



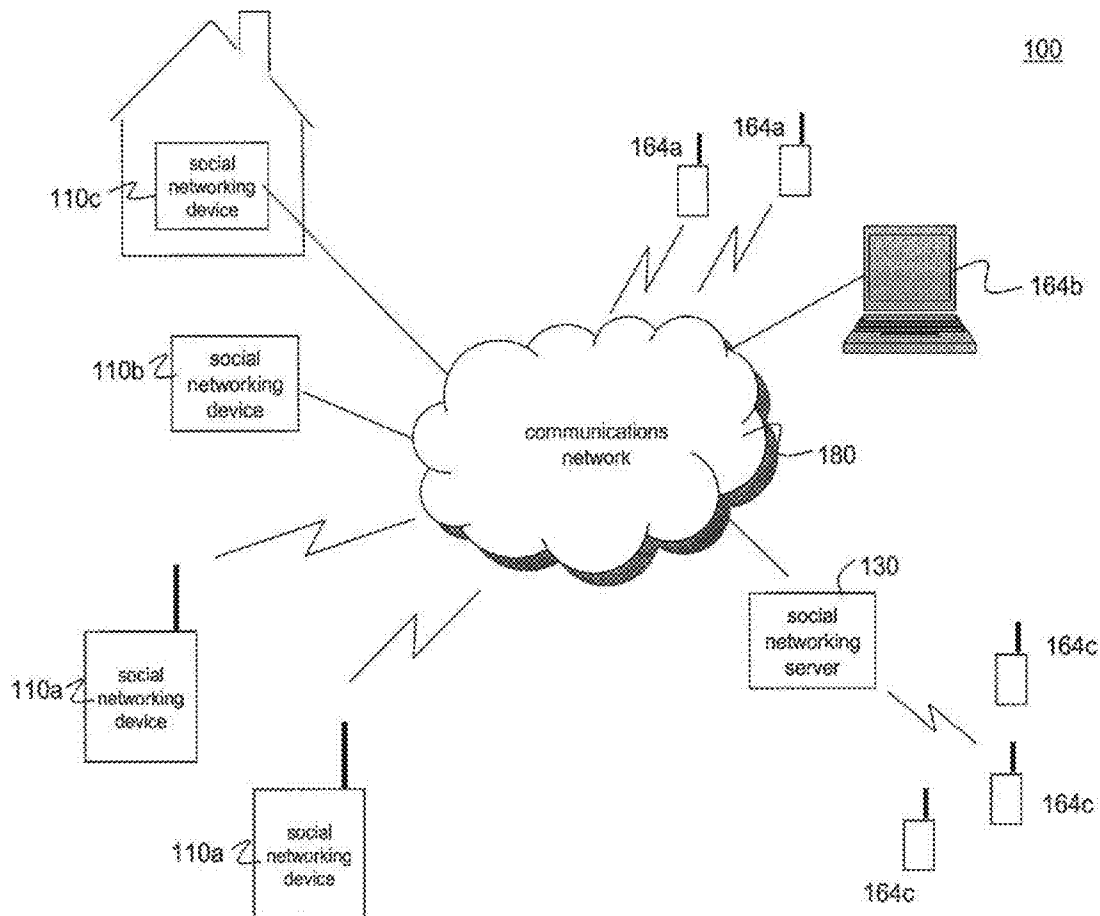
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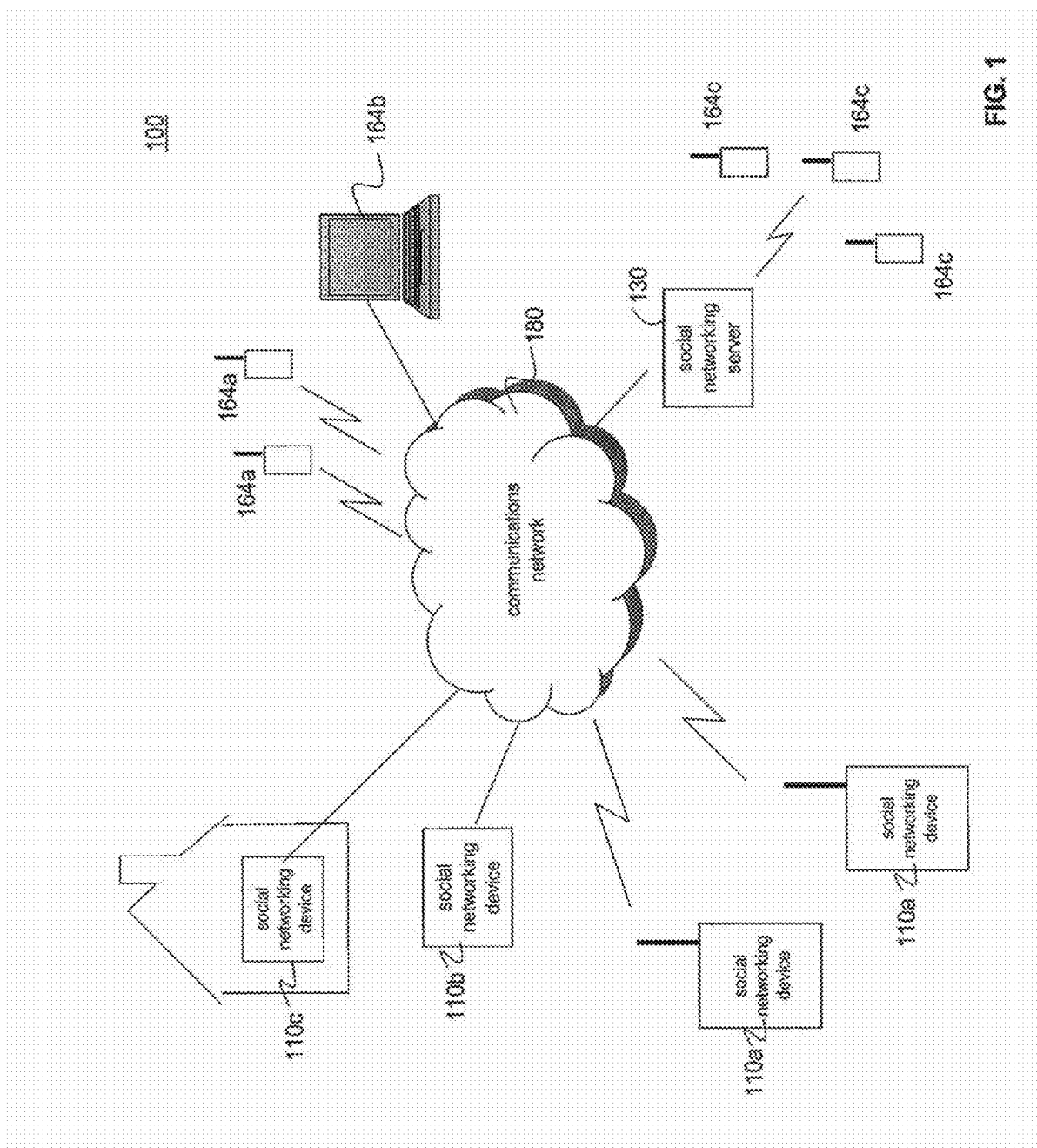
(19) **United States**(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Gittleman(10) **Pub. No.: US 2016/0255039 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: Sep. 1, 2016**(54) **SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR AUTOMATIC
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(US)(72) Inventor: **Daniel Gittleman**, Jackson, WY (US)(21) Appl. No.: **15/150,096**(22) Filed: **May 9, 2016****Related U.S. Application Data**(63) Continuation of application No. 12/537,090, filed on
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(57)

ABSTRACT

A system and method for automatic social messaging is provided. The social networking device includes an automatic social messaging module and one or more applications configured to coordinate with the automatic social messaging module. In a social network device, the automatic messaging module receives, from an application, an indication that a predefined trigger event has occurred. The automatic messaging module then accesses a set of event parameters for the predefined trigger event. The set of parameters includes a set of recipients for a notification message associated with the trigger event. The parameters may also include update information, message details, a filter criteria for the trigger event. The automatic messaging module then transmits the notification message associated with the predefined trigger event to the set of recipients according to the trigger event parameters.





210

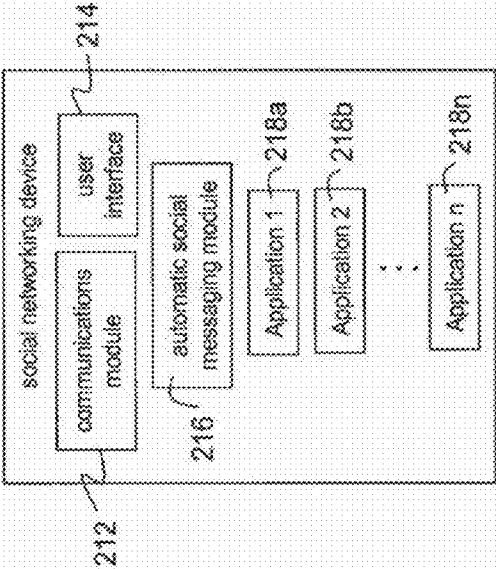


FIG. 2

300

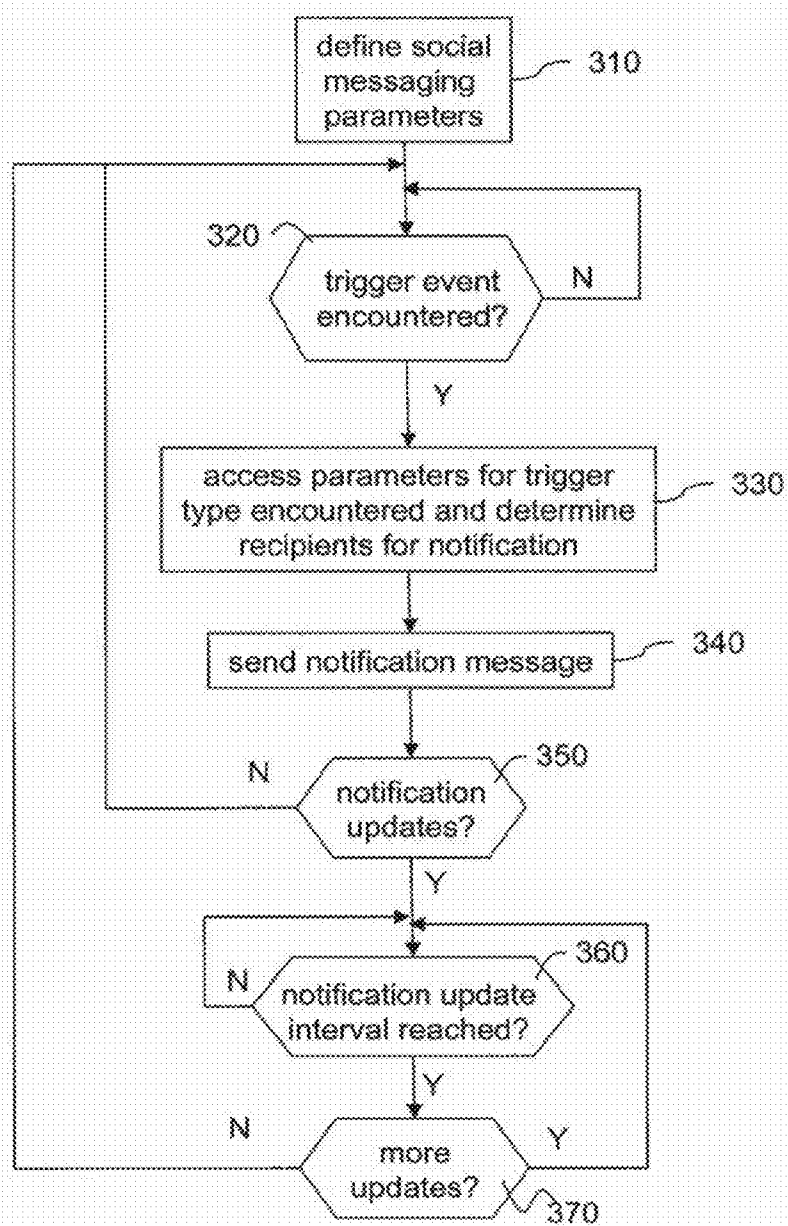


FIG. 3

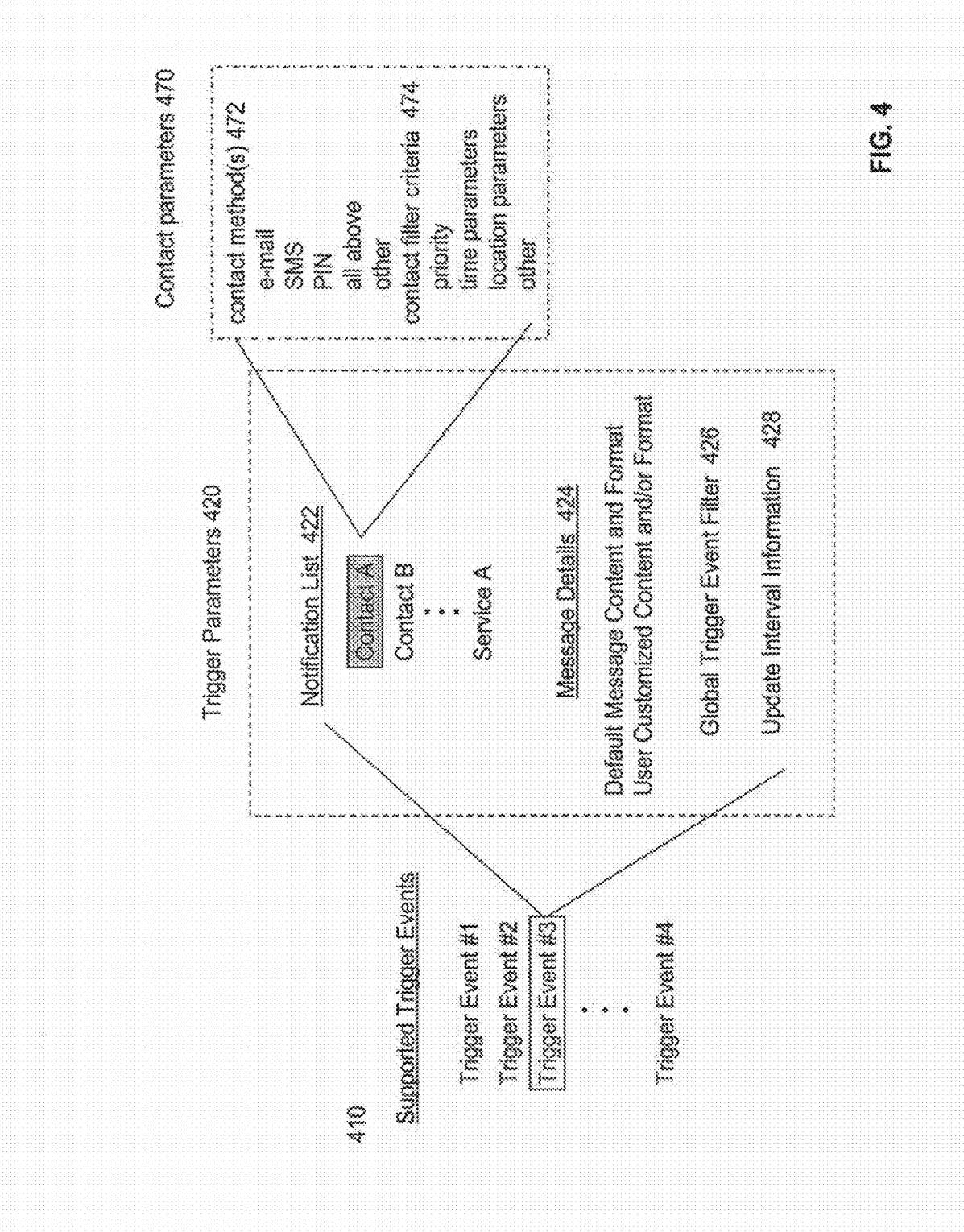


FIG. 4

503

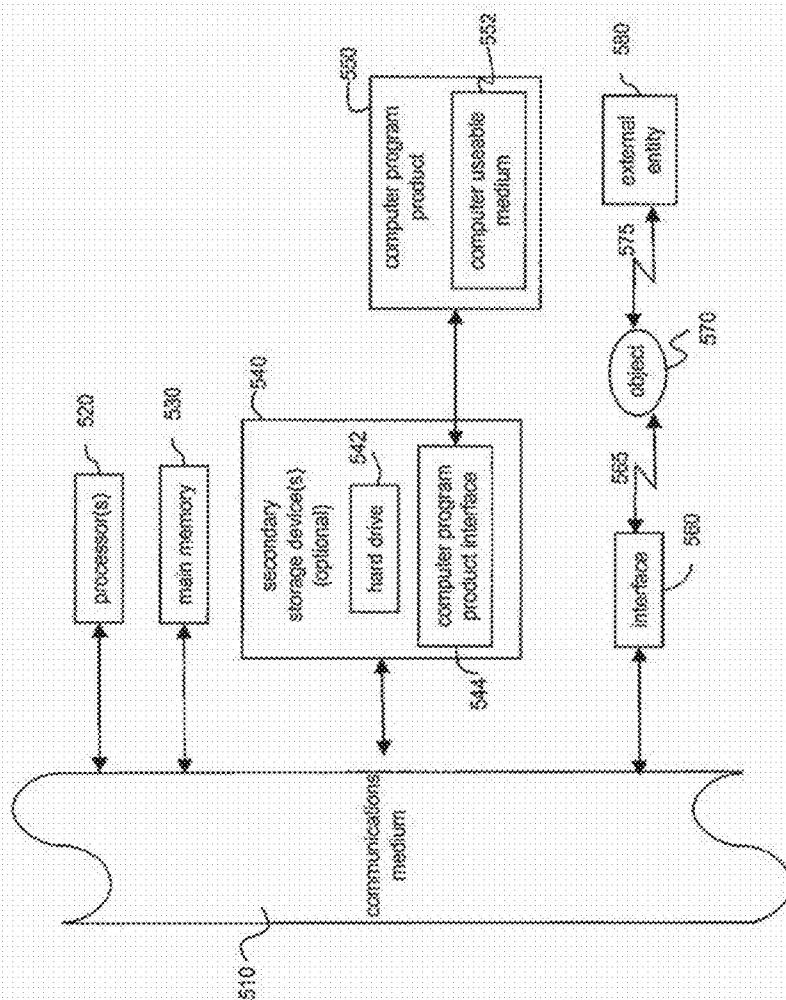


FIG. 5

SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR AUTOMATIC SOCIAL MESSAGING

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/537,090, filed Aug. 6, 2009, the entirety of which is incorporated by reference herein in its entirety.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] This invention relates generally to messaging and more particularly to systems and methods for messaging in social networking environments.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Social networking services like Facebook®, MySpace®, and Twitter® have grown in popularity in recent years. These services are appealing to users because they allow users to maintain contact and ‘keep up’ with each other by providing a forum for the exchange of personal information. Social messaging services are also extremely popular in that they provide a convenient and simple means for exchanging real time personal information, including what the user is currently doing or where he is currently located.

[0004] Social messaging services like Twitter® allow users to send messages to other users regarding their location and whereabouts. These messages (known as “tweets”) are not generated and sent automatically. Instead, each time the user wants to send a message, he or she is required to physically input the messages and send them. This requirement can diminish the experience by causing the user to send fewer messages, or send them less frequently.

[0005] What is therefore needed are systems and methods that automatically send messages regarding a user’s location, and/or activities, etc., without requiring user intervention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS/FIGURES

[0006] The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated herein and form a part of the specification, illustrate the present invention and, together with the description, further serve to explain the principles of the invention and to enable a person skilled in the pertinent art to make and use the invention.

[0007] FIG. 1 is a block diagram of an exemplary operating environment for a system for automatic social networking, according to embodiments of the present invention.

[0008] FIG. 2 depicts an exemplary social network device, according to embodiments of the present invention.

[0009] FIG. 3 depicts a flowchart of a method for automatic social messaging, according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0010] FIG. 4 depicts exemplary social messaging parameters that can be used with a social networking device, according to embodiments of the present invention.

[0011] FIG. 5 illustrates a block diagram of a data processing unit that can be used to implement the entities shown in FIG. 1.

[0012] The present invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings. In the drawings, like reference numbers can indicate identical or functionally

similar elements. Additionally, the left-most digit(s) of a reference number may identify the drawing in which the reference number first appears.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0013] The system and method for automatic social networking described herein provides a mechanism for an individual to automatically update a set of recipients on the current activities, location, and/or status of the individual. The individual is not required to take any explicit action to initiate the notification mechanism. Notification for pre-defined trigger events occurs automatically.

1. Structural Embodiments

[0014] FIG. 1 is a block diagram of an exemplary operating environment **100** for the system for automatic social networking, according to embodiments of the present invention. Exemplary operating environment **100** includes one or more social networking devices **110**, one or more recipient mobile devices **164a**, one or more recipient computing devices **164b**, a social networking server **130**, one or more recipient devices **164c**, and a communications network **180**. Although only one social networking server **130** is shown, in practice the operating environment may include a plurality of social networking servers **130**.

[0015] Social networking devices **110** are configured to perform the functions associated with automatically keeping a set of predefined recipients informed, in real-time, of information associated with the user of the social networking device. This information includes, but is not limited to, what the user is currently doing (e.g., listening to the radio, watching television, etc.), where the user is currently located, and where the user is currently heading (e.g., to a specific address, to a destination such as a restaurant, work, etc.). Social networking device **110** is described in further detail in FIG. 2, below.

[0016] Social networking devices **110** may be portable devices **110a** such as, but not limited to, mobile/cell phones or personal digital assistants. Alternatively, a social network device **110** may be a device located in a home or office such as social networking device **110c**. For example, social networking device **110c** may be a multi-media phone system (e.g., the Verizon Hub™ or the OpenPeak OpenFrame™ device). These multi-media phone systems typically have IP connectivity, a large display screen (e.g., 7" LCD panel), and special applications that allow the user to engage in a variety of activities, including watching movies, listening to music, playing games, scheduling events, etc.

[0017] FIG. 2 depicts an exemplary social network device **210**, according to embodiments of the present invention. Social networking device **210** includes a communications module **212**, a user interface **214**, an automatic social messaging module **216**, and one or more applications **218a-n**.

[0018] Automatic social messaging module **216** performs functions associated with automatic social messaging upon occurrence of a predefined trigger event. To perform these functions, social networking device **210** maintains a set of predefined trigger events supported by social messaging module **216** in a memory (not shown). A trigger event may be a passive trigger or an affirmative user action trigger. Example passive triggers include occurrence of an event without explicit user action (e.g., user arrival at a location) or a predefined time (e.g., alarm clock at 8 am). Example affirmative

triggers include triggers associated with an affirmative user action such as dialing a telephone number, answering a call, requesting a location, or requesting a direction.

[0019] A user of social network device **210** selects from this set of supported trigger events and defines associated parameters for each selected trigger event. These parameters include a message notification (contact) list, message details, notification update information, and global trigger filters. Exemplary trigger parameters are discussed in further detail in reference to FIG. 4 below. When the selected trigger event is encountered, automatic social messaging module **216** is configured to use the associated trigger parameters to determine the set of message recipients and content and format of the message to be transmitted. Automatic social messaging module then causes the message to be transmitted to the identified set of message recipients.

[0020] Communications module **212** enables communication between social networking device **210** and entities external to social networking device **210**, such as social networking server **130**, recipient mobile devices **104a**, and recipient computing device **104b**. Social networking device **210** communicates with these entities via communication network **180**, which may be any type of wireless or wired communication using any protocol. It is noted that multiple communications modules **212** may operate in a social networking device **210**. For example, in one embodiment, communications module **212** is an air interface protocol module (e.g., IS-95, GSM, etc.). In another example embodiment, communications module **212** is a TCP/IP stack. As would be appreciated by persons of skill in the art, other implementations for communications module **212** can be used with the present invention.

[0021] User interface **214** is preferably a graphical user interface that enables users to interact with applications provided by the social networking device **210**. More generally, user interface **214** controls how functions presented by automatic social messaging module **216** and applications **218a-n** are presented to users. The user interface **214** further controls how users interact with such functions and modules.

[0022] Applications **218** can be any application or function loaded onto social networking device **210**. Application **218** is configured to coordinate with social messaging module **216**. For example, application **218** may be configured to send social messaging module **216** a message when an action is taken by a user (e.g., request location, request directions, dial phone, etc.). Additionally, or alternatively, an application may be configured to send social messaging module **216** messages at predefined intervals. Example applications include, but are not limited to, location-based applications (e.g., GPS), alarm functionality, video watching functionality, event monitoring functionality.

[0023] Returning to FIG. 1, as described above, a user defines a set of recipients to receive notification messages upon occurrence of a predefined trigger event. The set of recipients includes recipient mobile devices **164a** or recipient computing devices **164b**. Recipient mobile device **164a** is any device that can display text and/or graphic information. Recipient mobile devices **164a** may be any type wireless communication device including, but not limited to, a computer, a laptop, a personal digital assistant (PDA), or a wireless telephone. Recipient computing device **164b** may be any type of e-mail capable wired or wireless communication device, including but not limited to, a computer or PDA.

[0024] The set of recipients for a notification message may also include one or more accounts or identities on one or more social networking servers. For example, a user may identify her Twitter® account as a recipient for the notification message. In this scenario, the notification message is sent to the Twitter® social networking server **130** which in turn transmits the message to the recipients identified by the recipient Twitter® account. Other social networking platforms or servers may also be utilized.

[0025] Recipient devices **164c** receive messages from social networking server **130**. Although FIG. 1 depicts recipient devices **164c** directly receiving messages from social networking server **130**, a person of skill in the art will recognize that social networking server **130** transmits messages to recipient devices **164c** via a communications network such as communications network **180**.

[0026] Social networking devices **110** automatically transmit notification messages to one or more recipient devices **164** and/or social networking servers **130**. In an embodiment, social networking devices **110** directly access recipient mobile devices **164a**, recipient computing devices **164b** and/or social networking server **130** via a communications network **180**. Communications network **180** may be a public data communications network such as the Internet, a private data communications network, the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN), a wireless communications network, or any combination thereof. The interface between social networking devices **110** and communications network **180** can be a wireless interface or a wired interface. In embodiments, social networking devices **110** are communicatively coupled (e.g., via RF, IR, WiFi, etc.) to similar recipient devices.

2. Operational Embodiments

[0027] FIG. 3 depicts a flowchart **300** of a method for automatic social messaging, according to an embodiment of the present invention. Flowchart **300** will be described with continued reference to the example operating environment **100** described with reference to FIG. 1 and the example social networking device **210** described with reference to FIG. 2. However, the invention is not limited to those embodiments. Note that some steps shown in flowchart **300** do not necessarily have to occur in the order shown.

[0028] Prior to step **310**, automatic social messaging module **216** is loaded onto social networking device **210**. In an embodiment, automatic social messaging module **216** is loaded during the manufacture process. In a further embodiment, the automatic social messaging module **216** is downloaded from a server onto the social networking device **210**. Alternatively, automatic social messaging module **216** may be directly loaded by a user of social networking device **210**. Additionally, prior to step **310**, one or more applications **218** configured to coordinate with automatic social messaging module **216** are loaded onto social networking device **210**.

[0029] In step **310**, social messaging parameters are defined for automatic social messaging module **216**. In this step, an individual defines events that will trigger generation of messages (referred to herein as “trigger events”), the notification (contact) list for the trigger event, and contact parameters. FIG. 4 depicts exemplary social messaging parameters that can be used with automatic messaging module **216**, according to embodiments of the present invention.

[0030] In the example of FIG. 4, during parameter set-up, automatic social messaging module presents an individual

with a set of trigger events **410** supported by automatic social messaging module **216**. The supported set of trigger events **410** may be defined based on the applications available on social networking device that are configured to coordinate with automatic social messaging module **216**. A trigger event may be a passive trigger or an affirmative user action trigger. Example passive triggers include an event (e.g., user arrival at a location) or a predefined time (e.g., alarm clock at 8 am). Example affirmative triggers include triggers associated with an affirmative user action such as dialing a telephone number, answering a call, requesting a location, or requesting a direction.

[0031] For example, if a location (e.g., GPS) application is loaded onto social networking device **210**, the set of trigger events may include “trigger on location request by user” and/or “trigger on direction request by user.” In a further example, if an alarm clock application is loaded onto social networking device **210**, the set of trigger events may include “trigger on alarm.” If a movie application is loaded on device **210**, the set of trigger events may include “trigger on movie start.”

[0032] Each trigger event has a set of associated trigger parameters **420**. The set of trigger parameters may include a notification (contact) list **422**, message details **424**, global trigger event filters **426**, and/or update interval **428**. Notification list **422** defines the set of recipients for the message generated by the trigger event. Notification list **422** may include individuals and/or an account or identity on a social networking server **130**. If an account or identity on a social networking server **130** is listed as a recipient, the notification message is transmitted to the social network server **130** which then disseminates the message to the list of recipients associated with the account or identity.

[0033] Trigger parameters **420** may also include message details **424**. For example, automatic social messaging module **216** may include a default message (content and format) for each supported trigger event. Automatic social messaging module **216** may further allow an individual to customize the content and/or format of the message for a specific trigger event. Note that automatic social messaging module **216** may further support the ability for an individual to customize the trigger event message on a contact by contact basis.

[0034] Trigger parameters **420** may further include one or more global trigger event filters. In an embodiment, an individual may set-up filter rules that define when messages should be sent for that trigger event. For example, an individual may set a filter to only send a message for an alarm trigger event Monday through Friday and not on the weekends. An individual may also opt to use different notification lists based on when the trigger event is encountered. For example, the individual may send a message for an alarm trigger to a work notification list on Monday through Friday and to a personal notification list on Saturday and Sunday. As would be appreciated by a person of skill in the art, other types of filter rules may be used with the present invention.

[0035] Trigger parameters **420** may also include trigger update information **428**. For example, a user may define an update interval for specific trigger events. The update interval may be time-based (e.g., update every 5 minutes), distance based (e.g., update every 5 miles), or event driven. For example, for a “direction trigger,” an individual may select an update interval of 5 miles. In this example, a message is sent to the notification list each time the location application indicates the social networking device has moved at least 5 miles.

[0036] A contact on the notification list has a set of contact parameters **470**. The set of contact parameters **470** includes contact methods **472** and contact filter criteria **474**. Contact methods **472** defines one or more methods to be used for transmitting a message to the contact. Example contact methods **472** include, but are not limited to, e-mail, short messaging service (SMS), and PIN. An individual may opt to send the message to all of the identified contact methods for the contact. Contact methods **472** further include the address to be used for the recipient (e.g., e-mail address, telephone number, etc.).

[0037] Contact parameters **470** may further include a set of contact filter criteria **474**. Contact filter criteria **474** allow the individual to define rules for what circumstances a message should be sent to the contact when the trigger event occurs. For example, the individual may indicate that a specific contact should receive only high priority messages. Additionally, or alternatively, the individual may indicate that the contact only receive the message during specific time periods or when the user is within a defined geographic area. As would be appreciated by a person of skill in the art, other types of contact filter rules may be used with the present invention.

[0038] Returning to FIG. 3, in step **320**, a determination is made whether a trigger event has been encountered. As described above, social messaging module **216** coordinates with other applications executing on social networking device **210**. In embodiments, an application sends a message to social messaging module **216** when specific events occur or alternatively at predefined intervals. For example, a location application may send a message to social messaging module **216** when the user requests a location determination or directions.

[0039] If a trigger event is encountered, operation proceeds to step **330**. If no trigger event is encountered, operation returns to step **320**.

[0040] In step **330**, social messaging module **216** accesses the parameters for the trigger type encountered. For example, social messaging module **216** will access the notification list **422**, message details **424** (if present), global trigger event filters (if present) **426**, and update intervals (if present) for the trigger type. Social messaging module **216** will further access the contact parameters **470** for each contact listed on notification list **422**. Additionally, in step **330**, social messaging module **216** determines the set of recipients for the notification message and the contact details for each recipient based on the parameters.

[0041] In step **340**, messages are sent to the list of recipients determined in step **330**.

[0042] In step **350**, a determination is made whether notification message updates are indicated for the trigger type encountered. For example, trigger parameters **420** may include a parameter indicating updates are applicable. Alternatively, the presence of an update interval may be used to indicate updates are applicable to the trigger type. If it is determined that updates are applicable for the trigger type, operation proceeds to step **360**. If it is determined that updates are not applicable to the trigger type, operation returns to step **320** where social messaging module **216** waits for the occurrence of the next trigger event.

[0043] In step **360**, a determination is made whether the update interval has been reached. For example, if the update interval indicates update notification every 5 minutes, social messaging module **216** will include a timer set at the update interval. When the timer expires, a notification is sent. In a

further example, if the update interval indicates update notification every 5 miles, social messaging module **216** will send an update message when location application indicates that 5 additional miles have been traveled by social networking device. As discussed above, an application may send messages to the social networking module at periodic intervals. In this example, the location application may send message updates every x seconds and/or every y miles traveled. The social messaging module **216** then uses this information to determine when the location based interval has been reached. **[0044]** If it is determined that the notification interval has been reached, operation proceeds to step **370**. If it is determined that the notification interval has not been reached, operation returns to step **360**.

[0045] In step **370**, a determination is made whether additional updates are required. If no additional updates are required, operation returns to step **320** where social messaging module **216** waits for the occurrence of the next trigger event. If additional updates are required, operation returns to step **360**.

3. Example Uses

Location-Based Triggers

[0046] In an example embodiment, a user is equipped with a portable social networking device that has a GPS or other location-determining functionality (e.g., RF or IR beacons). The portable social networking device may be a mobile/cell phone, personal digital assistant, or similar device. The portable social networking device is communicatively coupled (e.g., via RF, IR, WiFi, etc.) to similar devices used by other individuals that can display text and/or graphic information (e.g., phones, PDAs, PCs, etc.).

[0047] In this example, the user defines the set of trigger events to include a “trigger on location” event and a “trigger on direction” event. The following table illustrates the defined trigger event parameters (and contact parameters) for each trigger event.

Trigger on Location	Trigger on Direction
Contact A: SMS Contact B: e-mail Contact C: PIN	Contact A: e-mail

Update Interval: 5 miles

[0048] When the user operates the device to determine his location, the social messaging module accesses the trigger on location parameters and sends a message to the pre-determined list of individuals (Contact A, B, and C). The message informs them of the user’s location (e.g., user’s home address). When the user operates the device to find directions from his present location to a desired location, the social messaging module accesses the trigger on direction parameters and sends a message to the set of individuals (Contact A) indicating that the user is on his way to the desired location (e.g., Nino’s Italian restaurant). While the user travels to the desired location, the device automatically sends update messages (at the desired intervals) that indicate the user’s progress toward the desired location (e.g., 5 minutes to arrival or 5 miles from Nino’s Italian restaurant).

[0049] In another example, an individual may be waiting for the user to arrive at a particular destination. For example, a user could be a mother driving to pick up her son after

school. The mother’s social networking device would automatically message the son’s device when the mother left the house, and then continually update the son regarding the mother’s progress toward arriving at the school. With such information, the son would not only be prepared to meet his mother when she arrived, but he could continue to do other activities while his mother was on her way without having to waste time waiting for her. Using Twitter® or another current social networking application, this coordination would only be possible if the mother constantly sent messages to the son, including when she was behind the wheel driving her car. Since this is neither practical nor safe, the son would be forced to wait at the parking lot or meet his mother after she arrived.

Event-Based Triggers

[0050] As discussed above, social networking device **110** may be a multi-media phone system. A multi-media phone system typically includes special applications that allow the user to engage in a variety of activities, including watching movies, listening to music, playing games, scheduling events, etc. For example, the device can be used as an alarm clock. When the device wakes the user at the desired time, the device can also automatically send a message to the predefined set of recipients indicating that the user is now awake. Additionally, or alternatively, if the user activates the “watch movie” functionality, the device can automatically send message to the predefined set of recipients that the user is currently watching a movie. As another example, the device can send messages to the set of recipients each time a scheduled event comes up on the user’s calendar (e.g., the user is at a dentist appointment).

4. Exemplary Data Processing Unit

[0051] FIG. 5 illustrates a block diagram of a data processing unit **503** that can be used to implement the entities shown in FIG. 1. It is noted that the entities shown in FIG. 1 may be implemented using any number of data processing units **503**, and the configuration actually used is implementation specific.

[0052] Data processing unit **503** may represent a computer, a hand-held computer, a lap top computer, a personal digital assistant, a mobile phone, and/or any other type of data processing device. The type of data processing device used to implement the entities shown in FIG. 1 is implementation specific.

[0053] Data processing unit **503** includes a communications medium **510** (such as a bus, for example) to which other modules are attached.

[0054] Data processing unit **503** also includes one or more processors **520** and a main memory **530**. Main memory **530** may be RAM, ROM, or any other memory type, or combinations thereof.

[0055] Data processing unit **503** may also include secondary storage devices **540** such as but not limited to hard drives **542** or computer program product interfaces **544**. Computer program product interfaces **544** are devices that access objects (such as information and/or software) stored in computer program products **550**. Examples of computer program product interfaces **544** include, but are not limited to, floppy drives, CD drives, DVD drives, ZIP drives, JAZ drives, optical storage devices, etc. Examples of computer program products **550** include, but are not limited to, floppy disks, CDs, DVDs, ZIP and JAZ disks, memory sticks, memory cards, or any other medium on which objects may be stored.

[0056] The computer program products 550 include a computer useable medium 552 on which objects may be stored, such as but not limited to optical mediums, magnetic mediums, etc.

[0057] Control logic or software may be stored in main memory 530, second storage device(s) 540, and/or computer program products 550.

[0058] More generally, the term “computer program product” refers to any device in which control logic (software) is stored, so in this context a computer program product could be any memory device having control logic stored therein. The invention is directed to computer program products having stored therein software that enables a computer/processor to perform functions of the invention as described herein.

[0059] The data processing unit 503 may also include an interface 560 which may receive objects (such as data, applications, software, images, etc.) from external entities 580 via any communications media including wired and wireless communications media. In such cases, objects 570 are transported between external entities 580 and interface 560 via signals 565, 575. In other words, signals 565, 575 include or represent control logic for enabling a processor or computer to perform the functions of the invention.

5. CONCLUSION

[0060] While various embodiments of the present invention have been described above, it should be understood that they have been presented by way of example only, and not limitation. It will be apparent to persons skilled in the relevant art that various changes in form and detail can be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. Thus, the breadth and scope of the present invention should not be limited by any of the above-described exemplary embodiments, but should be defined only in accordance with the following claims and their equivalents.

What is claimed is:

1. A method for automatic social messaging in a user communication device, comprising:

providing a user interface by which a user can define a plurality of trigger events, each trigger event in the plurality of trigger events being respectively associated with one of a plurality of different applications that are available for execution on the user communication device;

receiving, from a particular application within the plurality of applications that is executing on the user communication device, an indication of an occurrence of a particular predefined trigger event within the plurality of trigger events;

accessing a set of event parameters stored on the user communication device for the particular predefined trigger event, the set of event parameters including a set of recipients for a notification message associated with the particular predefined trigger event; and
automatically transmitting the notification message associated with the particular predefined trigger event to the set of recipients via a communications network.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of applications include one or more of:

a social networking application;
a location-based application;
a game application;
an application that provides alarm functionality;
an application that provides video watching functionality;

an application that provides music listening functionality;
and

an application that provides event scheduling and/or event monitoring functionality.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the set of event parameters includes notification update information, the notification update information including an update interval.

4. The method of claim 3, further comprising:
automatically transmitting an updated notification message to the set of recipients each time the update interval expires.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the set of event parameters includes filter criteria for the particular predefined trigger event.

6. The method of claim 5, further comprising:
determining whether to transmit the notification message based on the filter criteria for the predefined trigger event.

7. The method of claim 5, further comprising:
determining the set of recipients based on the filter criteria for the particular predefined trigger event.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein automatically transmitting the notification message includes:

automatically transmitting the notification message to an account on a social networking server for forwarding to one or more recipients associated with the account on the social networking server.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein receiving the indication of the occurrence of the event includes:

receiving from a location application executing on the communication device an indication of the occurrence of a location request trigger event.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein receiving the indication of the occurrence of the event includes:

receiving from a location application executing on the communications device an indication of the occurrence of a direction request trigger event.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein receiving the indication of the occurrence of the event includes:

receiving from an application executing on the communication device an indication of the occurrence of a function activation by a user of the communications device.

12. A user communication device, comprising:

a memory configured to store software;

a processor configured to execute the software to:

provide a user interface by which a user can define a plurality of trigger events, each trigger event in the plurality of trigger events being respectively associated with one of a plurality of different applications that are available for execution on the user communication device;

receive, from a particular application within the plurality of applications that is executing on the user communication device, an indication of an occurrence of a particular predefined trigger event within the plurality of trigger events;

access a set of event parameters stored in the memory for the particular predefined trigger event, the set of event parameters including a set of recipients for a notification message associated with the particular predefined trigger event; and

automatically transmit the notification message associated with the particular predefined trigger event to the set of recipients via a communications network.

13. The user communication device of claim **12**, wherein the plurality of applications include one or more of:

- a social networking application;
- a location-based application;
- a game application;
- an application that provides alarm functionality;
- an application that provides video watching functionality;
- an application that provides music listening functionality;
- and
- an application that provides event scheduling and/or event monitoring functionality.

14. The user communication device of claim **12**, wherein the processor is further configured to:

- automatically transmit an updated notification message each time an update interval associated with the particular predefined trigger event expires.

15. The user communication device of claim **12**, wherein the user communication device is a multi-media phone system.

16. The user communication device of claim **12**, wherein the particular predefined trigger event is activation of an application on the multi-media phone system.

17. A computer program product comprising a computer useable storage device having computer-executable instructions stored thereon, that, when executed by a processor of a user communication device, cause the user communication device to perform a method comprising:

- providing a user interface by which a user can define a plurality of trigger events, each trigger event in the plurality of trigger events being respectively associated with one of a plurality of different applications that are available for execution on the user communication device;

receiving, from a particular application within the plurality of applications that is executing on the user communication device, an indication of an occurrence of a particular predefined trigger event within the plurality of trigger events;

accessing a set of event parameters stored on the user communication device for the particular predefined trigger event, the set of event parameters including a set of recipients for a notification message associated with the particular predefined trigger event; and

automatically transmitting the notification message associated with the particular predefined trigger event to the set of recipients via a communications network.

18. The computer program product of claim **17**, wherein the method further comprises:

automatically transmitting an updated notification message to the set of recipients each time an update interval for the particular predefined trigger event expires.

19. The computer program product of claim **18**, wherein the method further comprises:

determining whether to transmit the notification message based on filter criteria associated with the particular predefined trigger event.

20. The computer program product of claim **18**, wherein automatically transmitting the notification message includes:

automatically transmitting the notification message to an account on a social networking server for forwarding to one or more recipients associated with the account on the social networking server.

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