the sidebar **1473** receives the user preference information, for example, from a content provider computer **1426**. In one embodiment, the application module information can be obtained from the user's computer, for example, in an "off-line" embodiment. In one embodiment, the user preference information also comes with some application module information that can be loaded into an application module. Then method **1500** proceeds to step **1530**, where the sidebar **1473** uses the user preference information to build a graphical user interface (GUI) for the sidebar **1473**. In one embodiment, the sidebar is displayed on the right hand side of a desktop and is available for a user to access their Internet services.

[0204] In step **1535**, each application module retrieves and loads application module information associated with the type of the application module. The information can be obtained from the user's computer **1450**, from a UDB **1438**, from a content provider service module **11440**, content provider service module **21453**, from the Internet and from other sources. As described above, in one embodiment, the application module information is a subset of the service module information. Each application module can continuously update itself with new information. Method **1500** ends in step **1540**.

[0205] There is typically a limited amount of desktop space for a user's application modules. Therefore, in one embodiment, application modules can have one of at least three states: a closed state, a full open state,-and a preferred open state. FIG. **16** illustrates a method **1600** for displaying an application module based on its display state. In one embodiment, method **1600** can be part of the GUI building step **1530** of method **1500**. Method **1600** starts in step **1605**. Then in step **1610**, the sidebar **1473** determines the display state of an application module.

[0206] If the display state for the application module is closed, in one embodiment, method **1600** proceeds down the "closed" path to step **1615**. In step **1615**, the sidebar **1473** displays the titlebar of the application module in the sidebar. In one embodiment, the titlebar comprises the name of the application module and controls for manipulating the application module. Then method **1600** ends in step **1650**.

[0207] Returning to step **1610**, if a display state for the application module is full open, in one embodiment, method **1600** proceeds down the "full open" path to step **1620**, where the sidebar **1473** displays the titlebar of the application module in the sidebar **1473**. Then in step **1625**, the sidebar uses the dimensional information to build a display area for the application module. Following step **1625**, in step **1630**, the sidebar displays as much of a full set of application module information that will fit in the display area. As described above, in one embodiment, a full set of application module information means all the user information that is available through an application module. The principal counterpart application can still comprise additional information that the user cannot access through a sidebar. For example, the full set of emails available to a user through a sidebar **1473** can be limited to their inbox. If the user wants to view their sent mail they can use their principal email application. Method **1600** ends in step **1650**.

[0208] Returning to step **1610**, if a display state for the application module is preferred open, in one embodiment method **1600** proceeds down the "preferred open" path to step **1635**, where the sidebar **1473** displays the titlebar of the application module in the sidebar **1473**. Then in step **1640**, the sidebar **1473** uses the dimensional information to build a display area for the application module. Following step **1640**, in step **1645**, the sidebar **1473** displays as much of a preferred set of application module information that will fit in the display area. In one embodiment, a preferred set of application module information is a subset of the full set of application information. In one embodiment, a preferred set of application module information for an IM module can comprise the last few users the sidebar user conversed with. In one embodiment, a preferred set of module information for an email module can comprise unread emails, or unread emails from a user's family. Method **1600** ends in step **1650**.

[0209] In one embodiment of the invention, a sidebar **1473** only provides a preferred open state, where the preferred application module information is the full set of information available to a user through a sidebar **1473**.

[0210] Some application modules, such as, for example, an online address book or an online calendar, comprise user information stored on an Internet content provider computer **1426**. In one embodiment, this information can be accessed through a sidebar **1473**. In addition, in one embodiment, the user can edit their user information through the sidebar **1473**. Edits made to a user's information are reflected in the application module's counterpart principal application using a browser or another application.

[0211] FIG. **17** illustrates a method **1700** for updating user information through a sidebar. Method **1700** starts in step **1705**. Then in step **1710**, the sidebar **1473** detects a change in an application module to information that is stored on an Internet content provider computer **1426**. Following step **1710**, in step **1715**, the sidebar transmits the updated application module information to the appropriate Internet content computer **1426**. In one embodiment, in an email module, if a user reads an unread email, the sidebar **1473** transmits a message to the user's email service indicating that the email has been read. In one embodiment, the sidebar **1473** can send a message, for example, using HTTP, to the email server. In one, embodiment, a user can make a change to a user's address book entry through a sidebar **1473** slidesheet. When the user saves their changes, the sidebar transmits the changes to a content provider **1426** so it can update the user's UDB **1438**. Method **1700** ends in step **1720**.

[0212] FIG. **18** illustrates a method **1800**, implemented according to one embodiment, for selecting targeted advertisements to insert into the sidebar **1473** and/or slidesheets of a user. Method **1800** starts in step **1805**, then method **1800** proceeds to step **1810**, where a provider side sidebar module **1422** receives a request for an advertisement from a sidebar application **1473**. In one embodiment, a request can be sent by a sidebar **1473** because the sidebar application is initially loading, the sidebar is refreshing, or the user is opening a slidesheet. A request can comprise a username and can indicate whether the advertisement is for a sidebar or a slidesheet. If the advertisement is for a slidesheet, the request can also comprise a type of application module the slidesheet was initiated from.

[0213] Following step **1810**, in step **1815**, the sidebar provider computer **1426** determines whether the advertise-

ment is for a main sidebar **1473** window or for a slidesheet. If the advertisement is for the sidebar **1473**, method **1800** proceeds down the "sidebar" path to step **1820**. In step **1820**, if the user of the sidebar **1473** is anonymous, then method **1800** proceeds to step **1825**, where a non-targeted advertisement is transmitted to the sidebar **1473**. Then, method **1800** ends in step **1855**.

[**0214**] Returning to step **1820**, if the user is not anonymous, for example, a content provider member is signed into the sidebar **1473**, then method **1800** proceeds to step **1830**, where the sidebar module **1422** selects an advertisement based on user specific information, such as, for example, the user's location, the user's interests as obtained by user input to preference selections presented by the content provider, or by the content provider through data collection related to the user's interaction with the various services of the content provider, terms most searched by the user, the last few terms searched by the user, and other user information and/or this and other information found in user preference information **1495**. For example, a user who enjoys electronic gadgets can be sent advertisements for such gadgets. After step **1830**, method **1800** proceeds to step **1850**, where the selected advertisement is transmitted to the user computer **1450**. Following step **1850**, method **1800** ends in step **1855**.

[**0215**] Returning to step **1815**, if the advertisement is for a slidesheet, method **1800** proceeds down the "slidesheet" path to step **1835**. If the user is anonymous, method **1800** proceeds to step **1840**, where an advertisement is selected based on the type of application in which the advertisement will be displayed. For example, a slidesheet for an online radio player can display an advertisement to purchase the currently playing song, or a digital audio player that is compatible with the content provider's music service. Then method **1800** proceeds to step **1850**, and ends in step **1855**.

[**0216**] Returning to step **1835**, if the user is not anonymous, then method **1800** proceeds to step **1845**, where an advertisement is selected based on the type of application module in which the advertisement will be displayed, and user specific information. For example, a slidesheet for a map module initiated by the gadget lover can comprise the latest handheld GPS navigation system. Then method **1800** proceeds to step **1850** and ends in step **1855**.

[**0217**] In one embodiment, the request for advertising is implicit in a request for user sidebar preference information, and an advertisement or advertisements are transmitted to the user with their sidebar preferences. In one embodiment, a sidebar module **1422** predetermines the advertisements that will be sent to a sidebar **1473** user, from the personal user information already available to the provider side sidebar module **1422**, and transmits the predetermined advertisements to the user with the user's sidebar preferences. In one embodiment, a plurality of advertisements can be sent to a sidebar **1473** for slidesheets and/or for the main sidebar window. The sidebar application **1473** can determine which advertisements to display based on the user's actions, and/or based on time.

[**0218**] In order to provide enhanced usability and a cleaner display, sidebars **1473** and/or slidesheets that comprise application modules with items will comprise, in one embodiment, a whole number of items (e.g., not fractionally or partially displayed). FIG. **19** illustrates a method **1900** for providing whole menu items in a sidebar **1473** and/or slidesheets. Method **1900** starts in step **1905**. Then in step **1910**, the sidebar detects an adjustment to the size of a display area of an application module.

[**0219**] Following step **1910**, method **1900** proceeds to step **1915**, where the application module display area can be increasing or decreasing in size. If the display area is getting larger, method **1900** proceeds down the "larger" path to step **1920**. In step **1920**, in order to accommodate the larger display area, the sidebar **1473** will first decrease the display area of application modules without items, such as, for example, a photo module and a notepad module. Then the sidebar **1473** will eliminate whole items from other application modules with items. If all other application modules have been decreased to their minimum, the sidebar will then force application modules into a closed state. Following step **1920**, method **1900** proceeds to step **1930**.

[**0220**] Returning to step **1915**, if the display area is decreasing in size, method **1900** proceeds down the "smaller" path to step **1925**. In step **1925**, the sidebar **1473** first increases the display area of application modules without items. Then the sidebar **1473** adds whole items to other application modules. If there is no more application module information to display, then the sidebar forces application modules in a closed state into an open state. If there are no application modules left in a closed state, then the sidebar can display gray space. Method **1900** proceeds to step **1930**.

[**0221**] In both steps **1920** and **1925**, sidebar **1473** records which modules were affected by the user's resizing action and the original state of the module, so that the sidebar **1473** can restore the affected modules to their original state as space becomes available.

[**0222**] In step **1930**, once the user stops resizing, the sidebar determines whether the last item in the resized application module display area has been truncated. If the last item has not been truncated, method **1900** proceeds to step **1935**, where no adjustments are made, and method **1900** ends in step **1955**.

[**0223**] Returning to step **1930**, if the last item in a resized application module display area has been truncated, method **1900** proceeds to step **1940**, where the sidebar determines if more than half of the truncated item is showing. If more than half of the truncated item is showing, method **1900** proceeds to step **1945**, where the sidebar increases the size of the display area to include the whole truncated item. Method **1900** ends in step **1955**.

[**0224**] Returning to step **1940**, if less than half of the truncated item is showing, method **1900** proceeds to step **1950**, where the sidebar decreases the size of the display area to eliminate the truncated item. The threshold level for adding or eliminating an item is not limited to one half of an item and can be any percentage of an item. In one embodiment, an item is eliminated if less than three quarters of the item is showing. Then method **1900** ends in step **1955**.

[**0225**] In one embodiment of the invention, the user can have an email application module in their sidebar **1473**. FIG. **20** illustrates method **2000**, implemented according to one embodiment of the invention, for displaying emails through a sidebar **1473**. Before the start of method **2000**, an email module of a sidebar **1473** can default to an email service offered by the sidebar provider. In one embodiment, the

email module of the sidebar **1473** retrieves a user's unread emails and displays them to the user.

[**0226**] Method **2000** starts at step **2005**. Then in step **2010**, the sidebar **1473** detects the selection of an email item by a user. Following step **2010**, method **2000** proceeds to step **2015**, where the sidebar **1473** transmits a request, for example, to an IMAP server, for the selected email. Then in step **2020**, the sidebar receives the selected email.

[**0227**] Some email services are Internet based and users interact with the email service through a webpage. The webpage allows the user to access and manipulate their messages. An application, such as, for example, the sidebar **1473** does not need to access a user's email through a web interface, since it is a computer and it displays the user's email messages in its own format. Thus, in one embodiment, the email retrieval computer **1483** may use an email retrieval protocol (ERP), such as, for example, Internet Message Access Protocol (IMAP) and/or Post Office Protocol (POP) to retrieve email messages. Some Internet content provider email services use a central message storage computer **1484** to save their user's email messages, and provided different avenues of access to the email, such as, IMAP, POP, web-mail, etc. These services can be provided through one or more computers operated by the content provider.

[**0228**] In one embodiment, the content provider assigns one or more identifiers to messages stored in its central storage computer **1484**. For example, a message may require more than one identifier since different email access programs use different identifier. In one embodiment, a message is given an IMAP ID and a web message ID.

[**0229**] In one embodiment, the sidebar **1473** uses IMAP to retrieve messages through an IMAP server **1483**. When the sidebar **1473** requests messages from the IMAP server **1483** the IMAP server **1483** connects to the central storage computer **1484** to retrieve the requested message. In one embodiment, the IMAP protocol provides flags that can be used to indicate a state of a message, for example, read, unread, deleted, answered, and other states. Therefore, the sidebar **1473** can use IMAP to communicate certain user activities to the central storage computer. Other activates, such as, for example, marking a specific email as spam, use a message's web message ID, which is not part of the standard IMAP protocol. Therefore, marking emails as spam cannot be accomplished using a standard IMAP implementation. In known embodiments, IMAP does not include a default field for transmitting a web message ID. Thus, in one embodiment, a field comprising the web message ID is added to an extensible section of the IMAP protocol.

[**0230**] So, when the sidebar **1473** retrieves messages through the IMAP server **1483**, the web message ID field is used to provide the web message IDs for retrieved messages. In one embodiment, if a user identifies an email as spam for the sidebar **1473**, the sidebar **1473** can use the web message ID to identify the spam message to the web based email server **1436**. In one embodiment, spam controls may be performed by another computer or another company.

[**0231**] Strengthening spam controls through a sidebar is one embodiment of the use of sending additional information through an ERP.

[**0232**] After the sidebar **1473** receives the requested email in step **2020**, the sidebar **1473**, in step **2025**, displays the received email in a slidesheet. The slidesheet can comprise various email options, such as, for example, reply, reply to all, delete, mark as unread and mark as spam.

[**0233**] If the user selects a reply option, method **2000** proceeds to step **2030**, where the sidebar displays a slidesheet comprising a field to type a reply message and the sender of the email in the "to" field. Then method **2000** proceeds to step **2060**, where the composed email is sent to the email server. Then method **2000** ends in step **2075**.

[**0234**] Returning to step **2025**, if the user selects a reply all option, method **2000** proceeds to step **2035**, where the sidebar displays a slidesheet comprising a field to type a reply to all message, and all the addresses in the email in the "to" field. Then method **2000** proceeds to step **2060**, where the composed email is sent to the email server. Then method **2000** ends in step **2075**.

[**0235**] Returning to step **2025**, if the user selects a forward option, method **2000** proceeds to step **2040**, where the sidebar **1473** displays a slidesheet comprising a field to type a message and a copy of the original email. The slidesheet also comprises a "to" field for the user to enter email recipients. Then method **2000** proceeds to step **2060**, where a composed email is sent to the email server. Then method **2000** ends in step **2075**.

[**0236**] For the reply, reply to all and forward email options, in one embodiment, the sidebar **1473** can send a composed message to the email server and/or an SMTP server for delivery and the sidebar **1473** can use IMAP to mark an email as answered. In one embodiment, the sidebar can use IMAP to save a copy of the sent email to a user's "sent mail" folder. In one embodiment, the sidebar **1473** can send a composed message to an email server for delivery using HTTP. The sidebar can also send the email's web message ID, so that the web server knows which email to mark as answered. In one embodiment, the sidebar **1473** can launch the user's default email application and direct the user to use the full service counterpart email application to perform the selected option.

[**0237**] Returning to step **2025**, if the user selects the mark as unread option, method **2000** proceeds to step **2045**, where the sidebar **1473** transmits a message to the email server, indicating to the server that the selected email should be marked as unread. Following step **2045**, method **2000** proceeds to step **2065**, where the sidebar is updated to display the selected email as unread. This may require adding the email back into the main sidebar **1473** window and adjusting a counter in the email module titlebar. Then method **2000** ends in step **2075**.

[**0238**] Returning to step **2025**, if the user selects the delete option, method **2000** proceeds to step **2050**, where the sidebar transmits a message to the email server, indicating that the selected email should be deleted. Following step **2050**, method **2000** proceeds to step **2070**, where the selected email is deleted from the sidebar. Then method **2000** ends in step **2075**.

[**0239**] Marking an email as unread or deleting an email, in one embodiment, can be updated using IMAP.

[**0240**] Returning to step **2025**, if the user selects the mark as spam option, method **2000** proceeds to step **2055**, where the sidebar transmits a message to the email server, indicat-

ing that the selected email should be marked as spam. Following step **2055**, method **2000** proceeds to step **2070**, where the selected email is deleted from the sidebar **1473**. Then method **2000** ends in step **2075**. Since the user's email server receives the spam indication, email identified as spam by the user through the sidebar **1473** increases the overall robustness of the user's spam controls. In one embodiment, as mentioned above, the message to the email server comprises a web message ID, so that the email server can identify which message was selected as spam by the user. The sidebar **1473** received the web message ID through a field added to the IMAP protocol.

[**0241**] The sidebar **1473** can also be used to receive updates from community members. FIG. **21** illustrates a method **2100** for receiving community updates through a sidebar **1473**. Method **2100** starts in step **2105**. Then in step **2110**, a community service server receives an update from a first community member. Following step **2110**, method **2100** can proceed down path P**1** or P**2**, depending on how the sidebar **1473** is configured or set up.

[**0242**] If the sidebar **1473** is set up to poll community service servers for updated information, method **2100** proceeds to step **2145**, where the community service server receives a request for updated information from a sidebar **1473**. Then in step **2150**, the community service server transmits any updated information to the requesting sidebar **1473**. Method **2100** ends in step **2155**. In one embodiment, the updated information can be a review of a new movie, for a blast from a social networking friend.

[**0243**] Returning to step **2110**, if the sidebar **1473** is set up to receive alerts, method **2100** proceeds to step **2115**, where the community service server transmits an alert to an alert module **1439**. In one embodiment, the alert module **1439** can be part of an alert server. In one embodiment, the alert module **1439** can be part of the sidebar **1473**. In one embodiment, the alert module **1473** can be part of another application, such as, for example, an instant messaging application.

[**0244**] Following step **2115**, method **2100** proceeds to step **2120**, where the alert module determines whether the alert comprises the updated information. If the alert does not comprise updated information, method **2100** proceeds to step **2125**. In step **2125**, if the alert module is not part of the sidebar **1473**, method **2100** proceeds to step **2135**, where the alert module **1439**, whether it is part of an alert server or part of another application loaded on the user's computer **1450**, transmits the alert to the sidebar **1473**. Then method **2100** proceeds to step **2145**. Returning to step **2125**, if the alert module is part of the sidebar **1473**, then method **2100** proceeds directly to step **2145**. After step **2145** (described above), method **2100** then proceeds to step **2150** (described above) and ends in step **2155**.

[**0245**] Returning to step **2120**, if the alert comprises the updated information, for example, receiving a new email would alert the sidebar **1473** to the fact that a new email has been received. Following step **2120**, in step **2130**, if the alert module **1439** is not part of the sidebar **1473**, method **2100** proceeds to step **2140**, where the updated information is transmitted to the sidebar **1473**. Then method **2100** ends in step **2155**. Returning to step **2130**, if the alert module **1439** is part of the sidebar **1473**, method **2100** ends in step **2155**.

[**0246**] FIG. **22** illustrates a method **2200** for displaying photos in a slidesheet implemented according to one embodiment of the invention. Method **2200** starts in step **2205**. Then, in step **2210**, the sidebar **1473** detects a request from a user to open a photo slidesheet. Following step **2210**, method **2200** proceeds to step **2215**, where the sidebar **1473** displays a photo slidesheet. In one embodiment, the photo slidesheet comprises the current photo displayed in the sidebar **1473**, one or more photos previously displayed in the sidebar **1473** and one or more photos that will be displayed in the sidebar **1473**. In one embodiment, the current photo is highlighted in some manner, such as, for example, using a border and/or changing the brightness of the photo. Method **2200** ends in step **2220**.

[**0247**] FIG. **23** illustrates a method **2300** for displaying photos from an Internet photo sharing service, such as, for example Flickr (a service of Yahoo!, Inc. of Sunnyvale, Calif.). Depending on the option that a user selects, method **2300** can proceed down a plurality of different paths.

[**0248**] **2501** If the user desires to search for new photos, method **2300** proceeds down path SI to step **2310**, where the sidebar **1473** receives a search term from the user. In one embodiment, the search term can be received from a search field in a photo slidesheet. In one embodiment, the search term can be received from a search field in a photos options dialog. Following step **2310**, method **2300** proceeds to step **2315** where the sidebar **1473** transmits the search term to a photo sharing server. A photo sharing server receives the search term and retrieves photos associated with the search term. Following step **2315**, in step **2320**, the sidebar **1473** receives search results from the phot**6** sharing server. Then in step **2325**, in one embodiment, the sidebar **1473** displays the search results in a first photo slidesheet. In one embodiment, the search results can be displayed in a dialog.

[**0249**] In one embodiment, the user can select one of the search results to display a larger version of the selected photo. Thus, in step **2330**, the sidebar detects a request from a user to display a particular photo. Following step **2330**, in step **2335**, the sidebar **1473** displays the selected photo in an item level photo slidesheet. In one embodiment, the item level photo slidesheet further comprises metadata associated with the photo. The metadata can comprise a URL location for the photo and any tags that are associated with the photo. Then method **2300** ends in step **2370**.

[**0250**] Returning to step **2305**, the user can also search for photos through tags that are displayed in various slidesheets and display areas of the sidebar **1473**. Thus method **2300** proceeds down path S**2** to step **2340**, where the sidebar **1473** detects a tag selection by the user. In one embodiment, the tag selection can be received from a drop down menu in the first photo slidesheet. In one embodiment, the tag selection can be received from a tag listed in the item level photo slidesheet. Following the detection of a tag selection, method **2300** proceeds to step **2345**, where the sidebar **1473** transmits a request to a photo sharing server for photos with the selected tag. Following step **2345**, in step **2350**, the sidebar **1473** receives photos with the selected tag. Then in step **2355**, the received photos are displayed in the first photo slidesheet. In one embodiment, the photos can be displayed in a dialog. Method **2300** ends in step **2370**.

[**0251**] Returning to step **2305**, a user can subscribe to a particular tag and thereby add photos with the particular tag to the slideshow in their sidebar **1473**. When a user subscribes to a tag, method **2300** proceeds down path S**3** to step

2360, where the sidebar **1473** detects a subscription to photos with a particular tag. In one embodiment, a subscription button can be display with search results. Thus, if the user likes the photos in a search result, they can easily add those photos to their slideshow. In step **2365**, the photos with the selected tag are added to the user's photo slideshow. Method **2300** ends in step **2370**.

[**0252**] In one embodiment, the sidebar **1473** can display various types of information, such as, for example, a photo, a video, an article, and other types of information, that the user may want to share with other people. Therefore, the sidebar **1473** can provide sharing buttons when it displays shareable media. FIG. **24** illustrates a method **2400** for placing sharing buttons in a slidesheet with shareable media. Method **2400** starts in step **2405**. Then in step **2410**, the sidebar **1473** determines whether the media displayed in a slidesheet is shareable. In one embodiment, shareable media is predetermined, and the sidebar **1473** is preprogrammed to add sharing buttons to a predetermined set of slidesheets. In one embodiment, the sidebar **1473** determines whether the displayed media is shareable, for example, by examining the type of media or the URL for the media.

[**0253**] If the media is shareable, method **2400** proceeds to step **2415**, where the shareable media is displayed with one or more sharing buttons. In one embodiment, the sharing buttons can comprise an email button, an IM button, and a blog button. Following step **2415**, method **2400** proceeds to step **2420**, where in response to a user selecting a sharing button, a sharing application associated with a sharing button is initiated. For example, in one embodiment, when an email button is selected, a default email program for the computer is initiated. In one embodiment, when an IM button is selected, a default IM program is initiated. In one embodiment, when the blog button is selected, a browser opens to the user's default blogging service. In one embodiment, the user can set up a default blogging service through the sidebar **1473** options and have the media automatically added to the user's blog, when the button is selected.

[**0254**] Following step **2420**, in step **2425**, the shareable media or a link to the shareable media is sent to the sharing application so that the user can send the shareable media to other people. Then the method **2400** ends in step **2435**.

[**0255**] Returning to step **2410**, if the media displayed in a slidesheet is not shareable, method **2400** proceeds to step **2430**, where the media is displayed in a slidesheet without sharing buttons. Some media may have copyright limitation that would prevent the distribution of the media. Then the method **2400** ends in step **2435**.

[**0256**] It will be recognized that while the features and functions described above are described in relation to network components and user side components, such features and functions can be implemented at any point in the network, on single or multiple computers and/or servers, and network functions can also be duplicated at the user computer for functioning independent of the network if desired. Thus user side changes and or network side changes can be synchronized and or synchronized when a user returns to the network in manners known in the art or hereafter to become known.

[**0257**] While the description of the various embodiments of the invention are described in a server/client network environment, alternate embodiments of the invention can be performed in a peer-to-peer network or other interconnectivity schemes now known or hereafter to become known.

[**0258**] While there have been shown and described and pointed out fundamental novel features of the invention as applied to preferred embodiments thereof, it will be understood that various omissions and substitutions and changes in the form and detail of the disclosed invention may be made by those skilled in the art without departing from the spirit of the invention. It is the intention, therefore, to be limited only as indicated by the scope of the claims appended hereto.

What is claimed:

1. A method of adjusting a visible presentation of a sidebar, the sidebar comprising one or more application modules through which a user can access functions associated with the application module, the application module comprising a titlebar and a display area, the method comprising:

detecting an adjustment of the display area of a first application module displayed in the sidebar, the first application module displaying a displayed module item;

determining if the displayed module item is less than fully displayed; and

automatically adjusting the size of the display area of the application module if the displayed module item is less than fully displayed.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the display area is adjusted to fully display the displayed module item.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the display area is adjusted to fully display the displayed module item if a predetermined amount of the displayed module item is displayed prior to adjustment.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the predetermined amount is one half of the displayed module item.

5. The method of claim 3, wherein the predetermined amount is one quarter of the displayed module item.

6. The method of claim 3, wherein the display area is adjusted to not display the displayed module item if less than the predetermined amount of the displayed module item is displayed.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the display area is adjusted to not display the displayed module item.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the adjustment of the display area of the first application module is user initiated.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the adjustment of the display area of the first application module is initiated by an operation of an application.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the application is the sidebar.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein the sidebar further comprises a second application module displayed in the sidebar, the method further comprising adjusting the size of a display area of the second application module to accommodate the automatic adjustment of the first application module.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the display area of the second application module comprises content other than module items.

13. The method of claim 11, wherein the second application module is separated from the first application module by at least one other application module.

14. The method of claim 11, wherein the sidebar further comprises a third application module displayed in the sidebar, the method further comprising adjusting the size of a display area of the third application module to accommodate the automatic adjustment of the first application module, wherein the display area of the third application module comprises whole module items.

15. The method of claim 11, further comprising changing a display state of the second application module to accommodate the automatic adjustment of the first application module.

16. The method of claim 11, further comprising using an empty space at a bottom of the sidebar to accommodate the automatic adjustment of the first application module.

17. The method of claim 11, wherein an original display area size of the second application module is saved, the method further comprising, restoring the display area of the second application module to its original display area size if display space becomes available on the sidebar.

18. The method of claim 1, wherein the adjustment of the display area of the first application module is executed in response to an adjustment of another application module of the sidebar.

19. A method of adjusting a visible presentation of a slidesheet displayed adjacent to a sidebar, the slidesheet comprising a titlebar and a display area, the method comprising:

detecting an adjustment of the display area of the slidesheet, the slidesheet displaying a displayed module item;

determining if the displayed slidesheet item is less than fully displayed; and

automatically adjusting the size of the display area of the slidesheet if the displayed slidesheet item is less than fully displayed.

20. A sidebar, associated with a content provider, the sidebar comprising:

a first application module through which a user can access functions associated with the first application module, the first application module comprising a titlebar and a display area; and

a displayed module item displayed in the first application module, wherein the display area is automatically adjusted if the displayed module item is less than fully displayed.

21. The sidebar of claim 20, wherein the display area is adjusted to fully display the displayed module item.

22. The sidebar of claim 20, wherein the display area is adjusted not to display the displayed module item.

23. The sidebar of claim 20, further comprising a second application module displayed in the sidebar, wherein a display area of the second application module is adjusted to accommodate the automatic adjustment of the first application module.

24. The sidebar of claim 23, wherein the display area of the second application module comprises content other than module items.

25. The sidebar of claim 23, wherein the second application module is separated from the first application module by at least one other application module.

26. The sidebar of claim 20, further comprising a slidesheet displayed adjacent to the first application module, the slidesheet comprising a slidesheet titlebar and a slidesheet display area, the slidesheet display area comprising a displayed slidesheet item, wherein the slidesheet display area is automatically adjusted if the displayed slidesheet item is less than fully displayed.

27. The sidebar of claim 20, wherein the adjustment of the display area of the first application module is executed in response to an adjustment of another application module of the sidebar.

28. A user interface, displayed on a desktop of a computer, the user interface comprising:

a first application module through which a user can access functions associated with the first application module, the first application module comprising a titlebar and a display area; and

a displayed module item displayed in the first application module, wherein the display area is automatically adjusted if the displayed module item is less than fully displayed.

29. The user interface of claim 28, wherein the display area is adjusted to fully display the displayed module item.

30. The user interface of claim 28, wherein the display area is adjusted not to display the displayed module item.

31. The user interface of claim 28, further comprising a second application module displayed in a vertical stack in relation to the first application module, wherein a display area of the second application module is adjusted to accommodate the automatic adjustment of the first application module.

32. The user interface of claim 31, wherein the display area of the second application module comprises content other than module items.

33. The user interface of claim 31, wherein the second application module is separated from the first application module by at least one other application module.

34. The user interface of claim 28, further comprising a slidesheet displayed adjacent to the first application module, the slidesheet comprising a slidesheet titlebar and a slidesheet display area, the slidesheet display area comprising a displayed slidesheet item, wherein the slidesheet display area is automatically adjusted if the displayed slidesheet item is less than fully displayed.

35. The user interface of claim 28, wherein the adjustment of the display area of the first application module is executed in response to an adjustment of another application module of the user interface.

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