



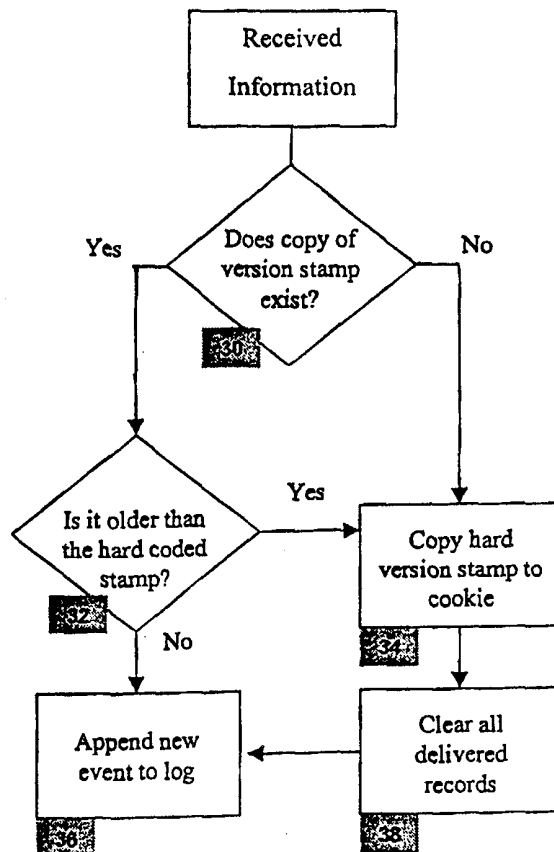
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<p>(21) International Application Number: PCT/GB99/02843 (22) International Filing Date: 27 August 1999 (27.08.99) (30) Priority Data: 9818872.5 28 August 1998 (28.08.98) GB (71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): GREEN CATHEDRAL LIMITED [GB/GB]; The Barn, High Street, Longstanton, Cambridge CB4 5BP (GB). (72) Inventors; and (75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): EVISON, Rufus, Simon, Tobias [GB/GB]; The Barn, High Street, Longstanton, Cambridge CB4 5BP (GB). PUTWAIN, Paul, Neville [GB/GB]; The Barn, High Street, Longstanton, Cambridge CB4 5BP (GB). WOODLEY, Michael, Lawrence [GB/GB]; The Barn, High Street, Longstanton, Cambridge CB4 5BP (GB). (74) Agent: ABNETT, Richard, Charles; Reddie &amp; Grose, 16 Theobalds Road, London WC1X 8PL (GB).</p>	<p>(81) Designated States: AE, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CH, CN, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZW, ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, SD, SL, SZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).</p> <p><b>Published</b> <i>With international search report. Before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of the receipt of amendments.</i></p>	

(54) Title: COMPUTER NETWORK INFORMATION USE MONITORING

(57) Abstract

Information sent from a server in response to a request from a client computer is accompanied by a version stamp, comprising date/time code. At the client, on each occurrence of a specified event or events, the version stamp is compared with any previous version stamp to determine whether this is a new transmission of information or not. A log is kept at the client of all information displayed, whether on-line or off-line, and the logged information is subsequently returned to the server, when a subsequent request for information is made by the client of the server. When it is determined from the version stamp that new information is being received from the server, this indicates that the logged information has reached the server, and the log can be cleared. Similar operations can be applied to the sending and receipt of e-mail messages.



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## COMPUTER NETWORK INFORMATION USE MONITORING

### Background of the Invention

The invention relates to a method of monitoring the use of information provided over a computer network, and to computers for implementing the method.

A network is a means of communicating between two or more computers or processors, and can take many forms, including for example the internet, infra-red, radio signals and cabling. Any medium for transporting information from one computer to another can be regarded as a network.

Most of the existing technology in this field is based in the area of internet or intranet Web servers. The invention will therefore be described in the context of server logs as used in this area, but it is applicable across many other areas of client/server interaction. Another particular area of potential interest is in relation to e-mail.

Currently, when a computer which provides information (i.e. server) fills an information request, it writes to a file at the server (a server log) whatever information it has about the request. Typically this will include the following details:

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- (a) what time the request reached the server;
- (b) what information was requested;
- (c) where the information was sent to; and
- (d) how the user was referred to the information  
5 (i.e. the referrer).

Some servers, or programs designed to run in conjunction with servers, will also send (e) an item of information to identify the recipient, and will record this if it is subsequently included with any future information  
10 requests. There are currently many log analysers on the market which take the details written by the server and try to form a picture of what information users have been looking at, when, and for how long.

Since servers only see the client requests, the  
15 information on timing that a server log analyser provides can be inaccurate. The time spent by the user examining the information can only be estimated by looking at the difference in time between when one request was made by a user and when the next request was made by the same user.  
20 If a user stops viewing the information sent, and later returns to it to make another information request, the time spent elsewhere may be included in the estimate for time spent viewing the sent information. This can be extremely inaccurate, to the extent of reporting hours spent viewing  
25 the requested information when only seconds were actually spent.

Another problem with timing is that over large networks such as the internet, particularly when accessed over low bandwidth connections, the time that the information takes  
30 to move from one computer to another can also become significant, and cannot be measured by server log analysis.

When copies of the information sent by the server are stored on the client computer and then viewed off-line, the server is not contacted and so no record of this viewing of  
35 the copies is kept. If either the server or the client is not connected to the network, then nothing will be seen using log analysis even if the computers are later reconnected across the network. This is another major deficiency in current methods.

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With a Web server accessed by a standard browser, cached pages will often be accessed whenever the 'back button' or 'forward button' are used. No new request is sent to the server. Depending on individual settings, they may also be used for any page that is revisited on a Web site. Other different things may also cause caching, but in all cases it can lead to inaccurate timing reports being produced from server logs.

A proxy server is a server which takes a copy of information from a content server when it is first requested, and then passes it on to each client that requests it within a limited time period. Subsequent copies of any information passed through a proxy server do not involve any interaction with the content server and are therefore not recorded by the content server.

For all these reasons current methods of server log analysis are liable to be inaccurate and unreliable. We have appreciated that there is a need to provide a structure which can be used to provide more effective analysis of server usage, by overcoming at least the major ones of these problems.

The problem of proxy servers has been recognised by MatchLogic Inc., of 10333 Church Ranch Boulevard, Westminster, Colorado 80021, United States of America, which has produced a TrueCount system with a view to ameliorating the inaccuracies in counting resulting from proxy server use. In this system a small element of code is added to the header on the content pages to be counted. If the pages are cached on a proxy server, then whenever the proxy server delivers the stored content to a subsequent user, this added code element acts as a messenger and transmits a message to a special server set up to receive these messages. This however, is only a limited solution to the problems enumerated above and does not enable the other difficulties to be overcome. In particular, the system can take no account of off-line viewing, and indeed has no need to, as its intended purpose is to determine by how many users a page, or more likely an advertising banner, has been accessed. It can not give information on the length of time

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a page was viewed, whether on or off line, or any information of a more complex nature.

International Patent Application Publication No. WO98/10349 describes a system for monitoring the display  
5 by a user of content (e.g. advertisements) received from a server. The system is designed *inter alia* to make it difficult for the content provider to manipulate the log file at the server, by setting up user computers automatically to access but not display the content, and to  
10 avoid undercounting of cached pages. This is achieved by monitoring at the user computer the display of web pages, rather than just requests for pages. When a page is requested, a program is transmitted to the user which causes the user computer to determine which part of the content is  
15 being displayed on the user's screen, and to note either the number of times the content is displayed or the start and finish times of such display. This information is then transmitted back to the content provider or to another location where the monitoring information is analysed.

20 There are a number of problems with this system. First, it still does not disclose how to handle the viewing of pages off-line. Secondly, it is limited to the monitoring of display, which is complex and may itself be inaccurate and not properly represent the effectiveness of  
25 the content, e.g. the advertisements, being displayed. Finally, there is no effective way of both ensuring that the monitoring data reaches the location where the monitoring information is analysed and also avoiding data being stored for long and/or indefinite periods at the user computer.

30 Reference may also be made to International Patent Application publication No. WO97/41673.

It is well-known for web servers to send 'cookies' to user computers which are stored on the user computer and provide information about the user to the server.

### Summary of the Invention

The invention is defined in the independent claims below, to which reference should now be made. Advantageous features of the invention are set forth in the appendant  
5 claims.

In a preferred embodiment of the invention, described in more detail below, a provider or sender computer transmits to a requestor or receiver computer code which causes the requestor computer to monitor each time a page is  
10 accessed or displayed, whether on-line or off-line, and to generate a log of such usage. The log includes events which occur not only when the requestor computer is on-line to the provider computer but also events which occur off-line. When a subsequent request for information is made by the  
15 requestor of the provider, the logged information is returned to or accessed by the provider computer, where it can be analysed.

The provider computer also accompanies each transmitted page with a version stamp, for example comprising date/time  
20 code. The requestor computer stores the latest received version stamp. On each occurrence of a specified event or events, it compares the version stamp in that page with the stored version stamp. If the stored version stamp is older than the version stamp of the displayed page, then it knows  
25 that the new page is being received in response to a request it has sent to the provider computer for information, and is not a stored page. Thus it knows that its logged information on usage, which will have been transmitted with that request for information, has reached the provider  
30 computer, and thus it also knows that it can clear the log, or at least it knows what information in the log is redundant.

Similar operations can be applied to the sending and receipt of e-mail messages, as described below.

### Brief Description of the Drawings

The invention will now be described in more detail, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

5           **Figure 1** is a flow chart illustrating the operation of a server in a client/server system embodying the invention; and

**Figure 2** is a flow chart illustrating the corresponding operation of the client.

### 10           Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiment

An outline description of the preferred embodiment of the invention will first be given. The preferred embodiment takes the form of a system and method for logging the use of a server machine (computer or processor) by a client machine  
15 in a client/server relationship. It will be appreciated that this represents only one possible usage of the invention and that it is applicable to other computer networks and relationships as discussed above. In particular, the use of the invention in monitoring e-mail is described at the end  
20 of this description.

The preferred system comprises a method of logging that operates on both the server machine and the client machine. In the system, the information supplied to the client is augmented with special code which may be executed on the  
25 client machine. This additional code, when executed, records information about the behavior of the user, by reference to specified events occurring at the user computer. This may include the time the user spends accessing or looking at the information supplied. The  
30 recorded information is stored on the client in the form of a log. The information recorded is not limited to the time the user spends accessing the information supplied but can include also other information about the behavior of the user, such as how far down the page a user scrolled, or how  
35 long they held the pointer over a particular banner or button, for example.



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The additional code is not only operational when the client is on-line to the server but also executes when the information is being viewed off-line.

In the augmented code is also included a version stamp, which can simply be a date/time code. This version stamp indicates the time when, relative to other transmissions of information to this client, the information was transmitted by the server. This information is copied to client-side storage. A comparison by the client computer of the version stamp which accompanies any viewed information with the copy previously stored on the client first confirms to the client what information has reached the server. In particular it enables the client to determine whether the server has been contacted in the interim, and accordingly it can also determine how the information stored on the client should be kept. This includes, for example, whether old information can be purged, whether new information is now required, and whether more or less information about each access should be stored. Examples of this could be:

(1) Purging all client side records that have been passed to the server.

(2) Deciding after a set amount of accesses that a user was a regular user and could be allowed greater access.

(3) Storing information about a user's behavior whilst viewing an information set if they have previously viewed information designed to influence that behavior.

The server can assign to each client a unique identifier (UID) which it then passes to the client along with the version stamp appropriate to the particular issue of the particular information set requested. The unique client or user UID is then stored at the client side for subsequent use by the server.

The system makes it possible to detect the viewing of old copies of the information provided, stored on the user's hard disk, and, if required, to stop them from being viewable.

It is possible to relate the amount of information stored about a set of sent information to how often it, or

any other set of sent information from the same server, has been viewed.

The code at the client side can make decisions about information storage, that is to decide the appropriate record-keeping and behavior of the information set.

A specific example will now be described with reference to the drawings, in which Figures 1 and 2 are flowcharts illustrating the execution of the method on the server and client computers respectively. The Appendix to this description contains a sample code fragment for the client side record keeping encoded in current JavaScript form.

The routine illustrated in Figure 1 shows the steps which are taken at the server following receipt of an information request from a client, step 10. First a check is made to find out whether this client already has a unique identifier (UID), step 12, and if not, one is assigned, step 14. Then the requested information is gathered and collated, step 16. In the illustrated example no additional processing of the information takes place. However, in a more sophisticated system, additional processing could take place which was dependent upon whether a unique identifier was received, and if so, what it was.

Next, the date/time code, constituting a 'version stamp' is incorporated into the information to be sent, along with the unique identifier (UID) and the client-side code required to implement the system, step 18. As noted above, code sent in this way and stored at the recipient is commonly known in internet parlance as a 'cookie'. As described, all the code is sent with every page, but in a more sophisticated system the sending of the client-side code could be dependent upon the logging information, as just described above.

The requested information is now sent, step 20, thus achieving a reasonable response time for the client. All recording or logging at the server of information sent takes place after the sending of the information to the client, and thus does not delay the sending of the information. A check is made, step 22, as to whether the client has sent with the request any information which needs to be logged.

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If the client has sent logging information, this will mean that it has previously received the code and a UID before, and so the logging information is passed and stored as a record of that client's behavior.

5           What happens at the client will now be seen by reference to Figure 2. The client request, which is basically conventional, and which takes place before the routine of Figure 1, need not be shown. It may, however, include logging information as discussed below. Figure 2  
10 illustrates what happens at the client upon receipt of the information from the content server.

Information may come directly from the server or may have been stored or cached. When information is received at the client side by the user, the client-side code which was  
15 sent by the server first causes the client system to check, step 30, to see if a copy of the hard-coded version stamp (date/time code) exists, in a cookie received from the server. If it does not exist, the procedure moves straight to step 34 and copies the hard-coded version stamp to a  
20 cookie. If it does exist, then the procedure compares, in step 32, whether the version stamp stored at the client is the same as or alternatively is older than the currently-received version stamp. If the stored version stamp is older than the currently-received version stamp,  
25 indicating that new information has been received on-line from the server, then the procedure moves to step 34, and the new version stamp is copied to the cookie to replace the version stamp which was previously stored there. If the version stamps are the same, then the information being  
30 displayed is stored or cached information and has not just been received on-line from the content server.

After step 34, the procedure moves to step 38, where the log of information which has been sent to the server is deleted. The precise form of step 38, however, will depend  
35 on the particular implementation. In the example just described the only events being monitored are load events, so all information will have been passed back to the server, as a log cookie, when the information containing the latest version stamp was requested. Thus all log events can be

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deleted. As this situation will only obtain when the output  
of comparison step 32 is 'yes', this step 38 could in this  
example be moved to between steps 32 and 34. In any event,  
the fact that the stored version stamp is older than the  
5 version stamp of the displayed page indicates that the new  
page is being received in response to an information request  
the client has sent to the server. Thus the client knows  
that the logged information on usage, which will have  
accompanied that information request, has reached the  
10 server. This is why it knows it can clear the log. In  
fact, the log may not actually be cleared, as some of the  
information may be kept as a backup, but at least the client  
knows what information is now redundant.

Finally, the procedure reaches step 36, either directly  
15 from step 32, if the version stamps are the same, or via  
steps 34 and 38. In step 36 the current event, that is  
viewing the received information, is appended to the log  
cookie.

As described, the only event being monitored and logged  
20 is the loading of information, that is to say only when the  
information is displayed, and this represents the simplest  
embodiment of the invention. The power of the system is  
however such that many other different events can be  
monitored. Other sophistications can be introduced. For  
25 example, the appearance of the information, or how much of  
it is displayed, can be changed dependent upon the output of  
step 32.

The code illustrated in the Appendix can readily be  
adapted to monitor other events, e.g. the time information  
30 is being viewed, by including extra code similar to the last  
section of the code (from 'function GCLoaded') to monitor  
the additional events. The preferred solution would be to  
monitor every event occurring at the client computer and  
analyse the monitoring information by looking for specified  
35 events only. The identification of relevant events could be  
made at the server or they could be pre-filtered at the  
client. The displayed information would only then be looked  
at when the display is altered.

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The form in which the log is kept can be chosen to suit any particular application. For example, the log can contain the page name, start time, and finish time, or the page name and viewing duration.

5 The log is transmitted to the server simply as a variable-length character string. As described, the log is cleared whenever a new version stamp is received. However, if desired, some or all of the records can be duplicated by storing them on both the client and server.

10 It will be seen from the foregoing that the server transmits with each transmission of sent information a version stamp which enables the client code to determine whether this is a new transmission of information or not. Furthermore, the client keeps a log of usage made and  
15 transmits this log to the server on the next occasion when a request for information is made of that server.

The version stamp does not have to be a date/time code, though this is a particularly convenient form for it to take. It could in principle simply be a serial number which  
20 is incremented on each transmission from the server, either to that UID or generally, or any other value which changes unidirectionally. It could be the last date/time code from the log most recently received from the client.

If proxy servers are in use, the UID received from the  
25 proxy will probably not match the UID for the client. In any event, it is as though the client and the server were not in communication, and the system operates exactly as it does when the client is viewing information off-line. However, in the present system the information transmitted  
30 from the content server to a proxy server preferably gives a zero validity time for the proxy server to hold the information. Effectively this disables the function of the proxy server. Setting the limited validity time period to zero in this way is a known technique. If this is not done,  
35 the system will still operate so long as at least occasional requests from the client get back to the content server.

The structure of internet pages is such that although each page is relatively simple, the links and interactions between them can rapidly lead to a very complex

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decision-making tree. Keeping track of viewing is not easy with such a structure. However, the method described of simply sending a version stamp to identify a transmission of a desired page or pages, and its use in logging the events which it is desired to monitor, and particularly in clearing the log, leads to a particularly effective way of monitoring the desired viewing and/or other events, without excessive complexity and without having to retain a log of possibly formidable size.

10           The specific embodiment of the invention described and illustrated is a Web session tracking program to follow a visitor to a web site, and to note their behavior patterns. The Appendix includes some sample code for keeping track of any individual web page's timing information. It does not include any attempt to compress the information, nor any error handling, both of which could advantageously be added. The code included is generic to all pages of a site, with the places where the code is unique to a specific page being omitted for clarity.

20           Here a typical application would be to follow a user around a Web site by looking at the time they spend on each page, both while on and off line. This is one way of measuring the effectiveness of each page. Determining the time a user spent on a given page is simple and accurate using the client side records. The server in this example tags each set of timing information with the unique identifier for that particular user, thus allowing analysis of how different pages interact.

30           In the Appendix, the hardcoded version stamp has a value which is set by the server. The setting of this value is not included in the code fragment.

35           The use of the version stamp in the manner described has the advantage that the client can be sure that the previous monitoring information has reached the server, and thus that the monitoring information stored at the client no longer needs to be retained.

          Similar principles to those described can be used to monitor e-mail messages sent over the internet. This is achieved as follows. Existing e-mail programs allow the

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e-mail messages to be sent as HTML code, that is the code used for web pages. This option is selected at the sender computer. The message automatically carries with it the additional code necessary to undertake the monitoring at the receiving computer. The monitoring may simply confirm the receipt of the message but may include other information about the user or activities at the receiving computer. It is then necessary for the receiver to contact the sender so that the monitoring information is transmitted back to the sender. This can be achieved in one of two basic ways. In the first of these, the message includes something that causes the user to wish to contact the sender again, for example by sending a reply e-mail. Alternatively, the message may incorporate something that makes the computer contact the server independently of the user commands. This may be achieved by including a graphic towards the end of the message which has to be downloaded. The graphic may be a one-pixel picture which is in fact imperceptible to the user.

The invention has been described in the context of a specific example, and those skilled in the art will appreciate that many modifications may be made in the system described and illustrated. The system enables the monitoring of the use of information provided over a computer network and, in the form described, can monitor use not only when the provider and client machine are both connected to the network, but also when one or both of them are disconnected from the network. Also, the system is able to function in conjunction with other systems which are supplied with other information sets from the same information provider without harmful interference.

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**Appendix**

Sample JavaScript code fragment for client side record keeping:

```
<script language="JavaScript">
5  <!--

    var expdate = new Date ();
    if ( GetCookie("clstr") == null){

        SetCookie ("clstr", "Entered site;");
10    }
    var pname= ";" + document.title+";";
    var KnownTime =new Date();
    CheckTime();

15    var expdate = new Date ();
    var RelativeTime =
expdate.getTime()-BaseTime.getTime();

function CheckTime(){
20

    KnownTime=GetCookie('Time1');
    if (KnownTime != BaseTime){
        SetCookie('Time1',BaseTime);
        clstrCookie = GetCookie('clstr')
25    SetCookie('clstr','StartStream/');
    }
}

function GCLoaded (PageNumberLoad){
30    expdate = new Date ();
    RelativeTime = expdate.getTime()-BaseTime.getTime();
    SetCookie ('clstr',
GetCookie('clstr')+PageNumberLoad+'/');
}

35 //-->
</script>
```



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**CLAIMS**

1. A method of monitoring the use of information requested by a receiving computer from a sender computer, comprising the steps of:

5 transmitting information from the sender computer to the receiving computer;

transmitting with the transmitted information additional information for use in monitoring usage of the information, the additional information comprising a version stamp having at least a unidirectionally-varying value;

10 monitoring at the receiving computer the use of the received information to provide an indication of events related to information usage at the receiving computer, the monitoring step comprising comparing additional information related to received information with previously-received additional information already held at the requestor computer;

15 recording the monitored information at the receiving computer to provide a log; and

20 subsequently transmitting the log from the receiving computer to the sender computer.

2. A method according to claim 1, in which when the additional information related to received information indicates that it is later than the previously-received additional information already held at the receiving computer, the information recorded in the log is cleared or treated as redundant.

3. A method according to claim 1, in which the additional information includes code which is operative on the receiving computer to command the receiving computer to effect the monitoring and recording steps.

4. A method according to claim 1, in which the log is transmitted from the receiving computer to the sender computer when a subsequent request for information is made by the receiving computer of the sender computer.

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5. A method according to claim 1, in which the monitoring step comprises monitoring the time for which pages are displayed.
6. A method according to claim 1, in which the monitoring step continues whether the receiving computer is in communication with the sender computer or not.
7. A client computer for use in a client/server system, the client computer being adapted to provide information to the server concerning the use of information requested by the client from the server, the client computer including:
- means for transmitting from the client to a server a request for specified information;
  - means for receiving from the server requested information corresponding to the specified information;
  - means for receiving from the server with the requested information additional information for use in monitoring usage of the requested information, the additional information comprising a version stamp having at least a unidirectionally-varying value;
  - means for monitoring the usage of the received information, whether or not the client computer is in communication with the server, by making use of the received additional information;
  - means for recording the monitored information to provide a log; and
  - means for subsequently transmitting the log from the client computer to the server when a subsequent request for information is transmitted by the client computer to that server.
8. A computer according to claim 7, in which when the additional information related to received information indicates that it is later than previously-received additional information already held at the receiving computer, the information recorded in the log is cleared or treated as redundant.

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9. A method of monitoring the use of information requested by a requestor computer from a provider computer, comprising the steps of:

5 receiving at the provider computer a request from the requestor computer for specified information;

transmitting from the provider computer to the requestor computer requested information corresponding to the specified information;

10 transmitting with the transmitted requested information additional information for use in monitoring usage of the requested information; and

15 monitoring at the requestor computer events taking place at the requestor computer including events related to the use of the received information, to provide an indication of events related to information usage at the requestor computer, the monitoring taking place whether or not the requestor computer is on-line to the provider computer;

20 recording the monitored information at the requestor computer to provide a log; and

subsequently transmitting the log from the requestor computer to the provider computer.

10. A method according to claim 9, in which the additional information comprises a version stamp.

25 11. A method according to claim 9, in which the additional information includes at least a unidirectionally-varying value.

12. A method according to claim 9, in which the monitoring step makes use of the received additional information.

30 13. A method according to claim 12, in which the monitoring step comprises comparing additional information related to displayed received information with previously-received additional information already held at the requestor computer.

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14. A method according to claim 13, in which when the additional information related to displayed received information indicates that it is later than the previously-received additional information already held at the requestor computer, the information recorded in the log is cleared or treated as redundant.
- 5
15. A method according to claim 9, in which the additional information includes code which is operative on the requestor computer to command the requestor computer to effect the monitoring and recording steps.
- 10
16. A method according to claim 9, in which the log is transmitted from the requestor computer to the provider computer when a subsequent request for information is made by the requestor computer of the provider computer.
- 15
17. A method according to claim 9, in which the monitoring step comprises monitoring the time for which pages are displayed.
18. A method according to claim 9 in which the monitoring step continues whether the requestor computer is in communication with the provider computer or not.
- 20
19. A method according to claim 9, in which the log is transmitted from the requestor computer to the provider computer when a subsequent request for information is made by the requestor computer of the provider computer.
- 25
20. A computer program product directly loadable into the internal memory of a digital computer, the program comprising software code portions for performing the steps of claim 1 when the product is run on a computer.

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21. A computer program product directly loadable into the internal memory of a digital computer, the program comprising software code portions for causing the computer to become a client computer in accordance with claim 7 when  
5 the product is run on a computer.

22. A computer program product directly loadable into the internal memory of a digital computer, the program comprising software code portions for performing the steps of claim 9 when the product is run on a computer.

Fig. 1

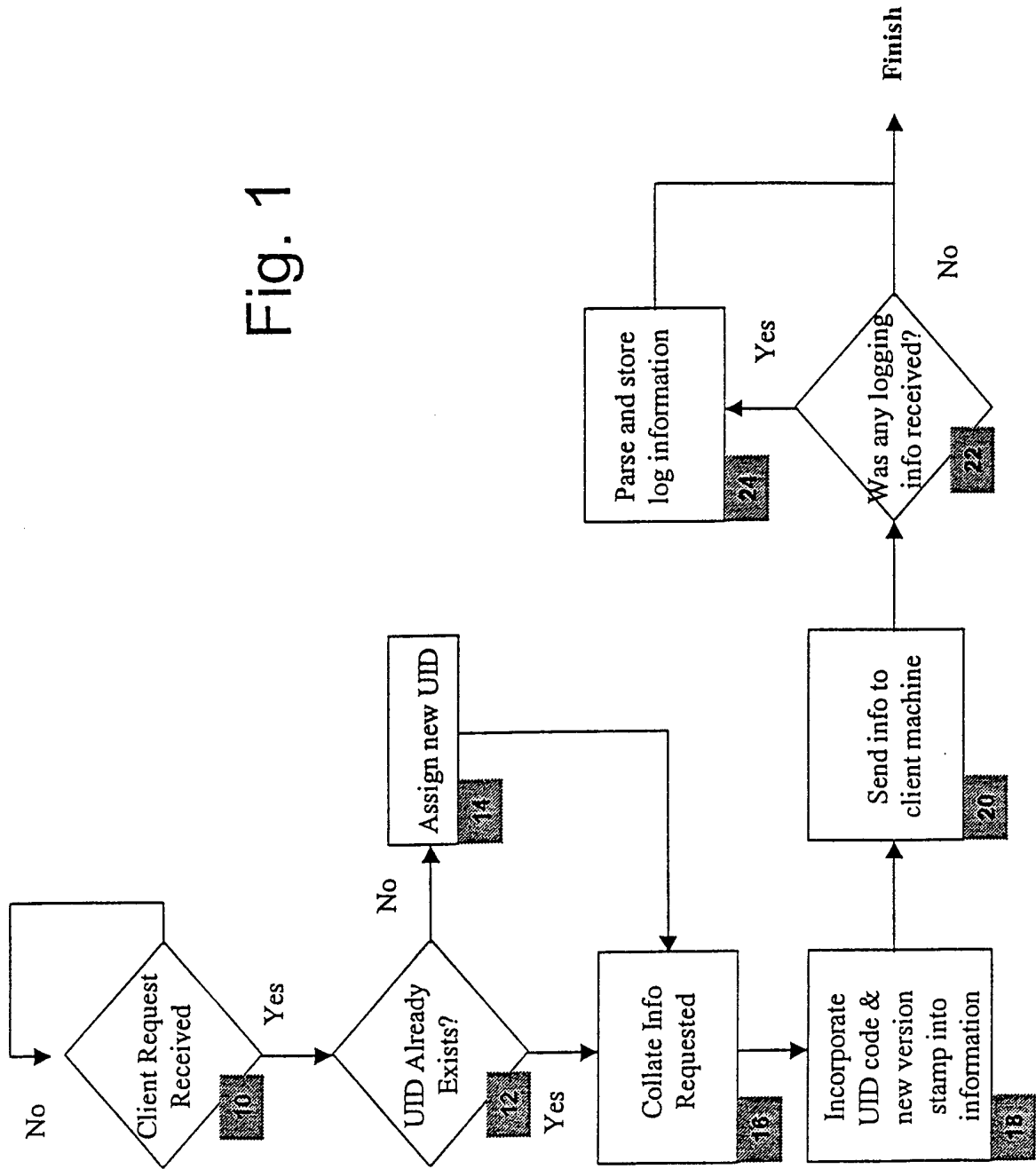
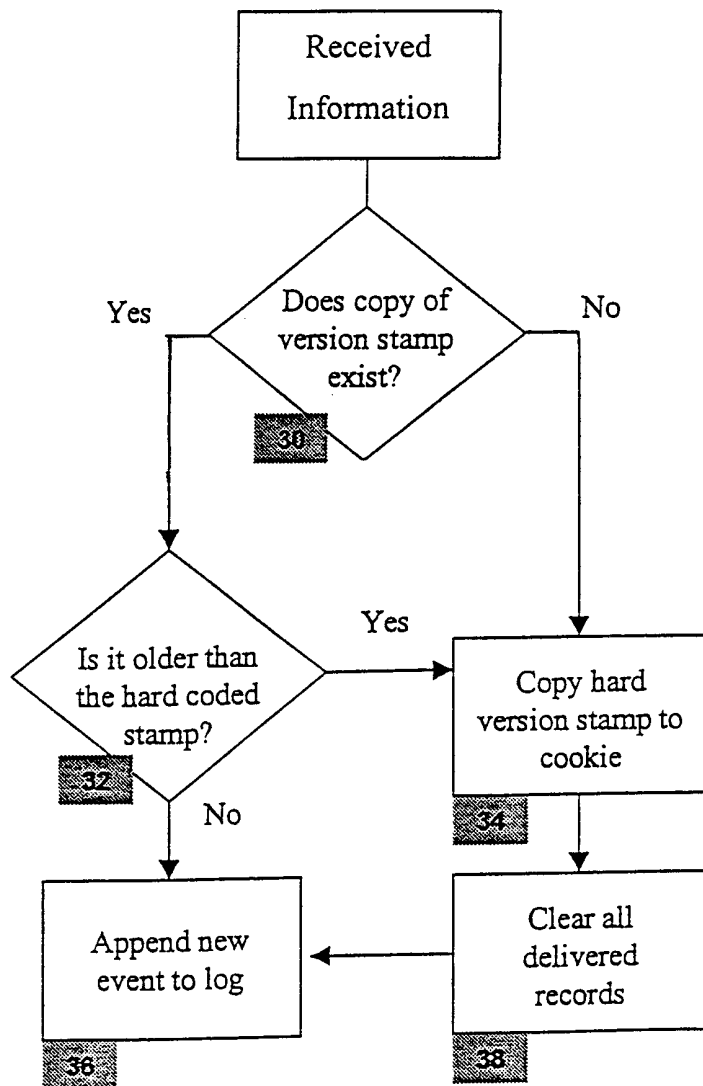


Fig. 2



# INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No

PCT/GB 99/02843

<b>A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER</b> IPC 7 H04L12/26 G06F11/34 H04L29/06				
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC				
<b>B. FIELDS SEARCHED</b> Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols) IPC 7 H04L G06F				
Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched				
Electronic data base consulted during the International search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)				
<b>C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT</b>				
Category °	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.		
A	US 5 732 218 A (NEPUSTIL VLADIMIR ET AL) 24 March 1998 (1998-03-24)  abstract figures 1,2 claims 1,6,9,13,16 column 2, line 4-24	1,3-5,7, 9,11,12, 15-17, 19-22		
A	GB 2 250 112 A (ELVEREX LTD) 27 May 1992 (1992-05-27)  abstract claims 1,2 page 4, line 1 -page 5, line 12  --- -/--	1,3,7,9, 11,12, 19-22		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Patent family members are listed in annex.				
° Special categories of cited documents :				
<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border: none; vertical-align: top;">                     "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance                      "E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date                      "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)                      "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means                      "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed                 </td> <td style="width: 50%; border: none; vertical-align: top;">                     "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.                      "&amp;" document member of the same patent family                 </td> </tr> </table>			"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance "E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified) "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed	"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. "&" document member of the same patent family
"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance "E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified) "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed	"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. "&" document member of the same patent family			
Date of the actual completion of the international search  <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 1.2em;">18 January 2000</p>		Date of mailing of the international search report  <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 1.2em;">28/01/2000</p>		
Name and mailing address of the ISA European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl, Fax: (+31-70) 340-3018		Authorized officer  <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 1.2em;">Cichra, M</p>		



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No

PCT/GB 99/02843

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	<p>WO 98 10349 A (BLUMENAU TREVOR I ; NUWEB (US)) 12 March 1998 (1998-03-12) cited in the application</p> <p>abstract                      figures 1,2,6                      claims 1,2,9,13,14                      page 12, line 8 -page 17, line 27</p>	<p>1,3-5,7,                      9,11,12,                      15-17,                      19-22</p>
A	<p>WO 97 22074 A (CYBERGOLD INC ; GOLDHABER A NATHANIEL (US); FITTS GARY (US)) 19 June 1997 (1997-06-19)</p> <p>abstract                      figures 4,7,10,12                      page 11, line 1 -page 13, line 10</p>	<p>1,7,9,                      20-22</p>

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Information on patent family members

International Application No

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