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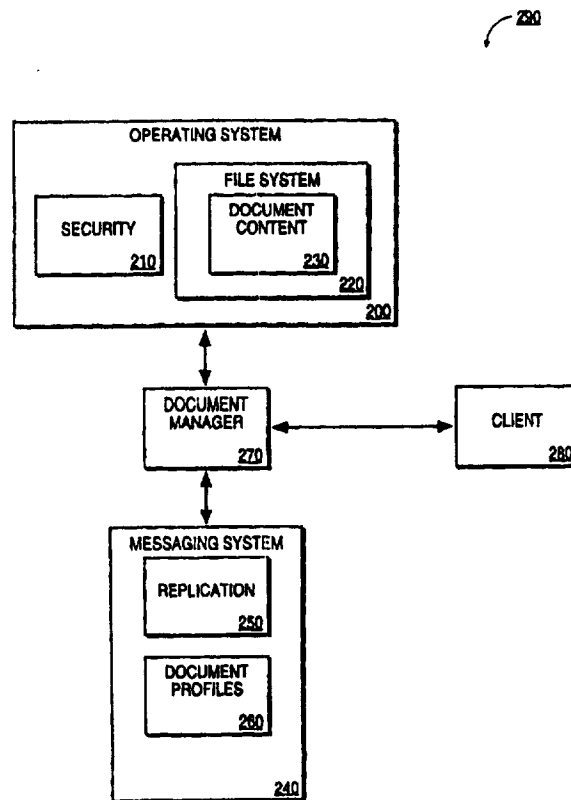
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(54) Title: A METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT UTILIZING A MESSAGING SYSTEM

(57) Abstract

The content (230) of a document is stored in a file system (220), within an operation system (200), while the profile (260) of the document is stored in a messaging system (240) within a messaging system (240). The profile of the document is accessed upon request, and the document content is accessed based upon the content of the profile.



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A METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT UTILIZING A MESSAGING SYSTEM

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to document management systems. More specifically the present invention relates to a method of managing and controlling documents through the use of a messaging system.

Description of the Related Art

In today's global market place, timely access to crucial business information has become a powerful and necessary strategic weapon. As more and more documents and items of data have to be filed and found, modern document processing systems have to be fast and accurate.

In a conventional document management system, each document is subdivided into two parts, the content of the document and the document profile. The content of the document is the actual information contained within the document itself. The document profile contains the attributes of the document including its title, author, and the date saved. The document content and the document profile are typically stored separately.

Figure 1 is an illustration of a prior art document management system 170. A file system 100 contains the document contents 110 which are stored as individual files. The file system 100 is a conventional computer-implemented file system such as the file system provided by Microsoft Windows[®] or Apple[®] Macintosh[®] Finder operating systems. A conventional database 120 contains the document profiles 140 corresponding to document contents 110, as well as security information 130. Database 120 is a conventional structural information system storing information as a set of records and attributes or fields. The security information 130 represents access control information to determine whether a particular computer user has permission rights to access the document profile 140 and/or document contents 110. The conventional document manager 150 accesses the document profile 140 and the document content 110 and allows the client 160 access to the composite document formed by the combination of a

document profile 140 and document content 110 if corresponding security information 130 so permits.

The conventional document management system 170 uses a security system that is separate from the operating system security system 180. The security information 130 is typically stored in the database 120, while a security monitor 170 resides within the document manager 150. In order to verify access to a certain document, user access information must be retrieved from the security information 130, and passed on to the security monitor 170. The security monitor 170 then determines whether the user has access to the particular document.

When a user operating a client computer system logs into a server computer system, the server computer system requires that the user have access authorization. When the user logs into a conventional document management system 170 located on a server computer system, a first user identifier and access code or password is required. This information is checked against operating system security 180 to authorize the user log-in. Next, the user must log into the document manager 150 using a second user identification and access code or password. This user-entered information is checked against the security information 130 in the database, maintained by the security monitor 170 of the document manager 150.

Thus, once a user operating a client computer system logs into a server computer system, he or she has to go through an additional hurdle of logging into the security system of the document manager 150. This two-step log-in procedure creates problems when the access rights are changed or when, for example, new users must be added to both security systems. Multiple sets of security information create configuration control and consistency problems and slow down user access to the document management system 170.

Therefore, it is apparent that a need exists for a document management system which does not use a separate database, and which does not utilize multiple security systems.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

An improved document management system using a messaging system and a single access security system is disclosed.

The content of a document is stored in a file system, while the profile of the document is stored in a messaging system. The profile of the document is

accessed upon request, and the document content is accessed based upon the content of the profile.

Other objects, features and advantages of the present invention will be apparent from the accompanying drawings and from the detailed description.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention is illustrated in the following drawings, in which known structures are shown in block-diagram form for clarity. These drawings are for explanation and for aiding the reader's understanding. The present invention should not be taken as being limited to the preferred embodiments and design alternatives illustrated.

Figure 1 is a block diagram of a prior art document management system.

Figure 2 is a block diagram of the present document management system.

Figure 3 is a block diagram of a networked computer system on which the present invention may be implemented.

Figure 4 is a block diagram of a conventional computer system on which the present invention may be implemented.

Figure 5 is an illustration of the system interfaces in a Windows NT operating system.

Figure 6 is a block diagram of the architecture of the present invention.

Figure 7 is an illustration of a document.

Figure 8A is a flow chart of opening a document.

Figure 8B is a flow chart of closing a document.

Figure 9A is a flow chart of one embodiment of a security subroutine.

Figure 9B is a flow chart of an alternate embodiment of a security subroutine.

Figure 10 is a flow chart of a search in the present system.

Figure 11A is an illustration of an embodiment of the user interface.

Figure 11B is an illustration of another embodiment of the user interface.

Figure 11C is an illustration of another embodiment of the user interface.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The present invention relates to a method and apparatus for document management. In the following detailed description, numerous specific details are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding of the present invention. It will be apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art, however, that these specific details need not be used to practice the present invention. In other instances, well-known structures, interfaces and processes have not been shown in detail in order not to unnecessarily obscure the present invention.

Figure 2 is a block diagram of the document management system 290 of the present invention. The document management system 290 of the present invention consists of a document manager 270 which is connected to the operating system 200. The operating system 200 used with the present invention may include the Windows operating system family. The Windows operating system as used in the present application includes Windows NT, Windows 95. The operating system (O/S) 200 contains the conventional operating system security 210. This conventional operating system security 210 is built in to the conventional O/S. For example, in Microsoft Windows NT, a built in security system is provided which requires a password in order for a user to log into the system and thereby gain access to files and the network. Similarly, many other conventional operating systems require a password or access code to allow users operating a client computer system to log in. This security 210 is used by the document manager 270 of the present invention as will be described in more detail below.

The operating system 200 also contains the file system 220. File system 220 is a conventional data management and data storage system. The file system 220 contains document content 230. Document content 230, as described above, comprises the information contained within the document itself. Document content 230 is described below in more detail in connection with Figure 7.

The document manager 270 of the present invention is also connected to a conventional messaging system 240. The messaging system 240 may, for example, be Microsoft Exchange™ which integrates e-mail with centralized management and communication capabilities. Alternately, for example, the messaging system 240 may be Lotus Notes developed by Lotus Corp.™, cc: mail

or any other conventional messaging system that incorporates message communication, message storage and the ability to attach information about a message to the message.

The conventional messaging system 240 contains the document profiles 260. As described above, one document profile is associated with each document content 230 stored in the file system 220. Each document profile 260 contains the document attributes including title, location of the document, the author of the document and assorted other information about the document. The document profile 260 is described in more detail with respect to Figure 7. A user operating a client 280 connects to the document management system 290 through the document manager 270 in order to use the document management system 290 of the present invention. The document manager 270 is described in more detail below.

Some conventional messaging systems 240 may also contain a replication module 250 that performs replication. Replication is the copying of the document profile 260 within the messaging system 240 and transmitting the document profile 260 using the communications capabilities of the messaging system 240. The recipient of the copy of the document profile may be another file system, another server, or a client system.

Figure 3 is an illustration of a typical networked system in which the present invention can be utilized. In this example, a number of devices 310, 320, 330 are interconnected through the network 300. These devices may be clients, or servers. In some cases, a device may act as a client in one instance, and as a server in another. A standard client/server configuration is utilized with the present invention.

Figure 4 is a block diagram of the computer system 400 upon which an embodiment of the present invention can be implemented. Computer system 400 comprises a bus 401 or other communication means for communicating information, and a processor 402 coupled with bus 401 for processing information. Computer system 400 further comprises a random access memory (RAM) or other dynamic storage device 404 (referred to as main memory), coupled to bus 401 for storing information and instructions to be executed by processor 402. Main memory 404 also may be used for storing temporary variables or other intermediate information during execution of instructions by processor 402. Computer system 400 also

comprises a read only memory (ROM) and/or other static storage device 406 coupled to bus 401 for storing static information and instructions for processor 402. Data storage device 407 is coupled to bus 401 for storing information and instructions.

A data storage device 407 such as a magnetic disk or optical disk and its corresponding disk drive can be coupled to computer system 400. Computer system 400 can also be coupled via bus 401 to a display device 421, such as a cathode ray tube (CRT), for displaying information to a computer user. An alphanumeric input device 422, including alphanumeric and other keys, is typically coupled to bus 401 for communicating information and command selections to processor 402. Another type of user input device is cursor control 423, such as a mouse, a trackball, or cursor direction keys for communicating direction information and command selections to processor 402 and for controlling cursor movement on display 421. This input device typically has two degrees of freedom in two axes, a first axis (e.g., x) and a second axis (e.g., y), which allows the device to specify positions in a plane.

Alternatively, other input devices such as a stylus or pen can be used to interact with the display. A displayed object on a computer screen can be selected by using a stylus or pen to touch the displayed object. The computer detects the selection by implementing a touch sensitive screen. Similarly, a light pen and a light sensitive screen can be used for selecting a displayed object. Such devices may thus detect selection position and the selection as a single operation instead of the "point and click," as in a system incorporating a mouse or trackball. Stylus and pen based input devices as well as touch and light sensitive screens are well known in the art. Such a system may also lack a keyboard such as 422 wherein all interface is provided via the stylus as a writing instrument (like a pen) and the written text is interpreted using optical character recognition (OCR) techniques.

The present invention is related to the use of computer system 400 to manage documents. According to one embodiment, the document management is performed by computer system 400 in response to processor 402 executing sequences of instructions contained in memory 404. Execution of the sequences of instructions contained in memory 404 causes processor 402 to manage documents, as will be described hereafter. In alternative embodiments, hard-wired circuitry may be used in place of or in combination with software instructions to

implement the present invention. Thus, the present invention is not limited to any specific combination of hardware circuitry and software.

Figure 5 is an illustration of the system interfaces in a Windows NT environment. The system is divided into the user mode 500, containing the operating system subsystem 505 and applications, and the kernel mode 510, which contains the system services 515. The kernel mode 510 also contains executive components.

Executive components maintain independence from each other, each creating and manipulating the system data structures it requires. The object manager 520 manages executive objects that are used to represent operating system resources. The security reference monitor 525 enforces security policies in the local computer. The process manager 530 creates processes and threads. The local procedure call facility 535 passes messages between client process and server process on the same computer. The virtual memory manager 540 implements the virtual memory. The kernel 545 responds to interrupts and exceptions, and synchronizes activities between multiple processors. The I/O system processes input from and delivering output to a variety of devices. Specifically, the I/O manager 555 implements device-independent input and output. The file system 560 accepts file-oriented I/O requests and translates them into I/O requests bound for a particular device. The cache manager 565 manages the system cache, and the network drivers 570 are system drivers that transmit and receive remote I/O requests on the network.

The document management system 290 of the present invention is implemented within the user mode 500 of the system. Both the document manager 270 and the messaging system 240 are applications which are part of the user mode 500. The document management system 290 of the present invention utilizes the security monitor 525 to verify user access to documents, as described in more detail with respect to Figures 9A and 9B. The file system 560 contains the document contents 230, and additive indexes, described in more detail below.

Figure 6 is a block diagram of one embodiment of the client-server architecture of the present invention. The client 600 contains the document manager link 615 (DM link), the user interface 610, and a personal information service 625. The DM Link 615 is an automation server, which operates as an object broker. Conventional automation servers automate server processes. The

DM link automation server 615 includes eight objects: application, services, rooms, cabinets, drawers, folders, documents and replies. Each object includes four methods: add, delete, list and display. The DM link 615 handles each of these objects, and automates the document management processes. Object brokers are well known to those of ordinary skill in the art.

The DM link 615 allows the user interface 610 to abstract a source of the underlying information presented to the user by the user interface 610. Multiple back-end services act as the sources of the underlying information. The link 615 allows these multiple back end services to be treated homogeneously, making the system easier to use. All information is provided to the link 615 in a defined structure by the back-end processes. The link 615 puts the information together into a single format, and presents the information to the user in a consistent form.

The user interface 610 provides the user with access to the information contained in the system. The user interface is linked to a number of graphical components, such as 605A and 605B. The graphical components 605A and 605B allow the user interface 610 to display figures and drawings to the user. For example, graphical components may include the cabinet shown in Figure 11A or the navigator shown in Figure 11B. In one embodiment, the user interface 610 and graphical components 605 are implemented as well known OCX's, OLE control exchanges. This provides high speed screen navigation and a small memory footprint, and allows the components to be included in custom applications.

The personal information service 620 handles checked out documents. The documents checked out or created by the user and not checked in are stored on the local computer of the user, in the personal information base 625. The personal information service 620 allows manipulation of the documents in the personal information base 625.

The server 630 contains at least one information service. The server 630 may have multiple information services 640-675. These information services include for example, message system 1, 640, message system 2, 650, web information service 640 and/or Exchange information service 670. These information services 640-670 are described in more detail below.

There may be a dispatcher 635, if more than one information service is utilized. The dispatcher 635 directs message traffic to one of the available

information services 640-670 based on service type and processor or storage device load considerations. The dispatcher 635 connects the server 630 to the DM link 615 in the client 600.

The dispatcher 635 is connected to a number of information services. Each information service has two elements: an information service 640, 650, 660, or 670 and an information base 645, 655, 665, or 675. The information service is the agent that allows interaction with the information contained in the information base.

In the preferred embodiment, one of the information services is the Microsoft™ Exchange Service 670. Microsoft Exchange is a well known messaging system. The Microsoft Exchange Service 670 is coupled with the Microsoft Exchange information base 675 which stores the information used by the Exchange Service 670. When a user queries information stored in the Exchange information base 675, the Exchange Service 670 returns the information to the user.

In an alternative embodiment, one of the information services is the World Wide Web ("the Web") information service 660. The Web information base 665 represents all of the information available on the Web. The Web information service 660 allows the user to access the information on the Web using the same method as used to access information stored on the local server. Thus, using the Web information service 660 allows the user to efficiently access the Web and retrieve information.

The dispatcher 635 selects the appropriate information service to utilize for a query based on computer system load and the selected service type. For example, a query requesting information from a certain server, may only be accessed by the Microsoft Exchange Service 670. In this case, the dispatcher 635 routes the query to the service 670. Alternatively, if there are a number of Microsoft Exchange Services, the dispatcher 635 decides which service to utilize based on which service is least busy (i.e., has fewest pending requests) at the time of the query.

For example, if a user wishes to retrieve some information stored in the messaging system 1 information base 645 (MS1 info base), the process is as follows. The user enters the query at the document manager interface 610. The document manager link 615 formats the query into a predetermined format, and

passes the formatted query to the dispatcher 635 in the server 630. Based on the target of the query, the dispatcher 635 directs the query to the MS1 information service 640. The information service 640 queries its info base 645. The response to the query is returned from the info base 645 to the dispatcher 635 through MS1 information service 640. The dispatcher 635 returns the response to the query to the document manager link 615, in the client 600. The document manager link 615 then formats the query response into a predetermined format, and returns the response to the user through the document manager user interface 610. The query response information is then displayed to the user in response to the query. The user need not be aware of the location or source of the information. Thus, even an unsophisticated user is able to access a variety of complex information sources.

In relationship to Figure 2, the client 280 of Figure 2 contains the DM link 615, the user interface 610, the graphical components 605, and the personal information service 620 as well as the personal information base 625. The document manager 270 of Figure 2 contains the dispatcher 635. Figure 6 contains a number of messaging systems and information bases. Figure 2 illustrates only one messaging system coupled with one information base. Thus, with respect to Figure 2, assume that the only messaging system represented is messaging system 1, consisting of messaging system 1 system 640 and the messaging system 1 information base 645. In that case, the messaging system 240 of Figure 2 is messaging system 1 640. The file system 220 of Figure 2 contains the messaging system 1 information base 645.

Figure 7 is an illustration of a document 700. A document is a composite of two parts, the document profile 710 and the document content 720. The document content 720 may include any information such as, text, graphics, video, audio, binary large objects (BLOB), etc. As described above, the document content 720 is stored as files in the file system.

The document profile 710 contains the attributes of the document. The document profile 710 may include the title and the application used to create the document. The profile 710 may also include the document type, defined by the user or the system. Document types include: letters, memos, and budgets. When the user is searching for a document, the user may select a certain document type to search. The profile 710 may also include the archive, which represents a period of days determined by the user or document type. When the number of days

designated as archive time expires, the document is moved into the archive files or long term storage area from the active files.

The profile 710 may also include the author and typist. Further, the profile 710 may include any comments the user wishes to make regarding the document, as well as a thumbnail sketch. The thumbnail is a miniaturized visual representation of the first page of the document. The thumbnail, however, is not created by the document management system of the present invention. If the application which was used to create the document creates a thumbnail sketch using well know techniques, the profile will take that thumbnail sketch, and display it as part of the document profile.

The document profile 710 may further include system properties. The system properties include the size of the document, date of creation, date of last modification and the home of the document. The home of the document identifies the location of the original document on the file system. The system properties also include custom properties, which may be defined by the user.

The profile 710 may further contain the category of "related to." "Related to" represents other documents which point to this document. For example, an annual report may be related to a number of different documents. The documents may be in the chairman's filing cabinet under a stockholder's meeting folder, in the sales cabinet under a prospect's folder and in the human resources cabinet under hiring documents. The actual document is only located in one place but the "related to" field allows a user to view related documents. The user may add other documents to the list of documents that relate to the selected document. The related to category also makes the user aware of other documents that may be affected when the selected document is changed.

The profile 710 may also include access permissions. The user may define access rights for a particular document. There are different levels of access permission ranging from authorization to see the profile of the document only, to authorization to access and edit the document content, as well as the profile and change the access permissions. Permission may be granted to groups as well as individuals. For example, access to a certain document may be granted to all field staff, representing a group, as well as John Doe and Mark Smith, representing a list of individuals who may or may not be members of the group. The security system 210 of the operating system 200 uses this information to verify whether

Tom Jones has access to a document, by determining whether he is a member of a group that has access to the document or one of the named individuals. In this example, Tom Jones would only have access if he is a member of the field staff.

Finally, the document profile 710 contains the access history of the document. Access history includes information defining the user who created the document, and all users who accessed, modified, printed or otherwise had contact with the document. The access history information includes the name of the user, the type of action performed by the user, and the time the user accessed the document.

Figure 8A shows a flowchart representing the process flow for opening a document or displaying the file hierarchy for the user interface illustrated in Figure 11C. A file room is selected at step 800. If the user is working in a graphical user interface (GUI), this is done by double clicking on a file room. If the user is using an alternative user interface, this is typically automatically selected by the system, when the file hierarchy display is created.

Access to each of the file cabinets within that file room is verified by security subroutine at step 803, which is illustrated in Figures 9A and 9B and described below. The file cabinets to which the user has access are displayed at step 806. If the user is in a GUI, the cabinets are graphically displayed. From these file cabinets, one cabinet is selected at step 809. Access to each of the cabinet drawers within the file cabinets are verified by the security subroutine at step 812. Those cabinet drawers to which the user has access are displayed at step 815. If the user is in a GUI, the drawers are graphically displayed, as illustrated for example by Figure 11A, Item 1130.

Returning to Figure 8A, one drawer is selected at step 818 from the drawers available to the user. The security subroutine tests the user's access to each of the folders located within the cabinet selected at step 821. Those folders to which the user has access are displayed at step 824. From these folders, one folder is selected at step 827. The user's access to each of the files within the selected folder is tested using the security subroutine at step 830. The files to which the user has access are displayed at step 833. In a graphical user interface, the user is shown a closed file folder. A file form appears on the outside of the closed file folder. The file form contains database information. Such database information results from an automatic database query on the folder name. Any

database information relating to that folder name is collected and displayed on the file form.

For example, a file form may contain the manager of the project, the author, any comments, task status, etc. This database information may be collected from multiple databases. Positioning the file form on the outside of the folder allows rapid access to database information about the folder, without having to execute a variety of searches. When the user opens the file folder, the files to which the user has access are displayed at step 833. In displaying the complete hierarchy, each file room, cabinet, drawer, folder and file is selected in turn by the system. In this way, all objects on all levels to which the user has access are displayed.

When opening a document, the user selects one file to be opened from the displayed files at step 836. Since the system has already verified that the user has access to the file, no access verification is necessary at this point. The messaging system 240 is accessed and the profile 260 of the document selected is updated to "checked out" at step 839. The profile is updated to checked-out in order to prevent others from using the file at the same time. The file system 220 is accessed, and the document content is copied from the file system to a temporary directory at step 842. The document is then opened within that temporary directory and the user has access to the document at step 845. The user then can alter the document.

Figure 8B shows a flowchart representing the process flow for closing a document. A file room is selected at step 848. If the user is working in the graphical user interface, the user may select the file room by double clicking on a file room. If the user is using an alternative user interface, this is typically automatically selected by the system, when the file hierarchy display is created.

Access to each of the file cabinets within that file room is verified by security subroutine at step 851, which is illustrated in Figures 9A and 9B. The file cabinets to which the user has access are displayed at step 854. If the user is in a GUI, the cabinets are graphically displayed. From these file cabinets, one cabinet is selected at step 857. Access to each of the cabinet drawers within the file cabinets are verified by the security subroutine at step 860. Those cabinet drawers to which the user has access are displayed at step 863. If the user is in a GUI, the

drawers are graphically displayed, as illustrated for example by Figure 11A, Item 1120.

Returning to Figure 8B, one drawer is selected from the drawers available to the user at step 866. The security subroutine tests the user's access to each of the folders located within the cabinet selected at step 869. Those files to which the user has access are displayed at step 872. From these folders, one folder is selected at step 875. The user's access to each of the files within the selected folder is tested using the security subroutine at step 878. The files to which the user has access are displayed at step 881. As described above, in a graphical user interface the user is shown a closed file folder with a file form on the outside of the file folder, containing database information. When the user opens the file folder, the list of files to which the user has access are displayed at step 881.

The user then enters a new file name at step 884. Alternatively, the user can select an already existing file name at step 884. The messaging system is then accessed and a profile form is displayed, allowing the user to update the profile at step 887. The basic information in the profile is filled in by the system. However, the user may alter it. For example, the user may have typed the document for someone else and therefore the writer may not be the user. The user can also add comments. If the user is the owner of the document or has permission to alter basic settings, the user may also add or change the permissions for access to the document.

The document is then closed from the user at step 890, and copied from the temporary directory to the file system at step 893. If the document is an old document that was modified by the user and saved under the same name, the new document is saved as a new version. The older version of the document is retained.

The document contents are then copied from the temporary directory to the file system at step 893. Then the messaging system is accessed and the profile of the document is updated at step 896. This may include adding to the history of the document that the document has been checked out and/or checked in, changing the version number, updating information about document size, etc. Checking in the document also updates the document content index and the document profile index, described in more detail below.

Figure 9A shows a flow chart of one embodiment of the security subroutine. When a user first logs into the computer system, the user provides his or her user identification. This user identification, coupled with the log-in information describing the identity of the system (i.e. computer) the user is on, together form the security identification (SID) or user token for the user. The user token is created by a conventional operating system.

When a new document is created, the user sets access rights for the document. This is illustrated in Figure 7, document profile 710, as "permissions." The list of users and groups who have access to the document (i.e., the document "permissions") is given to the O/S security system 210 by the document manager 270 when the document is checked in. The O/S security system 210 compiles a list of all access control entries (ACE's) creating an access control list (ACL). An ACE is the combination of the security ID of users and masks defining the level of access of each user to the document. This ACL, along with a discretionary ACL, which is the binary flag allowing or prohibiting access, and the system ACL, which audits the propriety of the access after it occurs together from the security descriptor (SD). This security descriptor is binary data, and is attached to the profile of the document.

When a user attempts to access a document, only those documents to which the user has access are displayed. The security subroutine verifies the user's access to the document. The security subroutine is invoked at step 910 by the document managing system 290 of the present invention.

The system accesses the messaging system and retrieves the security descriptor from each document profile that the user is trying to access at step 915. The security descriptor and the user token are passed to the O/S security system at step 920. The operating system security interprets the security descriptor to identify the level of access of each user, and compares that access level to the user's token. Based on that information, the O/S security returns yes/no authorization for each document access at step 925. All items to which the user has access are then selected at step 930, and the security subroutine returns this information to the invoking program.

Figure 9B shows an alternative embodiment of the security subroutine. The security subroutine is invoked at step 940 by the document management system 290 when a user attempts to open a document, close a document, or

display a file hierarchy. The document management system of the present invention accesses the file system at step 945. The user's SID is used to attempt access to the documents which the user is trying to display at step 950. A list of documents which the user's SID was qualified to access is returned at step 955. A list of those documents to which the user has access are selected at step 960. The security subroutine then returns the user to the invoking program.

Figure 10 is a flow chart representing the process flow for a search request executed by the system upon user request 1000. When a user requests a search, a dialog box is displayed. The dialog box allows the user to enter a number of search criteria. The criteria may be words within the document, or any information contained within the profile, including author, title, type of document, date created, size, etc. For example, the user may wish to search for all documents of type contract, which contain the word patent.

When a new document is entered into the document management system of the present invention, or checked in as described above, two indexes are created. The document content is indexed, indicating the occurrence of each word or other searchable term within the document. The document profile is also indexed, based on each profile category described above with respect to Figure 7, profile 710. An additive index of document contents and a separate additive index of document profiles are created and stored in the file system 220. The additive index is a cumulative index for all documents. In one embodiment, the additive indexes are only updated with any new documents that may have been added to the system when a search is executed on the index. That is, each time a search is initiated, before the search is executed, the additive indexes are updated. A search is divided into two parts: the document content and the document profile are searched separately.

The search is executed by accessing the file system 220 and searching the document content additive index 1010 for search criteria regarding information within the document. The profile additive index is searched 1020 for search criteria regarding information about the attributes of the document, described above with respect to Figure 7, profile 710. For the above example, the document content additive index would be searched for the occurrence of the word "patent," and the profile additive index would be searched for all documents of type "contract."

The system then compiles a list of document keys for documents matching all search criteria 1020. A document key consists of a document identifier and a service identifier. The document identifier identifies the location of the document content within the file system. The service identifier identifies the server site at which the document is located. At this point the result is just a list of numbers. For example, the result of the above search may be document 200, document 32, and document 48.

The user's access to each of the documents on the list is verified 1025. The access verification is performed by the security subroutine described above with respect to Figure 9A or Figure 9B.

A list of document keys for documents which match the criteria and to which the user has access is compiled 1030. The messaging system 240 is accessed and profile information is added to this list of document keys 1035. For example, the profile information can be title, author, and date created.

The list of documents matching the search criteria, and verified to be accessible to the user are displayed. The user may select any document from this list. Double clicking on a document in this list displays the profile information of the selected document. The user may open any of the documents in the displayed list if the user is authorized to do so. If the user opens a document, the procedure illustrated in Figure 8A is followed.

Figure 11A is an illustration of one embodiment of the document managing system user interface 1100, known as "workplace". The interface 1100 is a visual representation of a document hierarchical organization as well as the other functionalities of the present invention. In order to access a document the user selects the file room 1110. The file room 1110 is the uppermost tier of organization of documents. For example, the file rooms can be divided into a sales file room, a management file room, a quality assurance file room, a human resources file room or any other division that the user may find useful. Once the user selects a file room 1110, the cabinets 1125 within that file room 1110 are displayed. These cabinets 1125 are a further subdivision one tier down from file room 1110. For example, for a sales file room, the cabinets may be sales cabinet, corporate cabinet, research cabinet and personal cabinet. The user may select one of these cabinets 1125. The cabinet drawers 1130 of the cabinet selected are displayed on the right hand side of the screen. The drawers 1130 are further

subdivisions which may be named by the user. For example, for a sales cabinet, the drawers may be the suspects, the prospects, the current clients and follow up. Upon selecting one of the cabinet drawers 1130, a list of file folders is displayed graphically. From these file folders, the user may choose any file folder. As discussed above, the outside of the file folder shows a file form containing database information. Upon choosing the file folder, the documents contained within the file folder are displayed.

The file tray 1115 manages all personal documents and is divided into sections, including local documents, recently used documents and favorite places. Local documents are documents that have been checked out by the user or documents created by the user and not checked in. Recently used documents include a list of all the documents that the user has recently accessed, in chronological order. The length of the list may be set by the user. Favorite places are documents that the user has determined are important. Favorite places is a list of bookmarks, files that the user can access directly without navigating through the file hierarchy. For example, a user regularly accesses a file listing the purchases of a certain company, stored in the company's folder, in the current clients cabinet drawer, in the sales cabinet, in the sales file room. The user could store the file as a favorite place, and could access it through the file tray with a single click without having to step through the hierarchy.

The briefing book 1120 allows the user to subscribe to information that is being published within the document management system 290. Information within the briefing book 1120 is organized into sections. For example, sections could be news of interest, meetings scheduled, reports or any other category of data that is regularly updated and should be up-to-date to be useful. Within each section there are a number of documents. Once again, the documents in the section are organized hierarchically. For example, the news of interest section could include press releases, news from the CEO, the current company newsletter, etc. The briefing book 1120 automatically updates such documents by accessing the original of the document, and determining whether the document in the briefing book 1120 is the most current. In one embodiment the updating occurs based on a stored search based of the document location. If the document is up-to-date nothing is changed. However, if the document has changed, the new updated document is placed in the briefing book 1120. The updating may occur at any

time, or times, set by the user. Settings for update times may vary based on user preferences.

At any level within the file room all the way to folder, the user may press the "new" button 1135 and create a new document. The user may also press the "search" button 1140. Selecting the search button displays a tabbed form in which the user can enter search data. For a more detailed description see Figure 10 and the accompanying text above. The go to or favorites button 1145 allows the user to access a certain file without having to go through the hierarchy by selecting one of the documents of the list of favorite places, described above.

Figure 11B displays an alternative embodiment of a user interface for the document management system 290 of the present invention, also known as the "neighborhood". This interface is configured similarly to the Windows 95™ network neighborhood developed by Microsoft Corporation. The neighborhood is a large icon in the Windows desktop and when selected displays the representation shown in window 1150. As discussed above, the briefing book 1120, file tray 1115, and file rooms 1110 are shown as icons. Selecting the "new file room" icon allows the user to create a new file room. Upon selecting any one of these icons, a new window showing only the icons for that particular level is displayed.

Figure 11C is another alternative embodiment of a user interface of the present invention. This interface is designed for the expert Windows 95 user and it displays a hierarchical tree of available information 1170. Additionally, this interface also displays, like the previous embodiment shown in Figure 11B, the graphical representation at each level. However, in this embodiment 1160, the user may select an item at any level of the hierarchy without having to step through individual levels.

A method and apparatus for document management has thus been described. While the present invention has been described in particular embodiments and through particular examples, the invention should not be construed as limited by such embodiments and examples, but rather construed according to the following claims.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A computer-implemented method for managing documents, comprising the steps of:

storing content of a document on a file system;
storing a profile of said document in a messaging system;
obtaining said profile upon request for access to said document; and
accessing said content of said document based upon information obtained from said profile.

2. The computer-implemented method according to claim 1 wherein said profile includes information about attributes of said document.

3. The computer-implemented method according to claim 2 wherein said information about said attributes includes indicating location of said document content on said file system.

4. The computer-implemented method according to claim 1 wherein said document content comprises one or more of text, data, figures, binary large object (BLOB), audio, or video.

5. The computer-implemented method according to claim 1 further comprising the step of:
utilizing an operating system security system to determine access rights to said document stored on said file system.

6. The computer-implemented method according to claim 5 further comprising the step of:
displaying said document only if a user is qualified based on said access rights.

7. The computer-implemented method according to claim 5 wherein said step of utilizing said operating system security system comprises the steps of:
retaining a user identification upon user log-in;

requesting said document from said file system using said user identification; and
displaying said document if said user is qualified based on said access rights.

8. The computer-implemented method according to claim 5 wherein said step of utilizing said operating system security system comprises the steps of:
getting a security descriptor from said document profile;
getting a user token;
passing said security descriptor and said user token to said operating system security system; and
receiving authorization from said operating system security system to display said document.

9. The computer-implemented method according to claim 8 wherein creating said security descriptor for said document comprises the steps of:
determining a list of permissions of access granted to said document;
providing said list of permissions and said user token to said operating system security system;
receiving a binary block of data comprising said security descriptor; and
attaching said security descriptor to said document profile.

10. The computer-implemented method according to claim 8 wherein getting said user token comprises the steps of:
retaining a user identification upon user log-in;
retaining log information of said user; and
creating said user token from said log information and said user identification.

11. The computer-implemented method according to claim 10 wherein said log information comprises information about a current system being used by said user and privileges of said user on said current system.

12. The computer-implemented method according to claim 1 further comprising the step of:

indexing said document; and
adding said index to an additive index of documents.

13. The computer-implemented method according to claim 12, wherein said indexing comprises the steps of:

indexing said document content; and
indexing said document profile.

14. The computer-implemented method according to claim 13 wherein adding said index to said additive index of documents comprises the steps of:

adding said document content index to a document content additive index;
and
adding said document profile index to a document profile additive index.

15. The computer-implemented method according to claim 14 further comprising the steps of:

receiving a user search request;
executing said user search request; and
displaying a result of said user search request.

16. The computer-implemented method according to claim 15 wherein said step of executing said user search request further comprises the step of:

searching said document content additive index; and
searching said document profile additive index.

17. The computer-implemented method according to claim 15 wherein said step of displaying said result comprises:

accessing said file system and attempting to retrieve a first document in said result using a user identification; and
displaying said document if said user identification is qualified to receive said document based on access rights.

18. The computer-implemented method according to claim 17 wherein said step of displaying said document further comprise the steps of:

utilizing said profile to retrieve displayable information about said document; and

displaying said displayable information.

19. The computer-implemented method according to claim 1 wherein said method is a document management system integrated into an operating system.

20. The computer-implemented method according to claim 19 wherein said operating system is a Windows operating system.

21. The computer-implemented method according to claim 1 further comprising the step of:
maintaining a list of favorite documents.

22. The computer-implemented method according to claim 21 wherein said list of favorite documents comprises pointers to a location of documents in said list.

23. The computer-implemented method according to claim 1 further comprising the step of:
maintaining a list of regularly updated documents; and
updating documents in said list of regularly updated documents automatically.

24. The computer-implemented method according to claim 23 wherein said updating comprises the steps:
saving a search for each of said documents in said list of regularly updated documents; and
executing said search on a predetermined schedule.

25. A computer-implemented method for managing documents, comprising the steps of:
storing content of a document on a file system wherein said content is one or more of text, data, figures, binary large object (BLOB), audio, or video; and
storing a profile of said document in a messaging system, wherein said profile includes information about attributes of said document, including indicating location of said document content on said file system.

26. A computer-implemented method for managing documents, comprising the steps of:

storing a document content on a file system;

storing a document profile in a messaging system;

determining access rights to said document content stored on said file system using an operating system security system, said step of determining comprising the steps of:

getting a user token, comprised of information about a current system being used by a user and a user identification of said user;

getting a security descriptor from said document profile, wherein said security descriptor is a binary block of data attached to said document profile and created by said operating system security system from a list of permissions of access to a document and said user token;

passing said security descriptor and said user token to said operating system security system; and

receiving authorization from said operating system security system to display said document.

27. A computer-implemented method for managing documents, comprising the steps of:

storing content of a document on a file system;

storing a profile of said document in a messaging system;

indexing said document content;

adding said index of said document content to an additive index of document contents, wherein said additive index of said document contents is stored in said file system;

indexing said document profile;

adding said index of said document profile to an additive index of document profiles; wherein said additive index of said document profiles is stored in said file system;

receiving a user search request;

performing said user search request by accessing said file system and searching said additive indexes;

collecting a result comprised of a list of document keys;

verifying a user's access rights to said result using an operating system security system, comprising the steps of:

- retrieving a security descriptor from profiles of documents in said list of document keys;
- getting a user token identifying said user;
- passing said security descriptor and said user token to said operating system security system;
- receiving authorization from said operating system security system to display said results;
- utilizing said profile to retrieve displayable information about said document if said user identification is qualified to receive said document based on said access rights; and
- displaying said displayable information about documents which said user identification is qualified to receive.

28. A computer-implemented method for managing documents, comprising the steps of:

- storing content of a document on a file system;
- storing a profile of said document in a messaging system;
- wherein said method is a document management system integrated into a Windows[®] operating system.

29. A computer-implemented method for managing documents, comprising the steps of:

- storing content of a document on a file system;
- storing a profile of said document in a messaging system; and
- maintaining a list of favorite documents, wherein said list of favorite documents comprises pointers to a location of documents in said list.

30. A computer-implemented method for managing documents, comprising the steps of:

- storing content of a document on a file system;
- storing a profile of said document in a messaging system;
- maintaining a list of regularly updated documents;

saving a search for each document in said list of regularly updated documents;

executing said search on a predetermined schedule; and

using a result of said search to update each of said documents in said list of said regularly updated documents.

31. A computer system comprising:

a document management system;

a file system coupled to said document management system, wherein said file system is configured to store a document content; and

a messaging system coupled to said document management system, wherein said messaging system is configured to store a document profile.

32. A computer system, having a processor, comprising:

a document management system;

a file system coupled to said document management system, wherein said file system is configured to store a document content;

a messaging system coupled to said document management system, wherein said messaging system is configured to store a document profile;

an operating system security system; and

said operating system security system being configured to determine access rights to a document stored on said file system.

33. A computer system, having a processor, comprising:

a document management system;

a file system coupled to said document management system, wherein said file system is configured to store a document content;

a messaging system coupled to said document management system, wherein said messaging system is configured to store a document profile; and

an additive index of a plurality of documents;

wherein said additive index is searched in response to a search request and a result of said search request is displayed.

34. A computer system comprising:

a file system configured to store a document content;

a messaging system configured to store a document profile;
a document management system coupled to said file system and said messaging system; and
an operating system;
wherein said document management system is integrated with said operating system.

35. A machine readable medium having stored thereon data representing sequences of instructions, which when executed by a computer system, cause said computer system to perform the steps of:

storing content of a document on a file system wherein said content is one or more of text, data, figures, BLOB, audio, or video; and

storing a profile of said document in a messaging system, wherein said profile includes information about attributes of said document, including indicating location of said document content on said file system.

36. A machine readable medium having stored thereon data representing sequences of instructions, which when executed by a computer system, cause said computer system to perform the steps of:

storing a document content on a file system;

storing a document profile on a messaging system; and

utilizing an operating system security system to determine access rights to said document content and said document profile.

37. A machine readable medium having stored thereon data representing sequences of instructions, which when executed by a computer system, cause said computer system to perform the steps of:

storing a content of a document on a file system;

storing a profile of said document on a messaging system;

creating a first index of said content of said document;

creating a second index of said profile of said document;

receiving a search request;

executing said search request on said first index and said second index; and

displaying a result of said search request.

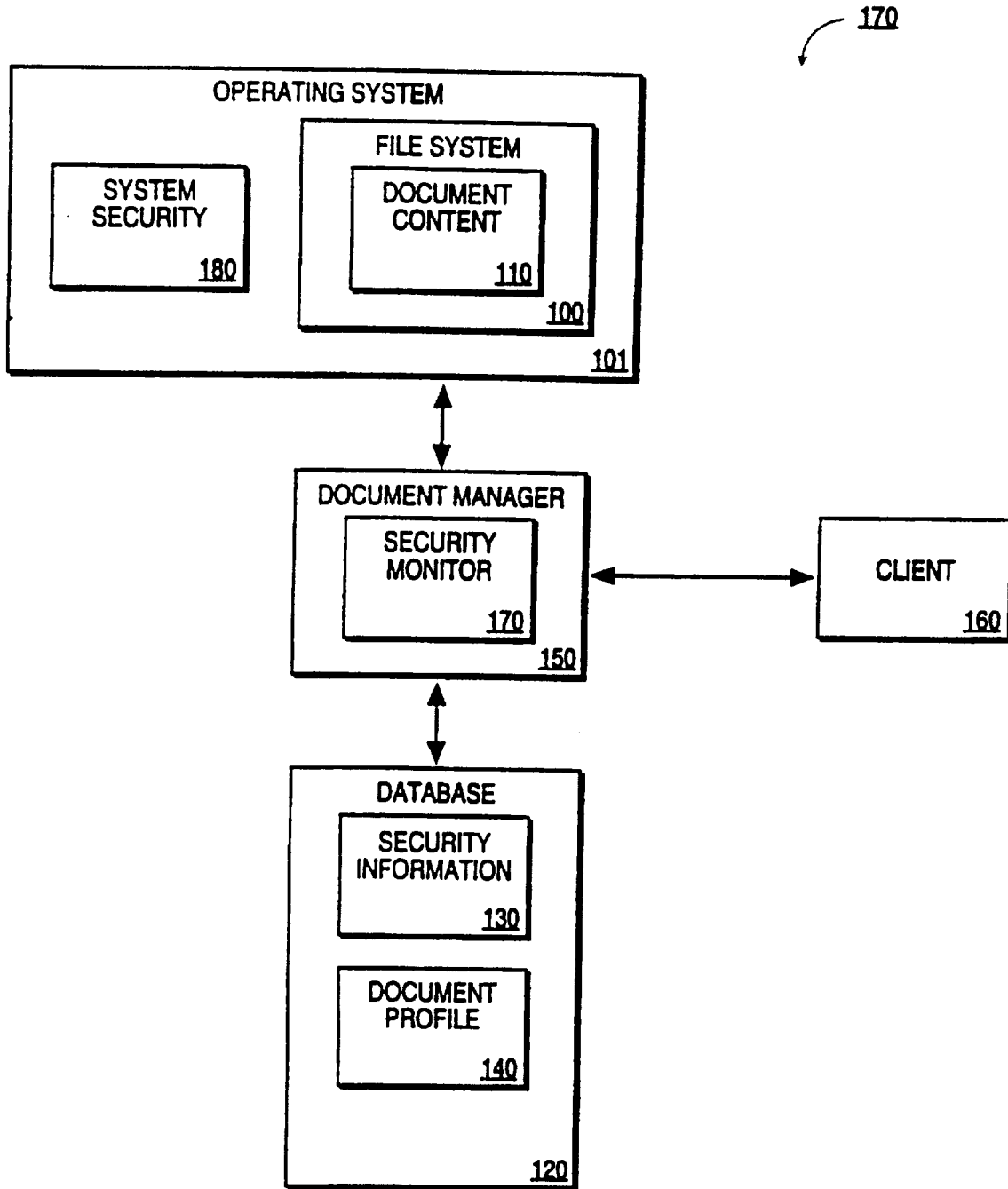


FIG. 1 (PRIOR ART)

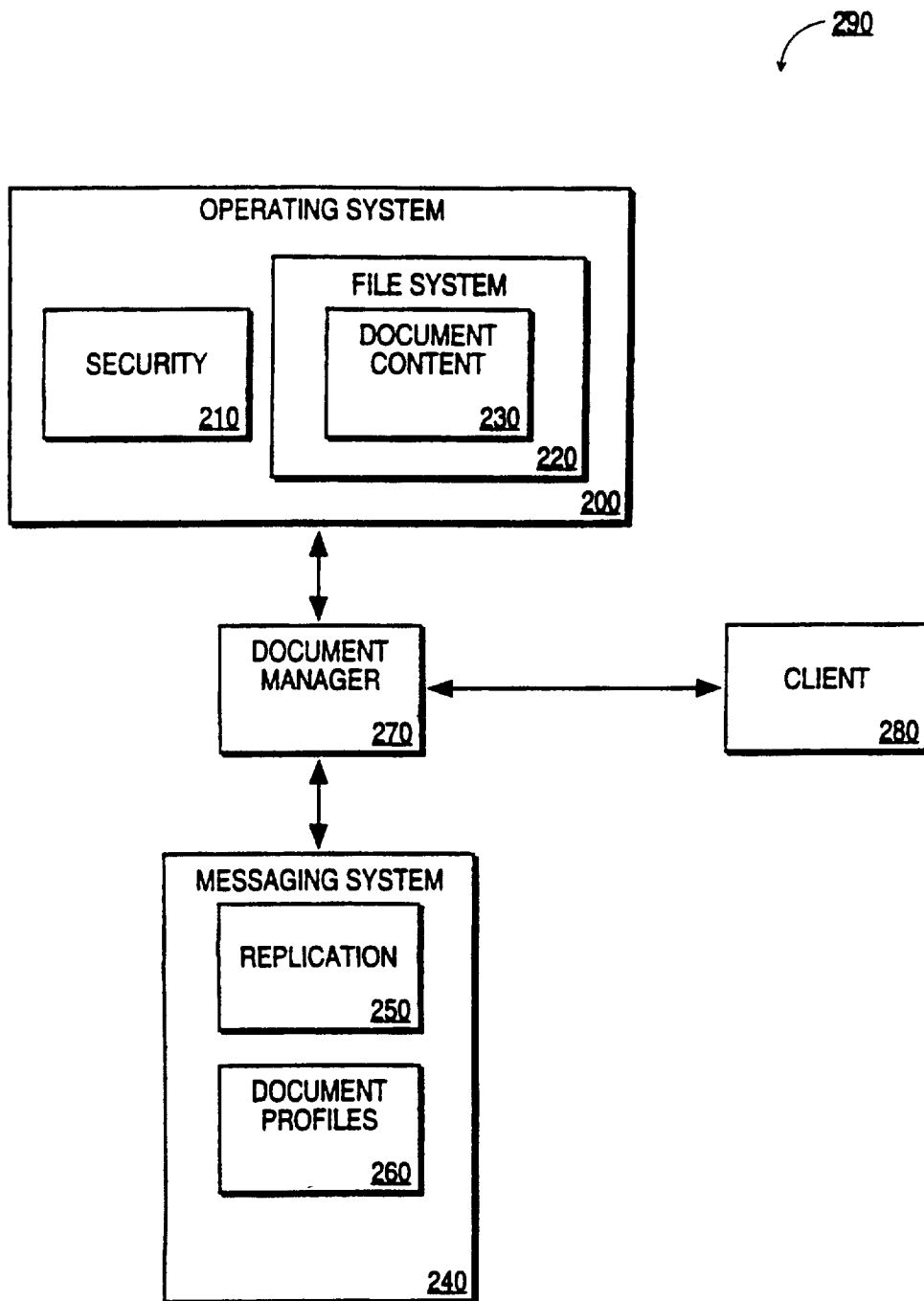


FIG. 2

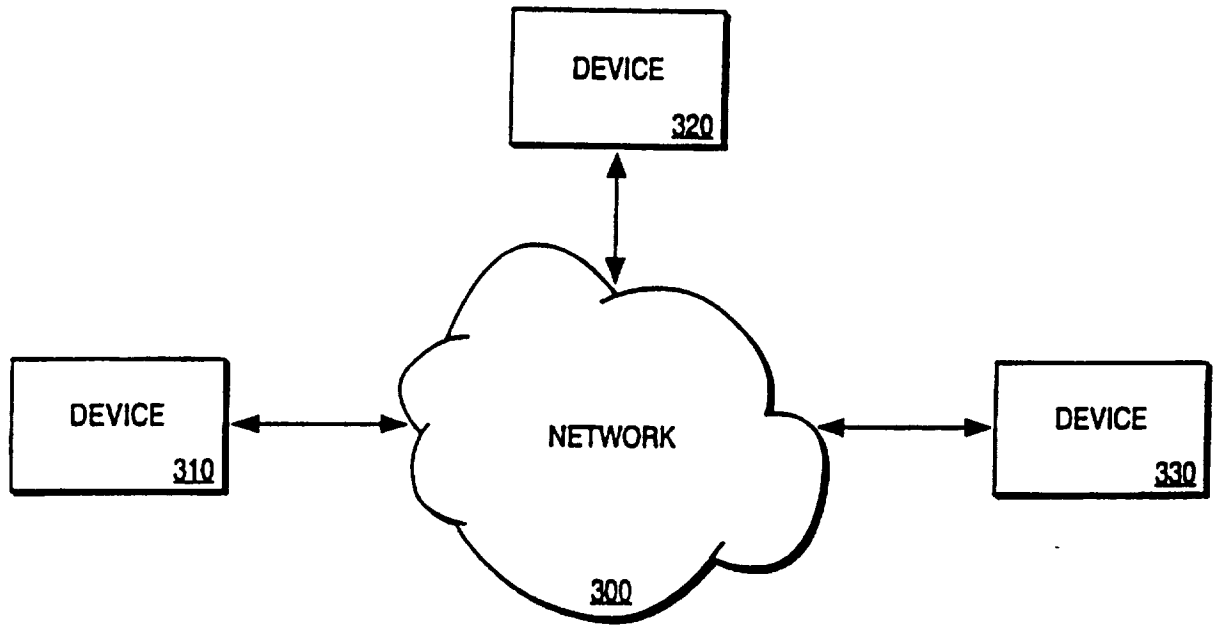


FIG. 3

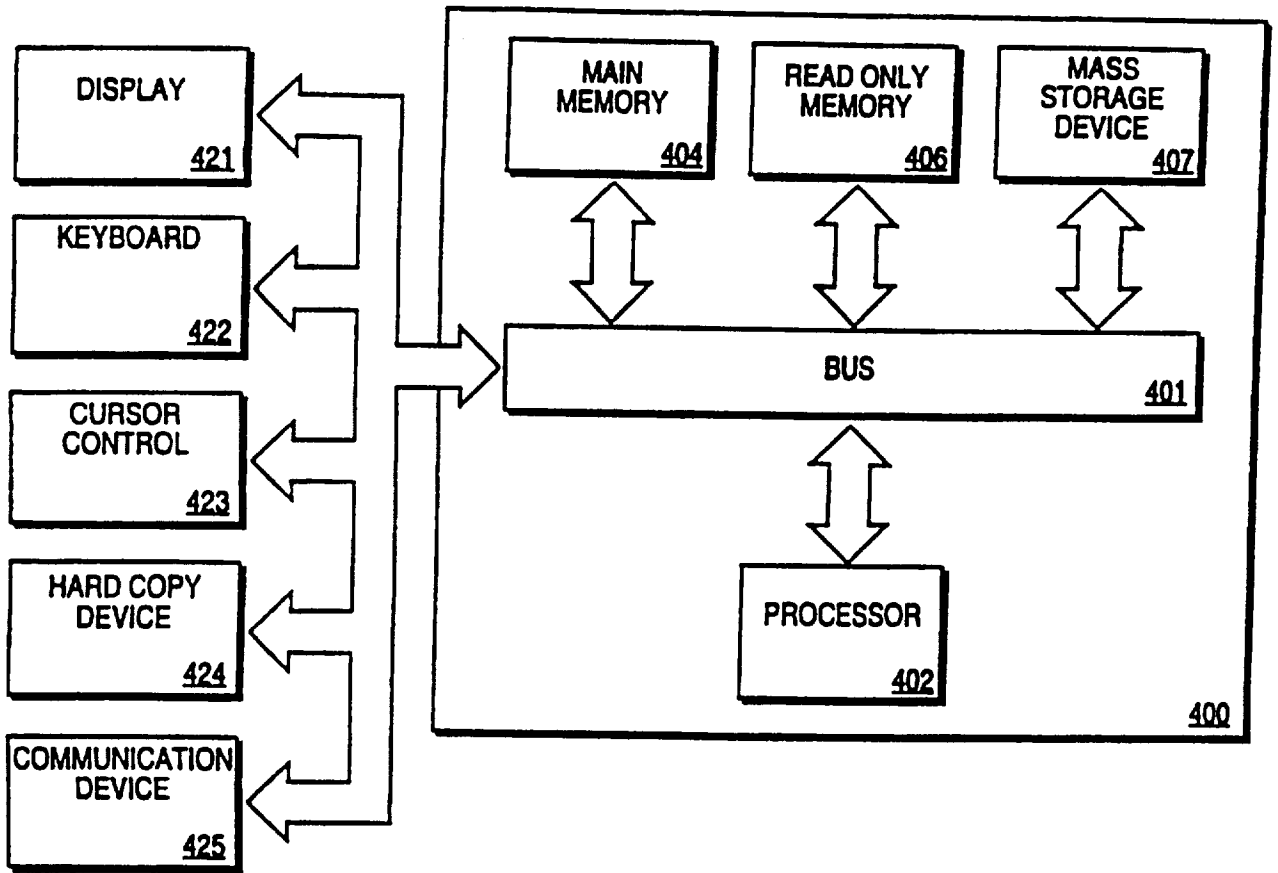


FIG. 4

O/S
SUBSYSTEM 505

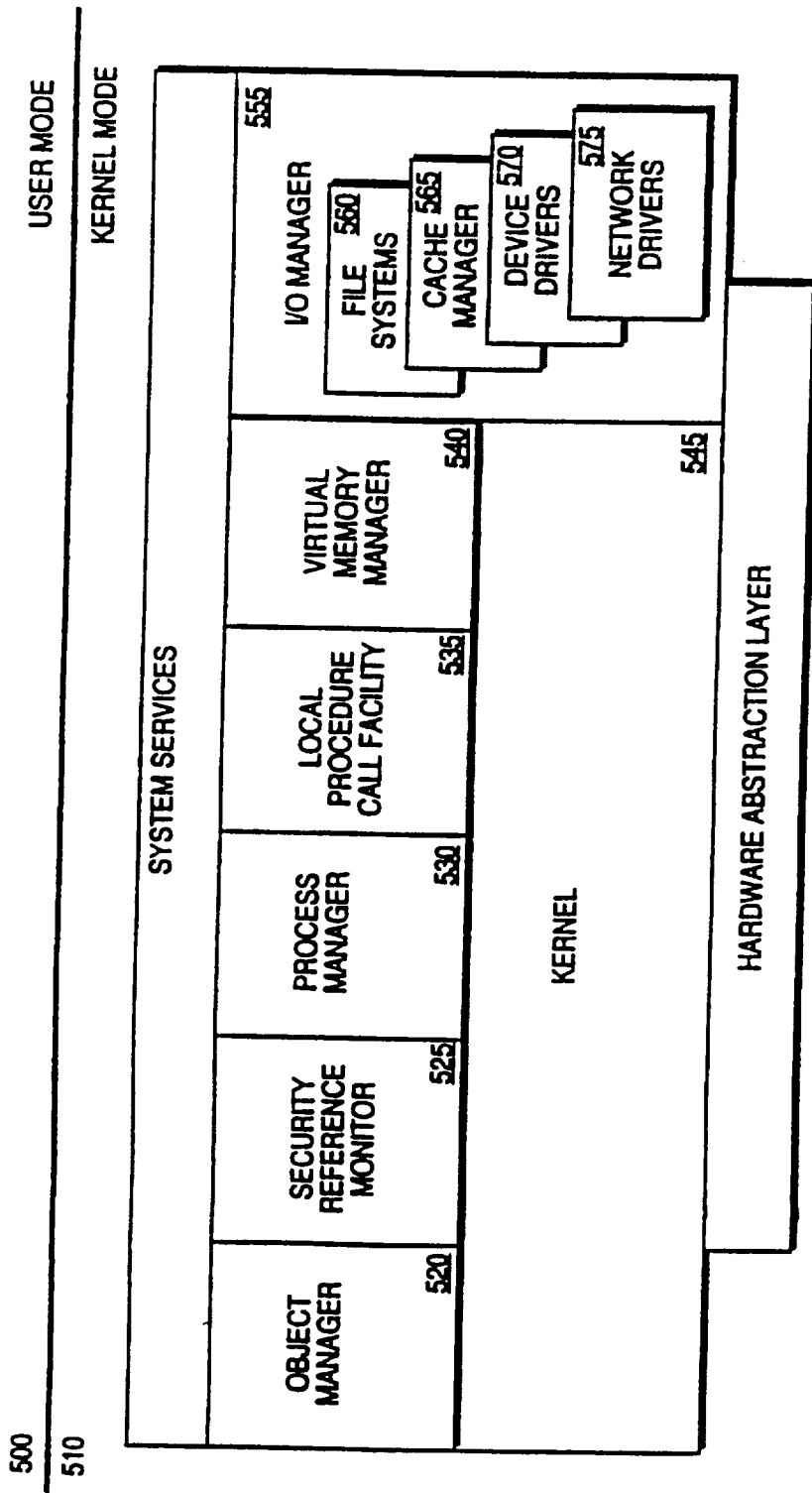


FIG. 5

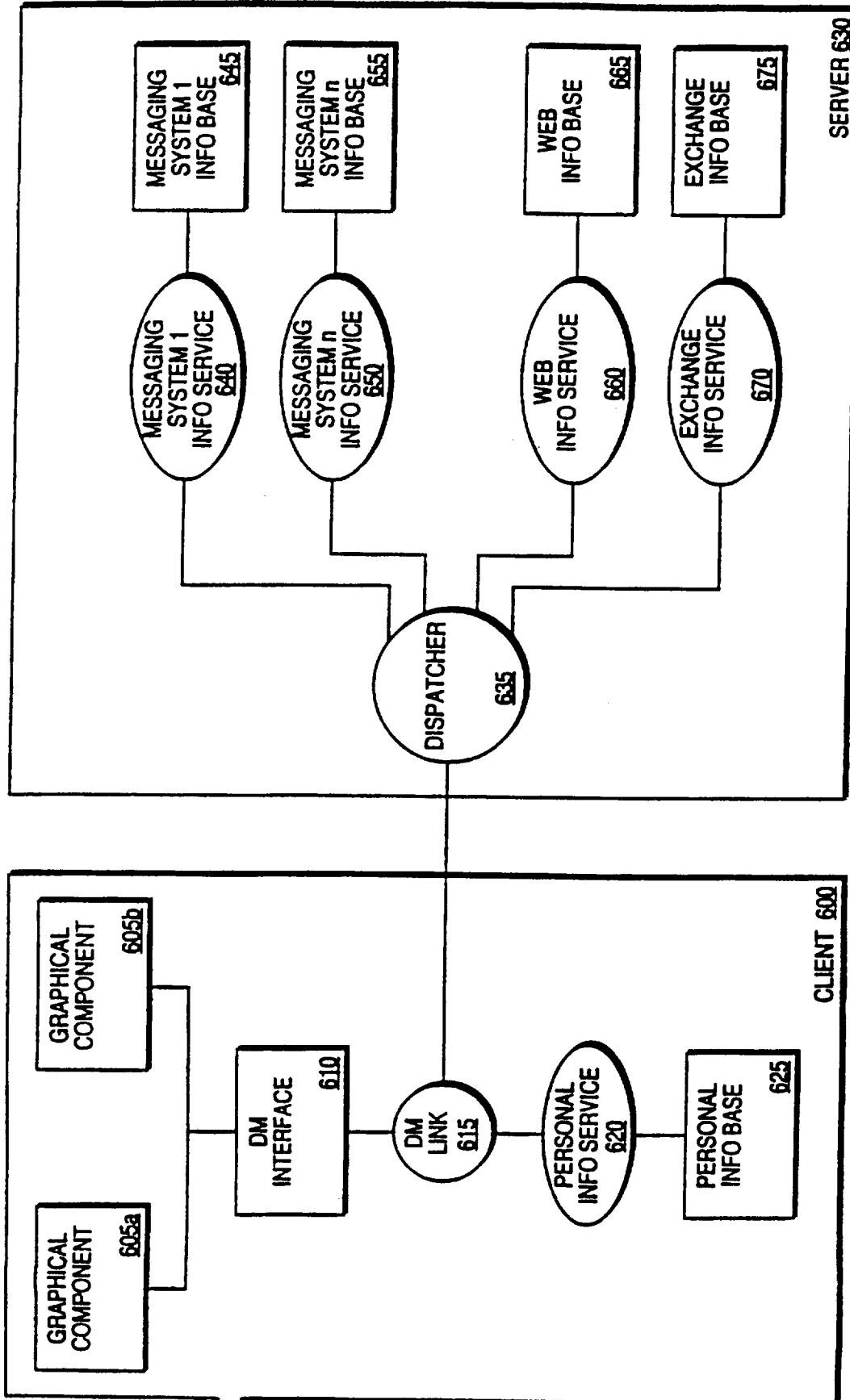


FIG. 6

| DOCUMENT PROFILE | DOCUMENT CONTENT |
|--|--|
| GENERAL: TITLE APPLICATION TYPE ARCHIVE AUTHOR TYPIST COMMENTS THUMBNAIL PROPERTIES SYSTEM DATE SAVED HOME CUSTOM RELATED TO PERMISSIONS HISTORY | TEXT GRAPHICS BLOB AUDIO VIDEO : : |
| 710 | 720 |

700

FIG. 7

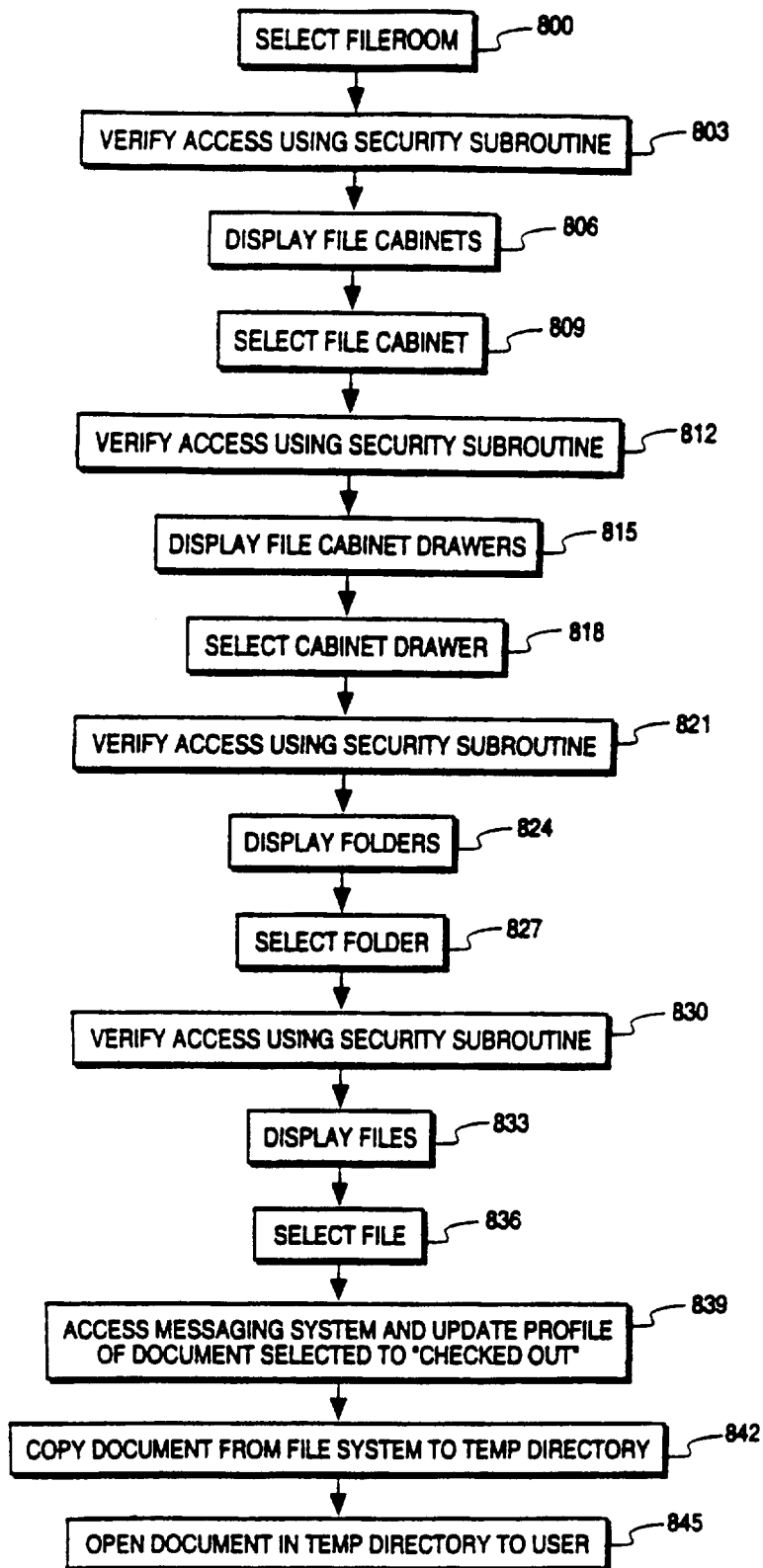


FIG. 8A

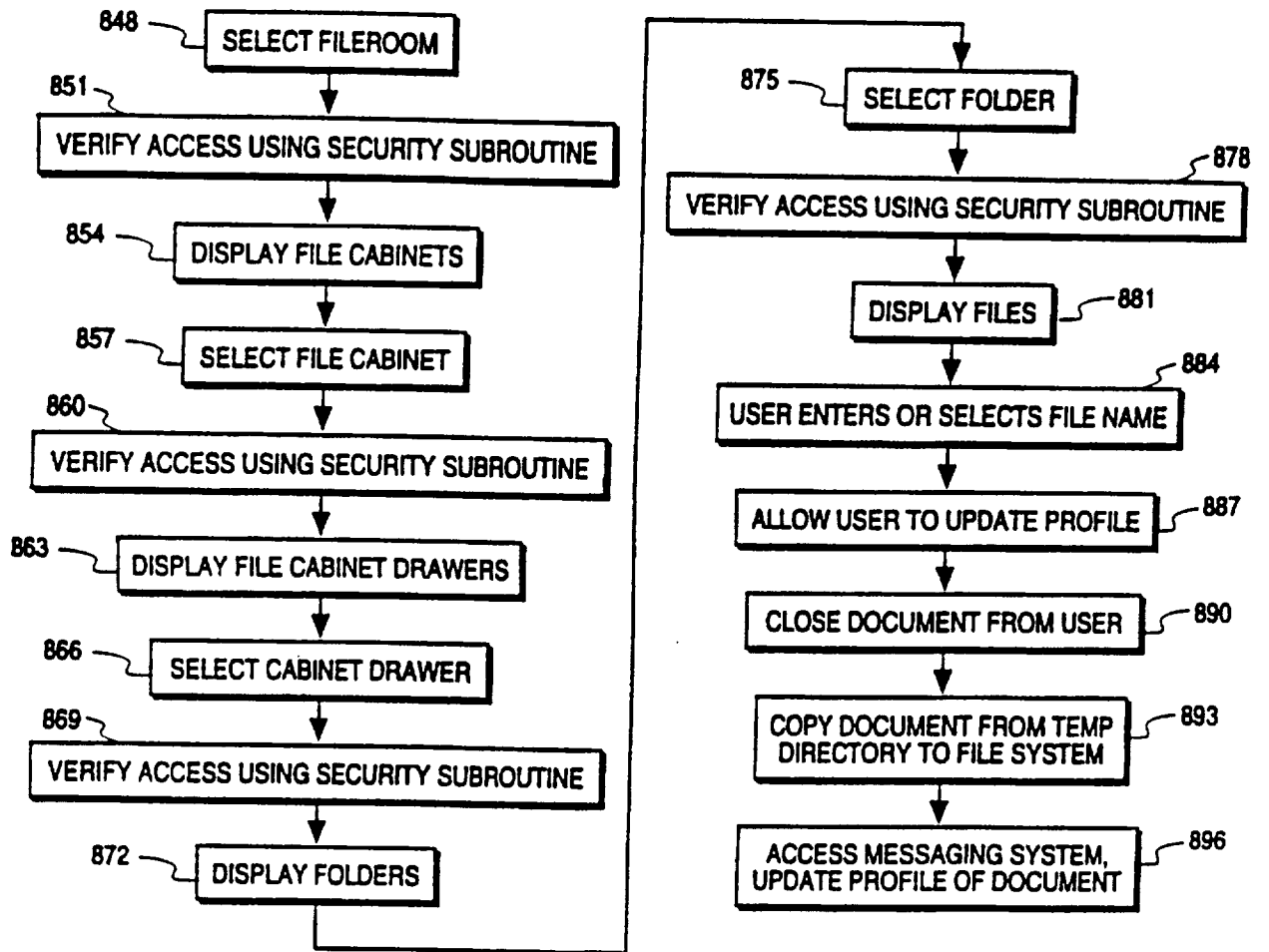


FIG. 8B

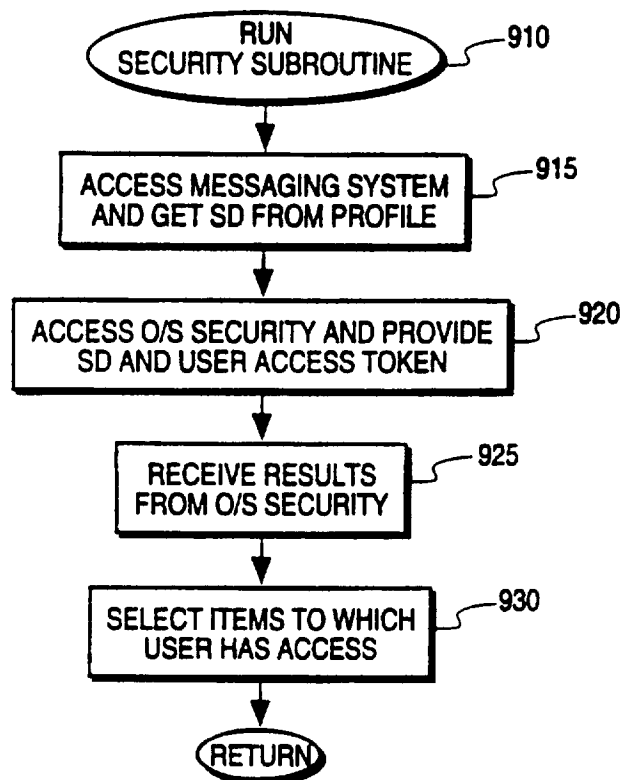


FIG. 9A

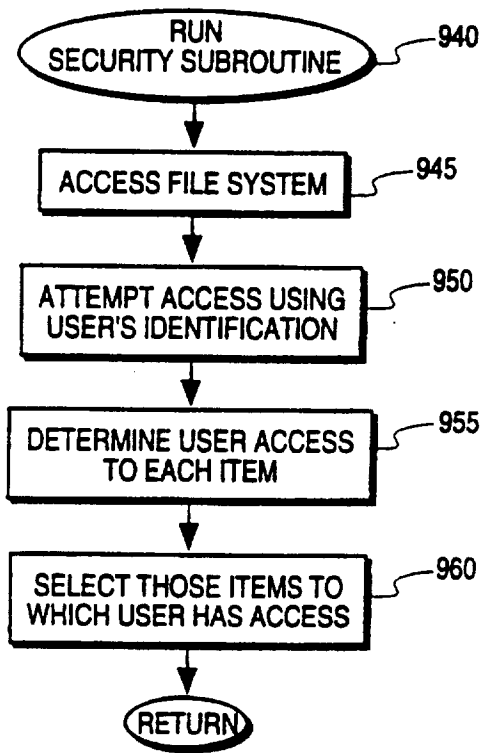


FIG. 9B

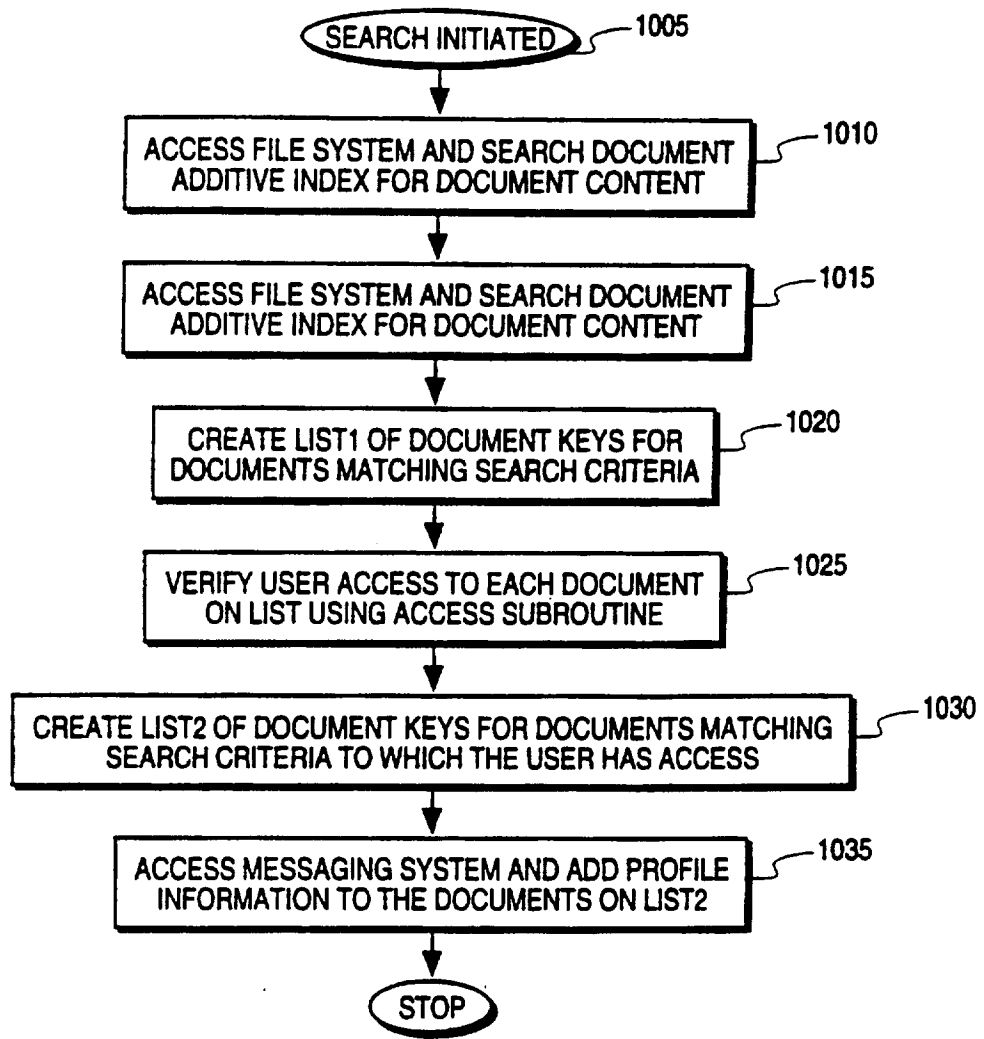


FIG. 10

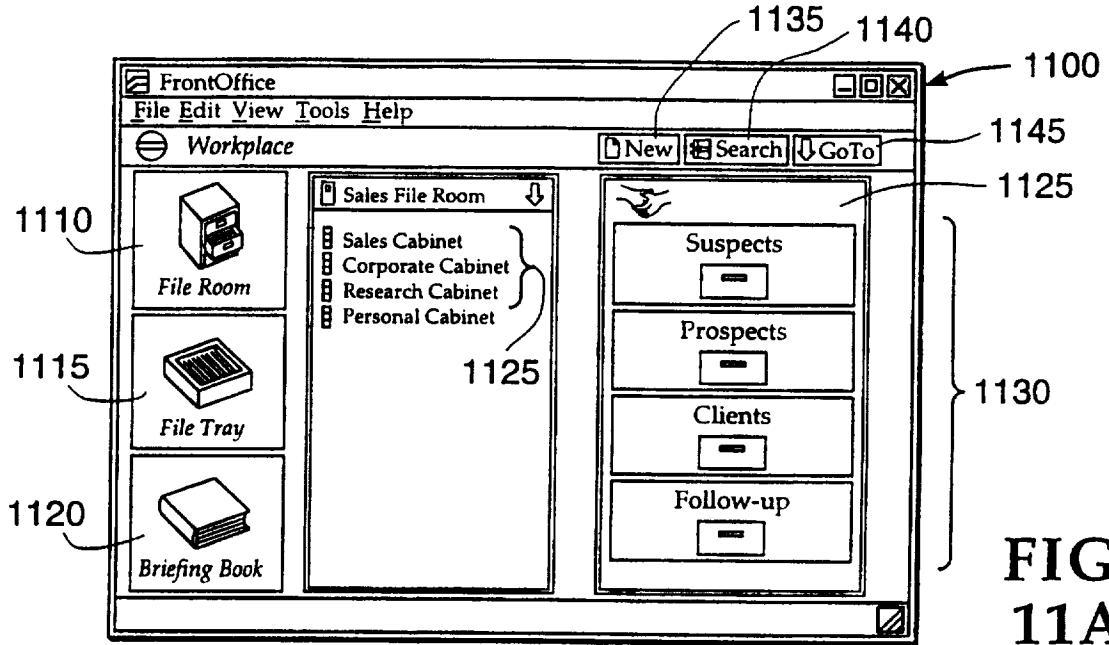


FIG. 11A

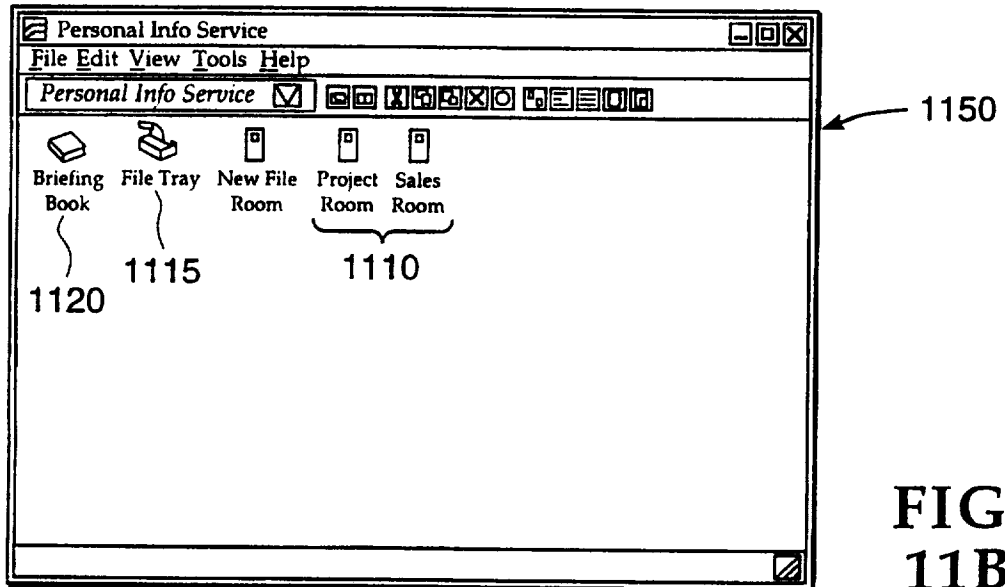


FIG. 11B

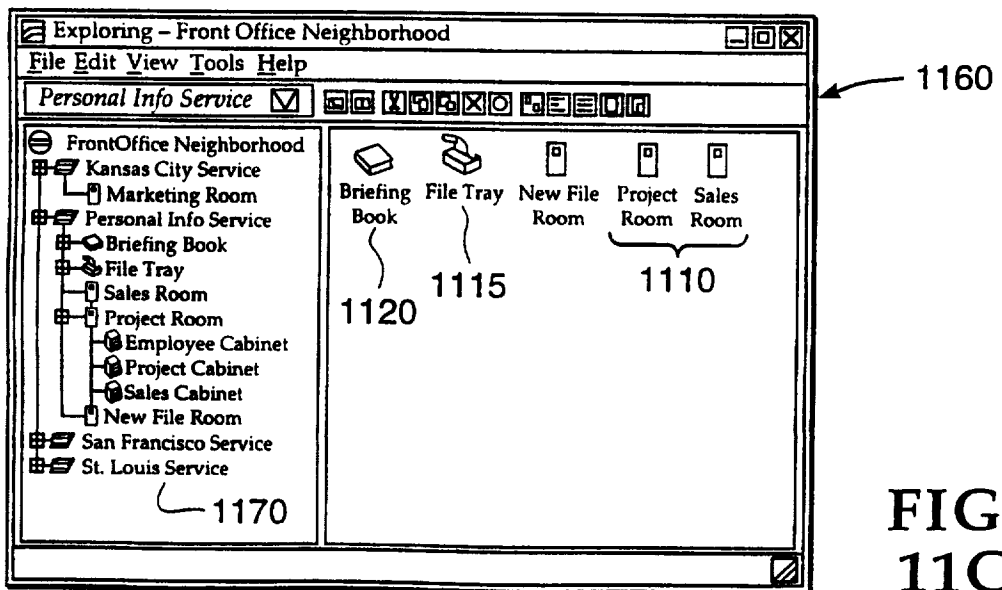


FIG. 11C

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US97/15953

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER IPC(6) :G06F 12/00, 12/14, 12/16 US CL :395/186; 707/9 According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC | | |
| B. FIELDS SEARCHED Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols) U.S. : 395/186; 707/9; 395/187.01, 188.01; 180/4, 23, 25, 55 Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used) MAYA, APS | | |
| C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT | | |
| Category* | Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages | Relevant to claim No. |
| A | US 5,263,165 A (JANIS) 16 November 1993, Abstract | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 19-21, 22, 28-31, 38, 39 |
| A | US 5,144,557 A (WANG et al.) 01 September 1992, Abstract | 3, 22, 25, 35 |
| A | US 5,418,942 A (KRAWCHUK et al) 23 May 1995, col. 5, lines 47-56. | 34, 36 |
| A | US 5,414,844 A (WANG) 09 May 1995, col. 2, lines 7-45. | 1-37 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. <input type="checkbox"/> See patent family annex. | | |
| * Special categories of cited documents: | *T* later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention | |
| *A* document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance | *X* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone | |
| *E* earlier document published on or after the international filing date | *Y* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art | |
| *L* document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified) | *A* document member of the same patent family | |
| *O* document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means | | |
| *P* document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed | | |
| Date of the actual completion of the international search 12 DECEMBER 1997 | Date of mailing of the international search report 05 MAR 1998 | |
| Name and mailing address of the ISA/US Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks 30x PCT Washington, D.C. 20231 Facsimile No. (703) 305-3230 | Authorized officer <i>[Signature]</i> V. HUA Telephone No. (703) 305-9684 | |

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US97/15953

C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

| Category* | Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages | Relevant to claim No. |
|-----------|---|-----------------------|
| A | US 5,163,147 A (ORITA) 10 November 1992, Abstract, col. 1, lines 50-63, col. 2, lines 1-26. | 1-37 |
| A | US 5,263,157 A (JANIS) 16 November 1993, Abstract, Fig. 2, columns 1-2. | 1-37 |