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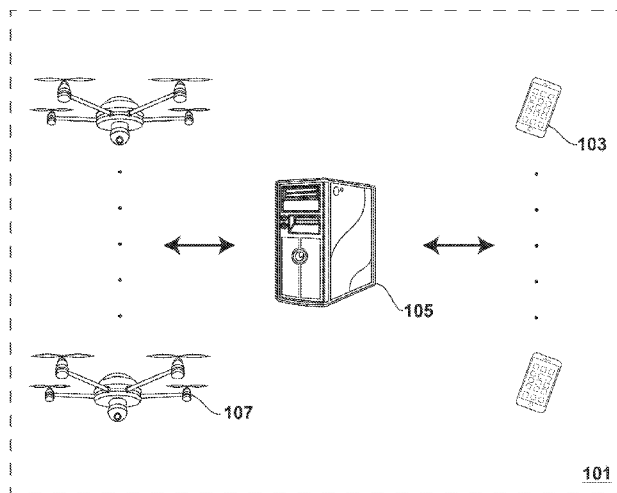


FIG. 1

(57) **Abstract:** A method is provided for sending a drone to a user on request. The method includes providing software, an instance of which is installed on a plurality of mobile technology platforms, wherein each mobile technology platform is associated with a user and is equipped with a tangible, non-transient medium having an instance of the software installed therein. The software contains suitable programming instructions which, when executed by a processor, perform the steps of (a) displaying, on a display associated with the mobile technology platform, a graphical user interface (GUI) having a user selectable object displayed thereon, (b) determining when the user selectable object has been selected by a user, and (c) when the user selectable object has been selected by the user, (i) determining the current location of the user via the location awareness functionality, and (ii) transmitting a request for a drone, wherein the request includes the determined current location of the user. The method further includes receiving, from one of the plurality of mobile technology platforms, a transmitted request for a drone, and dispatching a drone, from a fleet of drones, to fly over the determined current location of the user set forth in the request.

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DRONE BASED SYSTEMS AND METHODOLOGIES FOR CAPTURING IMAGES

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application claims the benefit of priority from U.S. provisional application number 62/093,063, filed December 17, 2014, having the same inventor, and the same title, and which is contained herein in its entirety by reference.

FIELD OF THE DISCLOSURE

[0002] The present disclosure relates generally to systems and methodologies for image capture, and more particularly to drone based systems and methodologies for image capture.

BACKGROUND OF THE DISCLOSURE

[0003] The use of drones for capturing images and videos is well established. Drones have a long legacy in military surveillance, and have more recently become more commonplace in civilian applications as well. For example, the International Business Times published an article on July 8, 2014 entitled “Drone-Filmed Fireworks Videos Capture Stunning Images From Above, Between Explosions”, in which it featured aerial images and videos of fireworks displays captured by drones during recent Independence Day celebrations. Similarly, several individuals and organizations, including The Telegraph, have published video footage and photos captured by drones of the new Apple Computer headquarters (“Campus 2”) under construction in Cupertino, California.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0004] FIG. 1 is an illustration of an embodiment of a system for summoning drones for the capture of digital media.

SUMMARY OF THE DISCLOSURE

[0005] In one aspect, a method is provided for sending a drone to a user on request. The method comprises providing software, an instance of which is installed on a plurality of mobile technology platforms, wherein each mobile technology platform is associated with a user and is equipped with a tangible, non-transient medium having an instance of the software installed therein, and wherein the software contains suitable programming instructions. The programming instructions, when executed by a processor, perform the steps of (a) displaying, on a display associated with the mobile technology platform, a graphical user interface (GUI) having a user selectable object displayed thereon, (b) determining when the user selectable object has been selected by the user, and (c) when the user selectable object has been selected by the user, (i) obtaining a target location (such as, for example, the current location of the user as determined, for example, via the location awareness capabilities of the user's mobile technology platform), and (ii) transmitting a request for a drone, wherein the request includes the target location. The method further comprises receiving, from one of the plurality of mobile technology platforms, a transmitted request for a drone, and dispatching a drone to fly over the target location set forth in the request. In a preferred embodiment, the method also includes the step of capturing digital media from the target location from one or more devices disposed on the drone.

[0006] In another aspect, a method is provided for requesting digital media capture by a drone. The method comprises obtaining a mobile technology platform equipped with a display and having a tangible, non-transient medium with an instance of a software program installed therein. The software program contains suitable programming instructions which, when executed by a processor, perform the steps of (a) displaying, on the display, a graphical user interface (GUI) having a user selectable object displayed

thereon, wherein the GUI includes a digital media control panel that allows the user to input digital media capture control commands from the mobile technology platform to the drone, (b) determining when the user selectable object has been selected by the user, and (c) when the user selectable object has been selected by the user, (i) obtaining a target location (such as, for example, the current location of the user as determined, for example, via the location awareness capabilities of the user's mobile technology platform), and (ii) transmitting a request for a drone, wherein the request includes the target location. The method further comprises selecting the selectable object, and inputting digital media capture control commands into the digital media control panel.

[0007] In a further aspect, a system is provided for capturing digital media. The system comprises a fleet of drones, each of which, in the preferred embodiment, is preferably equipped to capture digital media related to a ground based target. The system further comprises a plurality of mobile technology platforms, each of which is equipped with (a) location awareness functionality, (b) a display, (c) a tangible, non-transient memory medium, and (d) an instance of a software program recorded in the memory medium. The software program contains suitable programming instructions which, when executed by a processor associated with the mobile technology platform, render on the display a graphic user interface (GUI) having a graphical object thereon which, when selected by the user, (i) determines the current location of the user via the location awareness functionality, and (ii) transmits a request for a drone, said request including the determined current location of the user. The system further comprises a controller which receives requests for drones from the plurality of mobile technology platforms and directs a drone from the fleet of drones to the determined current location of the user.

[0008] In still another aspect, a method is provided for performing an appraisal on an asset. The method comprises (a) providing a drone equipped with image capture and location awareness functionalities; (b) obtaining a set of comparable assets to be used as a basis for establishing the appraisal value of the asset; (c) repeating, until n images have been captured, where $n \geq 1$, the steps of

(i) transmitting to the drone a request to capture an image of a target asset selected from the group consisting of the asset and the comparable assets,

(ii) determining the current location of the drone with respect to a geofence associated with the target asset, and

(iii) if the drone is within a distance d of the geofence associated with the target asset, then capturing the image, and otherwise denying the request; and (d) using the n images to determine an appraisal value of the asset.

[0009] In a further aspect, a method is provided for capturing images of an asset. The method comprises (a) providing a drone which is equipped with image capturing and location awareness functionalities; (b) receiving, from the drone, a request to capture an image of the asset using the software; (c) determining the current location of the drone with respect to a geofence associated with the asset; and (d) if the drone is within a distance d of the geofence associated with the asset, then granting the request, and otherwise denying the request.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0010] Despite the aforementioned advances, several needs still exist in the art for the application of drone based imaging and, more generally, drone based capture of digital media. For example, in some applications, there is a need in the art to obtain, on demand, the drone based capture of digital media pertaining to a target of interest, such as a location or an event. There is further a need in the art for a means by which a party requesting drone based capture of digital media can control at least certain parameters of the digital media capture, and can define the target of the digital media capture. These and other needs may be met with the systems and methodologies disclosed herein.

[0011] The systems, devices and methodologies disclosed herein may be further understood with reference to the particular, non-limiting embodiment depicted in FIG. 1 of a system for summoning a drone for digital media capture. With reference thereto, a system **101** is provided which includes a plurality of mobile technology platforms **103**, a server **105** and a fleet of drones **107**. Each of the plurality of mobile technology

platforms **103** has an internal memory device with an instance of a software application recorded therein.

[0012] The software application is preferably equipped with suitable features to allow the user to capture digital media such as, for example, photos, videos and sound files. In a preferred embodiment, and in addition to the features and functionalities described herein, the software includes the features and functionality of the software described U.S. 2013/0275505 (Gauglitz et al.), entitled “Systems and Methods for Event Networking and Media Sharing”, U.S. 20130117146 (Gauglitz), entitled “System and Methods for Event Networking, Media Sharing, and Product Creation”, and U.S. 62/048,506, entitled “Systems And Methodologies For Validating The Correspondence Between An Image And An Asset”, all of which are incorporated herein by reference in their entirety. The software may be implemented in various forms including, for example, as a distributed application, or as a client-server application.

[0013] In a preferred embodiment, the software, when launched on a mobile technology platform on which an instance of the software is installed, renders a suitable graphical object on the display of the host device. This object may be, for example, an icon, a button, a tab, a picture, or any other suitable, user-selectable object, although in an especially preferred embodiment, it is an icon with the associated text field “Drone Me!” The object is preferably incorporated into the graphical user interface (GUI) of image, video and/or audio capture software installed on the host device, to provide the user with a further option for capturing those types of media.

[0014] In a preferred embodiment, selection of the graphical object by the user causes the transmission of a drone request to the server **105**. This request preferably includes the current location of the user as may be determined, for example, by native location awareness software installed on the host device or by other suitable means.

[0015] Upon receipt of a drone request, the server **105** utilizes a suitable algorithm to determine which drone, in the fleet of drones **107**, to dispatch to the user’s location. Various factors may be considered in this determination including, for example, the availability of a given drone, the current location of the drone with respect to the target,

the flight path required for a drone to travel from its current location to the target, the length of such flight path and the time required for the drone to traverse it, atmospheric conditions (including, for example, wind speed and wind direction), and other such factors.

[0016] Upon selection of a suitable drone, the server provides sufficient instructions for the drone to proceed to the target destination. These instructions may include, for example, location information about the target (such as, for example, the current location of the mobile technology platform included in the drone request).

[0017] In some embodiments, as the drone approaches the target, it may cede at least partial control of its operations to the mobile technology platform from which the drone request was sent. This may occur, for example, when the drone reaches a predetermined distance from the target, or when the drone enters a geofence (for example, one associated with the mobile technology platform, or one designated by the server).

[0018] For example, in some embodiments of the systems and methodologies disclosed herein, upon approaching the target location, the drone may allow the user of the mobile technology platform to assume at least partial control over the capture of digital media by the drone. In such embodiments, the GUI may include a digital media control panel that allows the user to input digital media capture control commands from the mobile technology platform to the drone. These digital media capture control commands may include, for example, commands which specify the type of digital media to be captured by the drone, when or how frequently such digital media is to be captured, the location of a target to be imaged, a set of coordinates or geofence (which may be a user defined geofence) which specifies the location of the target, the shutter speed or exposure settings to be used by a drone camera in acquiring images or video footage, the lens or camera to be used during imaging (this may be an actual lens, or a virtual lens which produces a desired optical effect), or target information obtained, for example, from a target painter, which may be associated with the user and, in some embodiments, may be incorporated into the mobile technology platform.

[0019] In some embodiments of the systems and methodologies disclosed herein, upon approaching the target location, the drone may allow the user of the mobile technology platform to assume at least partial control over the flight of the drone, especially when it is approaching sufficient proximity to the target location to allow for the capture of digital media. In such embodiments, the GUI may be equipped with a flight control panel that allows the user to input flight control commands from the mobile technology platform to the drone. These flight control commands include commands which specify a portion of the flight path to be taken by the drone during digital media capture. In some embodiments, the GUI may also be configured to allow the user to enter or adjust other flight control parameters, such as the altitude, speed or trajectory of the drone. For safety or security reasons, the drone may be equipped with a database of allowable commands, such that any flight control command input by the user which is not an allowable command or would put the drone or members of the public in peril may be disregarded by the drone.

[0020] As an example of the foregoing, in some embodiments, a fleet of drones may be made available at an event venue. Attendees at the event may be given the ability to assume control over a particular drone in the fleet for a period of time. This may occur as a result of the attendee purchasing drone time, receiving it as a complimentary gift, or by other means. During the time that the attendee has control over the drone, the user may utilize the drone to capture digital media of the event, and the digital media may be associated with the user and/or event in the manner described, for example, in U.S. 62/048,506 (Gauglitz), entitled "Systems And Methodologies For Validating The Correspondence Between An Image And An Asset", and in PCT/US15/49488, which has the same inventor and title. The user may have only partial control over the drone during this time. For example, the user may be able to control certain parameters of the drone's flight path, but may be locked out of adjusting the altitude of the drone. When the drone is not being utilized by an attendee, it may return to a home, base for refueling or recharging, or may hover over the event until another attendee takes control over it. In this way, control of the drone may be essentially passed off from one attendee to another.

[0021] In some embodiments of the systems and methodologies defined herein, a drone may be equipped with suitable intelligence so that it can determine the most efficient flight path to canvas an event (for example, for digital media capture purposes). This may occur through software and/or hardware installed on the drone itself, and/or through suitable communications between the drone and one or more computers or computer networks. This intelligence may be adapted to permit the drone to recalculate its flight path due to detours or interruptions (as may occur, for example, if an individual temporarily assumes control over the drone in the manner described herein).

[0022] In some embodiments, the systems and methodologies disclosed herein may allow the user to enter information which specifies the general purpose for which use of the drone is being requested. This information may then be utilized to adjust various parameters controlling the drone to settings that are likely to be most conducive to the end use. For example, if the drone is to be used for capturing images or video of real estate, the drone may adopt one or more predefined flight patterns about a location or geofence that are most likely to result in quality image or video capture.

[0023] The systems and methodologies disclosed herein may be utilized in combination with other systems and methodologies which include the capture of digital media as a step thereof, with understandable modifications made to account for the use of a drone in capturing the digital media. For example, these systems and methodologies may be utilized as a component of the systems and methodologies disclosed in U.S. 62/048,506 (Gauglitz), entitled "Systems And Methodologies For Validating The Correspondence Between An Image And An Asset", and in PCT/US15/49488, which has the same inventor and title. The '506 application and the '488 application disclose systems and methodologies for ensuring that an image captured of an asset (such as a home) correspond to the actual asset, and are of recent vintage. The systems, methodologies and software disclosed therein for accomplishing this objective may be extended in a straight forward manner to the use of drones in capturing the images of an asset.

[0024] By way of illustration, a first entity requiring recent images of a series of properties (for insurance purposes, for example) may contact a second entity which has contracted with the first entity to provide such images upon demand. The second entity may own or rent a fleet of drones, or may have a business relationship with another party that does so. Upon receipt of the imaging request, the second entity may dispatch one or more drones to the location (or locations) of the property (or properties) to be imaged.

[0025] The drones in such an embodiment (or a device controlling them) may be equipped with suitable software that prevents the acquisition of digital media until the drone is in sufficient proximity of a target asset. Such proximity may be determined, for example, by ascertaining the proximity of the drone to a geofence associated with the asset. In particular, digital media capture by the drone may be prevented by such software until the drone has entered a geofence associated with the target asset.

[0026] In other embodiments, the digital media may be captured by the drone, and then subject to validation later for possible association with an asset. In such an embodiment, temporal and locative data associated with the captured digital media may be used in determining whether the digital media should be associated with a target asset. In some embodiments, the identification of the drone that captured the digital media may be embedded in metadata or other data associated with the captured media.

[0027] In some embodiments, one or more beacons may be disposed at, or in proximity to, a target for the purposes of establishing a geofence which may be used, for example, to determine where digital media should be collected by a drone (e.g., through geofence entry). By way of example, if images are desired of the outer structure immediately adjacent to a particular room in a house (for example, to determine the extent of structural damages for insurance purposes), a beacon may be placed in the room and used to define a suitable geofence so that the drone will focus its imaging efforts on the appropriate portion of a house.

[0028] In some embodiments, suitable software may be provided to control the collection of digital media by a drone in accordance with a predetermined formula. Such software may be disposed on a drone itself or on another device such as, for example, a

mobile technology platform, computer, server or other suitable device which is in communication with the drone and which exerts at least partial control over the drone's flight path.

[0029] For example, when a drone is utilized to image houses, such software may determine a set of optimal locations (e.g., sets of 2-dimensional or 3-dimensional coordinates) at which images are to be captured, the optimal attitude (e.g., pitch, yaw and roll) of the drone for each image, and the most efficient flight path for the drone to follow so as to collect the images in the least amount of time or with the least expenditure of energy. The foregoing may depend on such factors as, for example, current weather conditions (such as, for example, wind speed and direction), the location of the sun, and the degree of clarity. The drone may then follow the prescribed flight path and capture images at the predetermined locations.

[0030] Of course, it will be appreciated that the foregoing method may be utilized to capture images of a set of assets. In such an embodiment, the software may determine the optimal overall flight path for the drone to be able to capture images of all of the assets subject to appropriate constraints such as, for example, available fuel, time, and consideration of restricted air space.

[0031] In some embodiments, a database of parameters (such as coordinates for imaging locations relative to a structure) may be maintained for houses or other structures of various sizes, number of levels, shapes and footprints. These parameters may then be utilized to control image capture.

[0032] The systems, methodologies and software applications described herein may also be extended in a straight forward manner to the systems, methodologies and software applications described in U.S. 2013/0275505 (Gauglitz et al.), entitled "Systems and Methods for Event Networking and Media Sharing", U.S. 20130117146 (Gauglitz), entitled "System and Methods for Event Networking, Media Sharing, and Product Creation". For example, the media sharing software disclosed therein may be modified to include the "Drone Me" functionality described herein, thus allowing a spectator, participant or attendee at an event to have an aerial image or video captured of them.

[0033] In other embodiments, the software installed on a mobile technology platform associated with a spectator, participant or attendee at an event may be utilized in the manner described herein to at least partially control the flight or imaging capture of a drone. In such embodiments, a party may supply one or more drones for an event, and a spectator at the event who is equipped with a mobile technology platform having the foregoing software installed thereon may “rent” control of the drone for a predetermined period of time through submission of a request through the software.

[0034] While the above systems, methodologies and software have frequently been described specifically with respect to the capture of images of particular types of assets (such as, for example, houses or other assets), it will be appreciated that these systems, methodologies and software are more generally applicable to the collection of various types of digital media pertaining to various types of assets.

[0035] It will be appreciated that the systems and methodologies disclosed herein extend beyond media capture. For example, these systems and methodologies may be utilized in the context of drone rentals, where a user may summon a drone for a variety of purposes. For example, in some embodiments of the systems and methodologies disclosed herein, a fleet of drones may be equipped with suitable lighting, electronic signage, or audio transmission capabilities, and a user may summon a drone to display advertising, messages, or other content to an audience. For example, a user may summon a drone to pass over a birthday party while displaying “Happy Birthday!” and playing suitable music. In other embodiments, a user may summon a drone, and utilize it to deliver a package or item to a recipient. In still other embodiments, a user may summon a drone for emergency purposes such as, for example, locating a skier in an avalanche.

[0036] In some embodiments of the systems and methodologies disclosed herein, multiple drones may be summoned to a crowded venue. In such instances, the drones may communicate with each other for collision avoidance purposes, and to plot flight paths for each individual drone that will prevent or reduce any interference from any of the other drones during media capture.

[0037] In some embodiments of the systems and methodologies disclosed herein, a request for a drone may include the selection of one or more parameters for the flight path of a drone. For example, a user may be able to select parameters that will cause a drone to hover or circle and indicated area or point for a predetermined amount of time. A user may also be able to select parameters that will cause a drone to operate in stealth mode. In such embodiments, the drone may operate in response to such a request by reducing or minimizing operational noise or by selecting a flight path that will cause the drone to be as unobtrusive as possible.

[0038] In some embodiments of the systems and methodologies disclosed herein, when a drone arrives at a destination, it may follow a user. This may be achieved, for example, by having a mobile technology platform associated with the user update its location periodically, and provide that updated information to the drone (this may occur through direct communication between the mobile technology platform and the drone, or indirectly by way of, for example, one or more servers).

[0039] Various mobile technology platforms may be utilized in the systems and methodologies disclosed herein. Preferably, these mobile technology platforms are hand-held devices such as smartphones which are equipped with a display, an operating system, a communications system and location awareness. Many current models of such devices weigh less than 6.5 ounces. However, it is to be understood that other similar devices may be used in some embodiments of the systems and methodologies described herein including, for example, laptop or tablet PCs.

[0040] The above description of the present invention is illustrative, and is not intended to be limiting. It will thus be appreciated that various additions, substitutions and modifications may be made to the above described embodiments without departing from the scope of the present invention. Accordingly, the scope of the present invention should be construed in reference to the appended claims. In these claims, it will be appreciated that the limitations set forth in any claim may be combined with the limitations set forth in any other claim (or claims) without departing from the scope of

the present invention, unless the current specification specifically teaches otherwise. Thus, for example, the various limitations set forth in any dependent claim may be combined with the limitations set forth in any other dependent claim, whether or not such combination is explicitly called out in the present claims or specification.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for sending a drone to a user on request, comprising:
providing software, an instance of which is installed on a plurality of mobile technology platforms, wherein each mobile technology platform is associated with a user and is equipped with a tangible, non-transient medium having an instance of the software installed therein, and wherein the software contains suitable programming instructions which, when executed by a processor, perform the steps of
 - (a) displaying, on a display associated with the mobile technology platform, a graphical user interface (GUI) having a user selectable object displayed thereon,
 - (b) determining when the user selectable object has been selected by the user,
 - (c) when the user selectable object has been selected by the user, (i) obtaining a destination for a drone, and (ii) transmitting a request for a drone, wherein the request includes the destination;receiving, from one of the plurality of mobile technology platforms, a transmitted request for a drone; and
dispatching a drone to fly over the destination specified in the request.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein obtaining a destination for a drone includes querying the user for a destination.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein obtaining a destination for a drone includes obtaining the current location of the user, and specifying the current location of the user as the destination.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein the mobile technology platform associated with the user has location awareness capabilities, and wherein the location of the mobile technology platform at the time the request is transmitted is specified as the destination.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
capturing digital media from the determined location of the user from a device disposed on the drone.
6. The method of claim 5, wherein the digital media includes at least one digital image.
7. The method of claim 5, wherein the digital media includes at least one digital video.
8. The method of claim 5, wherein the digital media includes at least one audio file.
9. The method of claim 5, wherein the software further identifies a geofence associated with the mobile technology platform associated with the user, and transmits this information with the request.
10. The method of claim 9 wherein, upon approaching the determined location of the user, the drone adopts a flight path parallel to the boundary of the geofence.
11. The method of claim 10, wherein the drone captures the digital media while it is on the adopted flight path.
12. The method of claim 5 wherein, upon approaching the determined location of the user, the software allows the user to assume at least partial control over the flight path of the drone.
13. The method of claim 12, wherein the GUI includes a flight control panel that allows the user to input flight control commands from the mobile technology platform to the drone.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the drone is equipped with a database of allowable commands, and wherein any flight control command input by the user which is not an allowable command is disregarded by the drone.

15. The method of claim 13, wherein said flight control commands include commands which specify a portion of the flight path to be taken by the drone during digital media capture.

16. The method of claim 5 wherein, upon approaching the determined location of the user, the software allows the user to assume at least partial control over the capture of digital media by the drone.

17. The method of claim 5 wherein, upon entering a geofence associated with a user's mobile technology platform, the software allows the user to assume at least partial control over the capture of digital media by the drone while the drone is within the geofence.

18. The method of claim 15, wherein the GUI includes a digital media control panel that allows the user to input digital media capture control commands from the mobile technology platform to the drone.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein said digital media capture control commands include commands which specify the type of digital media to be captured by the drone.

20. The method of claim 18, wherein said digital media capture control commands include commands which specify when digital media is to be captured by the drone.

21. The method of claim 18, wherein said digital media capture control commands include commands which specify how frequently digital media is to be captured by the drone.

22. The method of claim 18, wherein said digital media capture control commands include commands which specify the location of a target to be imaged.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein said digital media capture control commands allow the location of a target for digital media capture to be specified by a set of coordinates.

24. The method of claim 22, wherein said digital media capture control commands allow the location of a target for digital media capture to be specified by a geofence.

25. The method of claim 24, wherein said geofence is a user defined geofence.

26. The method of claim 18, wherein said digital media capture control commands include commands selected from the group consisting of shutter speed, zoom and exposure.

27. The method of claim 18, wherein said drone is equipped with a plurality of lenses, and wherein said digital media capture control commands include commands which specify which lens is to be used during digital media capture.

28. The method of claim 18, wherein said drone is equipped with a plurality of cameras, and wherein said digital media capture control commands include commands which specify which camera is to be used during digital media capture.

29. The method of claim 18, wherein said digital media capture control commands include target information obtained from a target painter.
30. The method of claim 29, wherein the target painter is a component of the mobile technology platform.
31. The method of claim 1, wherein dispatching a drone to fly over destination set forth in the request includes dispatching one of a plurality of drones.
32. The method of claim 31, wherein dispatching a drone includes determining which drone in the plurality of drones is available and is closest to the destination set forth in the request.
33. The method of claim 31, wherein dispatching a drone includes determining which drone in the plurality of drones is available and has the shortest flight path to the destination set forth in the request.
34. A method for requesting digital media capture by a drone, comprising:
obtaining a mobile technology platform equipped with a display and having a tangible, non-transient medium with an instance of a software program installed therein, wherein the software program contains suitable programming instructions which, when executed by a processor, perform the steps of
- (a) displaying, on the display, a graphical user interface (GUI) having a user selectable object displayed thereon, wherein the GUI includes a digital media control panel that allows the user to input digital media capture control commands from the mobile technology platform to the drone,
 - (b) determining when the user selectable object has been selected by the user, and

(c) when the user selectable object has been selected by the user, (i) obtaining a target location from the user or the mobile technology platform associated with the user, and (ii) transmitting a request for a drone, wherein the request includes the target location; selecting the selectable object; and inputting digital media capture control commands into the digital media control panel.

35. The method of claim 34, further comprising:
receiving captured digital media from the drone in response to the request.

36. The method of claim 34, wherein said digital media capture control commands include commands which specify the type of digital media to be captured by the drone.

37. The method of claim 34, wherein said digital media capture control commands include commands which specify when digital media is to be captured by the drone.

38. The method of claim 34, wherein said digital media capture control commands include commands which specify how frequently digital media is to be captured by the drone.

39. The method of claim 34, wherein said digital media capture control commands include commands which specify the location of a target to be imaged.

40. The method of claim 34, wherein said digital media capture control commands allow the location of a target for digital media capture to be specified by a set of coordinates.

41. The method of claim 34, wherein said digital media capture control commands allow the location of a target for digital media capture to be specified by a geofence.
42. The method of claim 41, wherein said geofence is a user defined geofence.
43. The method of claim 34, wherein said digital media capture control commands include commands selected from the group consisting of shutter speed, zoom and exposure.
44. The method of claim 34, wherein said drone is equipped with a plurality of lenses, and wherein said digital media capture control commands include commands which specify which lens is to be used during digital media capture.
45. The method of claim 34, wherein said drone is equipped with a plurality of cameras, and wherein said digital media capture control commands include commands which specify which camera is to be used during digital media capture.
46. The method of claim 34, wherein said digital media capture control commands include target information obtained from a target painter.
47. The method of claim 46, wherein the target painter is a component of the mobile technology platform.
48. The method of claim 34, wherein the target location is the location of the mobile technology platform associated with the user.
49. The method of claim 48, wherein the mobile technology platform has location awareness functionality by way of its operating system, and wherein obtaining a target

location includes querying the operating system for the current location of the mobile technology platform.

50. A system for capturing digital media, comprising:
a plurality of drones;
a plurality of mobile technology platforms, each of which is equipped with
(a) location awareness functionality,
(b) a display,
(c) a tangible, non-transient memory medium, and
(d) an instance of a software program recorded in the memory medium,
wherein said software program contains suitable programming instructions which, when executed by a processor associated with the mobile technology platform, render on the display a graphic user interface (GUI) having a graphical object thereon which, when selected by the user, (i) determines the current location of the user via the location awareness functionality, and (ii) transmits a request for a drone, said request including the determined current location of the user; and

a controller which receives requests for drones from the plurality of mobile technology platforms and directs one of the plurality of drones to the determined current location of the user.

51. The system of claim 50, wherein each of said plurality of drones is equipped to capture digital media related to a ground based target.

52. A method for performing an appraisal on an asset, comprising:
providing a drone equipped with image capture and location awareness functionalities;
obtaining a set of comparable assets to be used as a basis for establishing the appraisal value of the asset;
repeating, until n images have been captured, where $n \geq 1$, the steps of

transmitting to the drone a request to capture an image of a target asset selected from the group consisting of the asset and the comparable assets,

determining the current location of the drone with respect to a geofence associated with the target asset, and

if the drone is within a distance d of the geofence associated with the target asset, then capturing the image, and otherwise denying the request; and

using the n images to determine an appraisal value of the asset.

53. The method of claim 52, wherein the asset is real estate.

54. The method of claim 52, wherein the n images include at least one image of each comparable asset.

55. The method of claim 54, wherein there are at least 3 comparable assets, and no greater than 5 comparable assets.

56. The method of claim 52, further comprising:
placing each captured image in a folder associated with the target asset.

57. The method of claim 52, wherein determining the current location of the drone with respect to a geofence associated with the target asset includes determining the GPS coordinates of the drone.

58. The method of claim 52, further comprising:
associating locative and temporal data with each captured image which specifies, respectively, the location and time at which the image was captured.

59. The method of claim 58, wherein associating locative and temporal data with each captured image includes recording the locative and temporal data in metadata associated with the captured image.

60. A method for capturing images of an asset, comprising:
providing a drone which is equipped with image capturing and location awareness functionalities;
receiving, from the drone, a request to capture an image of the asset using the software;
determining the current location of the drone with respect to a geofence associated with the asset; and
if the drone is within a distance d of the geofence associated with the asset, then granting the request, and otherwise denying the request.

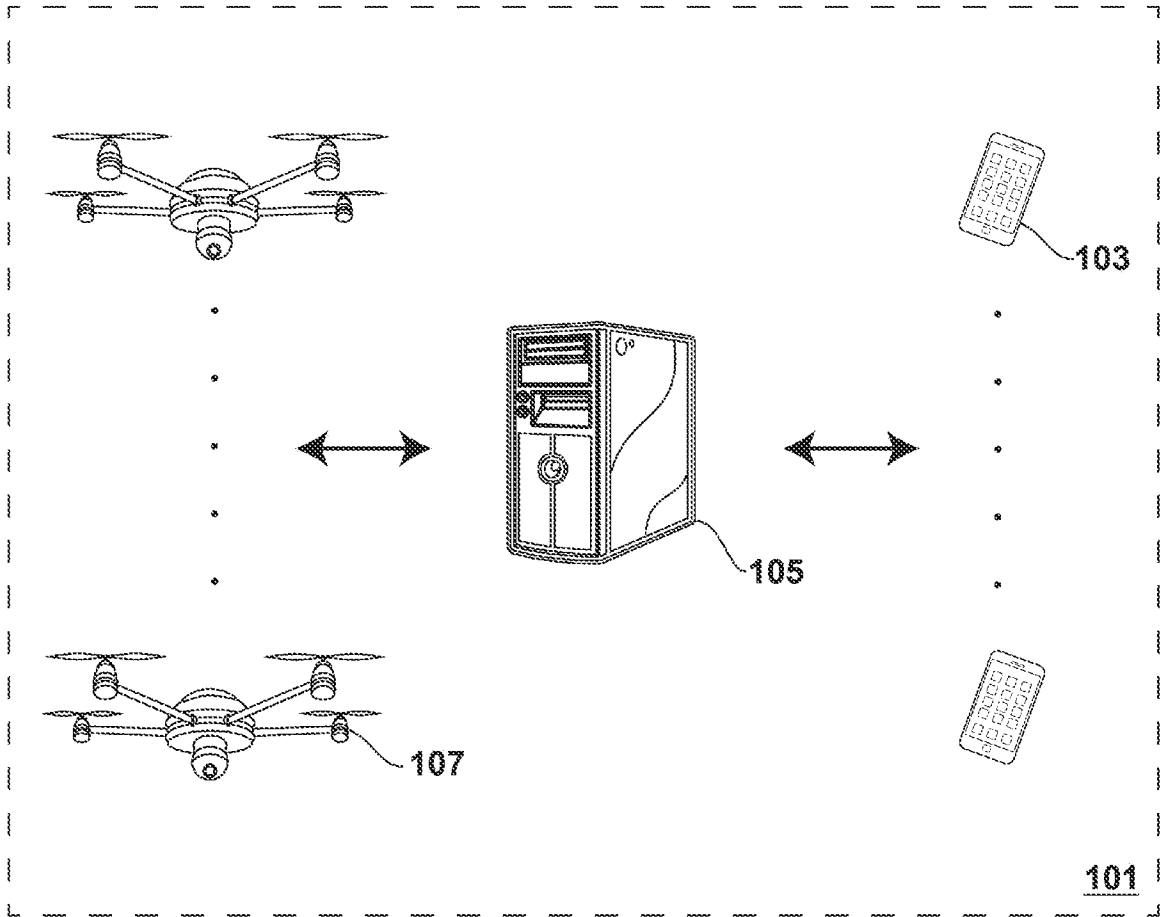


FIG. 1