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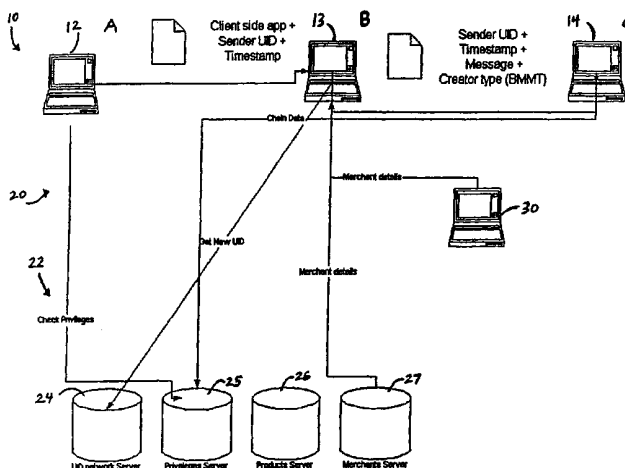
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(54) Title: INFORMATION DISSEMINATION SYSTEM AND METHOD AND MARKETING SYSTEM AND METHOD



(57) Abstract: Apparatus for promoting business and commerce using a computer system, includes a first computer for transmitting a recommendation about a source to a second computer, the recommendation including identification of the source and identification of the first computer or the user thereof, a memory for storing at least one or more of the following: identification of the user of the first or second computer, privileges to be awarded to the user of the first computer based on an act of the user of the second computer, product information and award value thereof, and information concerning merchants serving as a source. A method for operating a computer to encourage business or commerce, including providing via the computer to a first entity a reward based on another entity having received a recommendation from the first entity and having acted on the recommendation with an identification of the first entity.

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Title: Information Dissemination System And Method and Marketing System and Method

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Technical Field

The invention relates generally, as indicated, to an information dissemination system and method and an associated marketing system and method, and, more particularly, to dissemination, distribution and/or communication of information between persons or other entities regarding a product or service and the use of such communication or the like in connection with marketing the product or service.

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Background

Information concerning a product or service communicated between persons often leads to increased interest in the product or service. For example, when one person enjoys a particular movie and tells a friend, the friend is likely to have increased interest to see the movie. Similarly, if one person tells another person that the first is quite happy with a recently purchased product, such as a computer, television, automobile, beverage, etc., or with a recently used service, such as an automobile mechanic or dealership, house painter or other tradesperson, restaurant, etc., i.e., virtually any product, service or the like, the "another person" is likely to have increased interest therein and increased interest in acquiring it. Often people who are friends or otherwise are associated share some common interests; and the sharing of such positive information therebetween often has a positive result in the person receiving the information acquiring the product, service, or the like.

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Often a good source of favorable information concerning a product or service is a satisfied customer. Therefore, the communicating of such favorable information from one individual to another is likely to have a favorable influence on the another to acquire the product or to use the service.

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Currently there are many ways to communicate information between people, one example is use of internet facilities. Connection to the internet may be by electrical wire (telephone or some other connection, electrically or optically) or wireless communication. An example of wireless infrared communication is that currently
5 available from 3Com using Palm computers and known as "Beam" technology. Using such Beam technology it is possible to communicate from one Palm computer to another Palm computer and/or to the internet without the need for local telephone connection. Another wireless communication technology to provide a communication link is that referred to as BlueTooth, which uses radio frequency signals to
10 communicate between devices. It will be appreciated that these optical and electrical communications are only examples of many other types of electromagnetic energy communication devices, systems and methods. Other direct and indirect connections and communication techniques also currently are available and may become available in the future.

15 As used herein person may mean an individual person, a company, some other entity, etc. The invention is described related to people, but it will be appreciated that the invention may be used with other entities. Also, as used herein, communicate, communication, disseminate, dissemination and similar words are considered equivalent in that they relate to the distributing of information from one person to another person
20 or to many people and possibly via a personal networking from one person to one or more others and then from each of those to one or more others, e.g., analogous to the branches of a tree and/or analogous to the widespread networking and connections to the internet.

Further, as used herein, good, product, service, etc. are used equivalently as
25 something about which information is communicated from a person to another person. Several examples include those mentioned specifically elsewhere herein, some of which are computer hardware, automobile repair services, computer software, restaurant services (food quality, taste, etc., and service, cleanliness, etc.), recipes, and so on, it being appreciated that none of these is intended to be limiting on the invention.

Summary

Briefly, an aspect of the invention relates to a method of communicating information, comprising determining information to be communicated, communicating the information to a receiving party, including identification information regarding the communicating party, and storing at a remote location the identification information in response to an act by the receiving party.

Another aspect relates to a method of encouraging an activity, event or the like, comprising providing an award to a party in response to the party having communicated information to a receiving party which has acted on the information.

Another aspect relates to a method of storing information, comprising storing at a location in response to an act of a receiving party a representation indicating that information was communicated between parties.

Another aspect relates to a method of marketing, comprising allowing one party to communicate to a receiving party information concerning something to be marketed, and in response to an act of the receiving party awarding the communicating party.

Another aspect relates to a marketing method, comprising disseminating information from one party to another party with the expectation that the one party will receive an award in response to an act by the another party indicating receipt of the information by the another party.

Another aspect relates to a marketing method, comprising in response to an act by a party receiving something transmitting information for use by a storage and retrieval device to award a party for disseminating the something.

Another aspect relates to a marketing method, comprising in response to information representing the receipt of something by a receiving party from a transmitting party, storing a representation of such receipt and the source of such information.

Another aspect relates to a system for marketing something, comprising a storage and retrieval device for storing a representation provided thereto indicating that

the something had been provided from one entity to a receiving entity, and a unique identifier for identifying one entity as a source.

Another aspect relates to a person to person marketing system for marketing an object or service, comprising a communication responsive to an act by a receiving person to communicate that a device that the receiving person has received the object, and an award assigned to one or more persons who have direct or indirect sources of the object received by the receiving person.

Another aspect relates to a method of tracking information regarding a product or service, comprising providing a registry to record the number of times information concerning a product is transmitted from one party to another.

Another aspect relates to a method of communicating information, including determining information to be communicated, communicating the information to a receiving party, including identification information regarding the communicating party, and storing at a remote location the identification information in response to an act by the receiving party.

Another aspect relates to a method of communicating information, including determining information to be communicated, communicating the information to a receiving party, including identification information regarding the communicating party for storage at a remote location in response to an act by the receiving party.

Another aspect relates to a method of encouraging an activity, event or the like, including providing an award to a party in response to the party having communicated information to a receiving party which has acted on the information.

Another aspect relates to a method of storing information, including storing at a location in response to an act of a receiving party a representation indicating that information was communicated between parties.

Another aspect relates to a method of storing information, including storing at a location in response to an act of a receiving party having received information from another party a representation indicating that information was communicated between the parties.

Another aspect relates to a method of marketing, including allowing one party to communicate to a receiving party information concerning something to be marketed, and in response to an act of the receiving party awarding the communicating party.

5 Another aspect relates to a method of marketing, including allowing one party to communicate to a receiving party information concerning something to be marketed, and in response to an act of the receiving party providing an award to the communicating party.

10 Another aspect relates to a method of marketing, including in response to an act of a party who has acted on information provided by a communicating party concerning something to be marketed, providing an award to the communicating party.

Another aspect relates to a marketing method, including disseminating information from one party to another party with the expectation that the one party will receive an award in response to an act by the another party indicating receipt of the information by the another party.

15 Another aspect relates to a marketing method, including in response to an act by a party receiving something transmitting information for use by a storage and retrieval device to award a party for disseminating the something.

20 Another aspect relates to a marketing method, including in response to information representing the receipt of something by a receiving party from a transmitting party, storing a representation of such receipt and the source of such information.

25 Another aspect relates to a system for marketing something, including a storage and retrieval device for storing a representation provided thereto indicating that the something had been provided from one entity to a receiving entity, and a unique identifier for identifying one entity as a source.

Another aspect relates to a person to person marketing system for marketing an object or service, including a communication responsive to an act by a receiving person to communicate that a device that the receiving person has received the object, and an

award assigned to one or more persons wh have direct or indirect sources of the object received by the receiving person.

Another aspect relates to a person to person marketing system for marketing an object or service, including a communication caused by an act of a receiving person to communicate that the receiving person has received the object or service and the source of information to the receiving person concerning the object or service, an award assigned to one or more persons who are direct or indirect sources of the information concerning the object or service received by the receiving person.

Another aspect relates to a method of tracking information regarding a product or service, including providing a registry to record the number of times information concerning a product is transmitted from one party to another.

Another aspect relates to a method for operating a computer to encourage business or commerce, including providing via the computer to a first entity a reward based on another entity having received a recommendation from the first entity and having acted on the recommendation with an identification of the first entity.

Another aspect relates to a method for using a computer to receive recommendations and to act on the recommendations, including receiving via the computer a recommendation from a first entity, wherein the recommendation includes information identifying a source about which the recommendation concerns, and transmitting information relating to the recommendation, including the source and the first entity, to identify the same, for use indicating an action of the recipient based on the recommendation.

Another aspect relates to a method of using a computer to provide an award, including receiving input data indicating that a first entity has acted on information provided via a computer from a second entity, delivering data to an account of the second entity representing an award to the second entity on account of the act of the first entity.

Another aspect relates to a computer apparatus to encourage business or commerce, including a computer to provide a first entity a reward based on another

entity having received a recommendation from the first entity and having acted on the recommendation with an identification of the first entity, and a connection to the computer to supply information indicative of such act.

5 Another aspect relates to apparatus to receive recommendations and to act on the recommendations, including a computer to receive a recommendation from a first entity, wherein the recommendation includes information identifying a source about which the recommendation concerns, and a transmitter to transmit information relating to the recommendation, including the source and the first entity, to identify the same, for use indicating an action of the recipient based on the recommendation.

10 Another aspect relates to a computer to provide an award, including a communication link for receiving input data indicating that a first entity has acted on information provided via a computer from a second entity, and a further communication link for delivering data to an account of the second entity representing an award to the second entity on account of the act of the first entity.

15 Another aspect relates to a computer system, including a first computer for transmitting a recommendation about a source to a second computer, the recommendation including identification of the source and identification of the first computer or the user thereof, a memory for storing at least one or more of the following: identification of the user of the first or second computer, privileges to be awarded to the user of the first computer based on an act of the user of the second
20 computer, product information and award value thereof, and information concerning merchants serving as a source.

It would be desirable to facilitate disseminating information to persons who have some common interest.

25 It would be desirable to facilitate marketing goods, services, etc. using information disseminated from one person, such as, for example, a satisfied customer, to another.

It would be desirable to track information concerning those who express an interest in a good, service, etc.

The invention, then, comprises the features described herein the description and the annexed drawings set forth in detail certain illustrative embodiments of the invention. These embodiments are indicative, however, of but a few of the various ways in which the principles of the invention may be employed.

5 Although the invention is shown and described with respect to certain embodiments, it is evident that equivalents and modifications will occur to others skilled in the art upon the reading and understanding of the specification. Also, it will be appreciated that various features of the invention including the various embodiments and functions disclosed may be combined and/or substituted for each other. The
10 present invention includes all such equivalents and modifications

Brief Description of the Drawings

In the annexed drawing:

Fig. 1, the sole figure, is a schematic diagram illustrating the invention and use thereof.

Description

15 Referring in detail to the drawings, wherein like reference numerals designate like parts in the several figures, and initially to Fig. 1, a system 10 for practicing the information dissemination method of the invention is schematically illustrated. The system 10 includes three representative computers 12, 13, 14 (although there may be
20 fewer or significantly more computers, substantially without limit). The computers 12-14 are respective clients of the system 10. As associated with the system 10, the computers 12-14 represent respective users of the system 10, such as users identified be respective unique identifiers, referred to below for convenience as users A, B and C with user identifier (referred to below as UID) designations A, B and C.

25 As an example of using the system 10, consider that user A purchases a good or service or has an experience with a good or service and communicates that information to user B. Based in part on such information user B decides to purchase the good or service and communicates to a central location 16 a representation (other information, for example) that the subject good or service was purchased by user B.

User B, being pleased with the good or service, communicates that to user C, who also decides to purchase the good or service and communicates to the central location the same type of representation, namely that user C acquired the good or service. At the central location 16 several functions may be carried out. Among those functions may be included one or more of (1) assigning to each user a unique identification (UID); (2) assigning or granting awards, points, or some advantage or privilege to a person who has communicated information to another person regarding a good or service leading to acquiring, e.g., purchasing, of the good or service by the "another" person; (3) storing a list of products and services available for acquiring based on such "privileges," awards, etc.; and/or (4) keeping track of information regarding respective merchants who supply goods or services and/or supplying information to the merchants as to the persons who have acquired their goods/services, which may be used to assist the merchants in developing marketing programs, etc.

The system 10 is a client-server system in which the clients 20 are the users A, B, C at computers 12-14, etc., and the server 22 is one or more servers 24-27 a representation of which is illustrated in Fig. 1. Using the invention, communication is done person to person rather than by broad advertising, e.g., newspaper, television, radio, etc. The information concerning goods or services can be transmitted using the mentioned beaming technology or by some other technology. For example, assume that the good is a computer program and it is beamed or otherwise provided from user A to user B. As part of such communication between users A and B, information concerning the time and date of the communication and the identification of user A is included to user B with the computer program. When the computer program is communicated to user B, user B may decide whether or not to purchase it. Purchase could be by sending information to the UID server 24 that user B has purchased the computer program so that user B will receive a UID (unique identifier); also user A will already have received a UID. Information concerning the purchase will be provided the privileges server 25 which will assign points or some other award to user A for having "sold" or participated in the purchase or sale to user B. If user B

similarly participates in the sale to user C, then both user A and user B will receive an award.

Awards may be given not only for purchases made by recommendations, but also for any action the receiving party performs. For example, if a restaurant were recommended, the restaurant owner can grant an award for both sending and receiving user when the receiver calls the restaurant.

When user B registers, the server 22 knows who told user B about the computer program (software) that was communicated to user B. Information as to the source is temporarily stored in user B's computer 14. When user B registers the software, e.g., for upgrades, etc., the server 22 knows that user B's copy came from user A and saves that information, for example, for award. Similarly for a communication of the computer program from user B to user C, whereupon both user A and user B may receive award.

The awards mentioned may be used to acquire other goods or services or to receive discounts on purchases, etc. Many different award possibilities exist. The types of awards may be contained in the products server 26 and, if desired, in the products server may be included a list of products which are included for sale via the system 10 of the invention. The actual number of points or the awards may be determined by the respective merchants, for example, to determine how much encouragement to purchase, etc. a product or service is desired. Sometimes specials may be provided whereby more points are awarded for a particular transaction or fewer points are required to acquire a good or service as an award.

A merchant server 27 may be coupled in the system to allow the merchants access to their respective goods and points awarded therefore in the other portions of the server 22. Further, if desired, the merchants server 27 may be coupled to a further computer 30 (a separate one for each merchant, for example) to allow the merchants to access information stored in the server 22 indicating how many times their product was sold or points were awarded for an acquisition of their product or some other

information relevant to their respective business and the customers expressing interest therein.

As another example, user B goes to a restaurant and likes it. User B can load into user B's Palm computer or some other personal digital assistant (PDA) or otherwise obtains information concerning the restaurant. Perhaps user B likes the salad at the restaurant but does not care for the coffee. This information can be communicated by user B to user B's friends and also can be communicated to the merchant's server 27 for reading by the merchant via computer 30; thus, allowing the merchant to upgrade its service, if desired.

The operator of the system 10 may obtain income from payments based on awards acquired by users, based on advertising, based on membership in the system 10 or based on providing to the operator savings coupons, awards, points, etc.

The system 10 and method of the invention are described by way of further example below. The system 10 is a client server application. Clients (users A, B, C) are running on HandHeld computers 12-14 using InfraRed communication or any kind of computer to computer direct communication, but not limited to that (could be used now and in the future with any kind of home-type, business-type, or other computers that can communicate with each other with means of immediate direct online communication, or even delayed communication using middle-ware such as servers (example being: mail messages using mail servers).

The server side 16 is based on Internet connected servers, or any WAN (wide area network) that exists or that will evolve in the future. All clients 20 should have a connection to the same network; preferred is online connection but the connection could also be an offline connection, where the person using the client side software, has no access from the computer running the client side application, but has the possibility to connect to that network without the use of it.

There are several types of servers (generally 22), for example, useful with the invention as is exemplified in the drawing of Fig. 1 for the system 10. The servers may be separate, may be respective parts of a single server, may be at a common

location or at different locations, etc. The servers and respective functions thereof may be, for example, as follows:

UID server 24 – Generates new unique UID, keeps the map of relations of “who told information to whom”.

5 Privileges Server 25 – Keeps track of the points (awards) each user has gained.

Products server 26 – Keeps all the available products to be used or awarded based on with the user privileges (awards, for example, like a free subscription to an electronic newspaper, coupons for purchasing a printer, tickets to a movie, etc.)

10 Merchants Server 27 – Manages all entities that want to have a presence in the system, each will have a MID (merchant unique ID) (like: restaurants, hotels, companies, architects etc.).

The process:

1. User A installs system software of the invention as a client side application in his/her computer; for convenience below the system software of the invention is referred to as BMC, an acronym for BeamMate client side computer software). Another possibility is to use cellular phone technology, which may not require installation of the software, provided the software was stored elsewhere.

2. The user connects to the internet.

20 3. The BMC software connects to the UID server 24, sends a UID request with an identification (ID) package (which, for examples, includes data that exist in the user's BMC software and data about the user's computer, for example, serial no.). Access to the server 22 via the Palm computer or some other PDA or other computer; and the user identification (ID) is unique. The ID is stored in a unique way and/or is encrypted to avoid scams.

25 4. The UID Server 24 send a new unique UID to the user BMC software.

5. The BMC software registers itself at the UID network server 24 and with the privileges server 25 with the new UID representative of the user.

6. User A asks the BMC software application to send itself to User B which has not got the BMC software. The BMC software send its own executable code plus encapsulated data of the sender's UID. User B has a BMC now.
7. User B follows steps 2-4 just above to get his own registered UID.
- 5 8. In the User B registration process the ID package contains the UID plus the timestamp of User A who sent the BMC software to user B.
9. The UID server 24 uses this data and sends it to the Privileges server 25. The Privileges server then updates the privileges of User A (grants or awards him/her points or some other award) for distributing the BMC software.
- 10 10. Merchant A can register himself with the Merchants server 27, and get a UID, actually the merchant will receive a merchant identification (MID). The Merchant can specify some details about his business, and specify a program - the privileges he is willing to grant to users who will "spread the word" about that merchant and/or the products and services of that merchant. There is a tradeoff table
- 15 specifying what the merchant needs to "pay" so the user can be granted with the privileges he asked for (points for discount coupons, points for products list, points for every kind of use). The merchant will also specify the trigger for granting the privileges (beaming, purchasing).
- 20 11. User A visits a place he likes (for example, merchant A), and if the merchant has a Merchant side client application he can send User A the MID plus specific data about the merchant. User A can add a comment to that data. If the merchant has no Merchant code client, but only a registered MID, then user A can enter the MID into his BMC and the next time User A connects to the system 10, the BMC software will automatically connect to the Merchant server and load the Merchant
- 25 details. The details will also include the program that Merchant A has set for transferring his details.
12. User A will use the BMC software to send Merchant A details to user B BMC software. The details will be accompanied by user A UID plus timestamp

encapsulated in a secure way. User A can ask to include or exclude his notes from the data sent.

5 13. The next time user B connects to the net and activates BMC software, the BMC software will automatically connect with the privileges server 25 and send it the "chain data", in this case this is user A UID plus the beaming timestamp. The privileges server 25 will grant user A the points according to the program that Merchant A has set.

10 14. User B can follow the same steps and send Merchant A details. This time the "chain data" will include users' A and B UID and time stamps, so even if user B did not connect to the network at the previous step, then the privileges will be reported when user C does connect. If the Merchant A program defines that privileges are granted on every transfer for 5 generations then user A will also benefit from user B transferring to user C. However, Merchant A may limit the number of generations to less than all.

15 15. User A can query the privileges server 25 as to the status of his privileges. He will also be able to know how can he use his privileges, depending on the number and type of points he has gained. If he has coupons points then he can trade them with coupons from the Bank of Coupons (these coupons were granted by merchants). If he has products coupons then he can use them to trade with products
20 from the Bank of Products. If he has free points, he can use them for "any" product or service, just like real cash money.

The technology of the invention could be used for transferring advertisement messages (no end product to be bought using the system).

25 The technology could be used also to transfer free messages between people, as no privileges granted, and transferring the messages is based on personal motivation.

Although the invention is shown and described with respect to certain embodiments and features, it is evident that equivalents and modifications will occur to others skilled in the art upon the reading and understanding of the specification. Also, it will be appreciated that various features of the invention including the various

embodiments and functions disclosed may be combined and/or substituted for each other. The present invention includes all such equivalents and modifications.

Technical Applicability

5 Thus, it will be appreciated that, as an example, the invention has the ability to communicate information and to market products and services in an efficient manner.

Claims

What is claims is:

1. A method of communicating information, comprising determining information to be communicated, communicating via electromagnetic energy the information to a receiving party, including identification information regarding the communicating party, and storing at a remote location the identification information in response to an act by the receiving party.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the electromagnetic energy is electrical or optical.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein said storing is responsive to an act of registering an indication of having received the communicated information.
4. The method of claim 1, further comprising rewarding the communicating party for successfully carrying out the communicating.
5. A method of encouraging an activity, event or the like, comprising providing via a computer an award to a party in response to the party having communicated information to a receiving party which has acted on the information.
6. A method of storing information, comprising storing electronically or optically at a location in response to an act of a receiving party a representation indicating that information was communicated between parties.
7. A method of marketing, comprising allowing one party to communicate using electromagnetic energy to a receiving party information concerning something to be marketed, and in response to an act of the receiving party awarding the communicating party.
8. A marketing method, comprising

disseminating information from one party to another party with the expectation that the one party will receive an award in response to an act by the another party indicating receipt of the information by the another party.

9. A marketing method, comprising

in response to an act by a party receiving something transmitting information for use by a storage and retrieval device to award a party for disseminating the something.

10. A marketing method, comprising

in response to information representing the receipt of something by a receiving party from a transmitting party, storing a representation of such receipt and the source of such information.

11. A system for marketing something, comprising

a storage and retrieval device for storing a representation provided thereto indicating that the something had been provided from one entity to a receiving entity, and

a unique identifier for identifying one entity as a source.

12. The system of claim 11, further comprising an award assigned to the one entity in response to such representation.

13. The system of claim 12, wherein an award is assigned to each one entity that is a source.

14. The system of claim 11, further comprising a UID (user identification) assigning device.

15. A person to person marketing system for marketing an object or service, comprising

a communication responsive to an act by a receiving person to communicate that a device that the receiving person has received the object, and

an award assigned to one or more persons wh have direct or indirect sources of the object received by the receiving person.

16. The system of claim 15, further comprising plural computers using electromagnetic energy communication technology that is the same or equivalent to the beaming technology of Palm computers to communicate information between such persons and/or between at least one of the persons and an award system.

17. A method of tracking information regarding a product or service, comprising

providing a registry to record the number of times information concerning a product is transmitted from one party to another.

18. The method of claim 17, further comprising storing the information of registrants concerning the product made by receivers of the product.

19. The method of claim 17, further comprising recording comments of users who received the product.

20. A method of communicating information, comprising
determining information to be communicated,
communicating the information to a receiving party, including identification information regarding the communicating party, and
storing at a remote location the identification information in response to an act by the receiving party.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein said storing is responsive to an act of registering an indication of having received the communicated information.

22. The method of claim 20, further comprising rewarding the communicating party for successfully carrying out the communicating.

23. A method of communicating information, comprising
determining information to be communicated,
communicating the information to a receiving party, including identification information regarding the communicating party for storage at a remote location in response to an act by the receiving party.

24. A method of encouraging an activity, event or the like, comprising

providing an award to a party in response to the party having communicated information to a receiving party which has acted on the information.

25. A method of storing information, comprising storing at a location in response to an act of a receiving party a representation indicating that information was communicated between parties.

26. A method of storing information, comprising storing at a location in response to an act of a receiving party having received information from another party a representation indicating that information was communicated between the parties.

27. A method of marketing, comprising allowing one party to communicate to a receiving party information concerning something to be marketed, and in response to an act of the receiving party awarding the communicating party.

28. A method of marketing, comprising allowing one party to communicate to a receiving party information concerning something to be marketed, and in response to an act of the receiving party providing an award to the communicating party.

29. A method of marketing, comprising in response to an act of a party who has acted on information provided by a communicating party concerning something to be marketed, providing an award to the communicating party.

30. A marketing method, comprising disseminating information from one party to another party with the expectation that the one party will receive an award in response to an act by the another party indicating receipt of the information by the another party.

31. The method of claim 30, said disseminating information comprising disseminating information concerning recommendations about a product or service.

32. The method of claim 31, said disseminating comprising disseminating information received via an electrical, electronic, radio, or optical link to a source of the product or service.

33. The method of claim 32, said disseminating comprising including personal notations of the one party.

34. A marketing method, comprising
in response to an act by a party receiving something transmitting information for use by a storage and retrieval device to award a party for disseminating the something.

35. The method of claim 34, further comprising providing an award to the party which did the disseminating.

36. A marketing method, comprising
in response to information representing the receipt of something by a receiving party from a transmitting party, storing a representation of such receipt and the source of such information.

37. The method of claim 36, wherein the receipt of something by a receiving party results from a purchase made by the receiving party.

38. A system for marketing something, comprising
a storage and retrieval device for storing a representation provided thereto indicating that the something had been provided from one entity to a receiving entity,
and
a unique identifier for identifying one entity as a source.

39. The system of claim 38, further comprising an award assigned to the one entity in response to such representation.

40. The system of claim 39, wherein an award is assigned to each one entity that is a source.

41. The system of claim 38, further comprising a UID (user identification) assigning device.

42. A person to person marketing system for marketing an object or service, comprising

a communication responsive to an act by a receiving person to communicate that a device that the receiving person has received the object, and

an award assigned to one or more persons wh have direct or indirect sources of the object received by the receiving person.

43. The system of claim 42, further comprising plural computers using communications technology to communication information between such persons and/or between at least one of the persons and an award system.

44. The system of claim 42, further comprising plural computers using beaming technology that is the same or equivalent to the beaming technology of Palm computers to communicate information between such persons and/or between at least one of the persons and an award system.

45. A person to person marketing system for marketing an object or service, comprising

a communication caused by an act of a receiving person to communicate that the receiving person has received the object or service and the source of information to the receiving person concerning the object or service,

an award assigned to one or more persons who are direct or indirect sources of the information concerning the object or service received by the receiving person.

46. A method of tracking information regarding a product or service, comprising

providing a registry to record the number of times information concerning a product is transmitted from one party to another.

47. The method of claim 46, further comprising storing the information of registrants concerning the product made by receivers of the product.

48. The method of claim 46, further comprising recording comments of users who received the product.

49. A method for operating a computer to encourage business or commerce, comprising

providing via the computer to a first entity a reward based on another entity having received a recommendation from the first entity and having acted on the recommendation with an identification of the first entity.

50. The method of claim 49, wherein the first entity electronically communicates with the second entity to provide the recommendation.

51. The method of claim 49, wherein the first entity electronically obtains from a source about which the recommendation is provided identification information of the source to provide as at least part of the recommendation to the another entity.

52. The method of claim 51, wherein said providing includes providing information for feedback to the source about which the recommendation concerns for evaluation by the source and communication to the source via the another entity.

53. The method of claim 49, wherein the first entity provides the recommendation by direct communication from one portable computer to another.

54. A method for using a computer to receive recommendations and to act on the recommendations, comprising

receiving via the computer a recommendation from a first entity, wherein the recommendation includes information identifying a source about which the recommendation concerns, and

transmitting information relating to the recommendation, including the source and the first entity, to identify the same, for use indicating an action of the recipient based on the recommendation.

55. The method of claim 54, wherein said receiving comprises receiving the recommendation by direct communication between one portable computer and another portable computer.

56. A method of using a computer to provide an award, comprising receiving input data indicating that a first entity has acted on information provided via a computer from a second entity,

delivering data to an account of the second entity representing an award to the second entity on account of the act of the first entity.

57. The method of claim 56, wherein the input data identifies a source about which the information concerns, and further comprising transmitting for use by the source further data representative of such information.

58. The method of claim 57, wherein the information concerns a recommendation about the source, and wherein said transmitting comprises furnishing to the source information concerning the nature of the recommendation.

59. The method of claim 58, wherein the recommendation may include positive or negative information about the source.

60. A computer apparatus to encourage business or commerce, comprising a computer to provide a first entity a reward based on another entity having received a recommendation from the first entity and having acted on the recommendation with an identification of the first entity, and

a connection to the computer to supply information indicative of such act.

61. The apparatus of claim 60, further comprising a communication link for the first entity electronically to communicate with the second entity to provide the recommendation.

62. The apparatus of claim 60, further comprising a communication link for the first entity electronically to obtain from a source about which the recommendation is provided identification information of the source to provide as at least part of the recommendation to the another entity.

63. The apparatus of claim 62, further comprising a communication link to provide information for feedback to the source about which the recommendation concerns for evaluation by the source and communication to the source via the another entity.

64. The apparatus of claim 62, wherein the computer is a portable computer, and further comprising a communication link from the portable computer for the first

entity to provide the recommendation by direct communication from the portable computer to another portable computer.

65. Apparatus to receive recommendations and to act on the recommendations, comprising

a computer to receive a recommendation from a first entity, wherein the recommendation includes information identifying a source about which the recommendation concerns, and

a transmitter to transmit information relating to the recommendation, including the source and the first entity, to identify the same, for use indicating an action of the recipient based on the recommendation.

66. The apparatus of claim 65, wherein said computer receives the recommendation by direct communication between one portable computer and another portable computer.

67. A computer to provide an award, comprising

a communication link for receiving input data indicating that a first entity has acted on information provided via a computer from a second entity, and

a further communication link for delivering data to an account of the second entity representing an award to the second entity on account of the act of the first entity.

68. The computer of claim 67, wherein the input data identifies a source about which the information concerns, and further comprising a transmitter for use by the source further data representative of such information.

69. The computer of claim 68, wherein the information concerns a recommendation about the source, and wherein said transmitter comprises a communication link for furnishing to the source information concerning the nature of the recommendation.

70. A computer system, comprising,

a first computer for transmitting a recommendation about a source to a second computer, the recommendation including identification of the source and identification of the first computer or the user thereof,

a memory for storing at least one or more of the following: identification of the user of the first or second computer, privileges to be awarded to the user of the first computer based on an act of the user of the second computer, product information and award value thereof, and information concerning merchants serving as a source.

