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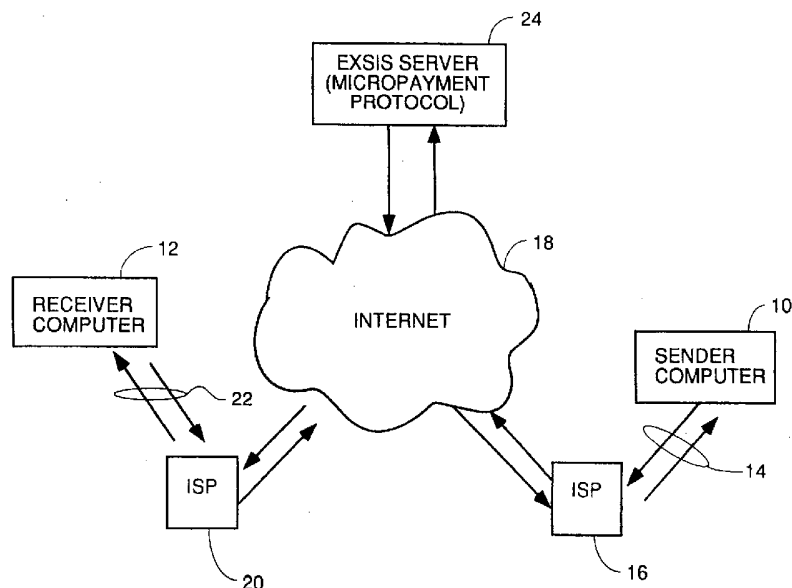
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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: MICROPAYMENT SYSTEM TO CONTROL E-MAIL SPAM



(57) Abstract: A micropayments method and apparatus to control spam using a centralized server architecture. The central server receives requests from senders who want to send emails, and determines if the sender has a micropayments account with an adequate balance. If so, an encrypted stemp is sent back to the sender and the amount of micropayment is deducted from the account or transferred to the recipients account. The key and a serial number of the message is saved in the server. The recipient computer receives the email, sends the serial number to the server and requests the key. The key is looked up and sent back to the recipient. Many alternative embodiments are disclosed such as centralized stemp decryption, centralized white lists, decentralized key decryption, one key used all the time for a particular recipient, transfer of value to recipient only upon opening message, etc.



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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

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A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(7) : G06F 15/16

US CL : 709/206

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

U.S. : 709/206; 705/41, 39

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

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C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

| Category * | Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages | Relevant to claim No. |
|------------|--|---------------------------|
| Y | US 5,999,967 A (SUNDSTED) 07 December 1999, see entire document. | 1-57 |
| Y | US 2004/0003283 A1 (GOODMAN ET AL) 01 January 2004, see entire document. | 1-14,16-35,37-40,41,43-57 |
| Y | Scott R. Fahlman, Selling Interrupt rights: A way to control unwanted e-mail and telephone calls, IBM Systems Journal, Vol. 41 No. 4, 2002 | 15,36,42 |
| A | US 6,073,167 A (POULTON ET AL) 06 June 2000 | |

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☐ See patent family annex.

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