(51) International Patent Classification: G06F 17/16

(21) International Application Number: PCT/US2003/024544

(22) International Filing Date: 6 August 2003 (06.08.2003)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:

(71) Applicant: UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

(72) Inventors: LARSEN, John; 8712 Little Patuxent Court, Odenton, MD 21113 (US). PARKE, Justin; 1820 South Street N.W. buznt, Washington, DC 20009 (US).

(74) Agent: HARRIS, Andrew, M.; Weiss, Moy & Harris, P.C., 4204 North Brown Avenue, Scottsdale, AZ 85251-3914 (US).


(54) Title: EVALUATING INTERNAL BUSINESS INVESTMENTS

(57) Abstract: A method and system for evaluating internal business investments by estimating decision-factor variations provides a powerful decision-making tool for deciding whether or not to invest in a particular internal business option or for selecting between business investment alternatives (14). The investment may be a capital investment, a program investment, personnel investment or other business strategy (14). Variations in cost, benefit, strategic alignment and risk values input to the business decision tool are used to adjust the business value of a business case. The variations can be estimated from data gathered (13A) from surveys of personnel rating a confidence or perceived variation from the input values (12), variations may be estimated in the computed business value due to interdependencies to other adopted or non-adopted business cases, or variations may be estimated based on actual historical collected data on business case performance. Statistical analysis, including real options analysis and/or efficient portfolio analysis can be used to provide a visual or other tool to a system user in order to evaluate multiple business cases (16).
Published:
— with international search report
— before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of receipt of amendments

(88) Date of publication of the international search report:
1 July 2004

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.
INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC(7) : G06F 17/16
US CL : 705/38
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. : 705/38

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched
NONE

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)
WEST, DIALOG

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages</th>
<th>Relevant to claim No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>US 6,192,347 B1(Graft) 20 February 2001 (20.02.2001) see column 11-20 lines 5-65.</td>
<td>1-30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:
  * "T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
  * "X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
  * "Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
  * "A" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search
02 March 2004 (02.03.2004)

Date of mailing of the international search report
20 APR 2004

Name and mailing address of the ISA/US
Mail Stop PCT, Attn: ISA/US Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
Facsimile No. (703) 305-3230

Authorized officer
Hyung S Sough
Telephone No. 703-308-0505

Form PCT/ISA/210 (second sheet) (July 1998)