

METHODS TO GENERATE REVENUE FOR A GLOBAL INFORMATIONAL NETWORK-
BASED MEDIA PROVIDER

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims priority to the following U.S. patent applications:

[0002] U.S. Provisional Patent Application serial number 60/588,934, entitled "Methods to Adapt Search Results Provided by an Integrated Network-Based Media Station/Search Engine Based on User Lifestyle" filed July 16, 2004, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

[0003] U.S. Provisional Patent Application serial number 60/588,565, entitled "A Method to Access and Use an Integrated Web Site in a Mobile Environment" filed July 16, 2004, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

[0004] U.S. Provisional Patent Application serial number 60/588,568, entitled "A Method to Generate Revenue for a Global Informational Network-Based Media Provider" filed July 16, 2004, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

[0005] U.S. Provisional Patent Application serial number 60/588,566, entitled "Systems and Methods to Provide Internet Search/Play Media Services" filed on July 16, 2004, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

[0006] U.S. Provisional Patent Application serial number 60/588,567, entitled "Method to Promote Branded Products and/or Services" filed on July 16, 2004, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

[0007] This application claims priority to the following U.S. patent applications:

[0008] U. S. patent application serial number 10/664,407, entitled "A Method for Operating an Internet Broadcasting Station" filed on September 19, 2003, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

[0009] U.S. provisional patent application serial number 60/547,765 filed February 25, 2004 and U. S. patent application serial number 11/066,623 filed February 25, 2005, both entitled “Methods to Adapt Search Results Provided by an Integrated Network-Based Media/Search Engine Based on User Lifestyle”, both of which are incorporated herein by reference in their entirety.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0010] Certain embodiments of the present invention relate to advertising and media program broadcasting. More particularly, certain embodiments of the present invention relate to a method to generate revenue for a global informational network-based media provider.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0011] Traditional broadcasting, such as radio or television, combines programming content (such as entertainment content or news content) with commercial advertising content. Programming content is periodically interrupted by commercial advertising content in units of, typically, 30 or 60 seconds to generate income. A user of the broadcast is forced to wait until the commercial advertising segment is finished before he is able to resume consumption of programming content.

[0012] Public broadcasting, such as public radio or TV, typically depends upon corporate or foundation sponsors to generate income. The name of the sponsor associated with a certain programming content is often mentioned at the end of the broadcast of the sponsored program. Also, pleas for donations, in the form of on-air pledge drives, are made to users of public broadcasting to offset the cost of providing programming content. These pledge drives often interrupt programming content for extended periods of time.

[0013] On the Internet, search engines are used to find sources of information, media content, and advertisers. Advertisers pay the provider of the search engine to be found and are ranked according to bid, with the highest bid appearing first in a search list on the users PC (personal computer) screen. U.S. Patent 6,269,361 describes such a bidding methodology.

[0014] Users enter key search words to perform a search and the search engine provides a list of search results in the form of links to web sites. One of the drawbacks of current search engines is that they typically do not take into consideration any information about the user to provide a better search result that is more pertinent to the user's interests. A search engine may simply "know" that users who have searched for "A" have also searched for "X", "Y", and "Z". Searching today provides mostly sterile and often static listings of URL's that point to sites based on a Boolean search. Results often lack any real relevancy and often, users have to refine and refine to finally get what they are looking for.

[0015] Internet radio stations provide a user uninterrupted programming content as desired by the user, making it an appealing source of music and other non-commercial program content. Although some Internet radio sites allow advertisers to provide "pop -up" icons that a user can click on to go to the web sites of the advertisers, revenue generated by such advertising techniques is not sufficient for operating the Internet radio site. Internet radio stations therefore presently require users to subscribe to the Internet radio station in some manner, in order to access programming content of the radio station by paying a subscription fee. When a user accesses an Internet radio station, a commercial media player provided in or downloaded to the user's personal computer is typically launched in order to play streaming digital audio from the Internet radio station.

[0016] Further limitations and disadvantages of conventional or traditional approaches will become apparent to one of skill in the art, through comparison of such systems with the present invention as set forth in the remainder of the present application with reference to the drawings.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0017] An embodiment of the present invention comprises a method to generate revenue for a global informational network-based media provider, and more particularly relating to Internet radio providers. The method comprises qualifying at least one advertiser as a sponsor of an integrated web site provided by the media provider, wherein the integrated web site integrates at least one digital media content provider station, providing streaming digital media for example,

with at least one global search engine. The integrated web site is accessed via a global informational network. The method further comprises qualifying at least one user of the integrated web site by making predictive demographic and psychographic associations to a lifestyle of the user in response to at least one action taken by the user via a user interface view provided by the integrated web site. The method also comprises paying the media provider a predetermined monetary amount from the sponsor of the integrated web site every time the qualified user of the integrated web site accesses or clicks on sponsor information or web site using the global search engine.

[0018] Another embodiment of the present invention comprises a method to generate revenue for a global informational network-based media provider. The method includes qualifying a plurality of advertisers as sponsors of an integrated web site provided by the media provider, wherein the integrated web site integrates at least one digital media provider station with at least one global search engine, and wherein the integrated web site is accessed via a global informational network. The method further includes setting up an account of monetary funds for each of the sponsors where each of the sponsors has a web site on the global informational network. The method also includes having the sponsors place monetary bids for key search words that the global search engine uses to find the web sites of the sponsors. The method further comprises qualifying at least one user of the integrated web site by making predictive demographic and psychographic associations to a lifestyle of the user in response to at least one action taken by the user via a user interface view provided by the integrated web site. The method also comprises paying the media provider a bid amount from the account of the sponsors every time the qualified user of the integrated web site accesses sponsor information or their web site or the like, using the global search engine with at least one of the key search words.

[0019] The advantages and novel features of the present invention, as well as details of an illustrated embodiments thereof, will be more fully understood from the following description and drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

[0020] Fig. 1 illustrates an embodiment of a personal computer (PC) system displaying an integrated, Internet-based media/search (IIM/S) view having an Internet radio station sub-view and a search tool sub-view displayed on a screen of the PC system, in accordance with various aspects of the present invention.

[0021] Fig. 2 illustrates an embodiment of a system providing integrated digital media and Internet search capability to the PC system of Fig. 1, in accordance with various aspects of the present invention.

[0022] Fig. 3 illustrates an embodiment of an integrated commercial media player/user interface view provided by the system of Fig. 2, in accordance with various aspects of the present invention.

[0023] Fig. 4 is a flowchart of a first embodiment of a method to generate revenue for a global informational network-based media provider using the system of Fig. 2, in accordance with various aspects of the present invention.

[0024] Fig. 5 is a flowchart of a second embodiment of a method to generate revenue for a global informational network-based media provider using the system of Fig. 2, in accordance with various aspects of the present invention.

[0025] Figs. 6-12 illustrate exemplary embodiments of an integrated commercial media player/user interface view provided by the system of Fig. 2 which represent various music genres, in accordance with various aspects of the present invention.

[0026] Figs. 13-15 each illustrate an exemplary embodiment of a user interface view having a selected embedded media player, in accordance with various aspects of the present invention.

[0027] Fig. 16 illustrates an exemplary embodiment of a user interface view showing certain user-selectable choices, in accordance with various aspects of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0028] Fig. 1 illustrates a schematic block diagram of an embodiment of a personal computer (PC) system **100** displaying an integrated, Internet-based media/search (IIM/S) user interface view **110** having an Internet radio or other media station view **115** and a search tool sub-view **120** displayed on a screen **130** of the PC system **100**. Although this embodiment represents various aspects of the present invention, alternative approaches such as making the search tool the primary view and having the Internet media station as a sub-view are contemplated.

[0029] Referring to Fig. 1, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, the PC system **100** includes the screen **130**, a mouse **140**, a keyboard **150**, a PC processing unit **160**, and speakers **170**. The PC screen **130**, the mouse **140**, the keyboard **150**, and the speakers **170** each interface to the PC processing unit **160**. The PC processing unit **160** includes a media player module **180** capable of processing and playing or viewing digital media, such as streaming audio or other or video as an example. The PC processing unit **160** also includes an Internet browser **190** capable of accessing web addresses on the Internet.

[0030] The present invention is not limited to the type of media consumed by the user, and although examples herein relate to embodiments of Internet radio and the like, any other media consumed by users is contemplated herein. For example, a user may access media in the form of an on-line book or on-demand media, wherein the subject matter of the book, the author or other attributes of the material is used to provide search results according to the invention. Thus, a user may be accessing media at sites like Amazon.com or the like, and the concepts of the invention implemented to provide search information to the user according to the invention. Alternatively, the user may access media via a site such as Encarta.com, wherein the user may access media via the on-line encyclopedia, and the media used to provide search results according to the invention. For example, the user may view of photograph of the Mona Lisa, with search results generated according to the invention to provide information on the artist, period of other aspects related to this content. Thus, as should be evident, any type of media consumed by a user is contemplated in the invention.

[0031] In accordance with an alternative embodiment of the present invention, the PC processing unit 160 may not include a media player module 180. Instead, a media player object embedded into a user interface view may be provided by a provider of, for example, an Internet radio station.

[0032] In an embodiment of the invention, the media player module 180 comprises a software module residing within the PC processing unit 160. The web browser 190 may comprise a software module residing within the PC processing unit 160.

[0033] Fig. 2 illustrates a schematic block diagram of an embodiment of a system 200 providing integrated streaming digital media and Internet search capability to the PC system 100 of Fig. 1, in accordance with various aspects of the present invention. The system 200 comprises the Internet 201 and a server 210. The server 210 interfaces to the Internet 201. The server 210 hosts an IIM/S website 220 which provides the IIM/S user interface view 110 of Fig. 1, in accordance with various aspects of the present invention. The system also includes a database 260 interfacing to the server 210. The IIM/S web site 220 is accessed via the PC system 100 using the Internet browser 190.

[0034] Referring to Fig. 2, a user of the PC system 100 connects to the Internet 201 via traditional means such as a dial-up connection or a high speed connection such as a cable modem connection 230, for example, to access the IIM/S website 220. The connection to the Internet 201 may be wired or wireless. In accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, the IIM/S website 220 is hosted on the server 210 on the Internet 201, and is configured as an Internet radio station that provides various streaming audio or other media program content 240 (such as, for example, music) and various display views (e.g., 110) to the PC system 100 via the established Internet connection.

[0035] The IIM/S website 220 also comprises an integrated search engine 250 corresponding to the search tool sub-view 120. In accordance with various alternative embodiments of the present invention, the Internet 201 may instead comprise some other global informational network. In general, digital media program content may be of a variety of forms, such as audio and video, may be communicated in streaming format or other known manners. In an embodiment, the

digital media comprises at least one of streaming digital audio or streaming digital video in the form selected from the group consisting of musical pieces (e.g. songs), human discourse (e.g., talk radio), television programs, movies, music videos and news programs.

[0036] The IIM/S user interface view 110 provided by the IIM/S website 220 is displayed on the screen 130 of the PC system 100 to the user. In accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, the IIM/S user interface view 110 includes an Internet radio station sub-view 115 with various link choices (e.g., “media program content” links, “previously played” links, “learn more” links, other links, etc.) and a search tool sub-view 120. The various link choices are provided by the IIM/S website 220 to the PC system 100. For example, when a user clicks on a “media program content” link, streaming digital media content 240 is routed from the server 210 to the PC system 100 via the Internet 201. The media player 180 is launched within the PC system 100 and receives and plays the streaming digital media content 240 (e.g., a musical piece) through the speakers 170 or output to another suitable playback system.

[0037] The “media program content” link choices displayed in the view 115 include, for example, links to individual musical pieces or songs, an album of musical pieces or songs, songs of a particular artist, a category or genre of musical pieces or songs, talk radio shows, news, etc. For example, a first media program content link is the category of music called “Classic Rock”. When a user clicks on the “Classic Rock” category, streaming digital audio of classic rock music is transmitted from the server 210 to the PC system 100. Alternatively, when a user clicks on the “Classic Rock” category, another set of links is displayed to the user which provides choices of songs of individual musical artists that the user may select. Other arrangements are possible as well, in accordance with various embodiments of the present invention.

[0038] The search tool sub-view 120 includes a text entry area 121 to enter key search words, and a “search” or “go” icon 122 to initiate a search. A user may use the mouse 140 or the keyboard 150 of the PC system 100 to select any of the link choices and to enter key search words in the text entry area 121 to perform a search on the Internet 201. In accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, at least the entire World Wide Web (WWW) is available for searching via the search tool sub-view 120 using the search engine 250.

[0039] In accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, the user may search the Internet **201** using the search engine **250** while listening to the streaming digital media program content without interrupting the streaming digital media program content. The user may proceed to input key search words into the search tool sub-view **120** using, for example, the keyboard **150** in order to look for other web sites on the Internet **201**. The web sites that a user may search for may include many different types of web sites that are hosted on the Internet **201**, including web sites of advertisers who are sponsors of the Internet radio station. The Internet radio station view **115** may also be populated with search results automatically, in a manner similar to concurrently filed U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 60/588,934 entitled "Methods to Adapt Search Results Provided by an Integrated Network-Based Media Station/Search Engine Based on User Lifestyle", filed on the same date and incorporated herein by reference. The user may then simply "click" on such search results rather than inputting a search.

[0040] As an example, referring to Fig. 2, a user of the PC system **100** accesses the IIM/S website **220** (e.g., an Internet radio station) and views the IIM/S user interface view **110**. The user then clicks on a "media program content" link, for example, to initiate the reception of streaming digital audio, via the Internet **201**, from the server **210** which is hosting the IIM/S website (i.e., the Internet radio station). Once the user is comfortably listening to the selected media program content (which is, for example, classical music), the user then begins entering key search words into the search tool sub-view **120** or viewing search results, to search the Internet **201** while listening to the uninterrupted streaming audio or other media.

[0041] The user may also click on various link choices in the sub-view **115** while listening to the streaming digital media program content without interrupting the streaming digital media program content. The user may proceed to click on links using, for example, the mouse **140** in order to access other web pages of the IIM/S web site **220** or to access other web sites on the Internet **201**. The various link choices may include links to other streaming media program content, links to other web pages of the IIM/S web site **220**, links to other web sites on the global informational network (e.g., the Internet **201**), and links to other links.

[0042] As an example, referring to Fig. 2, a user of the PC system 100 accesses the IIM/S website 220 (e.g., an Internet radio station) and views the IIM/S user interface view 110. The user then clicks on a “media program content” link, for example, to initiate the reception of streaming digital audio, via the Internet 201, from the server 210 which is hosting the IIM/S website (i.e., the Internet radio station). Once the user is comfortably listening to the selected media program content (which is, for example, a song of a rock-n-roll artist), the user then begins to click on other links related to the artist (e.g., tickets to concerts, biography of the artist, new album of the artist, etc.) while listening to the streaming audio. It should be clear with reference to the examples of possible information supplied via the search links that an endless variety of information can be provided and available to the user.

[0043] In accordance with an alternative embodiment of the present invention, the IIM/S website 220 also provides a directory of commercial advertisements that a user of the PC system 100 may access and view. The commercial advertisements take many forms including streaming digital audio, streaming digital video, an HTML web page, etc.

[0044] In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, a radio announcer for the Internet radio station may periodically encourage users to perform searches using the search tool sub-view 120 and the associated search engine 250 provided by the IIM/S website 220, or to click on other link choices provided by the current sub-view 115.

[0045] As an alternative embodiment, the IIM/S website 220 provides an Internet television station, broadcasting streaming video and audio over parts of the Internet 201 that provide enough bandwidth to accommodate the video and audio programming. The Internet television station operates in a similar manner to an Internet radio station (i.e., providing an integrated search engine and/or a directory of commercial advertisements).

[0046] The main television programming content picture is reduced in size and displayed on the screen 130 to a user in a picture-in-picture (PIP)-type window when the user uses the search engine 250 or chooses to view a commercial advertisement. The main display area of the screen 130 is then used to display the resultant search view or the selected commercial advertisement. Alternatively, the search view or commercial advertisement is displayed in a PIP-type window

while the main television programming content picture remains in the main display area of the screen 130. Other user display options are possible as well. The television programming content includes, for example, news video clips or television shows.

[0047] As an alternative embodiment, the IIM/S web site 220 provides an integrated web browser and media player (IWBMP) that can be downloaded to the user's PC system 100 via the Internet 201. The IWBMP is customized to have a unique "look and feel". The IWBMP, once downloaded, is then used to access and play the streaming digital media program content 240 and to search using the search engine 250 on the IIM/S website 220.

[0048] As a further embodiment, the IIM/S web site 220 integrates a commercial media player with the user interface view 110. The integrated commercial media player and user interface view is downloaded to the user's PC system 100 and is used to access and play streaming digital media program content 240 and to search using the search engine 250 on the IIM/S website 220.

[0049] Fig. 3 illustrates an embodiment of an integrated commercial media player/user interface view 300 provided by the integrated web site 220, in accordance with various aspects of the present invention. The integrated media player/user interface view 300 includes a commercial media player 310 with associated functionality and a search text entry box 121 and a search initiate icon 122 with a navigation tool bar 320. The integrated media player/user interface view 300 also includes a user interface view 330 comprising a plurality of links to other web pages, web sites, other links, etc.

[0050] Alternatively, the various components of the IIM/S web site (e.g., the streaming media program content 240, the search engine 250, the user interface view 110, and other associated web pages) are hosted on more than one server.

[0051] Fig. 4 is a flowchart of a first embodiment of a method 400 to generate revenue for a global informational network-based media provider using the system 200 of Fig. 2, in accordance with various aspects of the present invention. In step 410, at least one advertiser is qualified as a sponsor of an integrated web site provided by the media provider, wherein the integrated web site integrates at least one streaming digital media content provider station with at

least one global search engine, and wherein the integrated web site is accessed via a global informational network. In step **420**, at least one user of the integrated web site is qualified by at least making predictive demographic and psychographic associations to a lifestyle of the user in response to at least one action taken by the user via a user interface view provided by the integrated web site. In step **430**, the media provider is paid a predetermined monetary amount from the sponsor of the integrated web site every time the qualified user of the integrated web site accesses a web site provided by the sponsor.

[0052] In accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, when an advertiser wants to become a sponsor of an Internet radio station, the advertiser describes his web site and an editor for the station reviews the description. The advertiser will also indicate which key words he will want to bid on and the editor will also review and compare the desired key search words to the description of the web site as well as to the actual web site itself. In this way, the editor is able to “qualify” the advertiser’s web site for the Internet radio station (i.e., make sure that the web site is legitimate, is the type of web site that the Internet radio station is willing to accept as a sponsor, and that the key search words are appropriate for the web site).

[0053] Fig. 5 is a flowchart of a second embodiment of a method **500** to generate revenue for a global informational network-based media provider using the system **200** of Fig. 2, in accordance with various aspects of the present invention. In step **510**, a plurality of advertisers are qualified as sponsors of an integrated web site provided by the media provider, wherein the integrated web site integrates at least one streaming digital media provider station with at least one global search engine, and wherein the integrated web site is accessed via a global informational network. In step **520**, an account of monetary funds is set up for each of the sponsors, where each of the sponsors has a web site on the global informational network. In step **530**, the sponsors place monetary bids for key search words that the global search engine uses to find the web sites of the sponsors. In step **540**, at least one user of the integrated web site is qualified by at least making predictive demographic and psychographic associations to a lifestyle of the user in response to at least one action taken by the user via a user interface view provided by the integrated web site. In step **550**, the media provider is paid a bid amount from the account

of the sponsors every time the qualified user of the integrated web site accesses a web site of the sponsors via the integrated web site.

[0054] In accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, the transactions associated with the sponsor accounts are tracked and managed using the database **260**, and the search engine **250** of the Internet radio station **220** will include filters to make sure a user is not just clicking on a web site to empty the associated account and, in general, to help make sure the user traffic is qualified (e.g., is not from a competitor, etc.). In general, user traffic that comes from an Internet radio station will tend to be very qualified (i.e., is likely to be legitimate user traffic).

[0055] However, additional techniques are also used to qualify users which include making predictive demographic and psychographic associations to a lifestyle of a user. The global search engine **250** performs a search of the Internet **201** in response to actions taken by the user (e.g., clicking on a link, performing a key word search) and makes the predictive associations to the user's lifestyle based on the user actions. As a result, links to certain sponsor web sites are updated to the user interface view **110** which are thought to relate to the user's lifestyle (i.e., the user interface view is re-populated with lifestyle-related links). In this way, the user is further qualified by sponsor links being provided to the user interface view **110** corresponding to the user's lifestyle.

[0056] Further, the advertiser environment may be intentionally limited such that a paying sponsor receives an enhanced position in the mind of the user. For example, when a user performs a key word search, the search engine **250** may, for example, only display links to the top five advertisers based on willingness to pay (i.e., bids). The search engine **250** does not list, for example, twenty search results which may, for example, include non-paying advertisers.

[0057] Referring to Fig. 2, a user of the PC system **100** accesses the IIM/S web site **220** and views the IIM/S view **110**. The user then clicks on a media program content link to initiate the reception of streaming digital audio, via the Internet **201**, from the server **210** which is hosting the IIM/S web site **220**. Once the user is comfortably listening to the program content (which is, for example, classical music), the user then begin, using the same site, entering key search words

into the search tool sub-view **120** to leisurely search the Internet **201** while listening to the streaming digital audio.

[0058] In this situation, and merely as an example, the user of the PC system **100** enters the key search word “putter” in the text window **121** of the search tool sub-view **120** and initiates a search. The search engine **250** performs a search and makes predictive demographic and psychographic associations to a lifestyle of the user based on the fact that the user is listening to classical music and the fact that the user searched on the key word “putter”. As a result, the search engine **250** produces a list of web site links to golf equipment retailers and displays these to the user on the PC screen **130**. The user then clicks on a golf equipment retailer listed and goes to their web site. As a result, the Internet-based media provider of the IIM/S web site **220** is paid a predetermined monetary amount by the first golf equipment retailer in return for the “hit” on the first golf equipment retailer’s web site via the IIM/S web site **220**. In accordance known methods, the payment is made by automatically transferring the predetermined monetary amount from an account of the golf equipment retailer to an account of the Internet-based media provider. Again, account transactions are tracked and managed by the web site **220** using the database **260**.

[0059] Other alternative methods of payment are also possible, in accordance with various embodiments of the present invention, such as, for example, keeping track of “hits” for a sponsor and sending a bill to the sponsor at the end of the month. As a result, uninterrupted, commercial-free listening is provided to the user, with the user having the option to search the Internet to find web sites of interest while, at the same time, helping to provide revenue for the Internet-based media provider by searching.

[0060] As a further example, accounts of monetary funds each having \$1000 are set up for each of three golf equipment retailers having web sites on the Internet **201**. Each of the golf equipment retailers place monetary bids for the key search word “putter”. The first retailer places a bid of \$0.05 per web site hit, the second retailer places a bid of \$0.10 per web site hit, and the third retailer places a bid of \$0.12 per web site hit. As a result, the three golf equipment retailers are assigned ranked values as:

[0061] rank = #1: third golf equipment retailer (bid the most)

[0062] rank = #2: second golf equipment retailer (bid the second most)

[0063] rank = #3: first golf equipment retailer (bid the least)

[0064] Therefore, when a user searches on the key search word “putter”, the three golf equipment retailers will appear in rank order (i.e., #1, #2, #3) in the resultant search list in the user interface view 110. When a user goes to, for example, the second golf equipment retailer’s web site, the bid amount (i.e., \$0.10) is paid to the provider of the IIM/S web site 220 from the account of the second golf equipment retailer (i.e., a paying sponsor).

[0065] Non-paying entities (i.e., non-sponsors) also appear in the resultant search list since the search is global. However, the paying sponsors are given priority by being listed near the top of the search list, ahead of any non-paying entities.

[0066] Other alternative methods of payment and resultant ranking are possible as well, in accordance with various embodiments of the present invention. For example, a sponsor of the IIM/S web site 220 might pay an additional premium, above and beyond the bid amount per key search word, to always be placed at the top of the resultant search list when certain competitors also appear in the resultant search list, no matter what the key search word and bid amount are that produce the search list.

[0067] Alternatively, a user of the IIM/S web site 220 may access a directory of commercial advertisements provided by the IIM/S web site 220. When the user selects a commercial advertisement to view, the Internet media provider is paid a predetermined amount by the associated advertiser (i.e., sponsor). The directory includes, for example, files of video and/or audio that get streamed to the user, or includes links to web sites of the advertisers.

[0068] In accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, links that are populated to the user interface view 110 appear with commercial icons adjacent to the links. When a user clicks on a commercial icon, an audio and/or video commercial is streamed and played through the media player 180, for example. As a result, the user is provided with the option to view a

commercial advertisement of a sponsor before accessing the sponsor's web site by clicking on the associated link.

[0069] In the present invention, the global search engine **250** may be provided by the global informational network-based media provider of the integrated web site **220** as part of the integrated web site **220**. However, the integrated web site **220** also provides the option of direct access to other search engines (e.g., GoogleTM, Yahoo®) as well. Arrangements are made with the providers of the other search engines to pay a predetermined amount to the provider of the integrated web site **220** every time a user of the integrated web site **220** accesses another's search engine directly from the integrated web site **220**.

[0070] As an alternative, providers of other search engines pay a flat fee to the provider of the integrated web site **220** for users of the integrated web site **220** to have direct access to the other search engines from the integrated web site **220**.

[0071] Figs. 6-12 illustrate exemplary embodiments of an integrated commercial media player/user interface view provided by the system **200** of Fig. 2 which represent various music genres, in accordance with various aspects of the present invention. Fig. 6 illustrates an exemplary view **600** representing music of the 1970's. Fig. 7 illustrates an exemplary view **700** representing music of the 1980's. Fig. 8 illustrates an exemplary view **800** representing acoustic music. Fig. 9 illustrates an exemplary view **900** representing beat music. Fig. 10 illustrates an exemplary view **1000** representing classical music. Fig. 11 illustrates an exemplary view **1100** representing Jazz music. Fig. 12 illustrates an exemplary view **1200** representing rock music.

[0072] In the present invention, a media player object may be embedded into a frame-less pop-up window and is provided by the provider of the Internet radio station from the server 210. HTML is used to show the "now playing" information and the search view information in the pop-up window. The embedded media player object is used to play the stream of digital media data in any one of, for example, three selectable formats including QuickTime, real or MP3, or Windows Media. Each selectable format includes its own stream controls which are displayed near the bottom of the pop-up user interface view. The user selects which media player to have

embedded and a user interface view is provided to the user which includes a navigation tool near the top of the user interface view, populated search/play area which includes populated links based on a presearch which was performed by the search engine using ID3/ID4 tag data. A separate media player is not needed on the user's PC. The user interface view constitutes a search player which is a graphical image which has a media player built-in such that the embedded media player allows consumption of the media.

[0073] Figs. 13-15 each illustrate an exemplary embodiment of a user interface view (pop-up window) having a selected embedded media player, in accordance with various aspects of the present invention. Fig. 13 represents a search player user interface view **1300** comprising an embedded windows media player object. Fig. 14 represents a search player user interface view **1400** comprising an embedded QuickTime media player object. Fig. 15 represents a search player user interface view **1500** comprising an embedded REAL or MP3 media player object. The stream controls, which are displayed near the bottom of the pop-up user interface view, are different for each type of embedded media player.

[0074] Fig. 16 illustrates an exemplary embodiment of a user interface view **1600** showing certain user-selectable choices (**1601-1603**), in accordance with various aspects of the present invention. The user may select a channel **1601** corresponding to a genre of music, a media player **1602** (e.g., Windows Media, QuickTime, Real), and a quality of the stream **1603** (e.g., AM, FM, CD). When the user then selects "click to listen" **1604**, the pop-up window of Figs. 13-15 appears with the selected embedded media player object.

[0075] In summary, methods are disclosed for generating revenue for a global informational network-based media provider (e.g., an Internet radio station). Advertisers and users are qualified and an integrated web site, providing streaming digital media and search capability, is used to link qualified users to qualified advertisers (i.e., sponsors of the integrated web site). Revenue is generated to the media provider when users access web sites of the sponsors.

[0076] While the invention has been described with reference to certain embodiments, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that various changes may be made and equivalents may be substituted without departing from the scope of the invention. In addition, many modifications

may be made to adapt a particular situation or material to the teachings of the invention without departing from its scope. Therefore, it is intended that the invention not be limited to the particular embodiment disclosed, but that the invention will include all embodiments falling within the scope of the appended claims.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method to generate revenue for a global informational network-based media provider, said method comprising:

qualifying at least one advertiser to be a sponsor of an integrated web site provided by said media provider, wherein said integrated web site integrates at least one streaming digital media content provider station with at least one global search engine, and wherein said integrated web site is accessed via a global informational network;

qualifying at least one user of said integrated web site by at least making predictive demographic and psychographic associations to a lifestyle of said user in response to at least one action taken by said user via a user interface view provided by said integrated web site; and

paying said media provider a predetermined monetary amount from said sponsor of said integrated web site every time said qualified user of said integrated web site accesses a web site provided by said sponsor.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said at least one advertiser is qualified by at least:

said provider making sure that said web site of said advertiser is legitimate;

said provider making sure that said web site of said advertiser is a type of web site that said provider is willing to accept as a sponsor; and

said provider making sure that any key search words to be associated with said web site of said advertiser are appropriate for said web site of said advertiser.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein said associations are made by said at least one global search engine.

4. The method of claim 1 further comprising said integrated web site re-populating said user interface view with an updated set of links in response to said predictive associations, wherein said new set of links includes at least one link to at least one qualified sponsor.
5. The method of claim 1 wherein said at least one action taken comprises clicking on a link provided by said user interface view.
6. The method of claim 1 wherein said at least one action taken comprises performing a key word search using said user interface view.
7. The method of claim 1 wherein said integrated web site is accessed by said at least one user via a personal computer (PC) system connected to said global informational network.
8. The method of claim 1 wherein said global informational network comprises the Internet.
9. The method of claim 1 further comprising providing streaming digital media programming content from said integrated web site to a personal computer (PC) system of said at least one user via said global informational network such that said streaming digital media programming content is not interrupted by said at least one action taken by said user.
10. The method of claim 9 wherein said streaming digital media programming content comprises at least one of streaming digital audio and streaming digital video.
11. The method of claim 1 wherein said integrated web site comprises an Internet radio station with Internet search capability provided by said integrated global search engine.

12. The method of claim 1 wherein said integrated web site comprises an Internet television station with Internet search capability provided by said integrated global search engine.
13. The method of claim 1 wherein said integrated web site is hosted on at least one server connected to said global informational network.
14. A method to generate revenue for a global informational network-based media provider, said method comprising:

qualifying a plurality of advertisers as sponsors of an integrated web site provided by said media provider, wherein said integrated web site integrates at least one streaming digital media provider station with at least one global search engine, and wherein said integrated web site is accessed via a global informational network;

setting up an account of monetary funds for each of said sponsors where each of said sponsors has a web site on said global informational network;

having said sponsors place monetary bids for key search words that said global search engine uses to find said web sites of said sponsors;

qualifying at least one user of said integrated web site by at least making predictive demographic and psychographic associations to a lifestyle of said user in response to at least one action taken by said user via a user interface view provided by said integrated web site; and

paying said media provider a bid amount from said account of said sponsors every time said qualified user of said integrated web site accesses a web site of said sponsors via said integrated web site.

15. The method of claim 14 further comprising assigning a rank value to each of said sponsors for each of said key search words bid on by said sponsors, based on said bids.
16. The method of claim 14 wherein said integrated web site is accessed by said at least one user via a personal computer (PC) system connected to said global informational network.
17. The method of claim 14 wherein said global informational network comprises the Internet.
18. The method of claim 14 further comprising providing uninterrupted streaming digital media programming content to a personal computer (PC) system of said user from said integrated web site via said global informational network while said user is taking said at least one action.
19. The method of claim 18 wherein said streaming digital media programming content comprises at least one of streaming digital audio and streaming digital video.
20. The method of claim 14 wherein said integrated web site comprises an Internet radio station with Internet search capability provided by said integrated global search engine.
21. The method of claim 14 wherein said integrated web site comprises an Internet television station with Internet search capability provided by said integrated global search engine.
22. The method of claim 15 further comprising listing each of said sponsors in a resultant search list in order of said rank value such that a ranking of #1 puts a sponsor of said sponsors at a top of said resultant search list.

23. The method of claim 14 wherein said integrated web site is hosted on at least one server connected to said global informational network.
24. The method of claim 14 wherein said plurality of advertisers are qualified by at least:
said provider making sure that said web site of each of said plurality of advertisers is legitimate;
said provider making sure that said web site of each of said plurality of advertisers is a type of web site that said provider is willing to accept as a sponsor; and
said provider making sure that any key search words to be associated with said web site of each of said plurality of advertisers are appropriate for said web site.
25. The method of claim 14 wherein said associations are made by said at least one global search engine.
26. The method of claim 14 further comprising said integrated web site re-populating said user interface view with an updated set of links in response to said predictive associations, wherein said updated set of links includes at least one link to at least one qualified sponsor.
27. The method of claim 14 wherein said at least one action taken comprises clicking on a link provided by said user interface view.
28. The method of claim 14 wherein said at least one action taken comprises performing a key word search using said user interface view.
29. A method to generate revenue for a global informational network-based media provider, said method comprising:
qualifying at least one advertiser to be a sponsor of an integrated web site provided by said media provider, wherein said integrated web site integrates at least one

streaming digital media content provider station with at least one global search engine, and wherein said integrated web site is accessed via a global informational network;

qualifying at least one user of said integrated web site by at least making predictive demographic and psychographic associations to a lifestyle of said user in response to at least one action taken by said user via an integrated commercial media player/user interface view provided by said integrated web site; and

paying said media provider a predetermined monetary amount from said sponsor of said integrated web site every time said qualified user of said integrated web site accesses a web site provided by said sponsor.

30. The method of claim 29 wherein said integrated commercial media player/user interface view is provided by said integrated web site by downloading said integrated media player/user interface view to a PC system of said user via said global informational network.
31. The method of claim 29 wherein said integrated commercial media player/user interface view is provided by said integrated web site as a media player object embedded into a frame-less pop-up window.

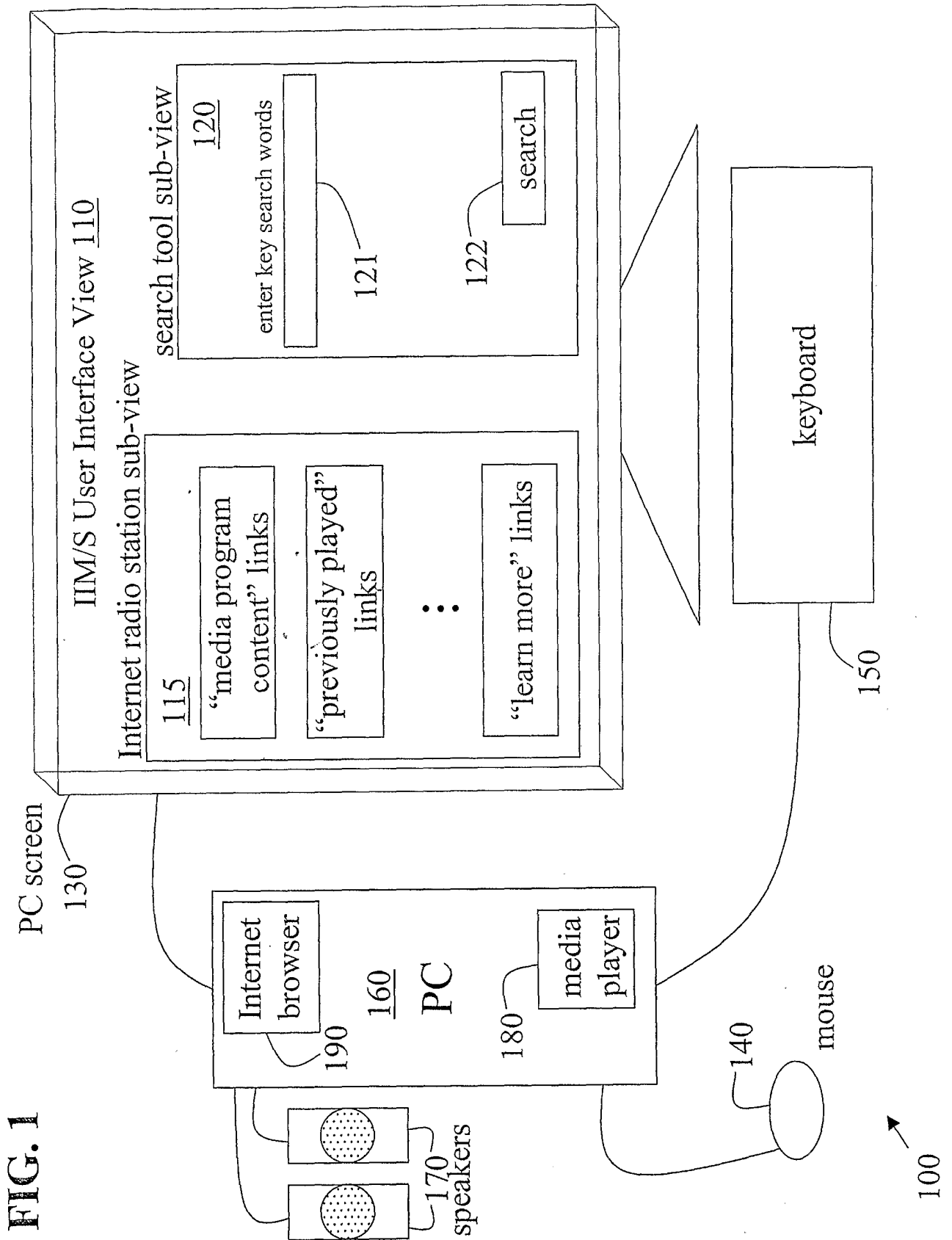


FIG. 2

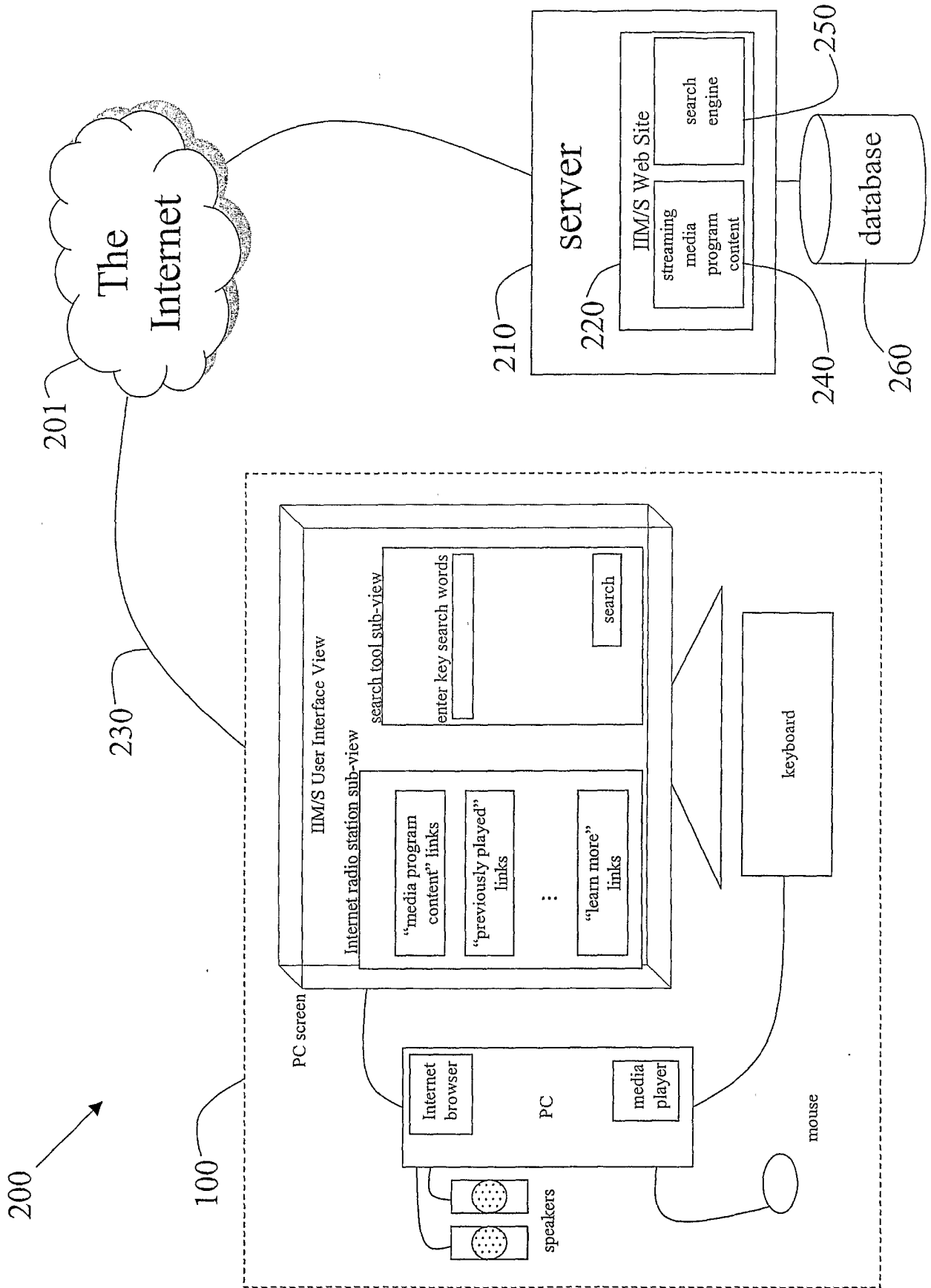
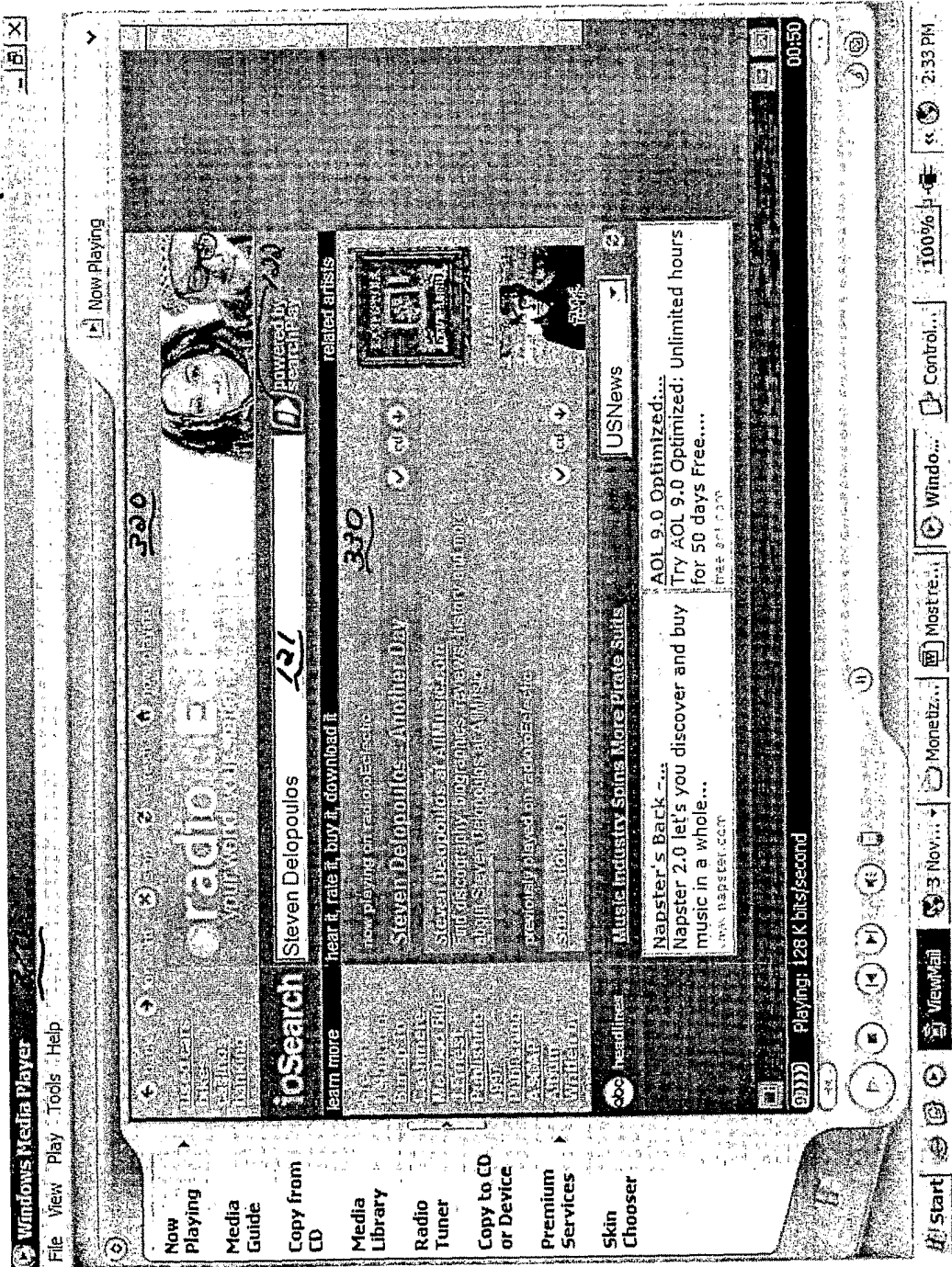


FIG. 3

3007



400

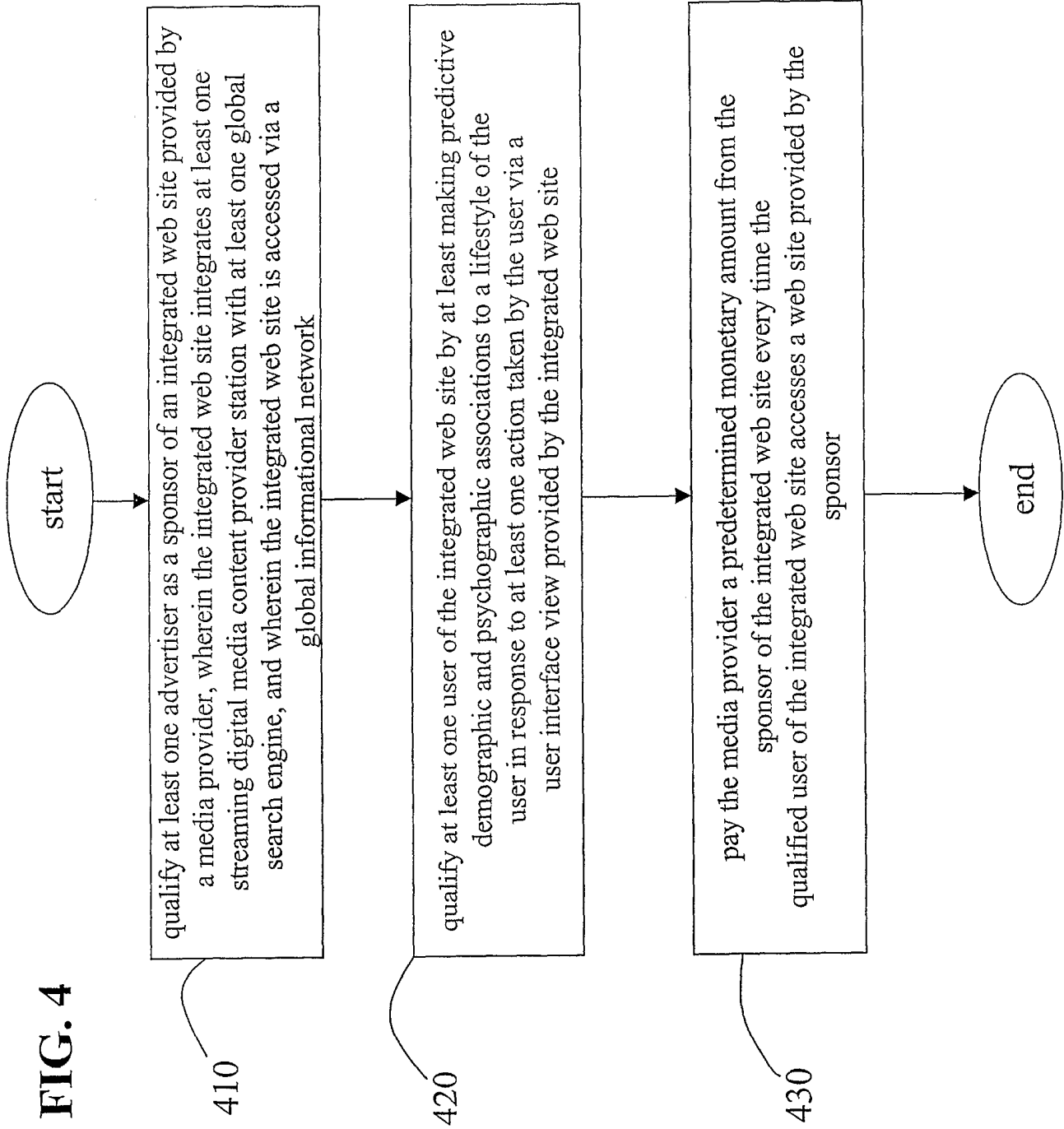
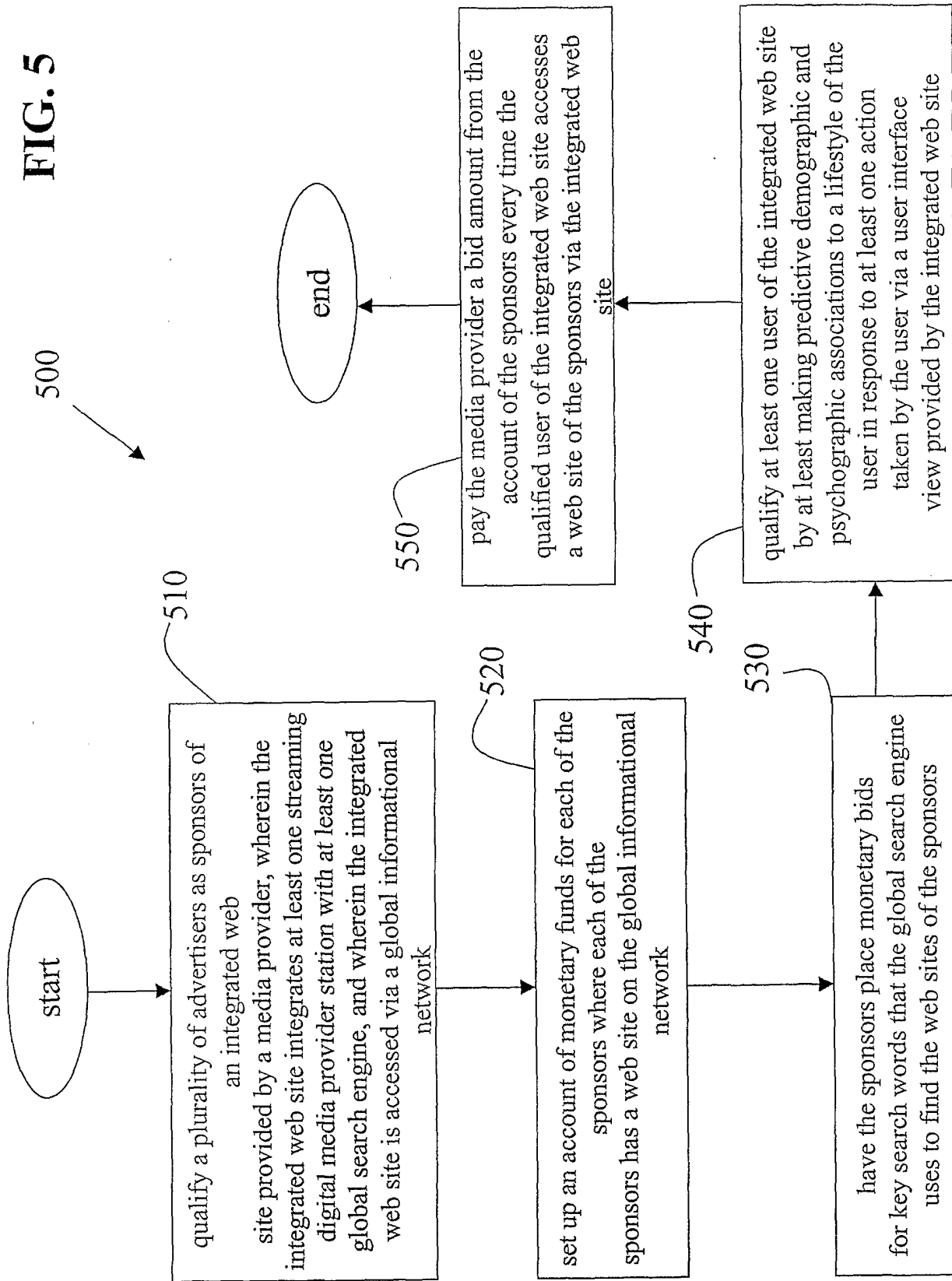


FIG. 5



6/16

F/G. 6

600

The screenshot shows the Windows Media Player interface with a radio station page. The page features a search bar with 'radio 700' and 'Jefferson Starship' entered. Below the search bar, there are several sections: 'ibSearch', 'related artists', and a 'Who are your ancestors?' section with a 'Click Here' button. The 'Now Playing' section at the bottom shows the song 'this is radio700'. The Windows taskbar at the bottom includes icons for Start, ViewMail, and Windows Media Player.

Windows Media Player
File View Play Tools Help

radio 700
Your World Your Station

ibSearch Jefferson Starship
learn more [hear it, rate it, buy it, download it](#)
now playing on radio700

related artists
Jefferson Starship - [Gather On Love](#) - MP3
Jefferson Starship - [Yellow Submarine](#)
Simply the Best - [I Wanna Dance with Somebody](#) - MP3
Spice Girls - [The Hot Chick](#) - MP3
Review - [Store](#) - [Reviews](#) - [Albums](#) - [Songs](#) - [Artists](#)

Who are your ancestors?
Your last name: [Click Here](#)

USNews

Now Playing
Song: this is radio700
00:12

Windows Media Player 100% 1:52 PM

Start **ViewMail** **3 Novell GroupWise 32...**

FIG. 7

2007

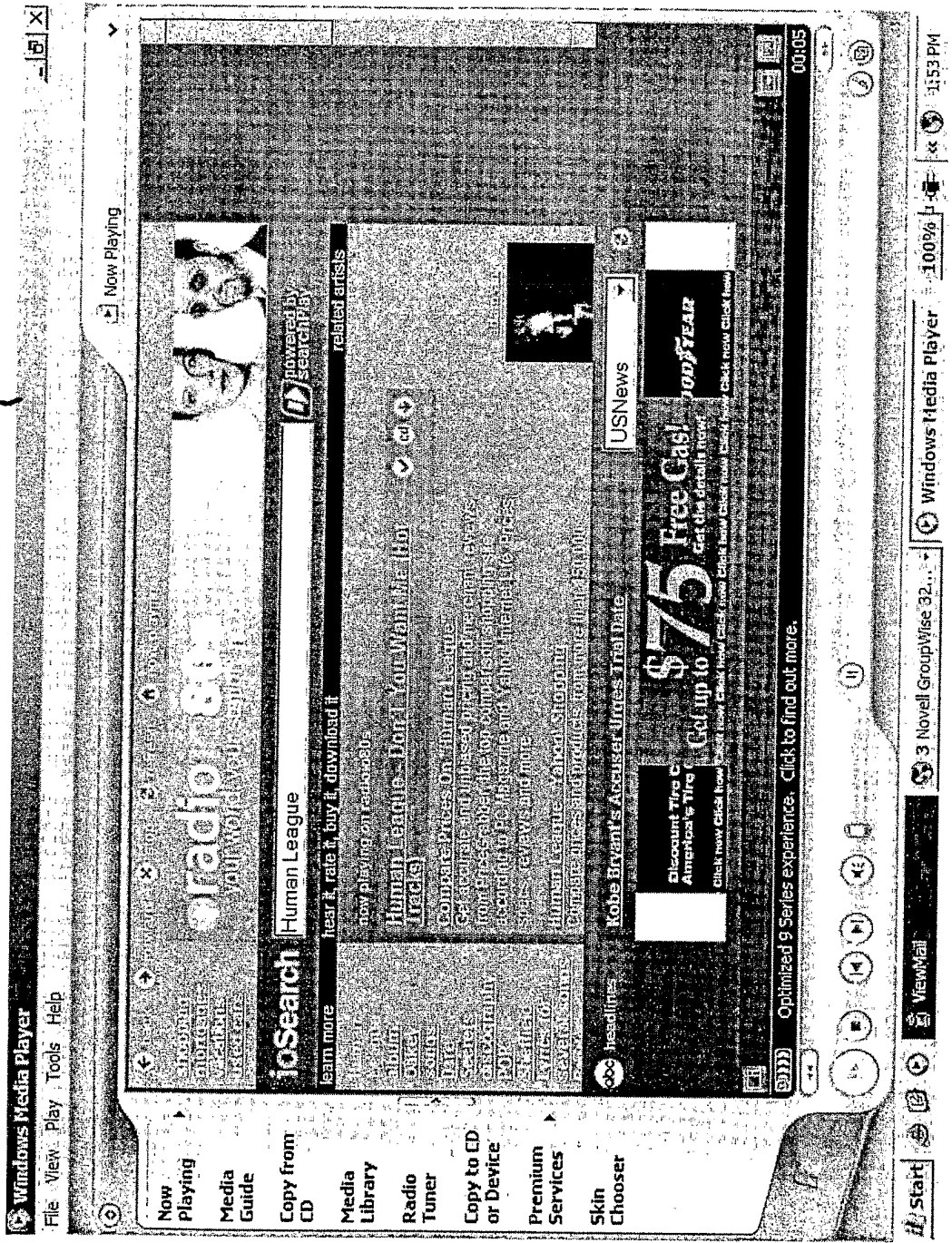


FIG. 8

8007

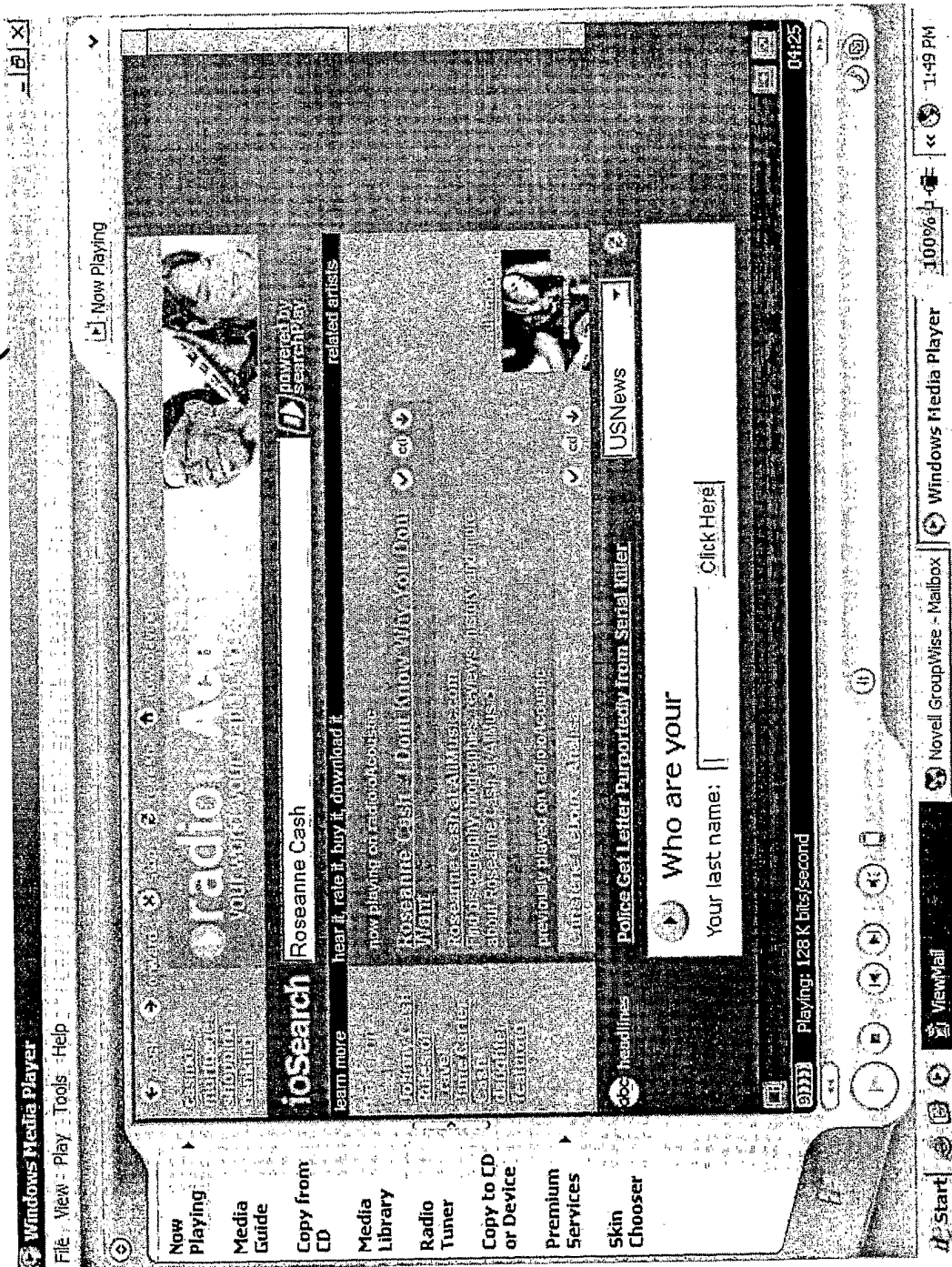


FIG. 9

9007

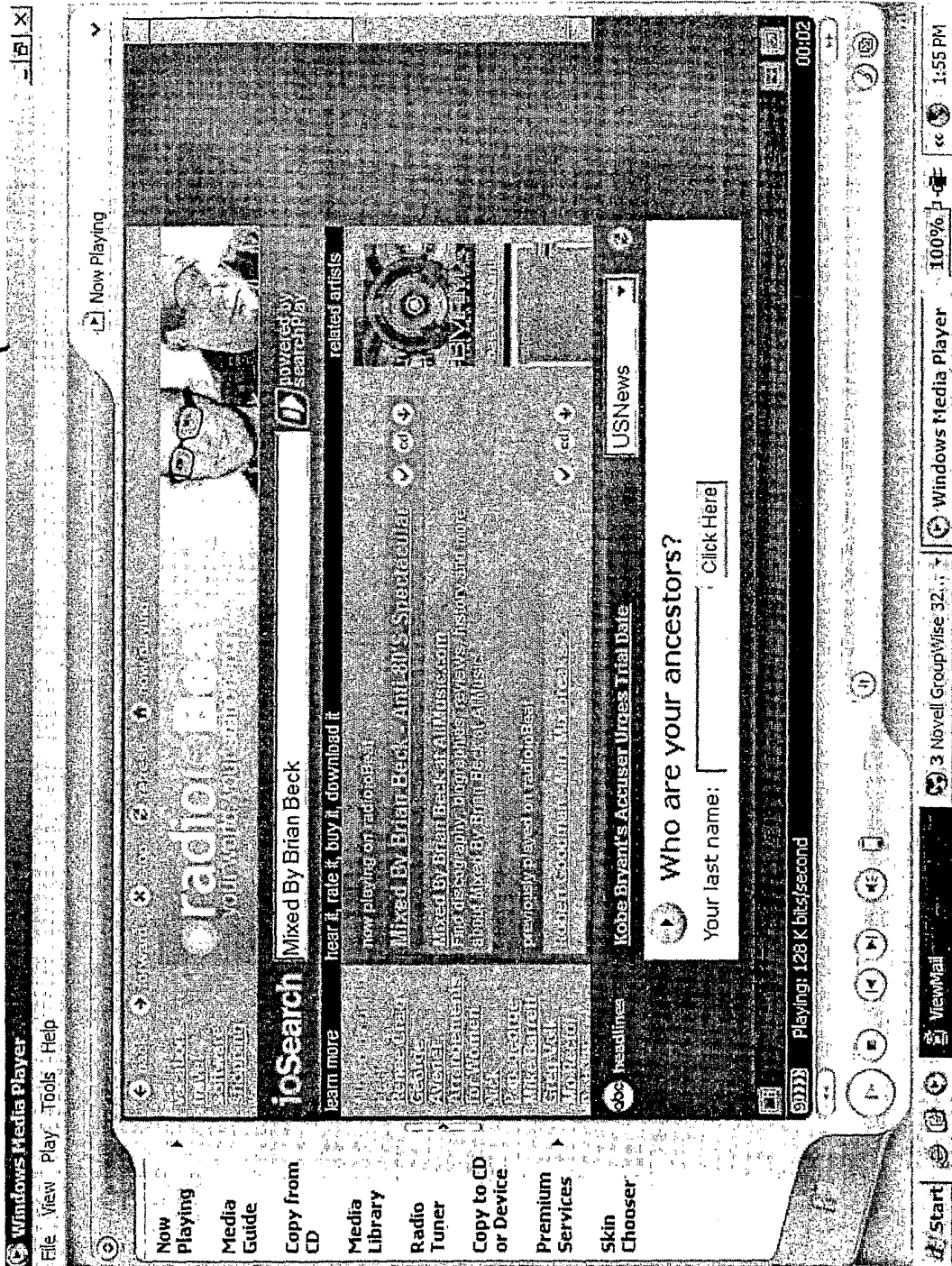


FIG. 10

1000

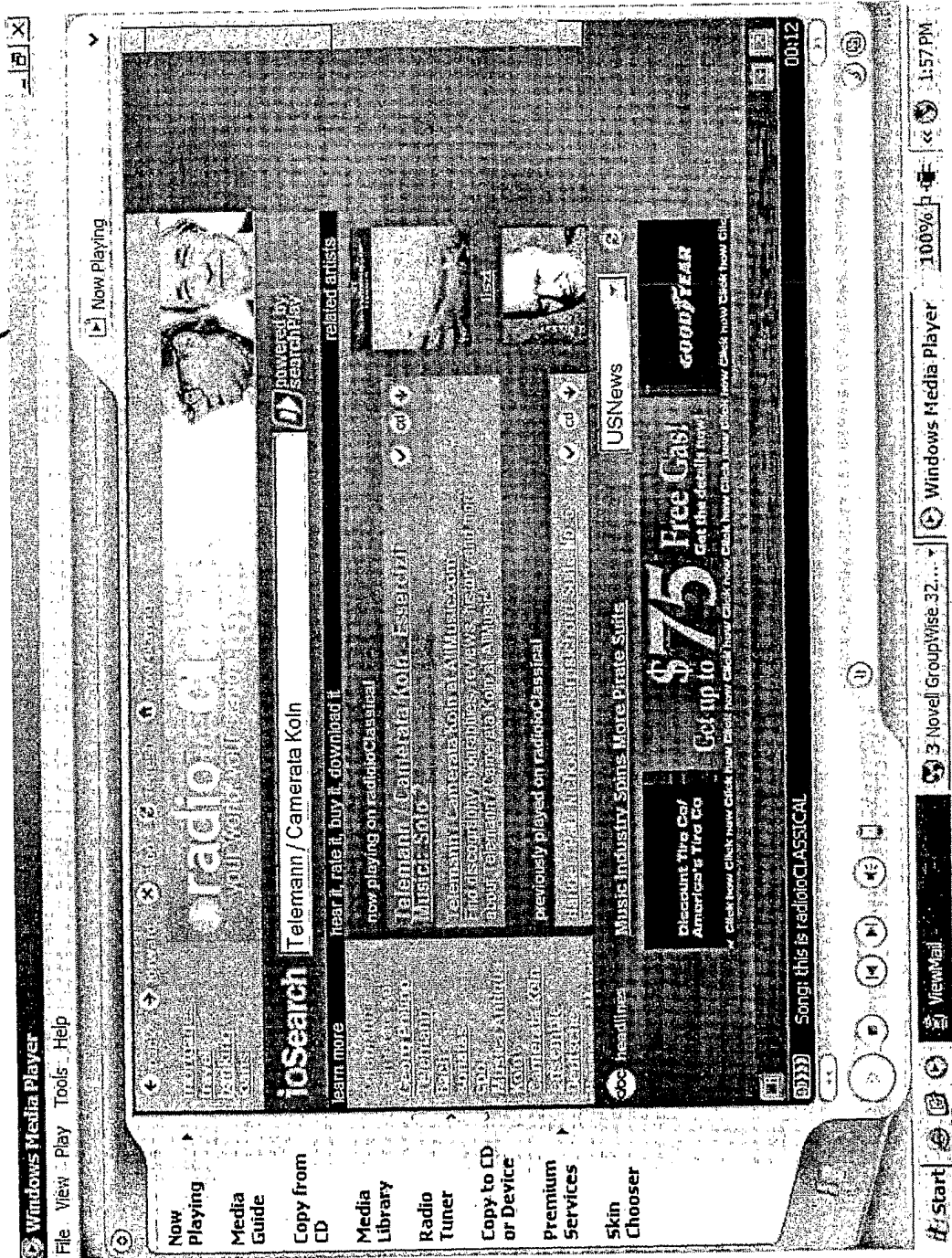


FIG. 11

1106

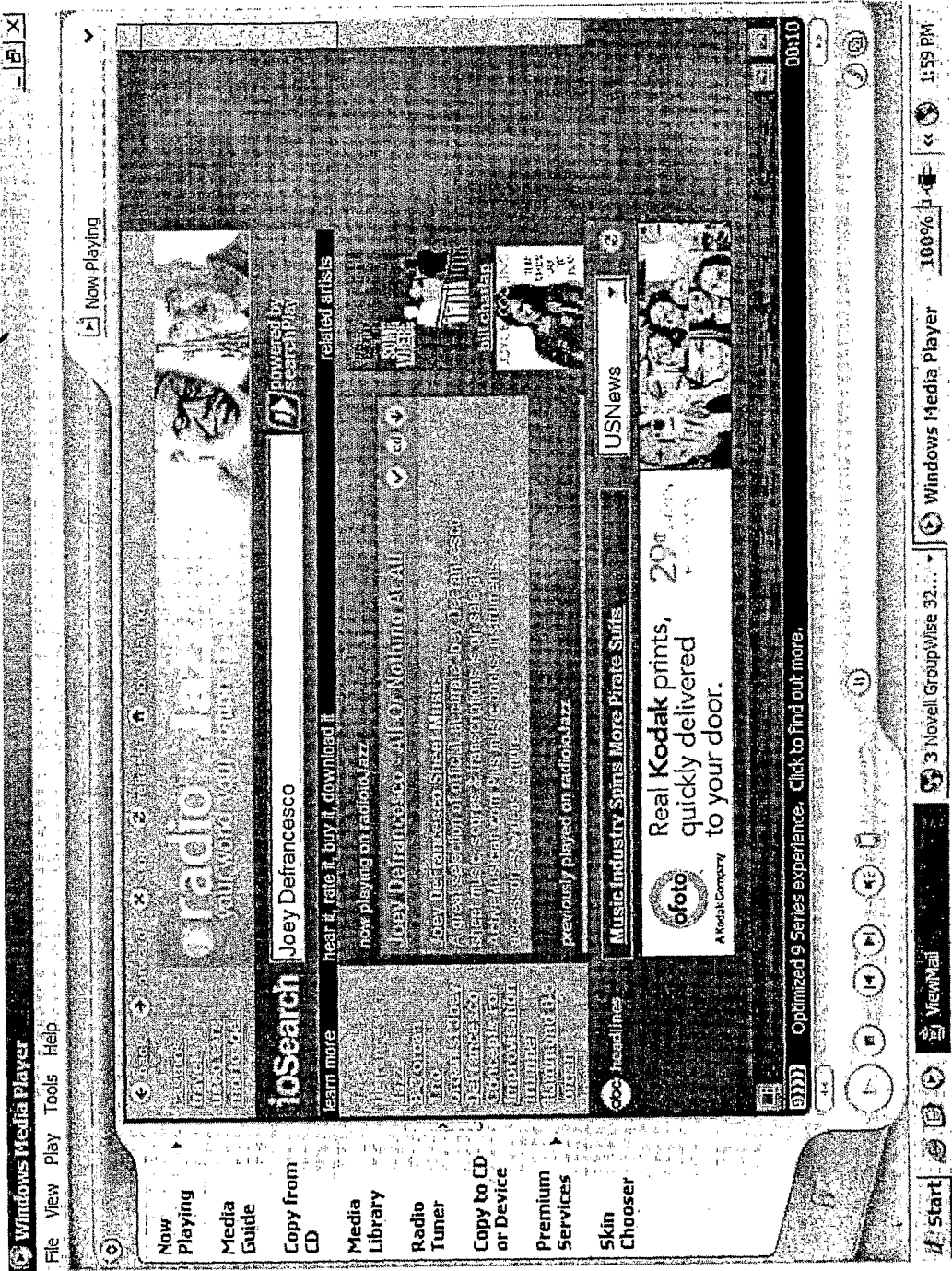
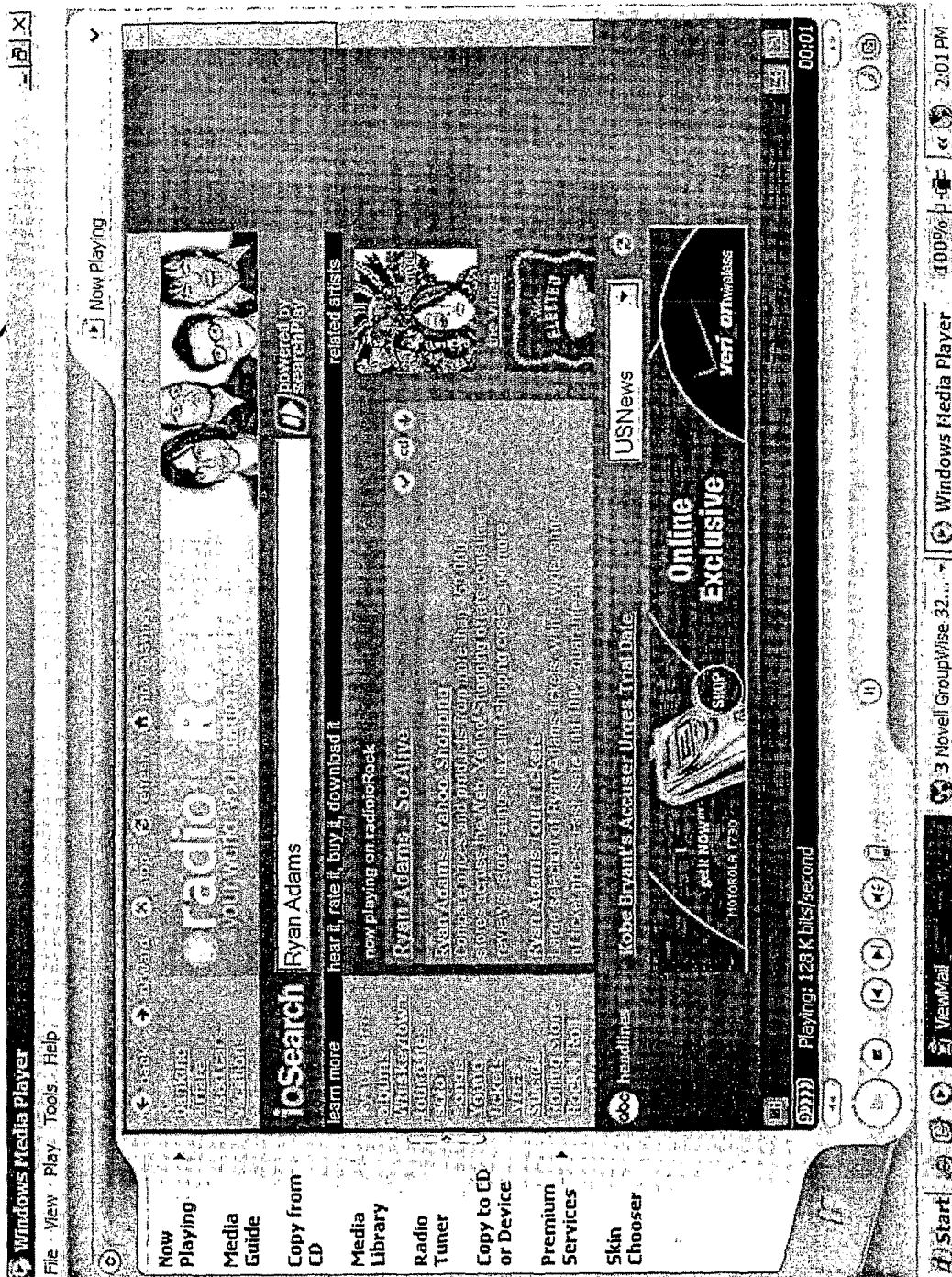


FIG. 12

1200



13/16
110.15

The screenshot shows a Microsoft Internet Explorer browser window displaying the radioELECTIC website. The search bar at the top contains the text "Lenny Kravitz". The page features a navigation menu on the left with categories like "Genres", "New", "Featured Music", and "Lenny Kravitz". The main content area displays search results for "Lenny Kravitz - Sissamama'slover", including a "now playing" section, a "featured music" section with album covers, and a list of "previously played on radioELECTIC" songs such as "Beastie Boys - Finish Line", "Cranberries - I'm Still Remembering", and "Melis Etheridge - Will You Still Love Me". A sidebar on the right contains a "Mini Worlds of Tree Holes Offer Insight" link and a "US News" link. At the bottom, there is a "VOXASE" advertisement for "CALL ANYWHERE" for \$29.99/month and a "Song: radioELECTIC" player showing a progress bar at 00:13. The browser's status bar at the very bottom indicates the current page is "http://home.hartlax.com" and the time is 2:03 PM.

1300 ↗

14/16
7/10/17

Microsoft Internet Explorer

radioELECTRIC

powered by searchPlay

10Search Donavon Frankenreiter

learn more hear it rate it buy it download it featured music

now playing on radioElectric
Donavon Frankenreiter - Free

Donavon Frankenreiter at AllMusic.com
Find discography, photos, reviews, history and more about Donavon Frankenreiter at AllMusic.com
Learn more

previously played on radioElectric

Kallinquinn - One Part Lullaby - Free	✓	📻	📄
For example - Self Implosion One Part Lullaby - Free	✓	📻	📄
Bea Band - Easy	✓	📻	📄
Jimmy Kravitz - Sistamama Love	✓	📻	📄
Headless - Think For Yourself	✓	📻	📄
Grant Harris - I'm Still Remembering	✓	📻	📄
Melissa Etheridge - Will You Still Love Me	✓	📻	📄
Sexy Woman Baez - The Rumble - A Real Like Life	✓	📻	📄
Lifehouse - Stanley Climbiell	✓	📻	📄
Indigo Girls - Free In You	✓	📻	📄

Have a VM

the tragedy of

How You Made Your Blog Into a Job?

USNews

T-Mobile

1000 WHENEVER minutes
\$39.99

Get a FREE Color Phone

Start

Novel GroupWise - M...

ViewMail

((radio)) - Microsof...

((radioElectric pr...

100%

Internet

2:15 PM

1400 ↗

15/16
F/G. 15

radioEcliptic presents searchPlay - Microsoft Internet Explorer

back forward refresh now playing radioEcliptic

radioEcliptic
your world of online music

toSearch MARY MCCANN powered by searchPlay

learn more hear it, rate it, buy it, download it featured music

new playing on radioEcliptic

MARY MCCANN - GREETING TWENTY NINE ✓ cd +

MARY MCCANN at AllMusic.com
Find discography, biographies, reviews, lyrics and more about MARY MCCANN at AllMusic.com
learn more

previously played on radioEcliptic

Donavon Frankenreiter - Here ✓ cd +

Folk Implosion - One Part Lullaby, 2 Parts To Go ✓ cd +

Folk Implosion - One Part Lullaby 03:11:10:00

Backland - Easy ✓ cd +

Lenny Kravitz - Sissamama Lover ✓ cd +

Beasties - Think For Yourself ✓ cd +

Gronberies - I'm Still Remembering ✓ cd +

Melissa Etheridge - Will You Still Love Me ✓ cd +

Sexy Worker Bees / The Humble - As for Like Life ✓ cd +

Lifehouse - Stanley Climbing ✓ cd +

Headlines: Could the Presidential Election Be Delayed? US News

T-Mobile: 1000 WHENEVER minutes \$39.99 Get a FREE Color Phone

start Novel GroupWise - M... ViewMail ((radio)) - Microsof... ((radioEcliptic pr... 100% 2:18 PM

1500 ↗

16/16
1-16-16

Microsoft Internet Explorer
Address: http://new.radio.com/

radio Home
your world. your station. our art.

loSearch powered by searchPlay

members only

premium streams

radio Eclectic

discover your world. your station. no boundaries.

loSearch NOW! powered by searchPlay

SoundPass Platinum
\$9.99 / mo
unlimited access to 24/7/365 access to all our on-demand streams, weekend radio, real or quicktime
free 7-day trial
order here

SoundPass Gold
\$5.99 / mo
unlimited access to 24/7/365 access to all our on-demand streams, weekend radio, real or quicktime
free 7-day trial
order here

SoundPass Silver
\$2.99 / mo
unlimited access to 24/7/365 access to all our on-demand streams, weekend radio, real or quicktime
free 7-day trial
order here

1601
1602
1603
1600

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Richard Parfing
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Internet
3:17 PM

1600 ↗