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(54) **HIGH QUALITY SEMI-AUTOMATIC
PRODUCTION OF CUSTOMIZED RICH
MEDIA VIDEO CLIPS**

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(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC **G06Q 30/0276** (2013.01)

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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A method and system for the high quality semi-automatic production of customized rich media video clips is disclosed. Media source material, such as text, graphics, pictures, and video clips can be submitted by a customer. A computerized content aggregator utilizing an automated production assistant can locate additional source material by searching available information libraries and databases. The computerized content aggregator may be programmed to organize and assemble the various source materials to create suggested video elements and a suggested voice-over script or recording. A human video producer can then quickly and efficiently create a rich media video clip from the suggested video elements and the voice-over script or recording.

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation of application No. 11/753,412, filed on May 24, 2007, now Pat. No. 8,966,369.

The screenshot shows a website interface for 'TV Spot Uploader' (200). At the top right, there is a 'Quick Training' section (214) with a link 'About Spot Uploader' and a price of '\$25' (212). Below this is the main 'Video Creation Packages' section (212). It lists three types of packages:

- (Type 1) **Upload Digital Pictures** (206) & script bullet points & get a video (208) for **\$150*** with an 'About Type 1' link.
- (Type 2) **Upload Your News Paper Ad (PDF)** & get a video (210) for **\$350*** with an 'About Type 2' link.
- (Type 3) **Upload Misc. Files** (video files, pdf's, jpeg's) & UW gives you a video with fancy editing & graphics for **\$500*** with an 'About Type 3' link.

At the bottom, a disclaimer states: '*You will not be billed until you have confirmed your order with your UnityWorks! Rep. You must be a UnityWorks! subscriber to qualify for these rates & there is a maximum number of allowed editing/production hrs for each of the above production types. Ask your UnityWorks! Rep. for details.'

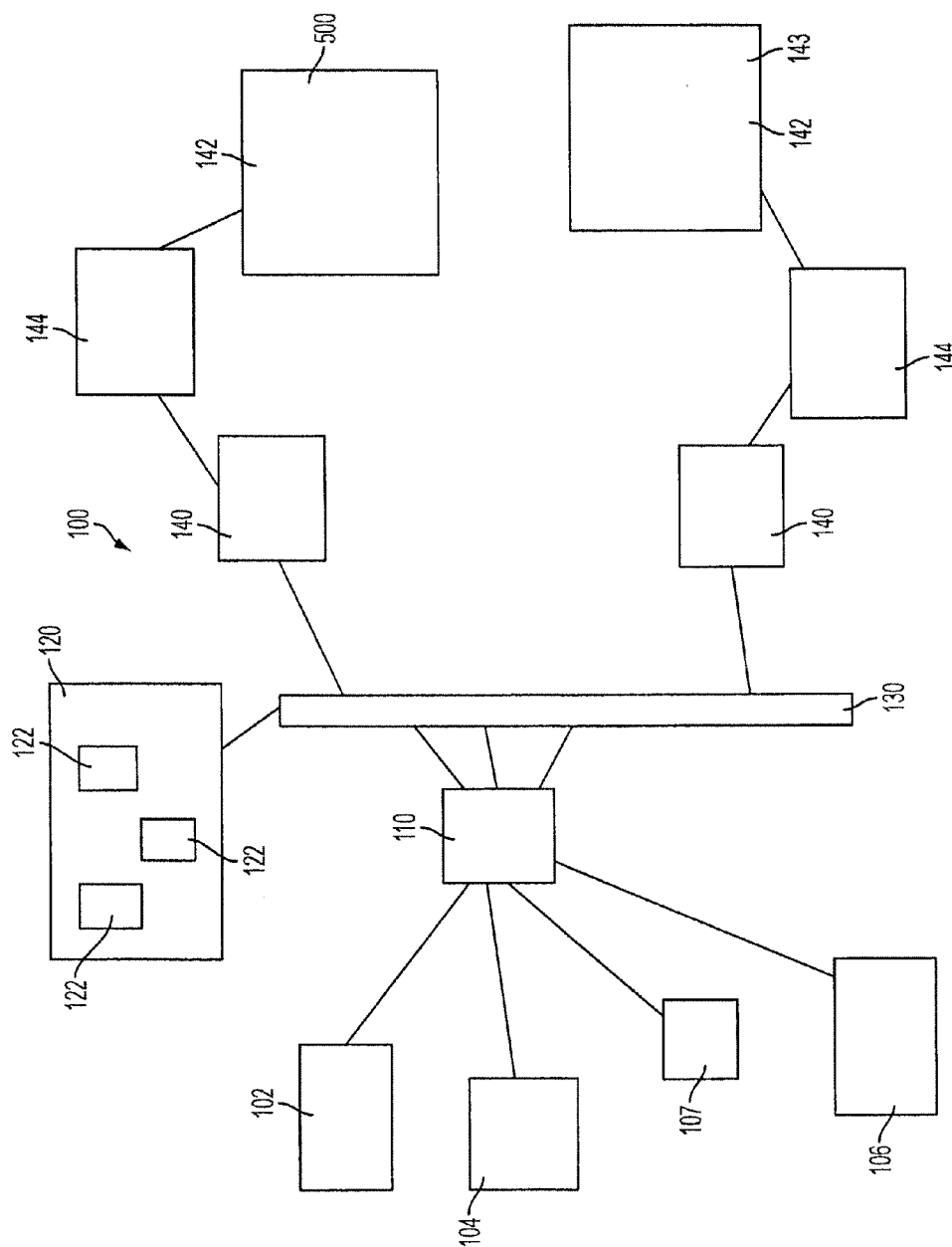


FIG. 1

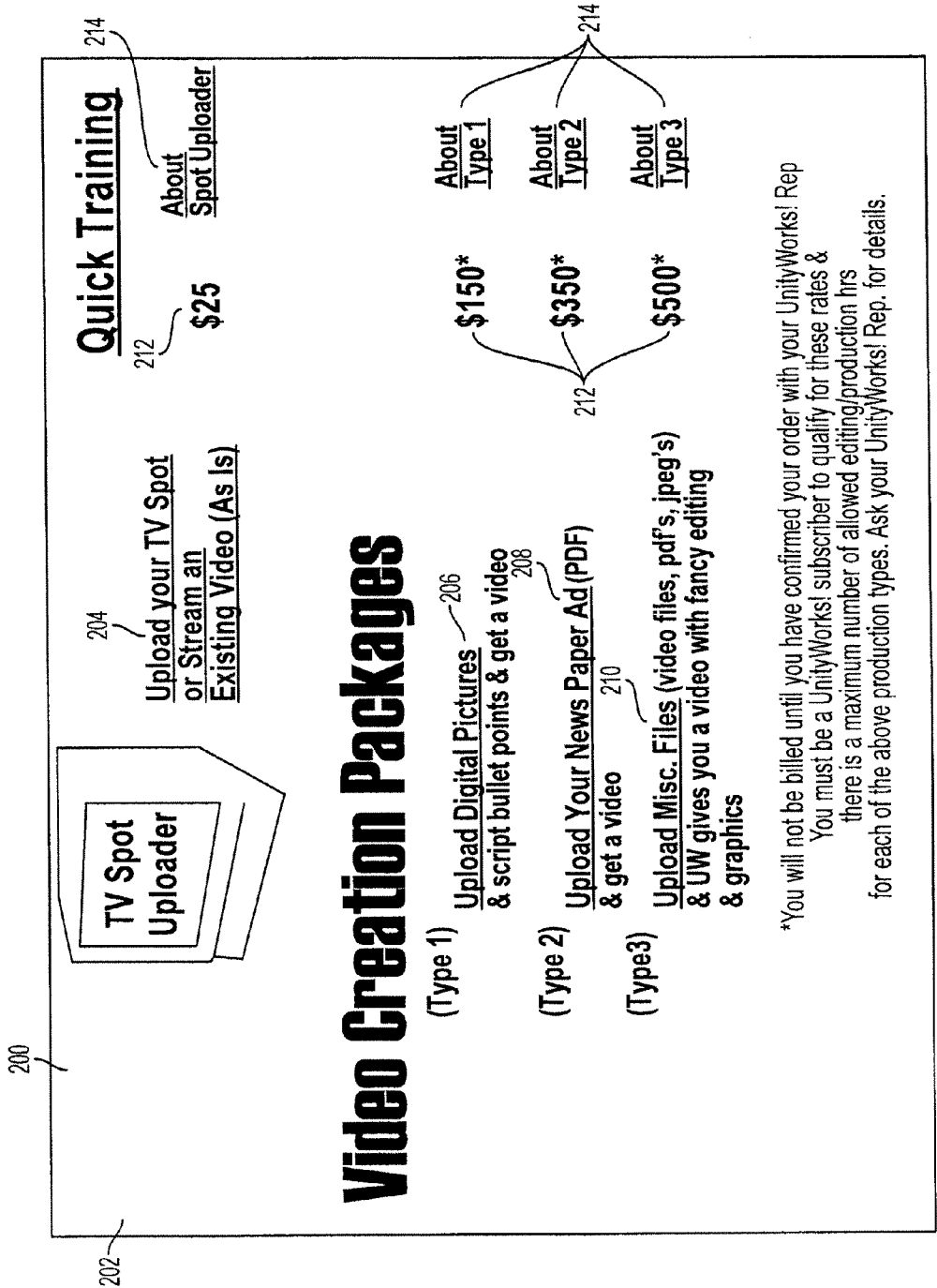
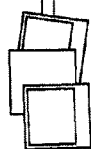



FIG. 2

216


Easy Video Creator



1



2



3

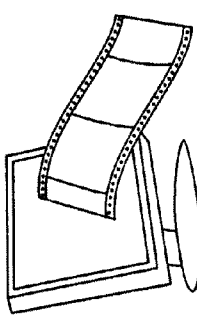
Follow the step by step photo album wizard

? HELP


TUTORIALS

VIDEO TUTORIAL


With the Easy Video Creator you are just 3 easy steps away from a compelling Call To Action streaming video!



1 Send Your Pictures ²¹⁸



2 Add Project Notes ²²⁰



3 Create Your Video ²²²

PREVIOUS

LeftPane

ContentPane

BottomPane




NEXT

RightPane

Main | Tools | Customer Support | Training | News | Sales | Employee Content | Contact Us | Register | Contact | Admin

FIG. 3

Video Creation Page

1 Select Your File(s)  **2** Add Brief Summary  **3** Add File Description 

Browse for the video content, images, newspaper ads, TV spots, and documents you want used in the creation of your video. Please limit uploads to 100MB and one video file per upload.

Title of Project

Select Any File (Required)

Select a Video Clip

Select an Image

Select a Newspaper Ad

Select a PDF or Doc

Select a Zip File

Your Name

Your Email Address

Enter a Short Summary of the Project These Files Are For:

Basic Text Box Rich Text Editor

FIG. 4

224

Easy Video Creator

1 2 3

? HELP
TUTORIALS
VIDEO TUTORIAL

Select photos that you'd like to upload to your personal photo album. Your album will provide the photo content for your professionally voiced over video.

Send Your Pictures

Enter a name for your photo album

226

Select your pictures

The total size of your selected files may not exceed 5 MB per upload.
The maximum number of files per upload is 50

240

Browse 242

These are the pictures to add to your Photo Album

Photo Album Image Name Action

Upload Pictures 248

FIG. 5

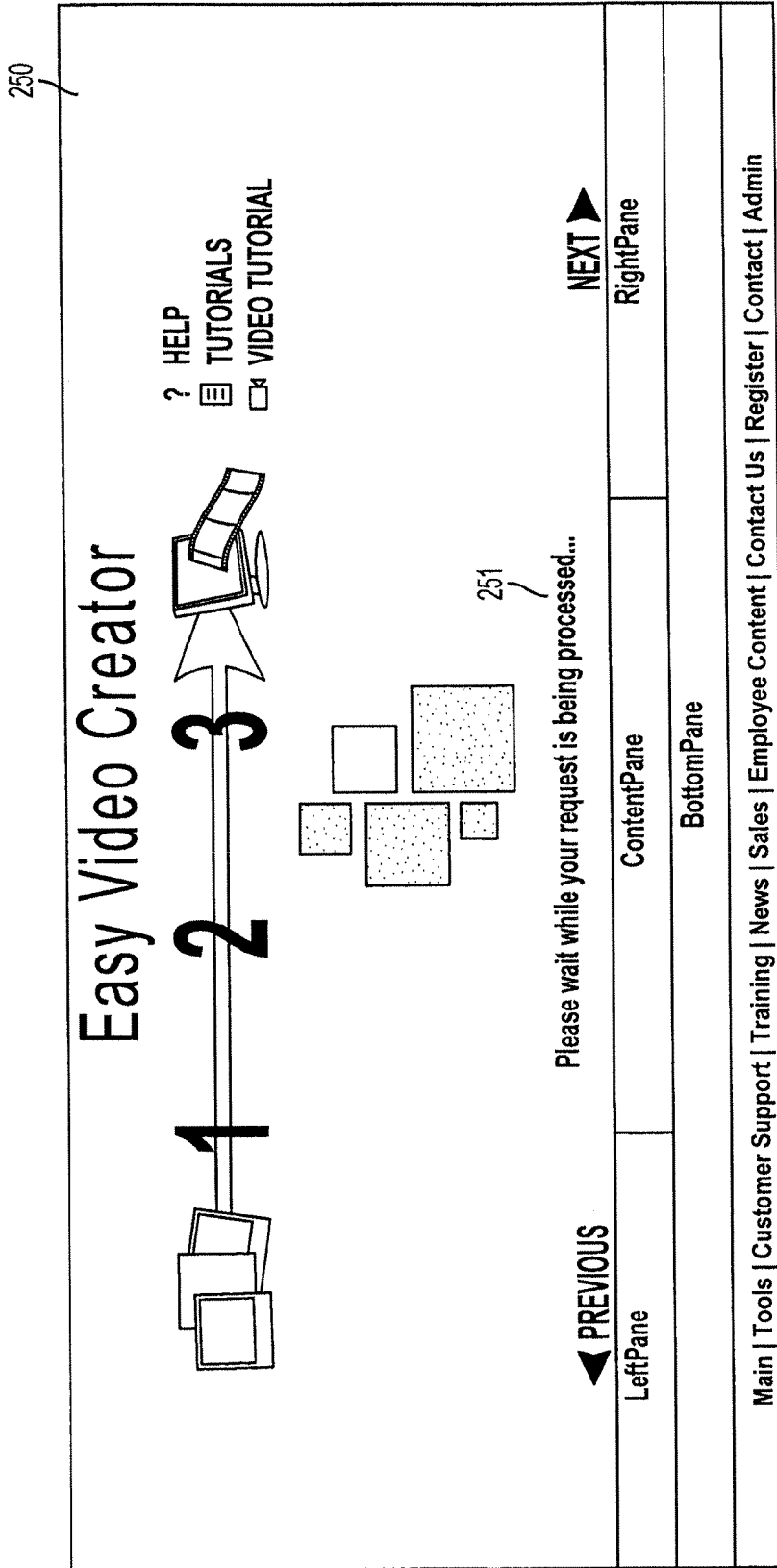


FIG. 6





224

Send Your Pictures ↗

Enter a name for your photo album

Select your photos
 The total size of your selected files may not exceed 5 MB per upload
 The maximum number of files per upload is 10

These are the pictures to add to your Photo Album

#	Photo Album	Image Name	Action
1		Jimmy D Auto 633069873072452006_16141_.jpg	<input type="checkbox"/> Remove
2		Jimmy D Auto 633069873072452005_16229_.jpg	<input type="checkbox"/> Remove
3		Jimmy D Auto 633069873072452008_16683_.jpg	<input type="checkbox"/> Remove
4		Jimmy D Auto 633069873072295758_17099_.jpg	<input type="checkbox"/> Remove

Click Next to continue

◀ PREVIOUS
NEXT ▶

LeftPane
ContentPane
RightPane

BottomPane

Main | Tools | Customer Support | Training | News | Sales | Employee Content | Contact Us | Register | Contact | Admin

FIG. 7

262

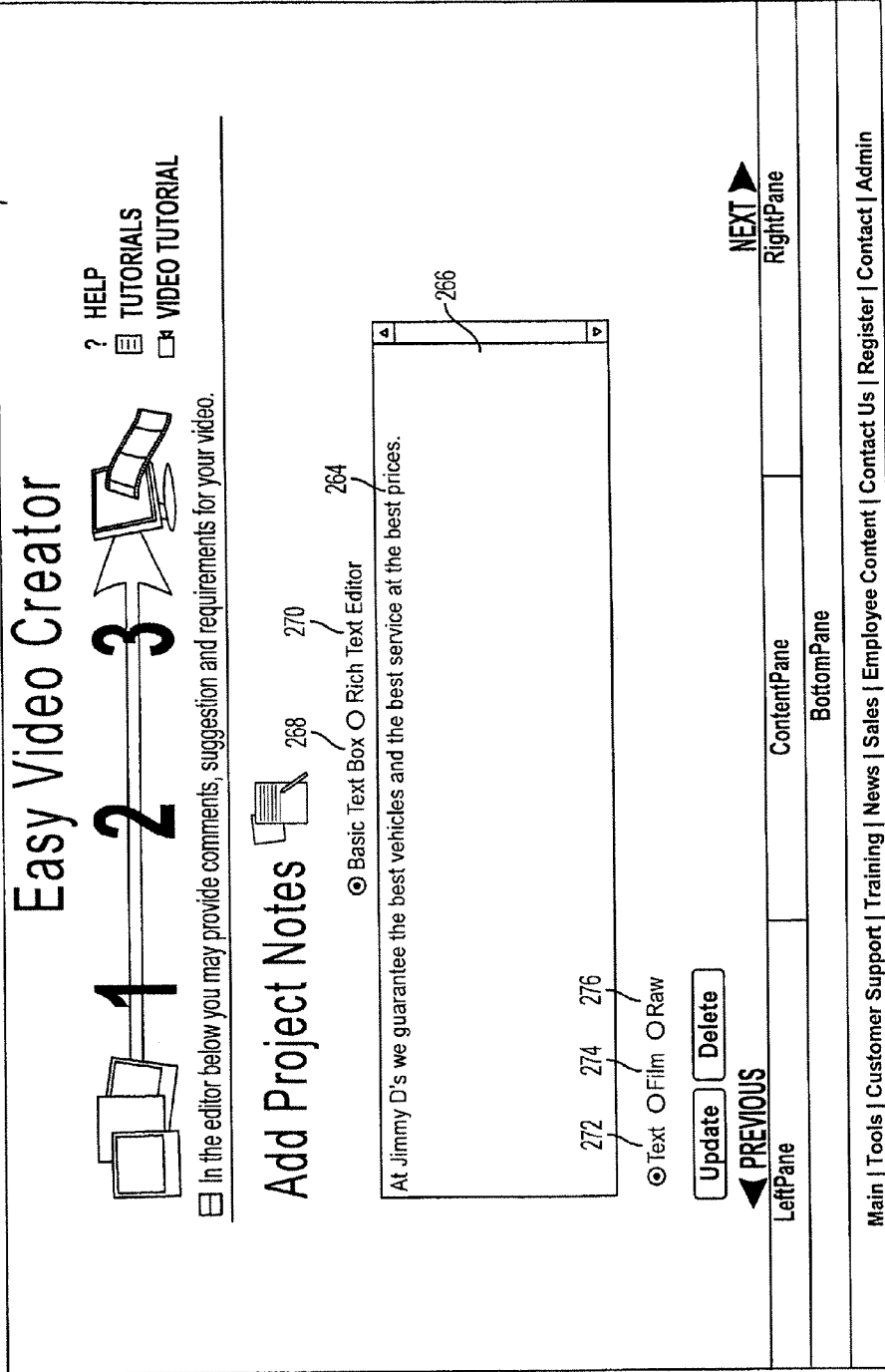


FIG. 8

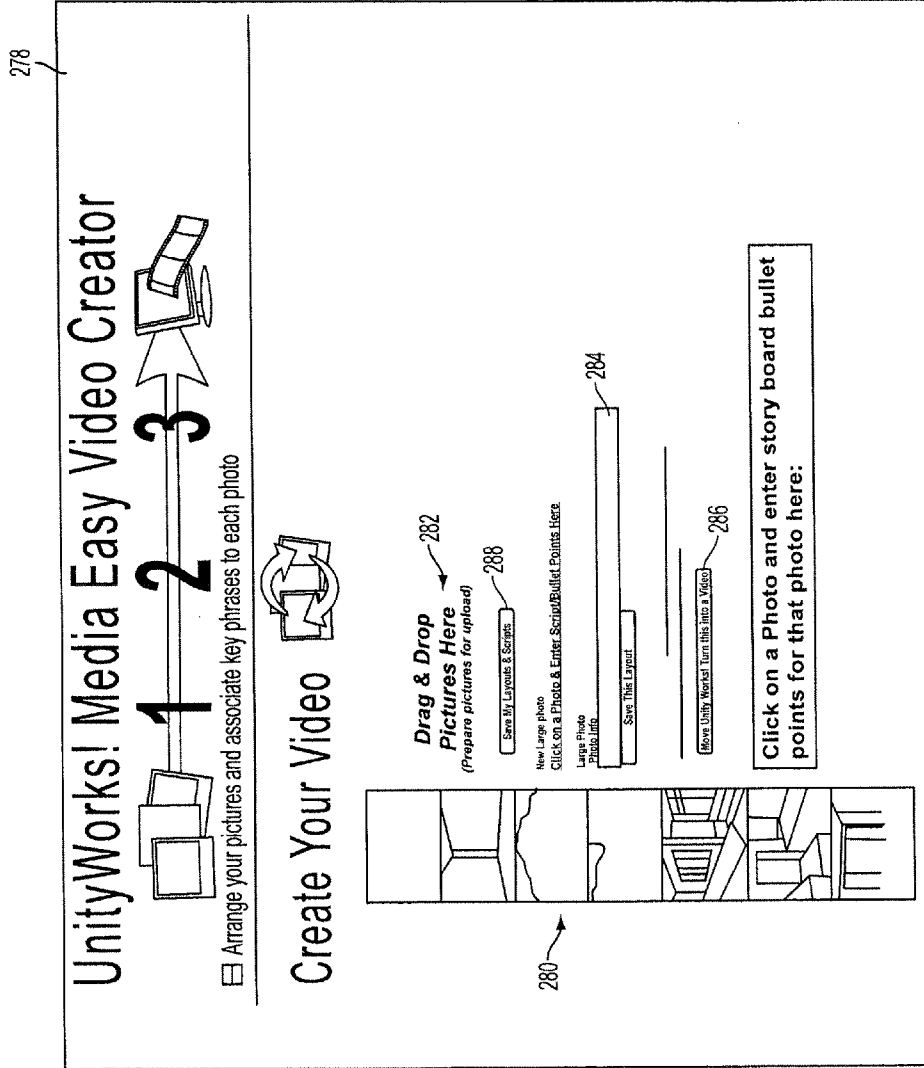


FIG. 9

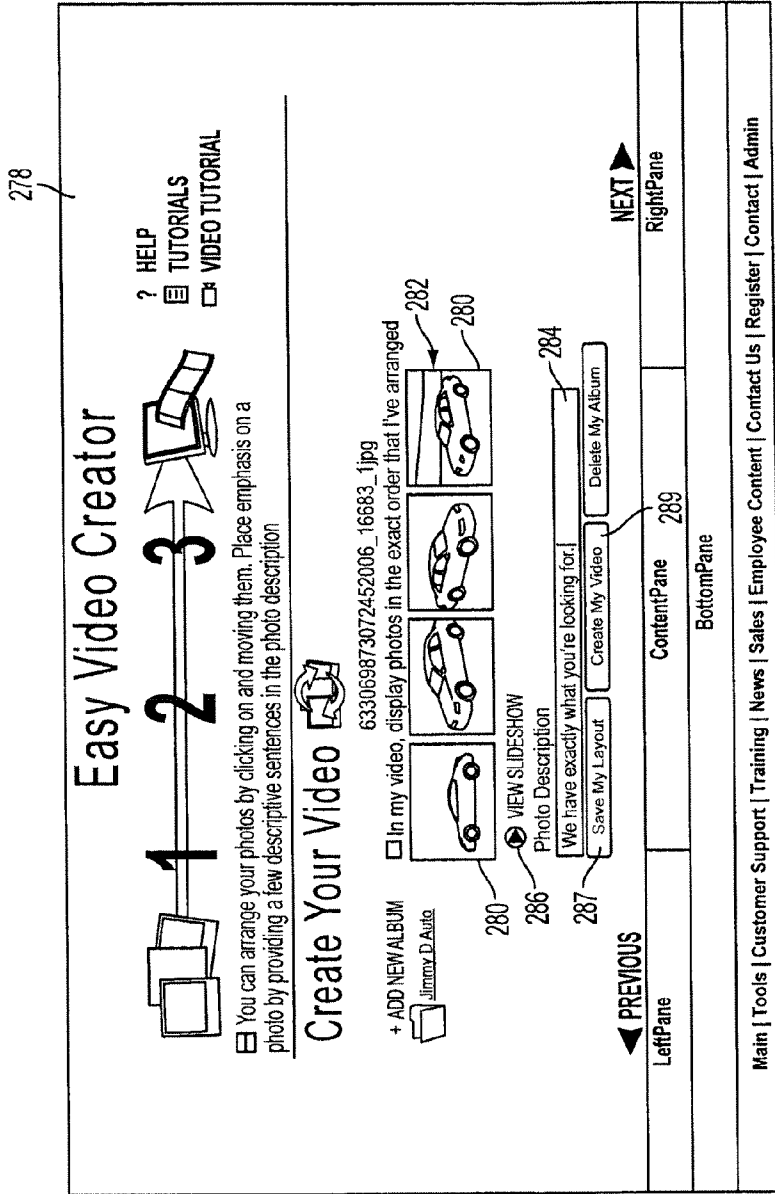


FIG. 10

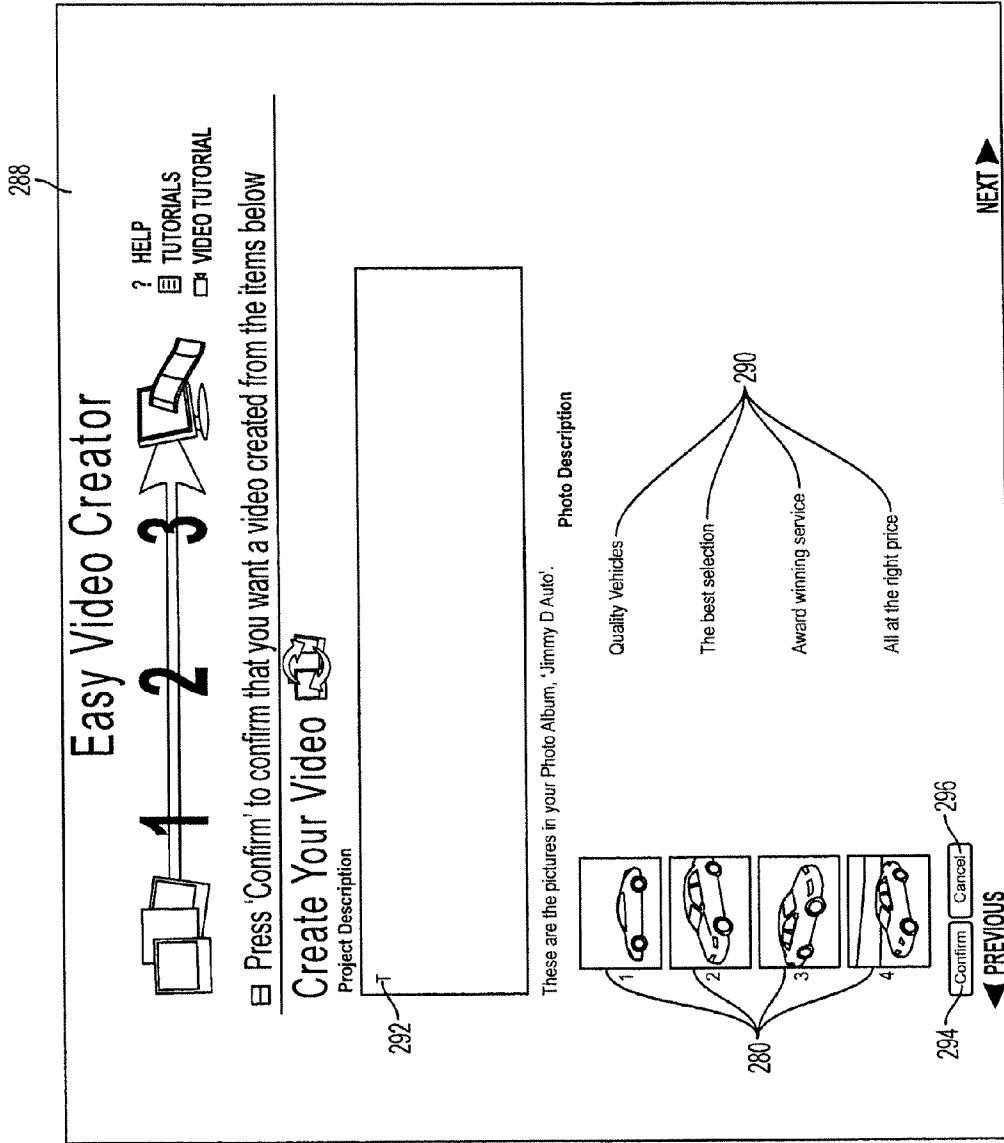


FIG. 11

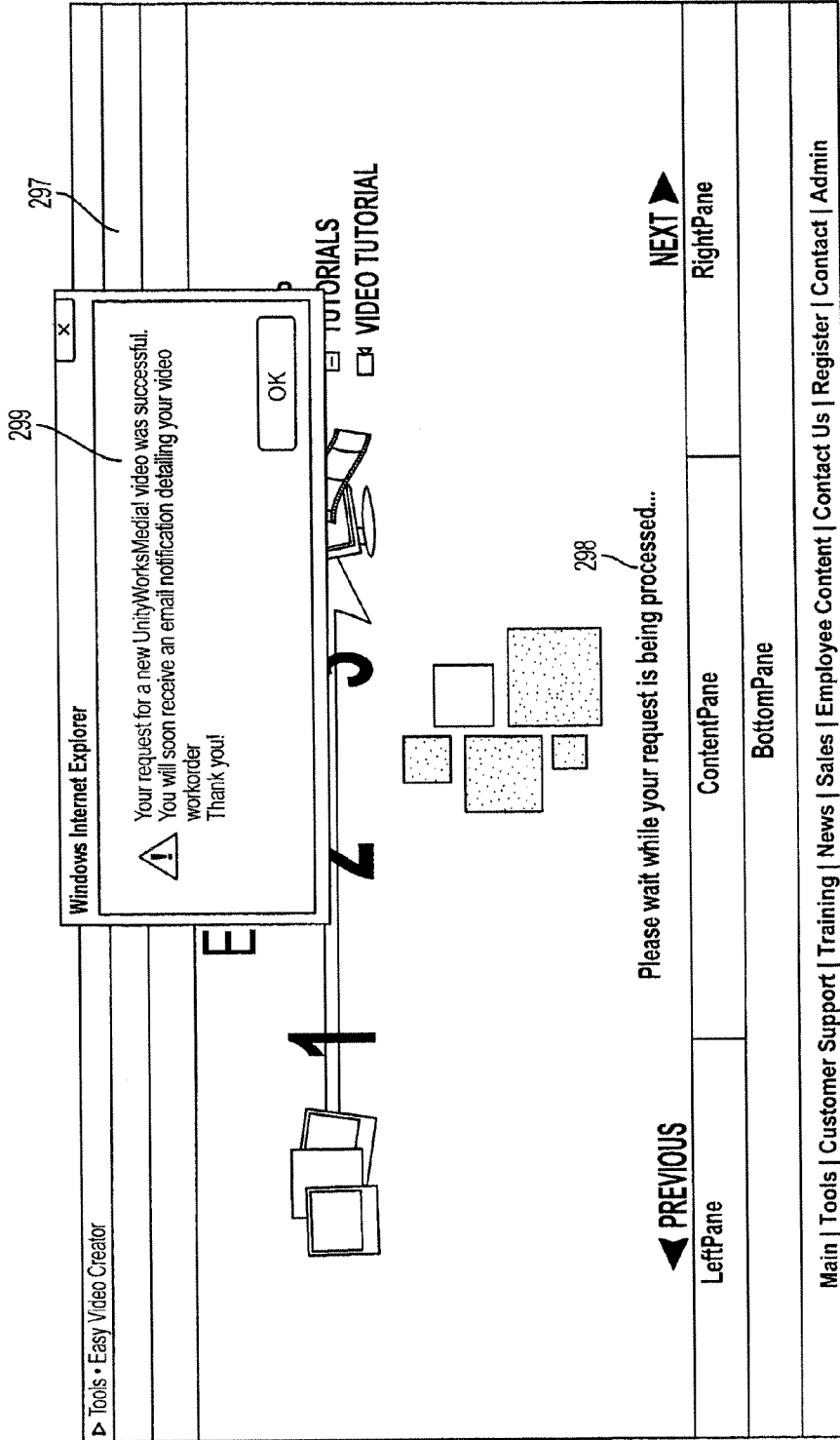


FIG. 12

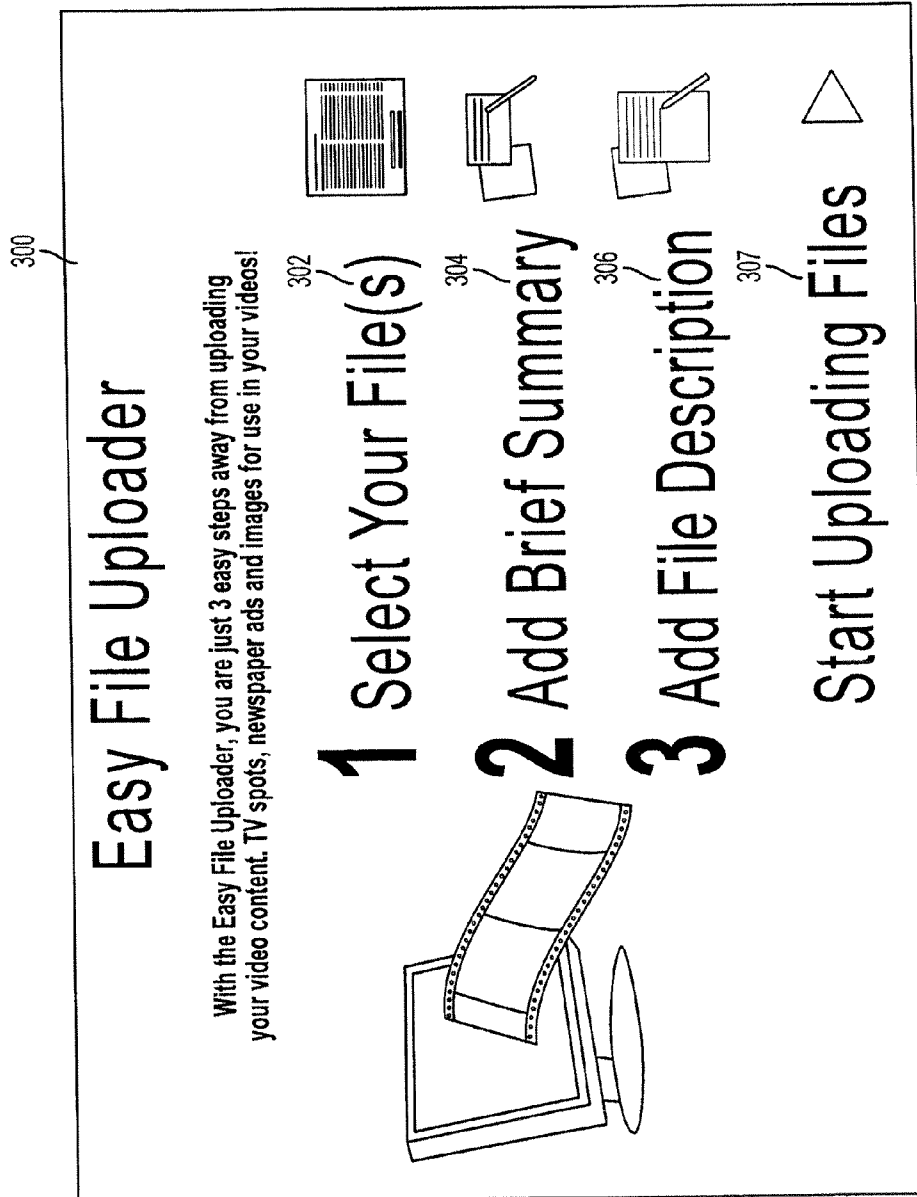


FIG. 13

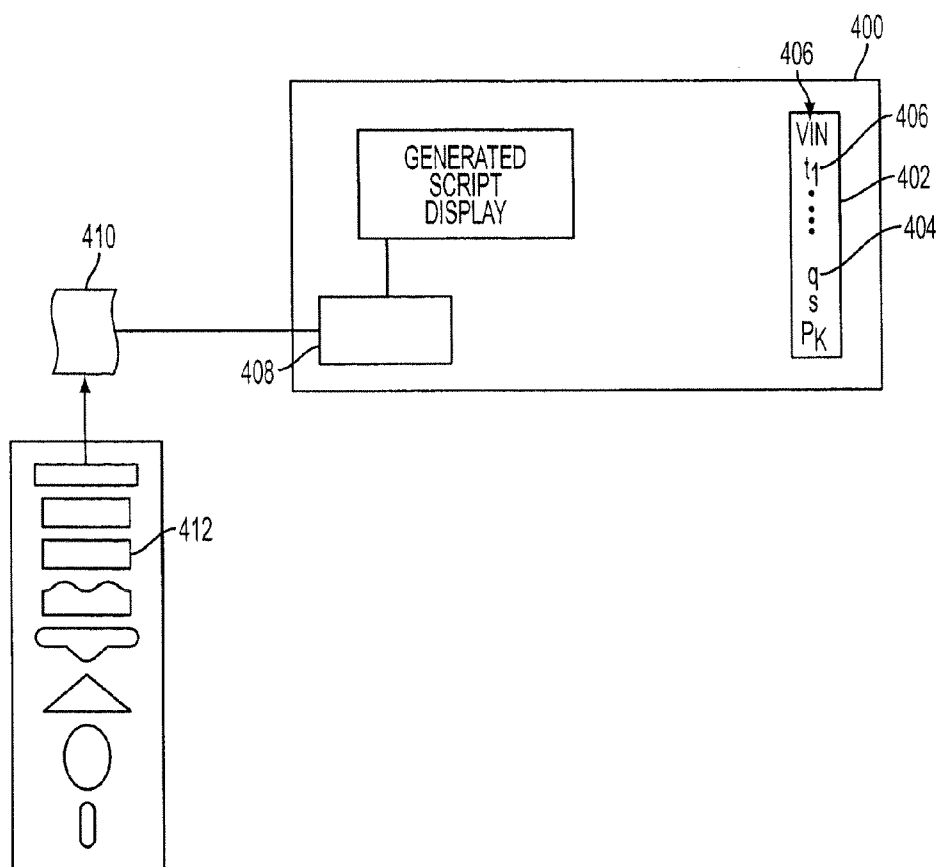


FIG. 14

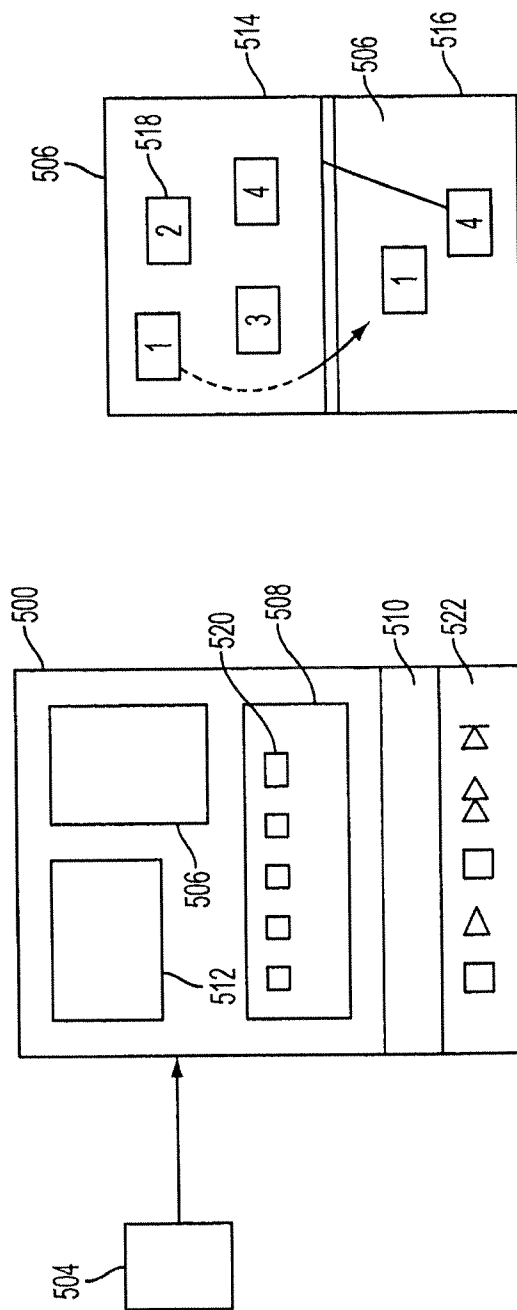


FIG. 15

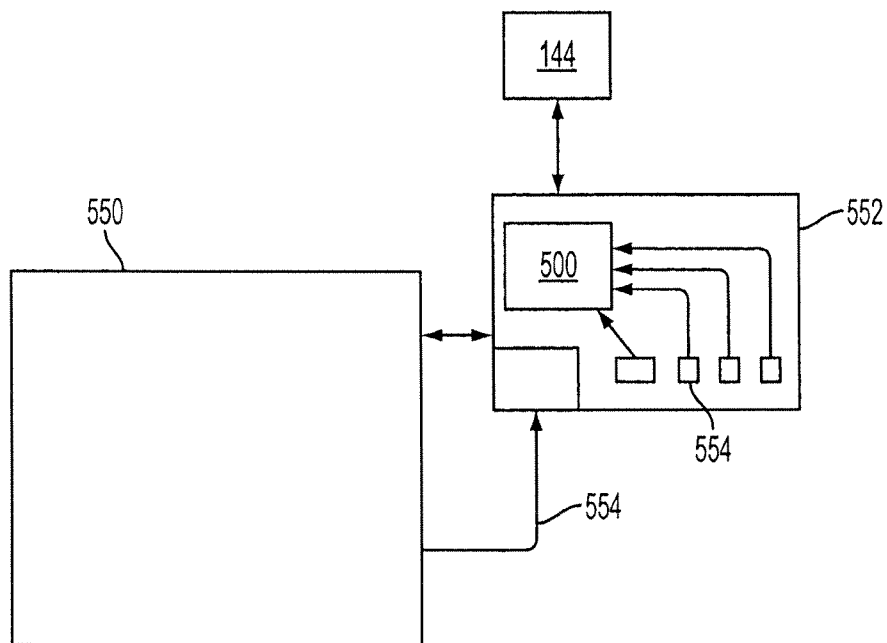


FIG. 16

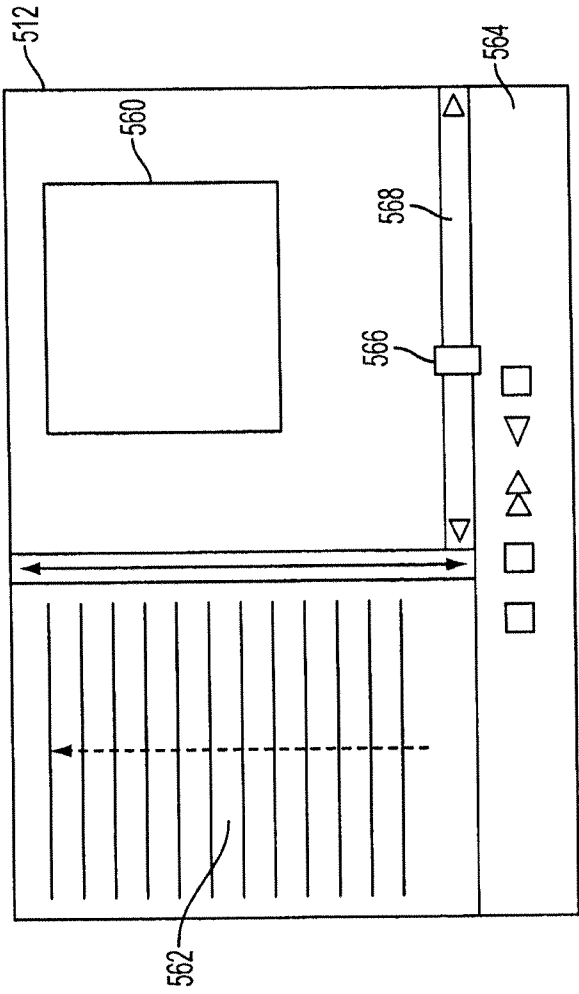


FIG. 17

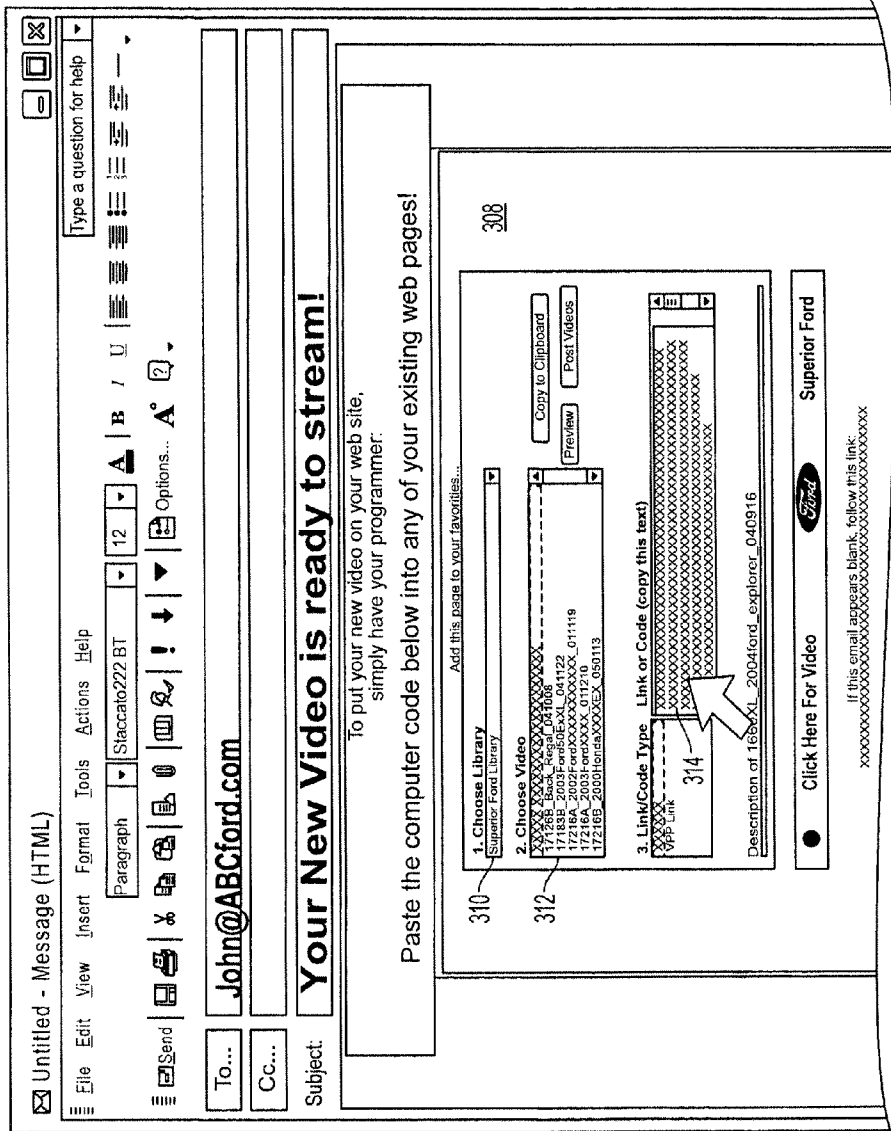


FIG. 18

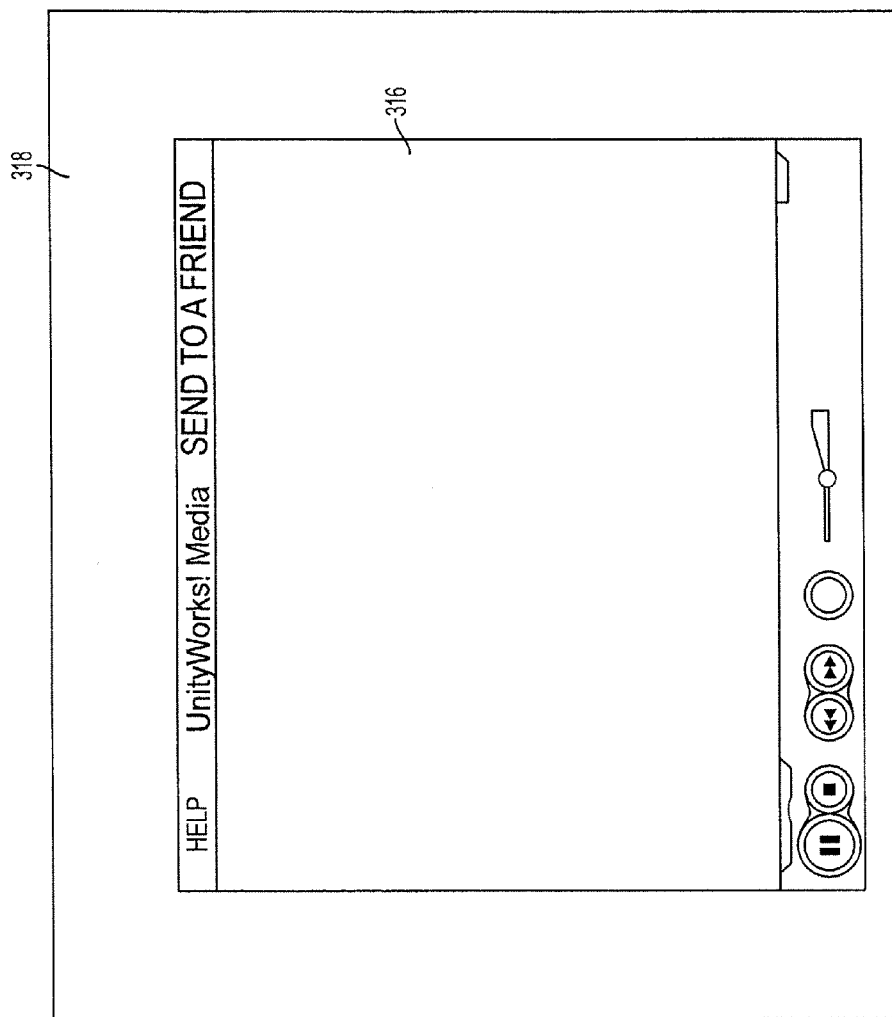


FIG. 19

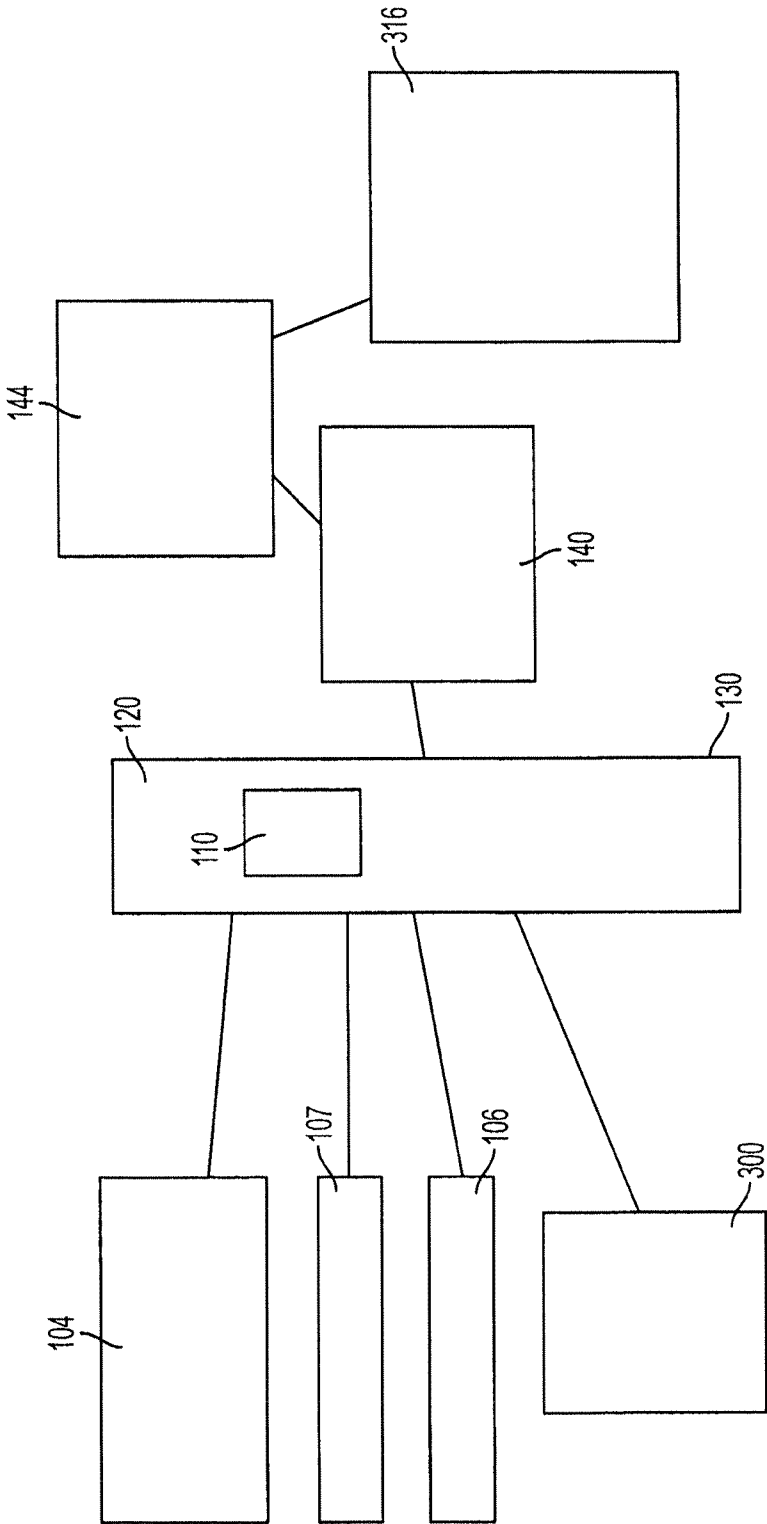


FIG. 20

**HIGH QUALITY SEMI-AUTOMATIC
PRODUCTION OF CUSTOMIZED RICH
MEDIA VIDEO CLIPS**

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates generally to the generation and production of video advertisements to be presented via the Internet. More particularly, the present invention relates to a method and apparatus for high quality mass production of customized video clips for the promotion of products and services.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The Internet has become an increasingly important part of the sales industry. Today, many buyers perform some kind of online research prior to making purchases. Not surprisingly, Internet advertising has steadily increased as a percentage of all advertising.

[0003] Developments such as these have spawned an entire industry that specializes in providing services relating to the creation and dissemination of advertising content. These kinds of business generally use the Internet infrastructure to some degree.

[0004] As the number of buyers and sellers using the Internet increases, the amount of product related information available on the Internet has proliferated. Most of this information is relatively undifferentiated, necessitating considerable time and effort on the potential buyer's part to tease out the information he or she seeks. One way to differentiate a given seller is to create advertisements that stand out from the crowd or increase the amount of time that is spent at the seller's web site so as to improve the chances of making a sale to the web visitor.

[0005] While customized audiovisual advertisements are known to be more attractive and increase the time a potential buyer spends at a website, the costs involved in producing and disseminating high quality, high bandwidth advertisements would be cost prohibitive if professional video production were used. This problem is further compounded when there is a need to efficiently and professionally create a multitude of unique, customized advertisements for the various products being sold by a given seller.

[0006] There are several techniques and technologies that make it possible to automate the creation of rich media content and make it possible to create productions involving the real-time display of images and text synchronized to an audio track, for example. These include animation tools (e.g. Flash from Macromedia Inc.), authoring tools for streaming media (e.g. RealPlayer from Real Networks Inc.), digital cameras, video recorders, commercial software packages such as for example, MovingPicture software from StageTools LLC in conjunction with video editors such as Adobe Premiere or Avid Xpress DV.

[0007] U.S. Pat. No. 5,801,685 and U.S. Patent Publ. No. 20020175917A1 describe generalized video editing systems for working with streaming media and video clips. U.S. Pat. No. 6,677,981 describes a system for video play-back of a still image with an image generator for generating a panoramic image by stitching together a plurality of images.

[0008] Various systems and techniques have been developed to aid in the production of rich media audiovisual content that includes text to be read accompanying the video footage. In the broadcast news editing system described in

U.S. Pat. No. 5,801,685, for example, selected video clips are linked to a script text by embedding edit link control sequences into the text at selected points. The control sequences in the script text are linked to an edit decision list (EDL) that defines the video clips that are to be synchronized to the script text. In preparing a news story for broadcast, the EDL is used to generate the video portion of the broadcast with the synchronized text displayed for reading by a news announcer. U.S. Pat. No. 6,654,930 discloses a similar editing system for producing video news footage that displays a sequence of text associated with a sequence of video frames, defining time codes in the text and a reading rate to indicate whether the text matches the video sequence.

[0009] It is also known to distribute such rich media content via email. U.S. Patent Publ. No. 20040019648A describes a facility for generating and presenting rich media email messages. U.S. Patent Publ. No. 20060168064A1 describes a message management system for creating and/or adapting electronic messages with digital content.

[0010] Unfortunately, the learning curve to use these products can be substantial and the amount of time required to produce any given customized video segment is often measured in hours, not minutes. As a result, mass production of customized rich media audiovisual content using skilled operators can be cost prohibitive.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0011] The present invention is directed to a method and system for high quality semi-automatic production of customized rich media video clips. Media source material, such as text, graphics, pictures, and video clips can be submitted by a customer. A computerized content aggregator utilizing an automated production assistant can locate additional source material by searching available information libraries and databases. The computerized content aggregator may be programmed to organize and assemble the various source materials to create suggested video elements and a suggested voice-over script or recording. A human video producer can then quickly and efficiently create a rich media video clip from the suggested video elements and the voice-over script or recording.

[0012] In one aspect of the present disclosure, high quality customized rich media video clips are produced through a semi-automatic method. Media source material can initially be received over an electronic network. Available electronic information libraries can then be automatically searched for previously produced rich media video clips and rich media video clip components related to the received media source material through an automated process. Commercially available databases can also be searched for database information related to the received media source material through an automated process. The media source material, previously produced rich media video clips and/or rich media video clip components, and database information can then be automatically translated into a suggested voice-over script or recording. Suggested video elements derived from the media source material, previously produced rich media video clips and rich media video clip components, and/or database information can be automatically organized and assembled. A rich media video clip can then be created by a human operator based on the suggested voice-over script or recording and the suggested video elements.

[0013] In another aspect of the present disclosure, high quality customized rich media video clips can be produced

with a semi-automatic system. The system can include a user interface configured to facilitate the transmission of media source material. A computerized content aggregator can be configured to receive the transmitted media source material. An automated production assistant in communication with the computerized content aggregator can search information libraries for previously produced rich media video clips and rich media video clip components related to the received media source material and one or more commercially available databases for database information related to the received media source material. The automated production assistant can be configured to communicate data to the computerized content aggregator in the form of the previously produced rich media video clips and rich media video clip components and/or database information it located related to the received media source material. The content aggregator can be configured to produce production instructions that include, for example, a suggested voice-over script or recording and also suggest video elements based on the data received from the automated production assistant and the received media source material. A video creation project element file can contain the production instructions and suggested video elements. A user interface can be configured to enable a human operator to utilize the video creation project element file to create a rich media video clip.

[0014] The above summary of the various representative embodiments of the invention is not intended to describe each illustrated embodiment or every implementation of the invention. Rather, the embodiments are chosen and described so that others skilled in the art may appreciate and understand the principles and practices of the invention. The figures in the detailed description that follows more particularly exemplify these embodiments.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

- [0015] FIG. 1 is a diagram illustrating a method and system for high quality semi-automatic production of customized rich media video clips according to an embodiment of the present invention.
- [0016] FIG. 2 is a screenshot of an order selection page of a user interface according to an embodiment of the present invention.
- [0017] FIG. 3 is a screenshot of a start page of a user interface according to an embodiment of the present invention.
- [0018] FIG. 4 is a screenshot of a file upload page of a user interface according to an embodiment of the present invention.
- [0019] FIG. 5 is a screenshot of a file upload page of a user interface according to an embodiment of the present invention.
- [0020] FIG. 6 is a screenshot of a processing screen of a user interface according to an embodiment of the present invention.
- [0021] FIG. 7 is a screenshot of a file upload page of a user interface according to an embodiment of the present invention.
- [0022] FIG. 8 is a screenshot of a project notes page of a user interface according to an embodiment of the present invention.
- [0023] FIG. 9 is a screenshot of a create video page of a user interface according to an embodiment of the present invention.

- [0024] FIG. 10 is a screenshot of a create video page of a user interface according to an embodiment of the present invention.
- [0025] FIG. 11 is a screenshot of a create-video confirmation page of a user interface according to an embodiment of the present invention.
- [0026] FIG. 12 is a screenshot of a processing page of a user interface according to an embodiment of the present invention.
- [0027] FIG. 13 is a screenshot of a file upload page of a user interface according to an embodiment of the present invention.
- [0028] FIG. 14 is a block diagram illustrating the operation of the automatic script generator according to an embodiment of the present invention.
- [0029] FIG. 15 depicts an edit mode of a user interface of an embodiment of the present invention.
- [0030] FIG. 16 is a diagram illustrating the editing software of an embodiment of the present invention.
- [0031] FIG. 17 depicts a teleprompter area of the editing software according to an embodiment of the present invention.
- [0032] FIG. 18 is a notification email according to an embodiment of the present invention.
- [0033] FIG. 19 is a customer webpage displaying a broadcast quality advertisement according to an embodiment of the present invention.
- [0034] FIG. 20 is a diagram illustrating a method and system for high quality semi-automatic production of customized rich media video clips according to an embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0035] FIG. 1 is a diagram illustrating a method and system 100 for high quality semi-automatic production of customized rich media video clips. Rich media, as the term is used in this invention, may be exemplified by a broad range of digital information consisting of any combination of audio, graphics, video, voice and animation delivered over the Internet or similar networked arrangement of electronic devices. For purposes of this invention, a clip is a set of contiguous frames of a video stream or segment, and each frame is a single, still image taken from a recorded video or video-like animation.

[0036] System 100 enables manual or semi-automated mass-customization of rich media by integrating information representing diverse input media source material into a rich media video clip that can be stored at one or more repositories and distributed on-demand over a communication network to one or more end-users situated at widely dispersed geographical locations. The input media source material may include motion video such as video vignettes captured from a camera or camcorder with or without an accompanying soundtrack, digital or digitized still images/photographs, audio such as music or speech and static or animated graphics and text or other formats which may be incorporated into rich media presentations. The rich media video clips are adapted for distribution using traditional and contemporary information transmission channels such as for example, by integration into e-mail, video streaming over the Internet, file-sharing, web-page loading, broadcasting, multicasting and podcasting

[0037] Referring again to FIG. 1, production of a rich media clip for a customer by a third party may be initiated by a customer in one of several ways. A customer can place an

order for a rich media video clip through a networked user interface, such as via the Internet, at step 102. The customer can upload media source material and instructions for use in creating the rich media video clip via a user interface at step 104. Media source material that may be uploaded include the customer's print ads, TV spots, video clips, or a series of digital pictures. Where a customer has previously uploaded media source material, an order can be placed and a rich media video clip can be produced without the need to upload additional source material. The customer can alternatively upload rich media elements via a direct feed, such as a file transfer protocol (ftp) link, at step 106. The customer then contractually agrees that media source material sent via direct feed will initiate a rich media video clip that will be put into a customer library and onto specified websites for marketing purposes. Media source material can also be transmitted through manual e-mail, snail mail, track, or manual upload track at step 107.

[0038] In one embodiment, a "customer" is typically a seller of goods or services. The customer contacts the third party video producer in order to have a rich media video clip promoting one or more of its products developed. The customer can then place the rich media video clip onto its website where it will be viewed by potential purchasers of its products.

[0039] FIGS. 2-13 depict screenshots of a user interface 200 which can be used by the customer to upload media source material and instructions. User interface 200 will typically be accessed by a customer on a desktop or laptop computer, but can also be used on any device with a visual display that is capable of communicating over the internet, such as a personal digital assistant or a cellular phone. FIG. 2 depicts an order selection page 202. The order selection page 202 includes links 204, 206, 208, 210 for various services offered by a third party video producer. One link 204 can provide the customer with the option of uploading a TV advertisement or other pre-existing video for display. Other links can be present to provide to allow the customer to choose which type of media source material to upload for creation of a rich media video clip. For example, there can be an upload digital pictures link 206, an upload newspaper ad link 208, and an upload miscellaneous files, such as, for example, video files, pdf's, or jpeg's, link 210. In one embodiment, next to each link there can be a price listing 212 for each service as well as links 214 that describe each service in greater detail.

[0040] Once the customer selects a service from the order selection page 202, a start page 204 such as that depicted in FIG. 3 can appear. The start page 204 can list the steps which the customer must accomplish to begin the process of having a rich media video clip. The steps are uploading media source material 218, adding project notes 220, and creating and organizing the desired video content 222.

[0041] The customer can then advance to a file upload page 224, such as one of the file upload pages 224 depicted in FIGS. 4 and 5. File upload page can include a title box 226 for entering a name for the project. Depending on the type of project selected by the customer, various selection boxes 228-240 can appear on the file upload page 224. For example, an any file box 228, a video clip box 230, an image box 232, a newspaper ad box 234, a pdf or doc box 236, and a zip file box 238 can be present to allow for the uploading of the various listed file types. Alternatively, where only digital pictures are being uploaded, the file upload page 224 can include only a digital picture box 240 (FIG. 5). Each selection

box 228-240 can include a browse button 242 to allow the customer to locate the desired file on the customer's system. The file upload page 224 can also include boxes into which the customer can insert its name 244 and email address 246. The selected files can be uploaded by pressing an upload files button 248.

[0042] As files are uploaded, a processing screen 250 (FIG. 6) may appear to display a processing message 251 to inform the customer that its files are in the process of being uploaded. As each file is uploaded, the upload file page 224 can be updated to reflect the uploaded files as shown in FIG. 7. The upload file page 224 can provide a list 252 of the uploaded files. The list 252 can include a thumbnail 254 and the name of the file 256 as well as the title of the project 258 that the file belongs to. A file can be removed from the list of uploaded files by use of a cancel or remove feature 260.

[0043] After the customer has uploaded all of the files it wishes to submit, the customer can move on to the add project notes step 220 at an project notes page 262 such as that depicted in FIG. 8. Project notes 264 can be added in a notes box 266. The project notes page 262 can allow the customer to select either a basic text box option 268 or a rich text editor option 270 for entering its project notes. The customer can also select from various data format options, such as a text option 272, an html option 274, or a raw option 276 to specify the format in which it wishes to enter the data that comprises its project notes.

[0044] Referring now to FIGS. 9-11, once the customer has added its project notes, the customer can proceed to the step of creating its video 222. Where the customer has uploaded multiple files to be used in the creation of a video production, thumbnails 280 of the files can be put into the order the customer wishes them to appear in the rich media video clip on a create video page 278. The thumbnails 280 can be arranged by various methods, including dragging and dropping them in the desired order into a designated area 282 or by designating a number for each thumbnail 280 representing the order in which it is to appear. In one embodiment, a description can be associated with each file by clicking on the file's thumbnail 280 and entering text into a photo description box 284. The create video page 278 can also include a view slideshow link 286 that allows a customer to view a slideshow of its files in the selected order. The selected order can be saved with a save layout button 288. Once the customer is satisfied with the layout and description of its files, it can click on a create video link 289.

[0045] When the create video link 286 is selected, a create video confirmation page 288 can appear. Create video confirmation page 288 can include the thumbnail 280 of each file in the selected order. The description 290 associated with each file can be located adjacent to its respective thumbnail 280. The project notes 292 for the project can also be displayed on the create video confirmation page 288. The description 290 and project notes 292 can later be used to develop a script for a voiceover to be used with the rich media video clip. The customer can confirm an order by clicking the confirm button 294. If the customer wishes to change or cancel an order, the customer can click the cancel button 296.

[0046] Once the customer has confirmed an order, a processing page 297 can appear with a message informing the customer that the order is being processed 298 while the order is communicated to the third party video producer (FIG. 12).

Once the third party video producer has received the order, a pop-up confirmation message 299 can appear to confirm that the order has been received.

[0047] The above steps taken by the customer to submit files and instructions can be done in a sequential order in order to provide complete information to the third party video producer. This provides for a more organized submission and allows for faster video production by the third party video producer. Alternatively, the customer may complete only some of the steps. For example, the customer can access a file upload page 300 from which the customer only selects files for upload 302, adds a brief summary of the project 304, adds a description of the files 306, and uploads the files 307. The third party video producer will then fill in the gaps in the information received, such as project notes or arrangement of files, to create a rich media video clip. Similarly, if a customer submits files in an unorganized fashion, such as by attaching them to an email, the third party video producer will generate any additional information necessary to produce a rich media video clip.

[0048] Referring again to FIG. 1, the customer's instructions and uploaded media source material are transferred over a network 110 and received by a computerized content aggregator 130. The content aggregator 130 is programmed to review the various input from the customer and exercises logic to translate the input into appropriate work orders and production instructions for submission to the third party video producer.

[0049] In one embodiment, the computerized content aggregator 130 includes an automated production assistant 120 that is programmed to utilize various automated processes and libraries 122 to aid in organizing and serving up suggested video elements that the third party video producer can use to create a rich media video clip. The automated processes and libraries 122 can include pre-produced intro and outro segments designed for ads of the specific customer, clips, voiceovers, and script templates previously produced for the customer, and an automated script developer tool. The production assistant may also be programmed to access various databases that contain descriptive information uniquely identified with the product that is the subject of the customer's order.

[0050] In one example embodiment, a VIN database includes information about specific cars or an MLS database includes information about specific real estate properties. In such databases, a unique identifier corresponds to each item in the database. When the unique identifier is entered into the computerized content aggregator, the automated production assistant may be programmed to access these databases to obtain further information, such as description or images, on the features of the corresponding item. This information can then also be used in selecting and constructing the suggested video elements packaged for the third party video producer.

[0051] In another example embodiment, databases of the customer's products or services and prepared marketing and rich media materials, as well as databases of the customer's customer lists, may be automatically accessed and compared as part of the process executed by the automated production assistant. In another aspect of this embodiment, the completed rich media clips may be automatically emailed to a selected subset determined from the customer's customer database to match attributes corresponding to the particular work order used to generate the customized rich media clip. For example, the work order may specify that a recipient of

the email containing the rich media clip may be entitled to a special offer on a new vehicle if they are willing to trade in their existing vehicle. In this example, the recipients may be selected from the customer list for those recipients who have an existing vehicle that matches the desired criteria of, for example, a used vehicle for which there is a current increased demand.

[0052] FIG. 14 is a block diagram illustrating the operation of one embodiment of the automatic script generator 400 that can be utilized by the automated production assistant 120. As seen in FIG. 14, block 402 represents a feature vector 404 for the rich media video clip after it is populated with select alphanumeric descriptors 406. The select alphanumeric descriptors are generated based on the file descriptions 290 submitted by the customer and/or the feature descriptions obtained from a proprietary database. In one embodiment, the automatic script generator 400 includes a natural language processor 408 communicating with a database 410 comprising a plurality of templates 412. Each template is a lexically meaningful sentence of connected words which include the alphanumeric descriptor or descriptors 406 corresponding to each file or feature description. Each file or feature may be associated with a plurality of templates and each template may represent a variant of a sentence in a selected language. Each variant of the sentence creatively conveys the essence of the associated file or feature with a slant tailored to a particular promotion related theme.

[0053] In one embodiment, a natural language processor 408 collects the set of sentences corresponding to the plurality of templates 412 associated with the alphanumeric descriptors 406 populating the feature vector 404 and generates a text message or script that is substantially grammatically correct by using natural language processing principles well known in the art. In one embodiment, the script is uploaded to a script library accessible to the automated production assistant 120 and catalogued for easy search using a search key derived from the feature vector 404. A future rich media video clip order that leads to an occurrence of the feature vector 404 may trigger the retrieval of script from the script library into computerized content aggregator 130 instead of triggering the automatic script generator 400.

[0054] The content aggregator 130 places the suggested video and script elements in a video creation project element file 140 which is transmitted to the third party video producer. A human operator 144 at the third party video producer can then import the video creation project element file 140 into a user interface 142. User interface 142 can be a user interface 144 of any known commercially available video production software, such as, for example, MovingPicture software from StageTools LLC. Alternatively, user interface 142 can be a user interface 500 of a proprietary video production software of the third party video producer.

[0055] FIG. 15 depicts an edit mode of a proprietary user interface 500 that provides the edit controls 502 necessary to affect the transformation of the selected video elements from the video creation project element file 140 into a rich media video clip. User interface 500 is provided with intuitive controls such that an operator 144 can quickly and efficiently produce a rich media video clip based on decisions made by the human operator 144, and in some embodiments, a customized voice over recorded by the human operator 144, without the need for specialized training.

[0056] In one embodiment, user interface 500 is configured with an input box 504 for operator input of an alphanumeric

input representing a unique database identifier, a review area **506**, a storyboarding area **508**, playback area **510** and a teleprompter area **512**. Review area **506** has a first region **514** and a second region **516**. First region **514** presents the operator **144** with thumbnail icons **518** characterizing the selected video elements and script. Exemplary thumbnail icons **518** include a still images icon, a motion video icon, an audio track icon and a script track icon. The absence of one or more types of selected video elements may cause the icon **518** corresponding to that type of media to not display in the first region **514**. Other equivalent means can be used to indicate the presence or absence of a particular component. Operator selection of, for example, the still images icon, causes the selected still digital photographs (i.e. frames) to display in the second region **516** of the review area **506**. Operator **144** can construct a key frame set **520** by transferring (e.g. by dragging the frames) a selected number of the still digital photographs (or frames) to the storyboarding area **508**. Operator selection of a motion video icon will cause a video vignette of the selected frames to play in the playback area **510**. Playback controls **522** may also be used to adjust the frame speed and a rectilinear cursor may be used to grab a thumbnail **518** and cause it to be added to the key frame set **520**. The operator **144** can edit the key frame set **520** by using intuitive frame-edit controls in the storyboarding area **508**.

[**0057**] Editing software **550** can take as input the key frame set **520**. In one embodiment of FIG. **16**, the editing software **550** may be either linear or non-linear. In one embodiment, the editing software **550** is a component of a virtual 'studio in a box' hardware-software package, such as Creation Station solution by UnityWorks! Media, the assignee of the present invention. Creation Station comprises a video camera and green screen lights in addition to the editing software **550** and provides full video production, editing and streaming capabilities.

[**0058**] In an example embodiment illustrated in FIG. **16**, editing software **550** is operable in a semi-automatic mode, i.e. through the intermediation of the operator **144** interacting with the editing software **550** through the user interface **500** displayed on a display device **552** of a computer. The editing software **500** "stitches" still frames **554** or other video elements in the key frame set **520** into a rich media video clip by adding dynamic motion through a predefined set of motion-effects. Exemplary motion-effects include still, pan, tilt, zoom, cut, wipe, fade and dissolve. Each still frame is subjected to one or more of motion effects to create animated sub clips. In effect, each motion effect involves creating a sequence of sub-frames from the single frame representing the still frame. The sequence of sub-frames represent periodic snapshots of the view within a window bounding a limited region of the still frame while the window is 1) moved continuously in a horizontal direction over the still frame in either a left or a right direction (i.e. panning) and/or 2) tilted continuously up or down in a vertical direction (i.e. tilting) and/or 3) scaled continuously to zoom in and/or zoom out. Animated sub clips associated with the key frames may be "stitched" together into a rich media video clip through appropriate cuts, wipes, fades and dissolves. Finally, an intro segment can be pre-pended to the rich media video clip and an outro segment can be appended to the rich media video clip to generate a broadcast quality video.

[**0059**] In another embodiment, video editors such as Adobe Premiere or Avid Xpress DV may be used for rendering the combination of the rich media video clip, the intro

segment and the outro segment into the broadcast quality video. The playback area **510** of the proprietary user interface **500** also provides the facility to render the video. The operator **144** may iteratively modify the video when needed using the editing software **550**. In one embodiment, the editing software **550** is configured to adjust the media effects employed to generate the rich media video clip so that the total playtime of the broadcast quality video is less than about a minute, such as about 42 seconds.

[**0060**] FIG. **17** exemplifies one embodiment of a teleprompter area **512**. Upon operator activation of the audio track icon **560**, the script **562** generated by the automated production assistant **120** is displayed in the teleprompter area **512**. User activated controls **564** in the teleprompter area **512** may be used to adjust the rate at which the script **562** may be displayed or scrolled, for example. A slider control **566** is provided where the length of the slot **568** represents 100% of the time duration to scroll the current script **562** in its entirety. The slider control **566** can be moved left or right by the operator **144** to vary the time at which playback of the video is automatically initiated relative to the scrolling duration of the script **562**.

[**0061**] In one embodiment, the operator, such as a person who has been professionally voice trained, reads the script **562** as it scrolls in the teleprompter area **512** to create a voice-over capsule. Operator selection of a voice over icon in the user activated controls **564** initiates a recording of the operator's voice. The playback of the video contemporaneous with the scrolling of the script **562** provides a visual cue to help the operator adjust the pace of delivery and the tone of voice to the contents of the video. Once recorded, the voice-over capsule may be replayed to synchronize it with the video. The editor software **550** combines the audio of the voice-over capsule with the video of the rich media promo to generate a broadcast quality advertisement.

[**0062**] In an alternate embodiment, the voice-over capsule is created before the creation of the rich media video clip and the duration of the audio in the voice-over capsule defines the total playtime of the rich media promo. Irrespective of whether the voice-over capsule is created before or after the rich media promo, the total time it takes the operator **144** to create a broadcast quality advertisement is less than about ten minutes and in one embodiment is less than two to three minutes.

[**0063**] Upon completion of the broadcast quality advertisement, the third party video producer can send an email **308** to the customer to notify it that its order has been completed (FIG. **18**). Within the email **308**, the customer can select a specific video **312** from a specific customer library **310** to display the source code **314** for the advertisement. The customer can then embed the source code **314** within its website **318** to allow the display of its broadcast quality advertisement **316** (FIG. **19**). In an alternate embodiment, the email may contain either 1) an iframe code that may be inserted by the customer into a web page such that the page may be served up by the customer, or 2) a link to the rich media clip. In another embodiment, the third party video producer may be contracted to promulgate emails containing the rich media clip, such as, for example, by incorporating an iframe or link to the rich media clip in an email as described in U.S. patent application Ser. No. _____, the disclosure of the detailed description of the invention which is hereby incorporated by reference other than the express definitions contained therein.

[0064] Referring now to FIG. 20 there can be seen another diagram illustrating a method and system for high quality semi-automatic production of customized rich media video clips according to an embodiment of the present invention. The various elements of the diagram identified by the various reference characters have already been described in reference to the previous Figures.

[0065] The above description of the disclosed embodiment is provided to enable any person skilled in the art to make or use the invention. Various modifications to these embodiments will be readily apparent to those skilled in the art, and the generic principles described herein can be applied to other embodiments without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention which is limited by nothing other than the appended claims.

1-9. (canceled)

10. A method implemented on a computer having a processor, a storage, and a communication platform connected to a network for providing a customized rich media video clip describing a product, comprising the steps of:

receiving a request to provide a customized rich media video clip that describes the product, wherein the product has one or more features;

obtaining, by an automated production assistant in response to the request, one or more rich media video clip segments each of which describes at least one of the one or more features of the product;

identifying, by an automated script generator, one or more script templates each with descriptive information describing at least one of the one or more features of the product described in the at least one video clip segment, wherein each of the one or more script templates has a plurality of variants each of which describes at least one of the features of the product in a different language;

automatically generating a script based on a variant of the one or more script templates in a target language determined based on the request;

creating a voice-over audio element based on the script in the target language for at least one of the video clip segments; and

stitching together, by a content aggregator, the rich media video clip segments in accordance with the voice-over audio element to generate the rich media video clip that described the product in the target language.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein at least one of the rich media clip segments corresponds to an intro segment.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein at least one of the rich media clip segments corresponds to an outro segment.

13. The method of claim 10, wherein at least one of the rich media video segments is without a script created based on the one or more script templates.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the rich media video clip segment for which no script is created based on the one or more script templates corresponds to an intro segment.

15. The method of claim 13, wherein the rich media video clip segment for which no script is created based on the one or more script templates corresponds to an outro segment.

16. The method of claim 10, further comprising transmitting the rich media video clip describing the product in the target language as a response to the request.

17. A machine readable, non-transitory, and tangible medium having information recorded thereon for providing a

customized rich media video clip, wherein the medium, when read by the machine, causes the machine to perform the following:

receiving a request to provide a customized rich media video clip that describes the product, wherein the product has one or more features;

obtaining, in response to the request, one or more rich media video clip segments each of which describes at least one of the one or more features of the product;

identifying one or more script templates each with descriptive information describing at least one of the one or more features of the product described in the at least one video clip segment, wherein each of the one or more script templates has a plurality of variants each of which describes at least one of the features of the product in a different language;

automatically generating a script based on a variant of the one or more script templates in a target language determined based on the request;

creating a voice-over audio element based on the script in the target language for at least one of the video clip segments; and

stitching together the rich media video clip segments in accordance with the voice-over audio element to generate the rich media video clip that described the product in the target language.

18. The medium of claim 17, wherein at least one of the rich media clip segments corresponds to an intro segment.

19. The medium of claim 17, wherein at least one of the rich media clip segments corresponds to an outro segment.

20. The medium of claim 17, wherein at least one of the rich media video segments is without a script created based on the one or more script templates.

21. The medium of claim 20, wherein the rich media video clip segment for which no script is created based on the one or more script templates corresponds to an intro segment.

22. The medium of claim 13, wherein the rich media video clip segment for which no script is created based on the one or more script templates corresponds to an outro segment.

23. The medium of claim 17, wherein when the medium is read by the machine, further causing the machine to transmit the rich media video clip describing the product in the target language as a response to the request.

24. A system for providing a customized rich media video clip describing a product, comprising:

an automated production assistant configured for

receiving a request to provide a customized rich media video clip that describes the product, wherein the product has one or more features,

obtaining, in response to the request, one or more rich media video clip segments each of which describes at least one of the one or more features of the product;

an automated script generator configured for

identifying one or more script templates each with descriptive information describing at least one of the one or more features of the product described in the at least one video clip segment, wherein each of the one or more script templates has a plurality of variants each of which describes at least one of the features of the product in a different language,

automatically generating a script based on a variant of the one or more script templates in a target language determined based on the request, and

creating a voice-over audio element based on the script in the target language for at least one of the video clip segments; and

a content aggregator configured for stitching together the rich media video clip segments in accordance with the voice-over audio element to generate the rich media video clip that described the product in the target language.

25. The system of claim **24**, wherein at least one of the rich media clip segments corresponds to an intro segment.

26. The system of claim **24**, wherein at least one of the rich media clip segments corresponds to an outro segment.

27. The system of claim **24**, wherein at least one of the rich media video segments is without a script created based on the one or more script templates.

28. The system of claim **27**, wherein the rich media video clip segment for which no script is created based on the one or more script templates corresponds to an intro segment.

29. The system of claim **27**, wherein the rich media video clip segment for which no script is created based on the one or more script templates corresponds to an outro segment.

30. The system of claim **24**, further comprising transmitting the rich media video clip describing the product in the target language as a response to the request.

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