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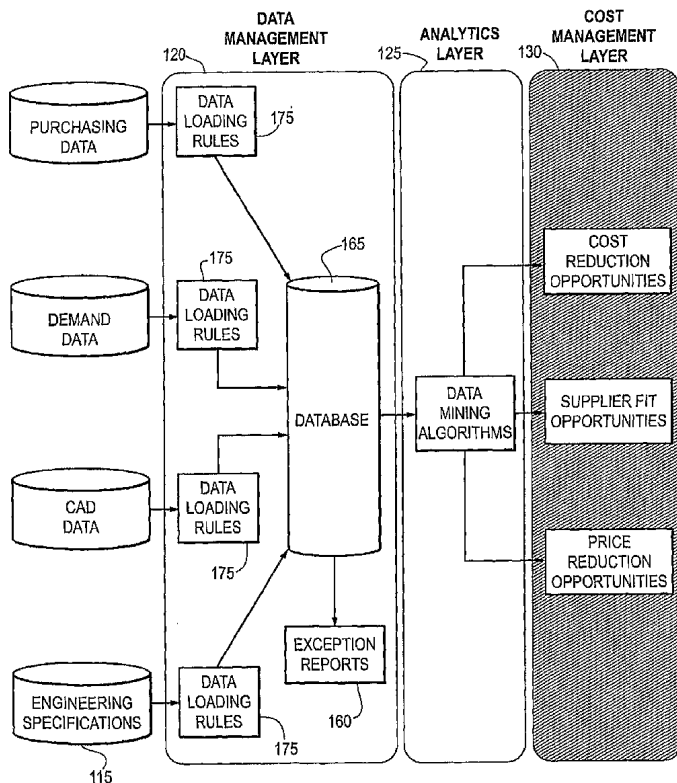
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Declaration under Rule 4.17:
— of inventorship (Rule 4.17(iv))

[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: AUTOMATED FEATURE-BASED ANALYSIS FOR COST MANAGEMENT OF DIRECT MATERIALS

Fig. 1



(57) Abstract: A system and method for managing costs of a target part is presented. The system and method entails five steps. First, the system and method provides features characteristics information of the target part. Second, system and method provides financial information related to the target part. Third, the system and method provides purchasing demand information related to the target part. Fourth, the system and method analyzes the features characteristics data, financial information, and purchasing demand information. Finally, the system and method compares the target part should cost to a supplier's price of the target part to determine cost saving opportunities .

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US 06/08681

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER IPC(8) - G06F 17/00 (2007.01) USPC - 705/400 According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC		
B. FIELDS SEARCHED Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols) IPC(8): G06F 17/00 (2007.01) USPC: 705/400 Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched 705/1, 29 Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used) USPTO WEST (PGPB, USPT, EPAB, JPAB); GOOGLE Search Terms Used: manage\$, cost\$, price\$, part\$, component\$, analy\$, compar\$, sav\$, vector, need, demand, weight, size, similar, CAD		
C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X --- Y	US 2004/0122860 A1 (SRINIVASAN) 24 June 2004 (24.06.2004), entire document, especially para [0010]-[0018], [0033]-[0037]	1-12, 18, 21-24, 27, 32-45 ----- 13-17, 19-20, 25-26, 28-31
Y	US 2002/0178027 A1 (KAWANO et al.) 28 November 2002 (28.11.2002), entire document, especially para [0005], [0012], [0042]-[0046]	13-14, 20, 25-26, 28, 30
Y	US 2003/0167263 A1 (SASAKI et al.) 04 September 2003 (04.09.2003), entire document, especially para [0008], [0112], [0180], [0375], [0453]	15-17, 19
Y	US 2002/0091536 A1 (SEAMAN et al.) 11 July 2002 (11.07.2002), entire document, especially para [0010], [0034]-[0035], [0042]	29-31
A	US 2004/0019538 A1 (BALLAS et al.) 29 January 2004 (29.01.2004)	1-45
A	US 2003/0037014 A1 (SHIMIZU et al.) 20 February 2003 (20.02.2003)	1-45
<input type="checkbox"/> Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. <input type="checkbox"/>		
* Special categories of cited documents: "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance "E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified) "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed "T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention "X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone "Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art "&" document member of the same patent family		
Date of the actual completion of the international search 11 February 2008 (11.02.2008)		Date of mailing of the international search report 21 MAY 2008
Name and mailing address of the ISA/US Mail Stop PCT, Attn: ISA/US, Commissioner for Patents P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450 Facsimile No. 571-273-3201		Authorized officer: Lee W. Young PCT Helpdesk: 571-272-4300 PCT OSP: 571-272-7774

Box No. II Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This international search report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. Claims Nos.:
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:

2. Claims Nos.:
because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out, specifically:

3. Claims Nos.:
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box No. III Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 3 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

Unity is lacking between Groups 1 and 2.

Group 1 (Claims 1-14, 18, 20-45) is drawn to a method of managing costs of a target part including providing feature characteristic and financial information relating to the target part.

Group 2 (Claims 15-17 and 19) is drawn to a method of determining machined parts similar to target parts including variables between the characteristics of the machined parts and the target parts.

The method of determining if machined parts are related to target parts of Group 2 does not require the specifics of those of Group 1 (i.e., managing the costs of the target parts).

1. As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims.
2. As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying additional fees, this Authority did not invite payment of additional fees.
3. As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:

4. No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

Remark on Protest

- The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest and, where applicable, the payment of a protest fee.
- The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest but the applicable protest fee was not paid within the time limit specified in the invitation.
- No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.