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(54) **GEOSPATIALLY CONSTRAINED GASTRONOMIC BIDDING**

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G06Q 30/00 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **705/14.4**; 705/26.3

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A method includes determining, through one or more central server(s) associated with a gastronomic bidding service provider, that a bidding platform provided by the gastronomic bidding service provider has a number of requests for gastronomical offers within a residential location zip code and/or a daytime location zip code associated with a user thereof. The one or more central server(s) includes a processor communicatively coupled to a memory. The method also includes permitting the user to access the number of requests for gastronomical offers within the residential location zip code and/or the daytime location zip code thereof, and denying the user access to a request for a gastronomical offer within a zip code outside a geospatially constrained region around the residential location zip code and/or the daytime location zip code thereof.

GASTRONOMICAL ITEM 302 - EGGPLANT PARMESAN SANDWICH

RETAIL ESTABLISHMENT 304 - ABC SANDWICHES

RETAIL PRICE 350 - $8.95

MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 310 (50% DISCOUNT) - $4.48

MAXIMUM PRICE CONSTRAINT 308 - $7.16 (80% OF $8.95)

(SET BY SERVICE PROVIDER 306)

ACCEPT FACTOR 316 - 5%

PAYOUT FACTOR 314 - 1%

QUANTITY 390	ACCEPT PRICE 320($)	PAYOUT PRICE 312($)	PROFIT ($)	BUY-IT-NOW-PRICE 340($)
0	0	0	0	N.A
1	4.61	4.48	0.13	6.53
2	4.74	4.50	0.24	6.53
3	4.86	4.53	0.33	6.53
.	.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.	.
29	6.55	5.13	1.42	N.A
.	.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.	.
123	7.16	6.37	0.78	N.A
.	.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.	.
361	7.16	7.09	0.07	N.A
.	.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.	.
366	7.16	7.09	0.07	N.A

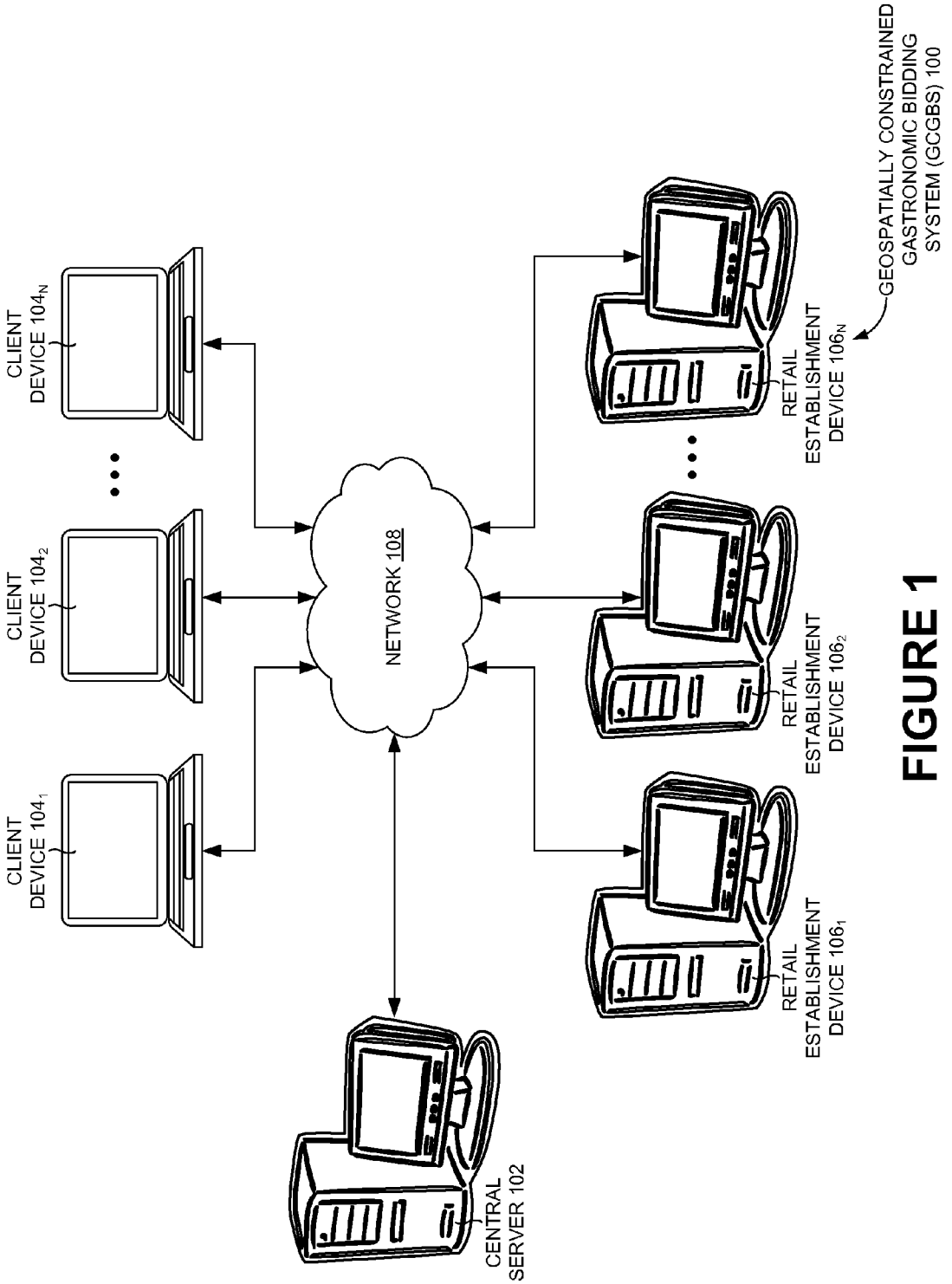
CLIENT DEVICE 104N
CLIENT DEVICE 1042
CLIENT DEVICE 1041
NETWORK 108
CENTRAL SERVER 102
RETAIL ESTABLISHMENT DEVICE 106N
RETAIL ESTABLISHMENT DEVICE 1062
RETAIL ESTABLISHMENT DEVICE 1061
GEOSPATIALLY CONSTRAINED GASTRONOMIC BIDDING SYSTEM (GCGBS) 100

FIGURE 1

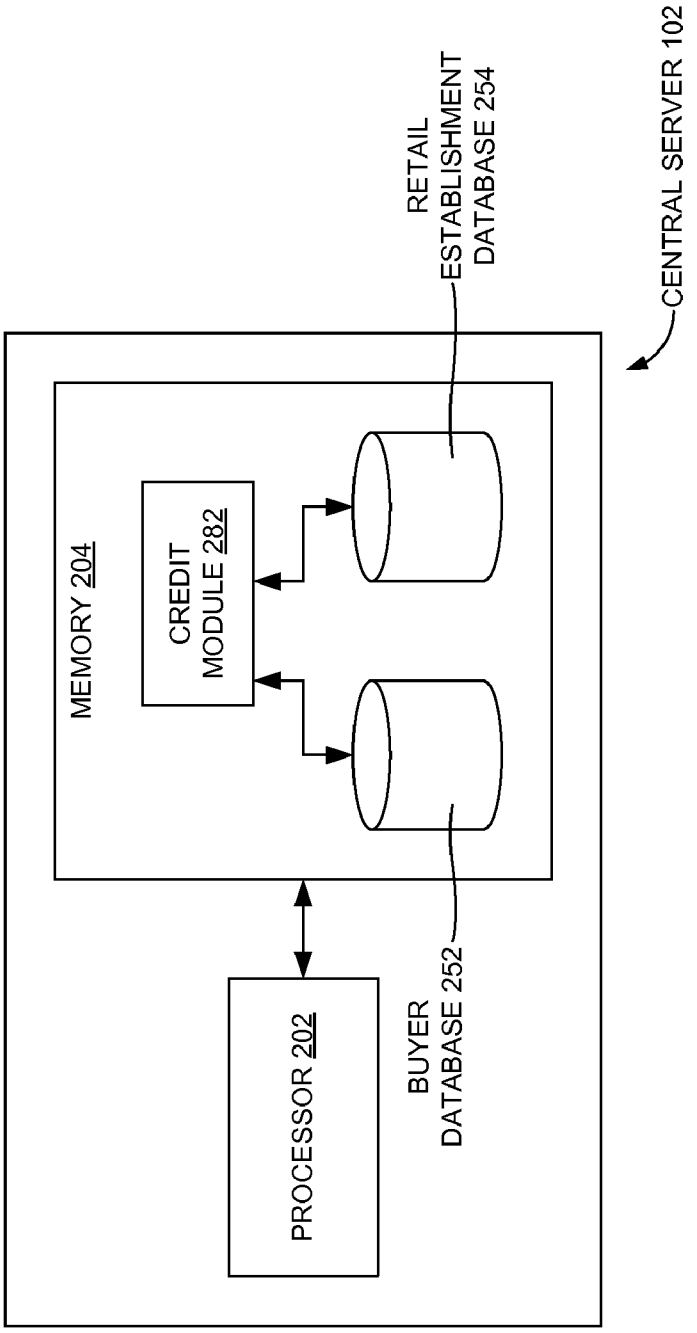
CENTRAL SERVER 102
RETAIL ESTABLISHMENT DATABASE 254
MEMORY 204
CREDIT MODULE 282
BUYER DATABASE 252
PROCESSOR 202

FIGURE 2

GASTRONOMICAL ITEM 302 - EGGPLANT PARMESAN SANDWICH

RETAIL ESTABLISHMENT 304 - ABC SANDWICHES

RETAIL PRICE 350 - $8.95

MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 310 (50% DISCOUNT) - $4.48

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0	0	0	0	N.A
1	4.61	4.48	0.13	6.53
2	4.74	4.50	0.24	6.53
3	4.86	4.53	0.33	6.53
.	.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.	.
29	6.55	5.13	1.42	N.A
.	.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.	.
123	7.16	6.37	0.78	N.A
.	.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.	.
361	7.16	7.09	0.07	N.A
.	.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.	.
366	7.16	7.09	0.07	N.A

FIGURE 3

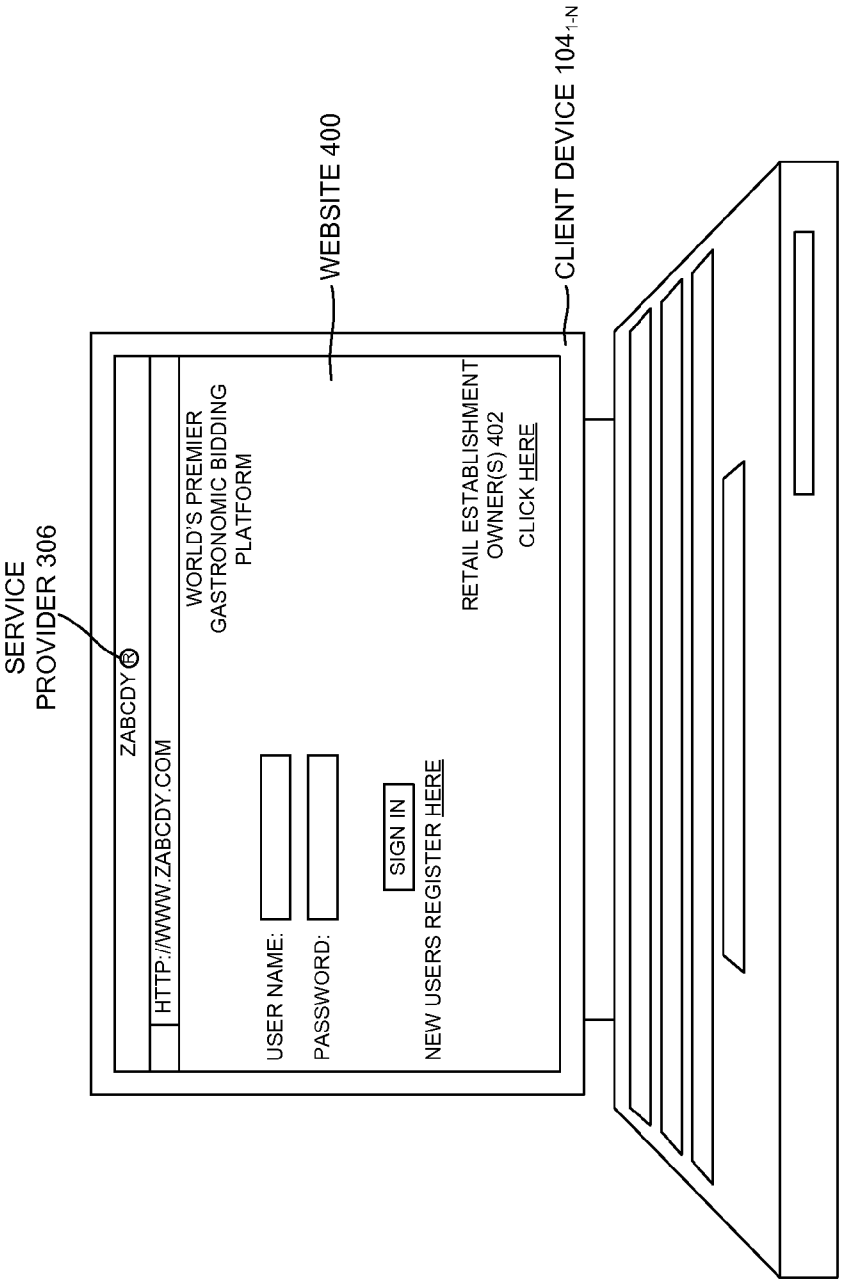
SERVICE PROVIDER 306
ZABCDY ®
HTTP://WWW.ZABCDY.COM
WEBSITE 400
WORLD'S PREMIER GASTRONOMIC BIDDING PLATFORM
USER NAME:
PASSWORD:
SIGN IN
NEW USERS REGISTER HERE
RETAIL ESTABLISHMENT OWNER(S) 402
CLICK HERE
CLIENT DEVICE 104 1-N

FIGURE 4

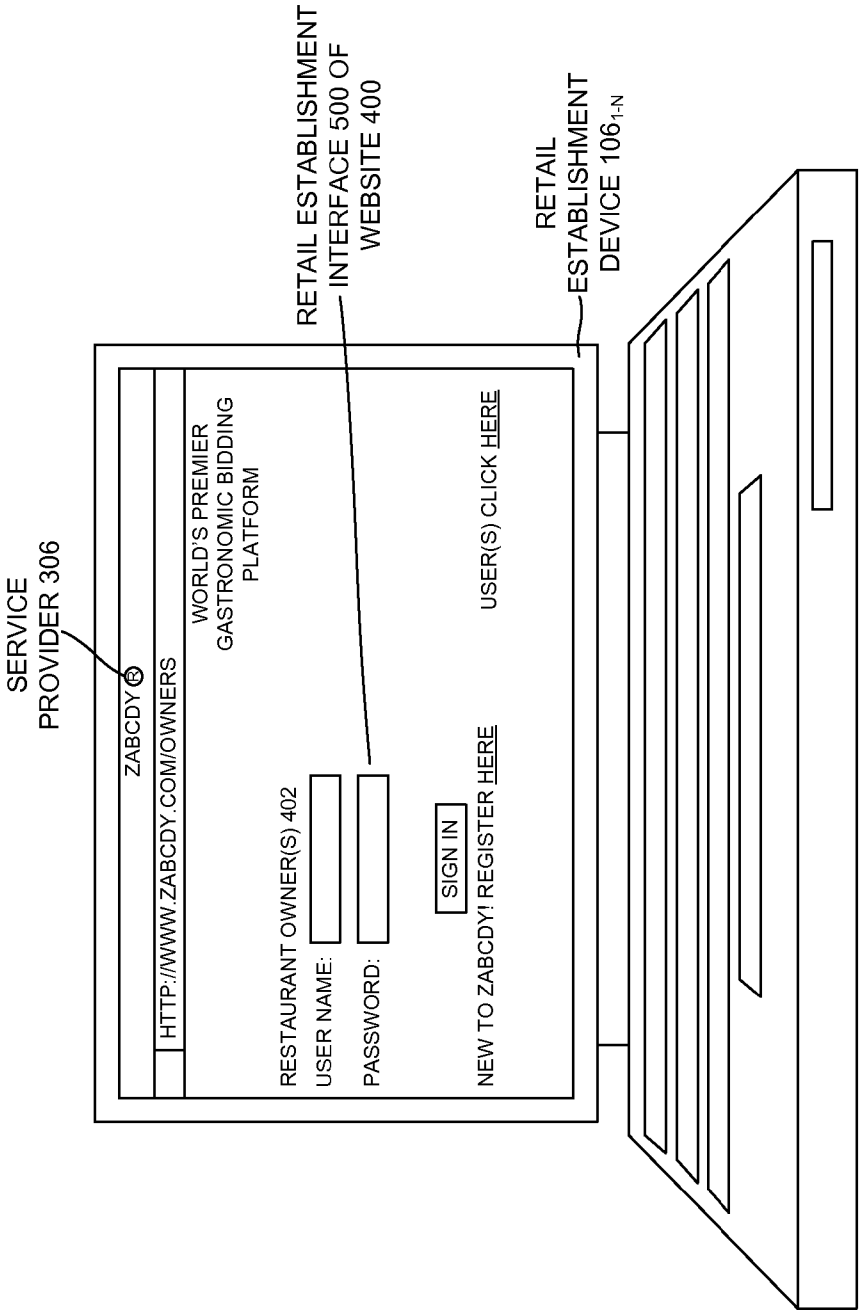
SERVICE PROVIDER 306
RETAIL ESTABLISHMENT INTERFACE 500 OF WEBSITE 400
RETAIL ESTABLISHMENT DEVICE 106 1-N
ZABCDY!
HTTP://WWW.ZABCDY.COM/OWNERS
WORLD'S PREMIER GASTRONOMIC BIDDING PLATFORM
RESTAURANT OWNER(S) 402
USER NAME:
PASSWORD:
SIGN IN
NEW TO ZABCDY! REGISTER HERE
USER(S) CLICK HERE

FIGURE 5

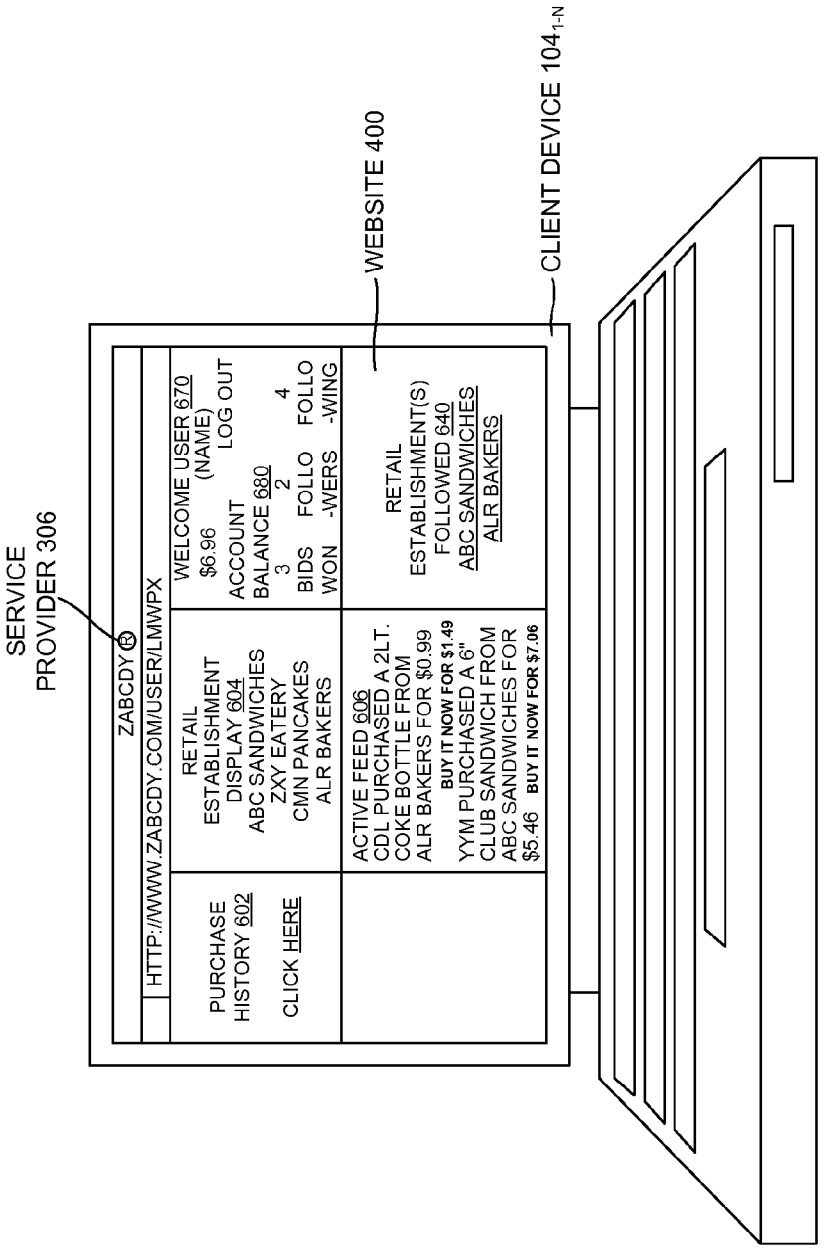
SERVICE PROVIDER 306
ZABCDY
HTTP://WWW.ZABCDY.COM/USER/LMWPX
PURCHASE HISTORY 602
CLICK HERE
RETAIL ESTABLISHMENT DISPLAY 604
ABC SANDWICHES
ZXY EATERY
CMN PANCAKES
ALR BAKERS
WELCOME USER 670
$6.96 (NAME) LOG OUT
ACCOUNT BALANCE 680
3 2 4
BIDS FOLLO FOLLO
WON -WERS -WING
ACTIVE FEED 606
CDL PURCHASED A 2LT. COKE BOTTLE FROM ALR BAKERS FOR $0.99
BUY IT NOW FOR $1.49
YYM PURCHASED A 6" CLUB SANDWICH FROM ABC SANDWICHES FOR $5.46
BUY IT NOW FOR $7.06
RETAIL ESTABLISHMENT(S) FOLLOWED 640
ABC SANDWICHES
ALR BAKERS
WEBSITE 400
CLIENT DEVICE 104 1-N

FIGURE 6

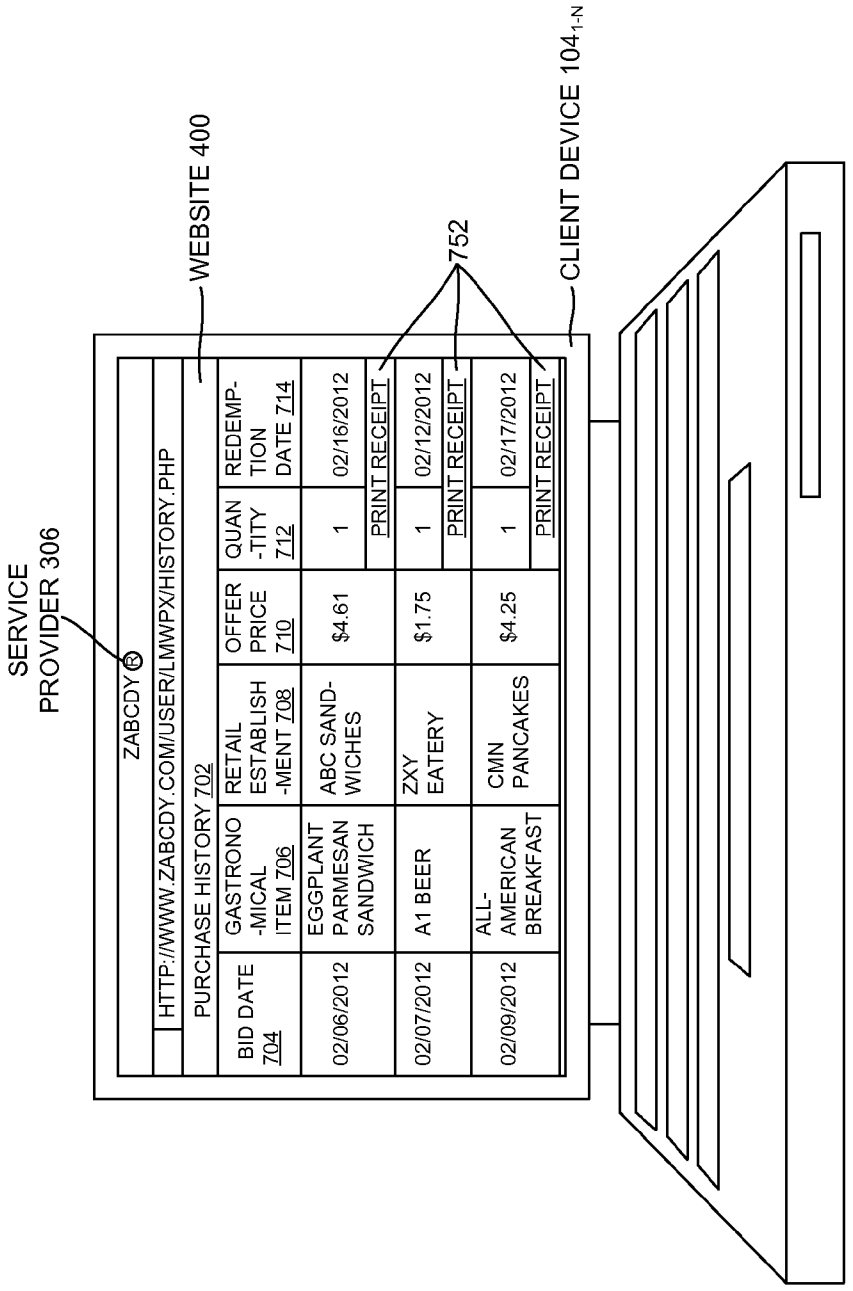
SERVICE PROVIDER 306
WEBSITE 400
CLIENT DEVICE 104 1-N
752
ZABCDY
HTTP://WWW.ZABCDY.COM/USER/LMWPX/HISTORY.PHP
PURCHASE HISTORY 702
BID DATE 704
GASTRONO -MICAL ITEM 706
RETAIL ESTABLISH -MENT 708
OFFER PRICE 710
QUAN -TITY 712
REDEMP- TION DATE 714
02/06/2012
EGGPLANT PARMESAN SANDWICH
ABC SAND- WICHES
$4.61
1
02/16/2012
PRINT RECEIPT
02/07/2012
A1 BEER
ZXY EATERY
$1.75
1
02/12/2012
PRINT RECEIPT
02/09/2012
ALL- AMERICAN BREAKFAST
CMN PANCAKES
$4.25
1
02/17/2012
PRINT RECEIPT

FIGURE 7

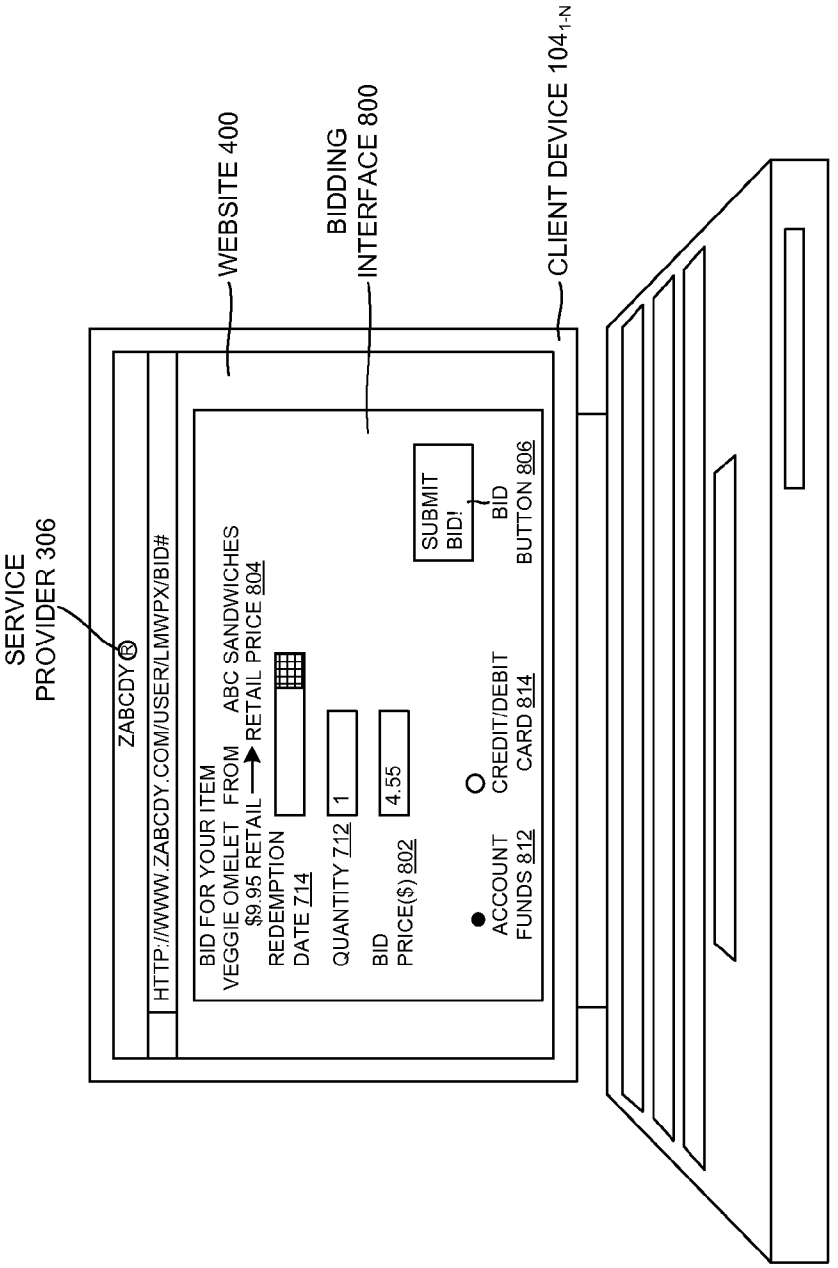
SERVICE PROVIDER 306
ZABCDY
HTTP://WWW.ZABCDY.COM/USER/LMWPX/BID#
WEBSITE 400
BIDDING INTERFACE 800
CLIENT DEVICE 104 1-N
BID FOR YOUR ITEM
VEGGIE OMELET FROM ABC SANDWICHES
$9.95 RETAIL → RETAIL PRICE 804
REDEMPTION DATE 714
QUANTITY 712 1
BID PRICE($) 802 4.55
ACCOUNT FUNDS 812
CREDIT/DEBIT CARD 814
SUBMIT BID!
BID BUTTON 806

FIGURE 8

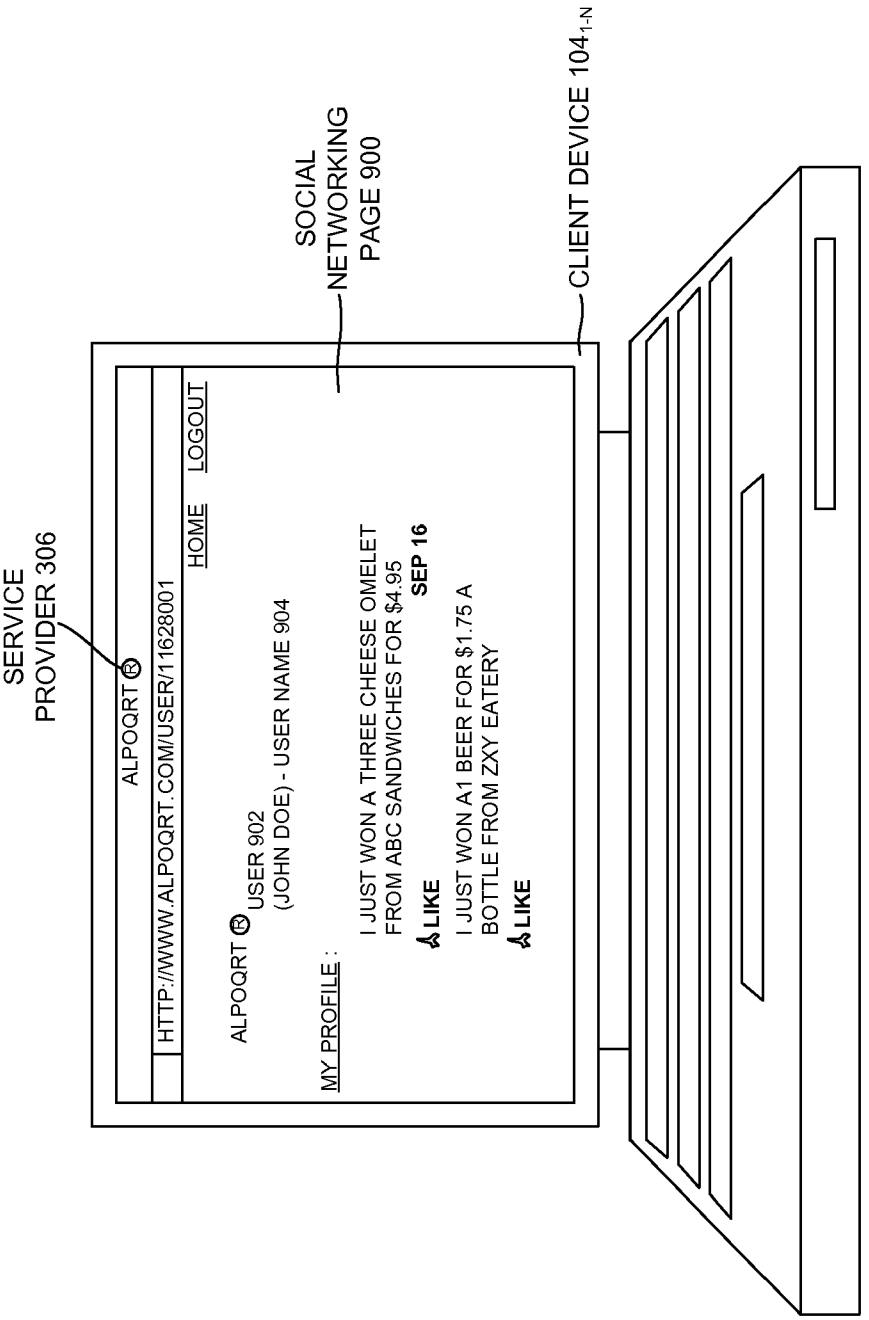
SERVICE PROVIDER 306
ALPOQRT
HTTP://WWW.ALPOQRT.COM/USER/11628001
HOME LOGOUT
ALPOQRT
USER 902
(JOHN DOE) - USER NAME 904
MY PROFILE :
I JUST WON A THREE CHEESE OMELET FROM ABC SANDWICHES FOR $4.95
SEP 16
LIKE
I JUST WON A1 BEER FOR $1.75 A BOTTLE FROM ZXY EATERY
LIKE
SOCIAL NETWORKING PAGE 900
CLIENT DEVICE 104 1-N

FIGURE 9

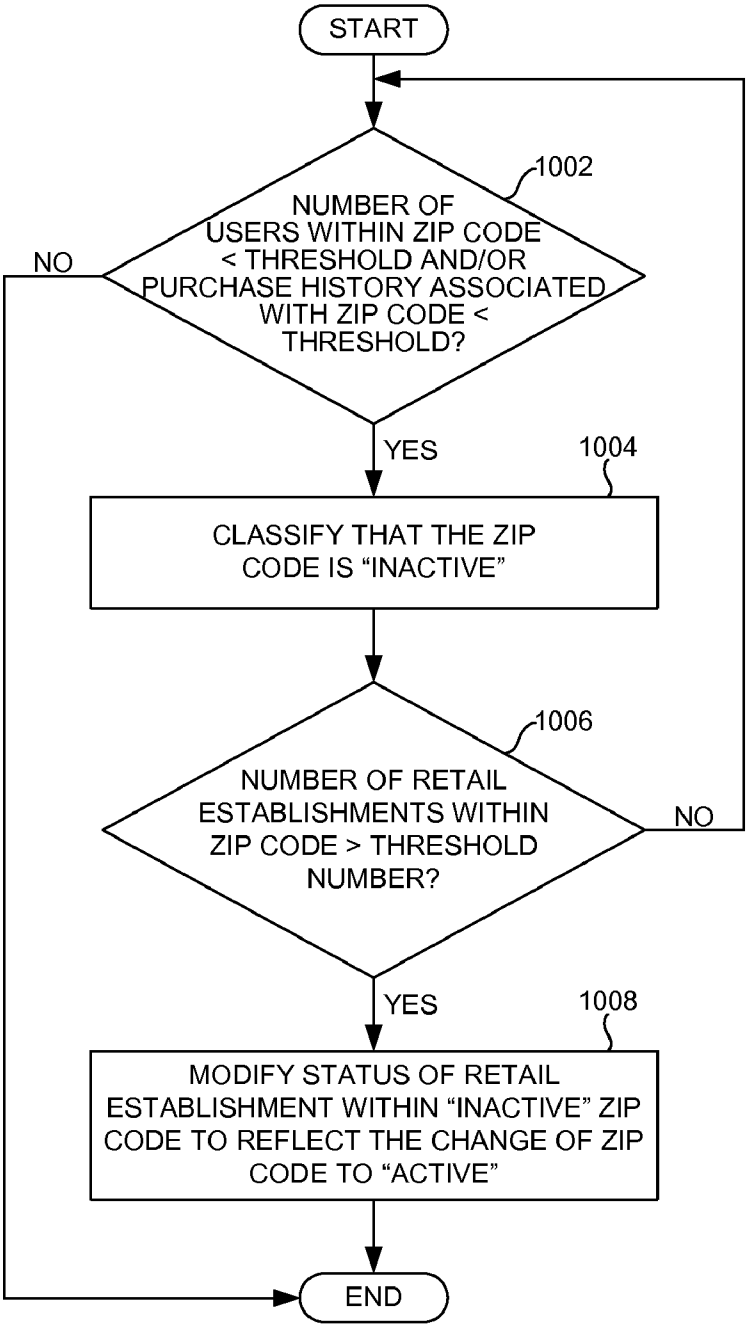
START
1002
NUMBER OF USERS WITHIN ZIP CODE < THRESHOLD AND/OR PURCHASE HISTORY ASSOCIATED WITH ZIP CODE < THRESHOLD?
NO
YES
1004
CLASSIFY THAT THE ZIP CODE IS "INACTIVE"
1006
NUMBER OF RETAIL ESTABLISHMENTS WITHIN ZIP CODE > THRESHOLD NUMBER?
NO
YES
1008
MODIFY STATUS OF RETAIL ESTABLISHMENT WITHIN "INACTIVE" ZIP CODE TO REFLECT THE CHANGE OF ZIP CODE TO "ACTIVE"
END

FIGURE 10

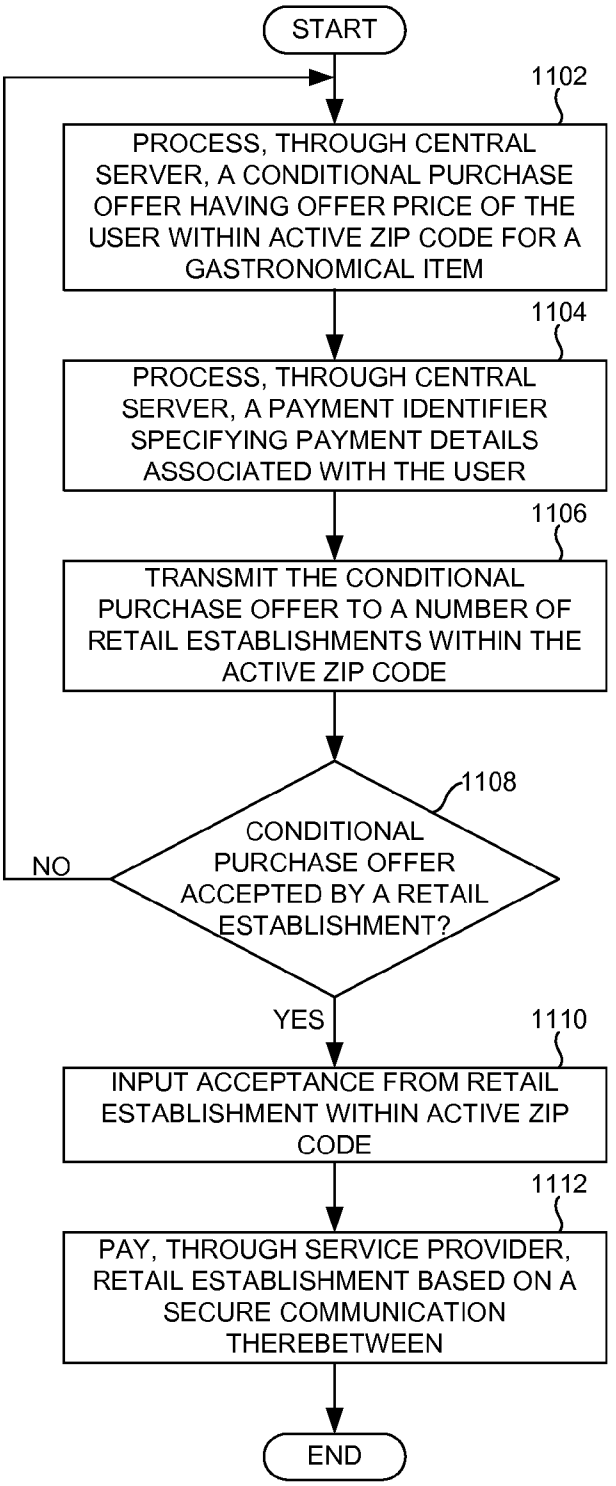
START
1102
PROCESS, THROUGH CENTRAL SERVER, A CONDITIONAL PURCHASE OFFER HAVING OFFER PRICE OF THE USER WITHIN ACTIVE ZIP CODE FOR A GASTRONOMICAL ITEM
1104
PROCESS, THROUGH CENTRAL SERVER, A PAYMENT IDENTIFIER SPECIFYING PAYMENT DETAILS ASSOCIATED WITH THE USER
1106
TRANSMIT THE CONDITIONAL PURCHASE OFFER TO A NUMBER OF RETAIL ESTABLISHMENTS WITHIN THE ACTIVE ZIP CODE
1108
CONDITIONAL PURCHASE OFFER ACCEPTED BY A RETAIL ESTABLISHMENT?
NO
YES
1110
INPUT ACCEPTANCE FROM RETAIL ESTABLISHMENT WITHIN ACTIVE ZIP CODE
1112
PAY, THROUGH SERVICE PROVIDER, RETAIL ESTABLISHMENT BASED ON A SECURE COMMUNICATION THEREBETWEEN
END

FIGURE 11

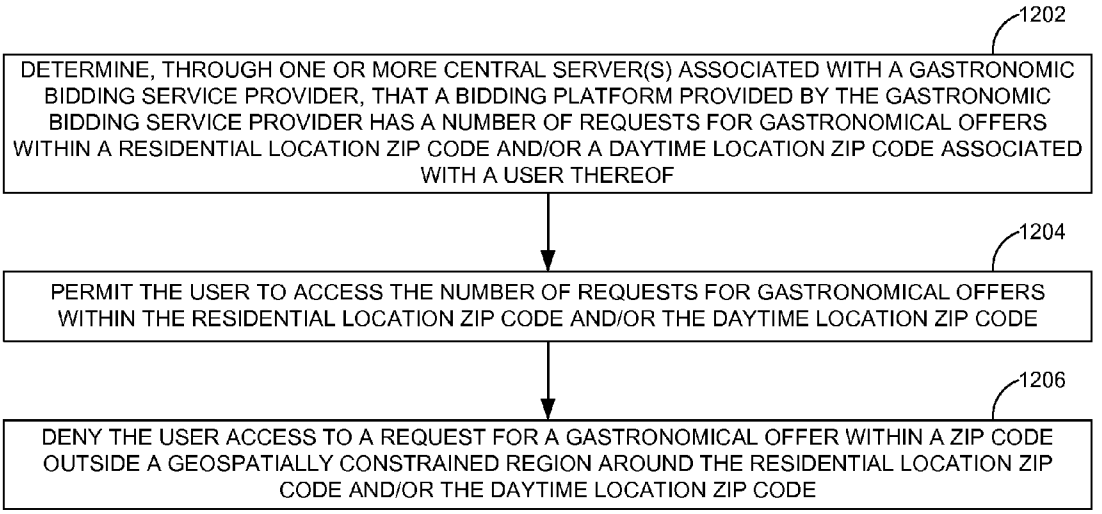
1202
DETERMINE, THROUGH ONE OR MORE CENTRAL SERVER(S) ASSOCIATED WITH A GASTRONOMIC BIDDING SERVICE PROVIDER, THAT A BIDDING PLATFORM PROVIDED BY THE GASTRONOMIC BIDDING SERVICE PROVIDER HAS A NUMBER OF REQUESTS FOR GASTRONOMICAL OFFERS WITHIN A RESIDENTIAL LOCATION ZIP CODE AND/OR A DAYTIME LOCATION ZIP CODE ASSOCIATED WITH A USER THEREOF
1204
PERMIT THE USER TO ACCESS THE NUMBER OF REQUESTS FOR GASTRONOMICAL OFFERS WITHIN THE RESIDENTIAL LOCATION ZIP CODE AND/OR THE DAYTIME LOCATION ZIP CODE
1206
DENY THE USER ACCESS TO A REQUEST FOR A GASTRONOMICAL OFFER WITHIN A ZIP CODE OUTSIDE A GEOSPATIALLY CONSTRAINED REGION AROUND THE RESIDENTIAL LOCATION ZIP CODE AND/OR THE DAYTIME LOCATION ZIP CODE

FIGURE 12

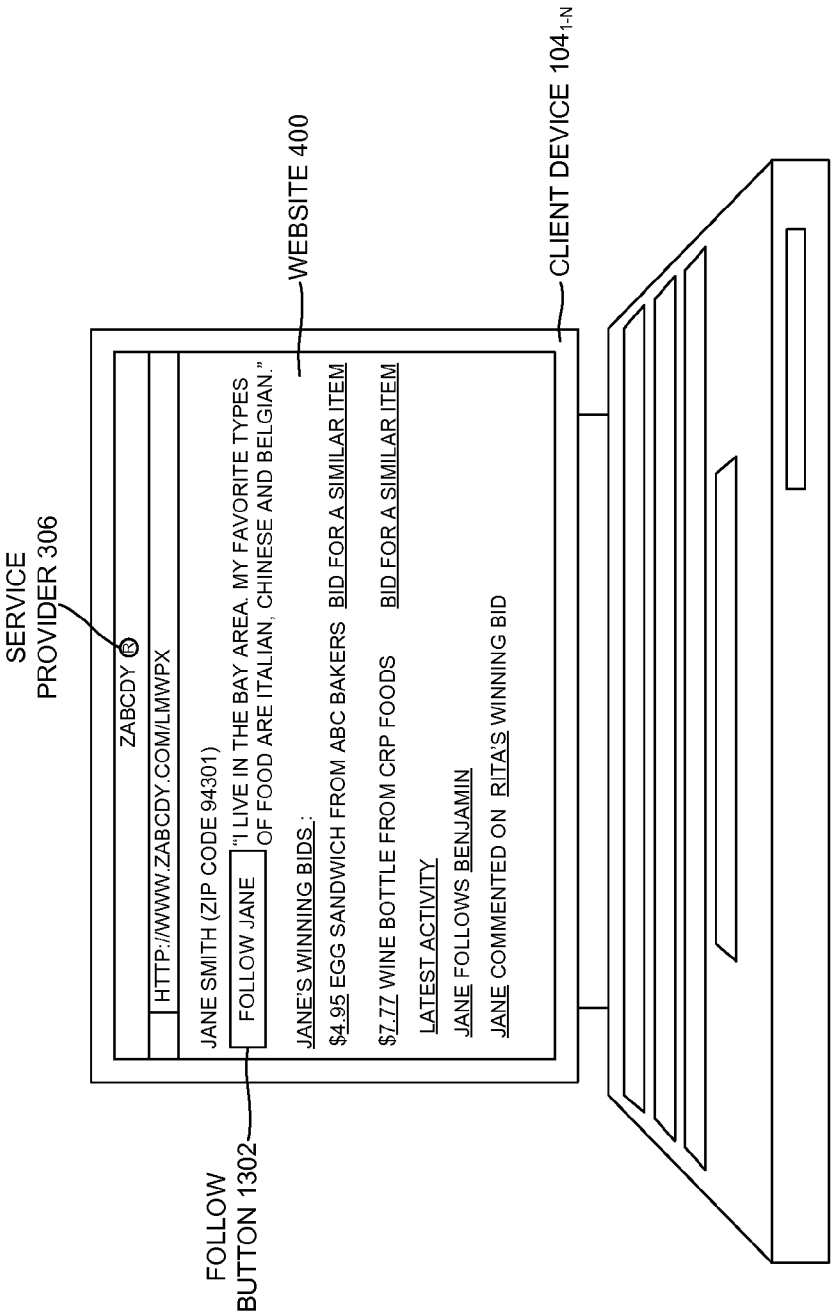
SERVICE PROVIDER 306
ZABCDY
HTTP://WWW.ZABCDY.COM/LMWPX
WEBSITE 400
CLIENT DEVICE 104 1-N
JANE SMITH (ZIP CODE 94301)
FOLLOW JANE
"I LIVE IN THE BAY AREA. MY FAVORITE TYPES OF FOOD ARE ITALIAN, CHINESE AND BELGIAN."
JANE'S WINNING BIDS :
$4.95 EGG SANDWICH FROM ABC BAKERS BID FOR A SIMILAR ITEM
$7.77 WINE BOTTLE FROM CRP FOODS BID FOR A SIMILAR ITEM
LATEST ACTIVITY
JANE FOLLOWS BENJAMIN
JANE COMMENTED ON RITA'S WINNING BID
FOLLOW BUTTON 1302

FIGURE 13

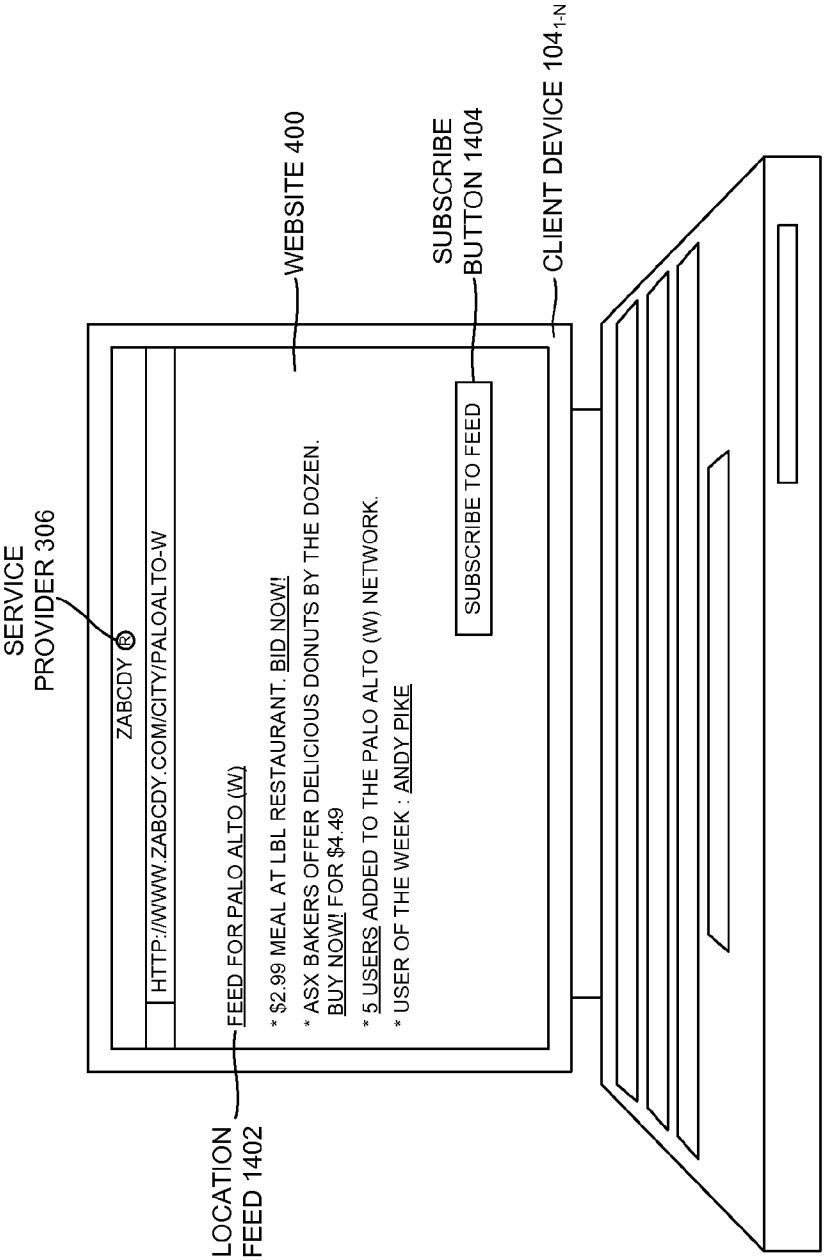
SERVICE PROVIDER 306
ZABCDY
HTTP://WWW.ZABCDY.COM/CITY/PALOALTO-W
WEBSITE 400
SUBSCRIBE BUTTON 1404
CLIENT DEVICE 104 1-N
SUBSCRIBE TO FEED
FEED FOR PALO ALTO (W)
* $2.99 MEAL AT LBL RESTAURANT. BID NOW!
* ASX BAKERS OFFER DELICIOUS DONUTS BY THE DOZEN. BUY NOW! FOR $4.49
* 5 USERS ADDED TO THE PALO ALTO (W) NETWORK.
* USER OF THE WEEK : ANDY PIKE
LOCATION FEED 1402

FIGURE 14

GEOSPATIALLY CONSTRAINED GASTRONOMIC BIDDING

CLAIM OF PRIORITY

[0001] This is a utility application and claims priority from U.S. provisional application No. 61526693 titled "GEOSPATIAL CONSTRAINT AROUND BIDDABILITY OF A GASTRONOMICAL ITEM" filed on Aug. 24, 2011.

FIELD OF TECHNOLOGY

[0002] This disclosure relates generally to gastronomic bidding and, more particularly, to methods, an apparatus and/or a system of geospatially constrained gastronomic bidding.

BACKGROUND

[0003] A retail establishment serving gastronomical items (e.g., a restaurant, a market, a convenience store, a catering service provider) may depend on customers who spend a significant portion of time thereof around a physical address of the retail establishment (e.g., in the same zip code, in the same street, in the same town). The retail establishment may wish to identify such customers because the aforementioned may prospectively patronize the retail establishment regularly and frequently because of convenience therein.

[0004] The retail establishment may distribute material (e.g., flyers, menus, coupons, collateral) in the neighborhood thereof (e.g., through direct mail, Valpak®, etc.). However, these materials may not reach prospective customers who spend daytime hours around the retail establishment but do not live around the retail establishment (e.g., those who work around the retail establishment, those who go to school around the retail establishment etc.). Additionally, the retail establishment may be banned from distributing material on cars, in parking lots, and/or on sidewalks by local ordinances and/or private rules. As such, it may be difficult for the retail establishment to attract customers who spend daytime hours around the retail establishment (e.g., customers who work around the retail establishment, customers who go to school around the retail establishment).

[0005] As an additional measure, the retail establishment may agree to be featured on a daily deals website (e.g., Groupon®, Plum District®). The retail establishment may gain single visit customers who drive large distances (e.g., many kilometers) to the retail establishment when featured on the daily deals website. It may be difficult for such customers to come often and/or regularly to the retail establishment because of the time inconvenience involved in traveling to the retail establishment. Furthermore, the retail establishment may not financially benefit by such single visit customers (e.g., because there may be no profit margin in a special offered on the deals website, and because of the statistical improbability of repeat visits). In addition, the retail establishment may be faced with a large influx of customers that cannot be satisfactorily serviced based on current trained labor, capacity and/or food sourcing constraints soon after (e.g., for days and/or for weeks) being featured on the daily deals website.

[0006] Similarly, potential customers may find the daily deals website frustrating because many of the retail establishments featured on the daily deals website may be geographically distant from a primary location (e.g., home) and a secondary location (e.g., work location, school location, etc.) thereof. As a result, the retail establishment may struggle to identify marketing avenues to predictably attract customers around the secondary location who spend daytime hours around the retail establishment. In addition, the retail establishment may struggle to distribute demand better such that trained labor, capacity and/or food sourcing constraints can be scaled to adequately meet such demand. Current technologies do not provide solutions to these constraints.

SUMMARY

[0007] Disclosed are methods, an apparatus and/or a system of geospatially constrained gastronomic bidding.

[0008] In one aspect, a method includes determining, through one or more central server(s) associated with a gastronomic bidding service provider, that a bidding platform provided by the gastronomic bidding service provider has a number of requests for gastronomical offers within a residential location zip code and/or a daytime location zip code associated with a user thereof. The one or more central server (s) includes a processor communicatively coupled to a memory. The method also includes permitting the user to access the number of requests for gastronomical offers within the residential location zip code and/or the daytime location zip code thereof, and denying the user access to a request for a gastronomical offer within a zip code outside a geospatially constrained region around the residential location zip code and/or the daytime location zip code thereof.

[0009] In another aspect, a bidding platform server associated with a gastronomic bidding service provider includes a memory and a processor configured to address storage locations associated with the memory. The processor is also configured to execute instructions associated with determining that a bidding platform provided by the gastronomic bidding service provider has a number of requests for gastronomical offers within a residential location zip code and/or a daytime location zip code associated with a user thereof. Further, the processor is configured to execute instructions associated with permitting the user to access the number of requests for gastronomical offers within the residential location zip code and/or the daytime location zip code thereof, and denying the user access to a request for a gastronomical offer within a zip code outside a geospatially constrained region around the residential location zip code and/or the daytime location zip code thereof.

[0010] In yet another aspect, a gastronomic bidding system includes one or more central server(s) configured to serve as a bidding platform provided by a gastronomic bidding service provider, a network, a retail establishment device to submit one or more request(s) for a gastronomical offer associated with a gastronomical item of a retail establishment to the one or more central server(s), and a client device associated with a user of the bidding platform configured to submit an offer for the gastronomical item. The retail establishment device and the client device are coupled to the one or more central server(s) through the network.

[0011] The one or more central server(s) is further configured to determine that the retail establishment associated with the submitted at one or more request(s) for the gastronomical offer is within a residential location zip code and/or a daytime location zip code associated with the user. Also, the one or more central server(s) is configured to permit the user of the client device to access the submitted one or more request(s) when the retail establishment is established to be within the residential location zip code and/or the daytime location zip code thereof, and deny the user access to the submitted one or

more request(s) when the retail establishment is established to be outside the residential location zip code and/or the daytime location zip code thereof.

[0012] The methods and systems disclosed herein may be implemented in any means for achieving various aspects, and may be executed in a form of a machine-readable medium embodying a set of instructions that, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to perform any of the operations disclosed herein. Other features will be apparent from the accompanying drawings and from the detailed description that follows.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0013] The embodiments of this invention are illustrated by way of example and not limitation in the figures of the accompanying drawings, in which like references indicate similar elements and in which:

[0014] FIG. **1** is a schematic view of a geospatially constrained gastronomic bidding system (GCGBS), according to one or more embodiments.

[0015] FIG. **2** is a schematic view of constituent elements of the central server of FIG. **1**, according to one or more embodiments.

[0016] FIG. **3** is an example business model of income from bidding on a gastronomical item through the GCGBS of FIG. **1**.

[0017] FIG. **4** is an illustrative view of a website of a gastronomic bidding service provider loaded on a browser on a client device, according to one or more embodiments.

[0018] FIG. **5** is an illustrative view of a retail establishment interface of the website of the gastronomic bidding service provider of FIG. **4** accessed through a browser on a retail establishment device, according to one or more embodiments.

[0019] FIG. **6** is an illustrative view of the website of FIG. **4** following the log-in of a registered user thereon, according to one or more embodiments.

[0020] FIG. **7** is an illustrative view of purchase history of a user on the web site of FIG. **4**, according to one or more embodiments.

[0021] FIG. **8** is an illustrative view of a bidding interface associated with the website of FIG. **4**, according to one or more embodiments.

[0022] FIG. **9** is an illustrative view of a social networking page of a user associated with a gastronomic bidding service provider being populated with bid result(s), according to one or more embodiments.

[0023] FIG. **10** is a flowchart detailing the operations involved in a method of qualifying a retail establishment in an "inactive" zip code as a retail establishment in an "active" zip code through the central server of FIG. **1**, according to one or more embodiments.

[0024] FIG. **11** is a flowchart detailing the operations involved in a method of transacting a conditional purchase offer to be paid for by a user between a gastronomic bidding service provider and a retail establishment, according to one or more embodiments.

[0025] FIG. **12** is a process flow diagram detailing the operations involved in a method of realizing geospatially constrained bidding of a gastronomical item, according to one or more embodiments.

[0026] FIG. **13** shows an example user profile associated with the GCGBS of FIG. **1**.

[0027] FIG. **14** shows an example location feed provided through the central server of the GCGBS of FIG. **1**.

[0028] Other features of the present embodiments will be apparent from the accompanying drawings and from the detailed description that follows.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0029] Example embodiments, as described below, may be used to provide a method, a system and/or an apparatus of geospatially constrained gastronomic bidding. Although the present embodiments have been described with reference to specific example embodiments, it will be evident that various modifications and changes may be made to these embodiments without departing from the broader spirit and scope of the various embodiments.

[0030] FIG. **1** shows a geospatially constrained gastronomic bidding system (GCGBS) **100**, according to one or more embodiments. In one or more embodiments, GCGBS **100** may include a central server **102** configured to have a number of gastronomical offers displayed thereon listed from one or more retail establishment(s) (e.g., restaurant(s) and/or catering service provider(s)) by way of retail establishment device(s) $\mathbf{106}_{1\text{-}N}$ associated therewith. In one or more embodiments, one or more client device(s) $\mathbf{104}_{1\text{-}N}$ may be able to bid for one or more of the number of gastronomical offers through a bidding platform associated with central server **102**.

[0031] In one or more embodiments, the one or more client device(s) $\mathbf{104}_{1\text{-}N}$ may be coupled to central server **102** through computer network **108** (e.g., the Internet, Local Area Network (LAN), Wide Area Network (WAN)). In one or more embodiments, the one or more retail establishment device(s) $\mathbf{106}_{1\text{-}N}$ may also be coupled to central server **102** through computer network **108**. In an alternate embodiment, retail establishment device(s) $\mathbf{106}_{1\text{-}N}$ may be coupled to central server **102** through a computer network different from the computer network coupling the one or more client device(s) $\mathbf{104}_{1\text{-}N}$ to central server **102**.

[0032] FIG. **2** shows constituent elements of central server **102**, according to one or more embodiments. In one or more embodiments, central server **102** may include processor **202** (e.g., Central Processing Unit (CPU) and/or other optional processor(s)) configured to address storage locations associated with memory **204** (e.g., Random-Access Memory (RAM), Read-Only Memory (ROM), disk storage). In one or more embodiments, as central server **102** is associated with a bidding platform serving as an interface between a buyer (e.g., a user of a client device $\mathbf{104}_{1\text{-}N}$) and a seller (e.g., an entity associated with retail establishment device $\mathbf{106}_{1\text{-}N}$), central server **102** may be capable of transacting at a high volume.

[0033] In one or more embodiments, processor **202** may be configured to execute instructions associated with bidding processes, processing of payment(s) (e.g., credit/debit card payment(s) associated with a user of client device $\mathbf{104}_{1\text{-}N}$, verification, authentication and/or processing of the aforementioned payments through other server(s)), authentication of information from buyers (e.g., from client devices $\mathbf{104}_{1\text{-}N}$) and/or sellers (e.g., retail establishment device(s) $\mathbf{106}_{1\text{-}N}$) and geospatially constraining gastronomical search results of the prospective buyer(s) (e.g., from client devices $\mathbf{104}_{1\text{-}N}$) to retail establishment(s) (e.g., associated with retail establishment device(s) $\mathbf{106}_{1\text{-}N}$) within a residence zip code and/or a daytime zip code thereof.

[0034] For example, a user of client device $\mathbf{104}_{1\text{-}N}$ may be resident at a zip code associated with Mountain View, Calif., while spending most of the daytime hours at work at a zip code associated with Palo Alto, Calif. During registration of the user with the bidding platform provided through central server **102**, the user may be required to provide the zip code associated with residency and/or the zip code associated with work. The gastronomical offers available to the user may, then, be localized to the aforementioned zip code(s). In other words, central server **102** may make gastronomical offers associated with solely the residency zip code and/or the work zip code available to the user. In another example embodiment, central server **102** may make gastronomical offers associated with all zip codes available (i.e., viewable) to the user, but may only enable transaction(s) associated with the residency zip code and/or the work zip code. In yet another example embodiment, the residency zip code and the daytime zip code associated with the user may be the same.

[0035] It is obvious that central server **102** may include a number of servers communicatively coupled to each other performing the functionality associated therewith. In one or more embodiments, memory **204** of central server **102** may include one or more database(s) associated therewith such as buyer database **252** and retail establishment database **254**, where buyer database **252** includes details of user(s) associated with client devices $\mathbf{104}_{1\text{-}N}$ such as name, address including a residence location zip code and a daytime location zip code, e-mail address, credit/debit card number (if previous transaction(s) exist) and history of bidding/purchase(s) through the bidding platform, and retail establishment database **254** includes details of retail establishment(s) such as name of establishment, address/contact information including website address, payment preferences and ratings/user feedback associated therewith. The aforementioned example details of the database(s) are merely for illustrative purposes, and other implementations thereof are within the scope of the exemplary embodiments discussed herein.

[0036] Further, in one or more embodiments, memory **204** may include a credit module **282**, instructions associated with which are configured to execute on processor **202**. In one or more embodiments, credit module **282** may enable calculation of an amount to be credited to a service provider associated with the bidding platform provided through central server **102**. Discussion associated with credit module **282** has been deferred until the end of discussion associated with FIG. **9** for the sake of clarity. It is obvious that although processor **202** and memory **204** are shown to be distinct from one another in FIG. **2**, processor **202** may include memory **204** as a part thereof and vice versa.

[0037] In one or more embodiments, central server **102** may select the zip code(s) associated with a buyer to display offers from retail establishment(s) solely within the above-mentioned zip code(s). In one or more embodiments, retail establishment(s) (e.g., restaurants) may enter, at central server **102**, a minimum selling price (or, reserve price) associated with a gastronomical item provided therefrom through retail establishment device(s) $\mathbf{106}_{1\text{-}N}$ associated therewith. In one or more embodiments, the service provider of the bidding platform associated with central server **102** may accept the first offer above a threshold percentage (e.g., 5%) higher than the minimum reserve price (the price associated with the accepted offer may be called "accept price," for the sake of simplicity). In one or more embodiments, subsequent orders/bids may be associated with increased income for both the retail establishment and the service provider as both the minimum reserve price and the accept price may be increased for each gastronomical item associated with the retail establishment, in accordance with a business model.

[0038] In one or more embodiments, the percentage increase between the minimum reserve price and the accept price may not always be proportional due to subsidization of early bidders through the service provider. However, as discussed above, both the service provider and the retail establishment may increase income thereof with increased sale(s). FIG. **3** shows an example business model of income from bidding on a gastronomical item **302**. Gastronomical item **302** (e.g., eggplant parmesan sandwich) from retail establishment **304** (e.g., ABC sandwiches) may have a retail price **350** of $8.95 associated therewith. Retail establishment **304** may offer gastronomical item **302** at a 50% discount (e.g., $4.48 approx., which is minimum reserve price **310**) to users of the bidding platform associated with service provider **306**.

[0039] Service provider **306** may set a maximum price constraint **308** associated with gastronomical item **302**, which may at most be 80% (in general, less than or equal to a threshold) of retail price **350** of gastronomical item **302** when the first payout price (discussed below) is at most 80% of retail price **350**. Maximum price constraint **308** may be equal to retail price **350** when the first payout price is within 20% of retail price **350**. Thus, in the example shown in FIG. **3**, maximum price constraint **308** may be set to be $7.16 (80% of $8.95). Service provider **306** may also set an accept factor **316** associated with gastronomical item **302**, which is 5% in the example shown in FIG. **3**. The first offer (e.g., associated with purchase of one quantity; quantity is shown under column quantity **390**) for gastronomical item **302** may, therefore, be accepted from a buyer (e.g., a user at client device $\mathbf{104}_{1\text{-}N}$) at 5% above minimum reserve price **310**. The monetary value associated with the first accepted offer (shown under accept price **320** in FIG. **3**) may, thus, be $4.61 approx, which is 5% above the difference between minimum reserve price **310** and maximum price constraint **308**.

[0040] In accordance with the first accepted offer of $4.61, service provider **306** may pay retail establishment **304** $4.48, which is equivalent to minimum reserve price **310** (here, payout price **312**). Service provider **306** may set a payout factor **314** (e.g., 1%, as shown in FIG. **3**; setting may be done through central server **102**) associated with an increase of payout price **312** from minimum reserve price **310** to maximum price constraint **308**. Thus, for the second accepted offer having a monetary value of $4.74 approx. ($4.61+5% of the difference between first accepted offer and maximum price constraint **308**) associated therewith, payout price **312** may be $4.50 approx., which is $4.48+1% of the difference between maximum price constraint **308** and first payout price **312** of $4.48.

[0041] It is obvious to see that payout price **312** may be constant at $4.48 (minimum reserve price **310**) when payout factor **314** is 0%. Although this yields a maximum profit to service provider **306**, the business model may be static and unattractive from the perspective of retail establishment **304**. Therefore, payout factor **314** may be chosen to be a finite percentage. Monetary value(s) associated with subsequent offers and payout price(s) **312** shown in FIG. **3** are obviously derived based on accept factor **316**, payout factor **314**, minimum reserve price **310** and maximum price constraint **308**.

[0042] From FIG. **3**, it is also obvious that accept price **320** may increase to maximum price constraint **308**, following

which accept price **320** is saturated (i.e., constant). Similarly from FIG. **3**, it can be seen that payout price **312** may also increase approximately to maximum price constraint **308**, following which saturation occurs. However, as accept factor **316** is higher than payout factor **314**, the rate of change of the increase of accept price(s) **320** as a function of the number of gastronomical item(s) **302** sold is faster than the rate of change of the increase in the corresponding payout price(s) **312** as a function of the number of gastronomical item(s) **302** sold.

[0043] Moreover, as seen in FIG. **3**, the profit (e.g., profit **370**) associated with each accepted offer increases to a maximum value thereof, following which the profit decreases. It is obvious that changing values of the prices and the factors involved in the business model discussed with respect to FIG. **3** may change characteristics of the offers and the monetary values associated therewith. Further, it is obvious that although accept actor **316** is discussed as an indicator, bids above the expected accept price **320** may be accepted, thereby further increasing profit on the bid to service provider **306**.

[0044] Additionally, service provider **306** may set a buy-it-now price **340** (e.g., $6.53 in FIG. **3**), which is displayed to the bidding user up and until accept price **320** predicted based on accept factor **316** is less than buy-it-now price **340**. The bidding user may, therefore, have the option of buying at buy-it-now price **340**, which is still less than maximum price constraint **308** and retail price **350** associated with gastronomical item **302**.

[0045] In one or more embodiments, accept price(s) **320** and payout price(s) **312** may be hidden from the view of the bidding user in the bidding platform displayed on client device $\mathbf{104}_{1\text{-}N}$ associated therewith, as will be discussed below. In one or more embodiments, the user may enter a bid amount with primarily retail price **350** of gastronomical item **302** serving as guidance thereto. In one or more embodiments, the user may be permitted to submit a series of standing bid amounts spread across a spectrum of time. In the scenario discussed in FIG. **3**, the user may increase the bid amount until the bid amount is accepted by service provider **306** (retail establishment(s) **304** may have authorized service provider **306** to accept bid amount(s)) and/or retail establishment(s) **304**. In one or more example embodiments, the standing bid amounts may be submitted (e.g., on a periodic basis) to a set of retail establishment(s) **304** based on one or more of gastronomical item **302**, a business name (e.g., ABC sandwiches), a cuisine type (e.g., Italian cuisine, Indian cuisine, Chinese cuisine), a residential location zip code and a daytime location zip code. Other parameters/differentiators within the context of geospatially constrained bidding are within the scope of the exemplary embodiments.

[0046] In a first example, the user may perform a gastronomical item **302** based search on the bidding platform (or, be presented gastronomical item **302** through the bidding platform), following which he/she bids on gastronomical item **302**. In a second example, the user may perform (or, be presented through the bidding platform) a geospatially constrained search by business name, following which he/she submits a bid for one or more item(s) (e.g., a combo meal). In a third example, the user may submit a bid based on the cuisine type, which is accepted by a retail establishment **304** within the residential location zip code and/or the daytime location zip code. In a fourth example, the user may submit a bid that is transmitted to a number of retail establishment(s) **304** associated with the residential location zip code and/or the daytime location zip code, following which the bid is accepted by a retail establishment **304** therein.

[0047] It is obvious that the bid(s) submitted by the user may not be accepted by any retail establishment **304** (or, service provider **306** authorized by retail establishment **304**). The user may have a fixed expense in mind regarding a meal, and may be unsure of a place to eat within the residential and/or daytime location zip code. Exemplary embodiments discussed herein may provide for a means to match a meal at a retail establishment **304** with the fixed expense submitted by the user in the form of a bid to the bidding platform.

[0048] Also, it is obvious that other algorithms associated with calculation of accept price(s) **320** and/or payout price(s) **312** are within the scope of the exemplary embodiments, and that the discussion above related to the calculation thereof is merely for example illustrative purpose(s).

[0049] FIG. **4** shows a website **400** of service provider **306** associated with the bidding platform loaded on a browser on client device $\mathbf{104}_{1\text{-}N}$ (e.g., a laptop, a personal computer (PC), a mobile phone), according to one or more embodiments. In one or more embodiments, website **400** may require a user to register therewith (e.g., name, address, residential location zip code and/or daytime location zip code) and/or to sign-in to place a bid/order thereon. Website **400** may also have a separate interface for retail establishment(s) **304**, which is accessed by clicking the appropriate section thereof (e.g., retail establishment owner(s) **402**). FIG. **5** shows retail establishment interface **500** of website **400** accessed through a browser on retail establishment device $\mathbf{106}_{1\text{-}N}$, according to one or more embodiments. In one or more embodiments, retail establishment interface **500** may also require retail establishment owner(s) (or, representatives thereof) to register therewith and/or to sign-in to enter gastronomical item(s) **302** and/or specials (e.g., day-of-the-week limited special offering including one or more gastronomical item(s)).

[0050] In one or more embodiments, website **400** may also allow user(s) and/or retail establishment owner(s)/representative(s) to log-in with social networking account(s) (e.g., Facebook account, Twitter™ account; not shown in FIGS. **4** and **5**) thereof. FIG. **6** shows website **400** following the log-in of a registered user thereon, according to one or more embodiments. In one or more embodiments, website **400** may provide links to purchase history **602** and/or may display one or more retail establishment(s) **304** (e.g., through retail establishment display **604**) within the residential location zip code and/or the daytime location zip code provided by the user during registration thereof with website **400**. In one or more embodiments, website **400** may also provide an active feed **606** to the user based on a purchase history of user(s) associated therewith similarly constrained by the same residential location zip code and/or the daytime location zip code. In one or more embodiments, active feed **606** may enable the user to make decision(s) based on purchase(s) by other users. For example, buy-it-now price **340** associated with a gastronomic item **302** purchased by a user may be displayed to another user based on recency of activity associated therewith and similarity of constraint associated with residential location zip code and/or daytime location zip code.

[0051] In one or more embodiments, active feed **606** may be a user feed configured to publish a winning bid of a particular user to other users within the bidding platform at least one of socially (e.g., through an online community such as a forum and/or a social network-based community) and geographically associated therewith (see, e.g., FIG. **6**). Addition-

ally, in one or more embodiments, active feed **606** may be a zip feed that publishes winning bids of various retail establishment(s) **304** within the zip feed to users who reside and/or work in the residential location zip code and/or the daytime location zip code.

[0052] Further, in one or more embodiments, active feed **606** may be a retail establishment feed that publishes winning bids associated with a particular retail establishment to users socially and/or geographically associated therewith. In one or more embodiments, central server **102** may enable generation of the aforementioned feeds. In one or more embodiments, central server **102** may also permit users of the bidding platform to subscribe to the user feed, the zip feed and/or the retail establishment feed such that updates associated therewith are accessible through client device $\mathbf{104}_{1\text{-}N}$ of each of the subscribed users.

[0053] FIG. **7** shows purchase history **702** of a user on website **400**, according to one or more embodiments. In one or more embodiments, the webpage associated with purchase history **702** may be reached by the logged in user upon clicking an appropriate link associated therewith. As shown in FIG. **7**, purchase history **702** may include bid date **704**, gastronomical item **706** (analogous to gastronomical item **302**), retail establishment **708** (analogous to retail establishment **304**), offer price **710**, quantity **712** and redemption date **714**, according to one or more embodiments. FIG. **7** shows a user having purchased three gastronomical items **706** from separate retail establishment(s) **708**, with offers associated therewith to be redeemed on separate redemption dates **714**.

[0054] For example, the user is shown to have the capability to redeem a $4.61 offer for an eggplant parmesan sandwich from ABC sandwiches on Feb. 16, 2012, a $1.75 offer for a bottle of A1 beer at ZXY eatery on Feb. 12, 2012 and a $4.25 offer for an All-American Breakfast at CMN pancakes on Feb. 17, 2012. It is obvious that the user may place bids on the same retail establishment **708** and/or have the same redemption date **714** associated therewith. For example, the user may bid for breakfast and dinner at the same retail establishment **708** on the same redemption date **714**. Other logical variations are within the scope of the exemplary embodiments.

[0055] In one or more embodiments, retail establishment(s) **708** (e.g., restaurants) all over a region (e.g., a country like the United States of America (USA)) may self-sign up with service provider **306** to be capable of creating a menu thereof "online," creating specials (e.g., special deal(s), offer(s) on occasions such as Labor Day, Independence Day et al.) associated with gastronomical item(s) **706** and/or inviting patrons thereof. In one or more embodiments, service provider **306** may start operations associated with the bidding platform only when more than a threshold number (e.g., 5) of retail establishment(s) **708** and a threshold number (e.g., 200) number of active user(s) sign up therewith.

[0056] In accordance with an agreement (e.g., a contract) between a retail establishment **708** and service provider **306**, retail establishment **708** may have to agree to permit the user(s) to receive gastronomical item(s) **706** (e.g., dine in person at the appropriate retail establishment **708**) based on receipt(s) generated (e.g., see print receipt **752** of FIG. **7**) through the bidding platform provided by central server **102** upon securitization of the winning bid consideration and/or a fixed fee purchase consideration of the user(s). For example, securitization of the winning bid consideration and/or a fixed fee purchase consideration of a user may be complete upon the credit/debit card thereof being charged by service provider **306**.

[0057] Referring to FIG. **6** once again, in one or more embodiments, user(s) may have the capability to follow (e.g., see Retail Establishment(s) followed **640**) one or more retail establishment(s) **304** of preference to aid easy cognizance of deal(s), offer(s), special(s) and/or gastronomical item(s) **302** associated therewith. Also, in one or more embodiments, user(s) may have the capability to follow one another just like a social networking environment such that a user can be apprised of eating preference(s) and/or choice(s) of one or more other user(s).

[0058] FIG. **8** shows bidding interface **800** associated with website **400**, according to one or more embodiments. In one or more embodiments, a user of client device $\mathbf{104}_{1\text{-}N}$ may be configured to arrive at bidding interface **800** upon logging into website **400** and opting to bid for a gastronomical item **706**. FIG. **8** shows a user bidding for a Veggie Omlette (example of gastronomical item **706**) from ABC sandwiches (example of retail establishment **708**). Bidding interface **800** may require the user to choose or enter a redemption date **714**, a quantity **712** of gastronomical item **706** and a bid price **802** thereof. The guideline for bidding may be provided by retail price **804** associated with gastronomical item **706** (e.g., Veggie Omelet, $9.95 retail). The user may then submit the bid through an appropriate button (e.g., bid button **806**), following which central server **102** is configured to determine whether to accept/reject the bid.

[0059] For example, a bid price below the expected payout price **312** may be instantly rejected and a bid corresponding to a sum of the expected payout price **312** and a price associated with accept factor **316** may be accepted at or above the aforementioned sum. Also, FIG. **8** shows user payment of service provider **306** through account funds **812** and credit/debit card **814** as options. Account funds **812** may be an amount the user has as credit to his/her account on website **400**. For example, the user may transfer funds to his/her account through a bank transfer, a service provider transfer (e.g., through Paypal®), or, the amount may be available to the user as credit amount toward a refund from one or more retail establishment(s) **708** and/or service provider **306**. FIG. **6** shows a user **670** associated with website **400** as having a $6.96 as account balance **680** for illustrative purpose.

[0060] In one example embodiment, service provider **306** may credit the user account (e.g., a $20 credit) for signing up therewith as a promotional offer to attract more user(s) thereto (e.g., by way of the user spreading word through the Internet, word of mouth etc.). In one or more embodiments, the user may possess the capability to "follow" location(s) (e.g., cities), cuisine style(s), gastronomical item(s) **706**, retail establishment(s) **708** or other users through website **400** to be apprised of social behavior, choice(s) and/or available options.

[0061] In one or more embodiments, a user, upon winning a bid, may have the result(s) thereof posted to his/her social networking page (e.g., a Facebook wall) through service provider **306**. This may be made possible through either through the user logging into website **400** using his/her social networking profile and/or the user permitting service provider **306** to access his/her social networking profile. The social networking profile of the user may be stored in buyer database **252** of FIG. **2**, for example, thereby enabling a social networking page associated therewith to be populated with his/

her bidding result(s). The user may obviously opt not to have the social networking page populated with the bidding result (s).

[0062] FIG. **9** shows an example social networking page **900** of a user **902** associated with service provider **306** being populated with bid result(s), according to one or more embodiments. In the example embodiment of FIG. **9**, the bid result(s) are shown as "I just won a three cheese omelet from ABC sandwiches for $4.95," and "I just won A1 beer for $1.75 a bottle from ZXY eatery," followed by the appropriate URLs associated with the aforementioned retail establishment(s) **708**, under the name of user **902** (e.g., username **904** shown as John Doe). The aforementioned is merely for example purposes, and other forms of populating social networking pages are within the scope of the exemplary embodiments. In one or more embodiments, the aforementioned population of social networking page **900** may enable friend (s) of user **902**, friend(s) of friend(s) of user **902** and/or networking group members thereof to track and/or view offers availed by user **902**.

[0063] Referring to FIG. **2** once again, in one or more embodiments, central server **102** may include credit module **282** resident on memory **204** configured to enable execution of instructions associated with crediting service provider **306** on processor **202** for a successful accepted offer. For example, credit module **282** may enable crediting an account (e.g., a credit/debit card, a bank account) associated with service provider **306** with an amount between the offer price (e.g., expected accept price **320** and above) and payout price **312** associated with a gastronomical item **302**. In one or more embodiments, credit module **282** (or, a related module on memory **204** configured to execute on processor **202**) may also be associated with crediting an account associated with the appropriate retail establishment **304** with payout price **312** for the gastronomical item **302** following the successful completion of the debit process (or, payment for the offer) associated with the user (or, buyer of gastronomical item **302**).

[0064] In one or more embodiments, a retail establishment **304** may also provide home delivery (or, work delivery) options to the user if the user is within a threshold distance (e.g., <4 miles) of a location of retail establishment **304**. In such scenarios, in one or more embodiments, service provider **306** (e.g., with the authorization of retail establishment **304**, or, through implementing a policy associated with website **400**) may append a delivery charge to a winning bid consideration and/or a fixed fee (e.g., a buy-it-now price **340**) purchase consideration associated with the user based on the physical address provided by the user (or, stored in buyer database **252**). The user may be required to pay for the delivery if requesting a home delivery (or, a work delivery), or, may have the option to dispense with the delivery charge by not opting for the home delivery (or, work delivery).

[0065] In an example embodiment, the user may also get at least a portion of the delivery charge(s) waived if his/her order exceeds a threshold monetary value (e.g., $100). In another example embodiment, taxes (e.g., state food taxes) may be claimed from the user during processing of a payment therefrom. Alternately, the user may opt to pay for the taxes following consumption of gastronomical item **302**. In yet another example, the user may be provided, through website **400**, the option to merely pay for a portion of the monetary value associated with gastronomical item **302**. The user may then pay the balance amount following the consumption of gastronomical item **302** at the location of retail establishment **304** and/or following the receipt of the home delivery order (or, work delivery order).

[0066] In one or more embodiments, as discussed above, the fixed fee option (e.g., buy-it-now price **340**) may be hidden from the view of the user on the bidding platform provided through central server **102** if accept price **320** associated with gastronomical item **302** exceeds the fixed fee. In one or more embodiments, a message associated with a percentage saved on a successful bid of gastronomical item **302** and/or a fixed fee purchase (e.g., at buy-it-now price **340**) thereof may be posted (not shown) in active feed **606** and/or the social networking page associated with the user. In one or more embodiments, the "percentage saved" may be calculated based on accept price **320** and retail price **350** of gastronomical item **302**.

[0067] In one or more embodiments, one or more retail establishment(s) **304** in an "inactive" zip code (e.g., zero, or, a low number of patrons associated therewith) listing gastronomical item(s) **302** to be marketed through the bidding platform provided by service provider **306** may qualify as retail establishment(s) **304** within an active zip code, provided the number of retail establishment(s) **304** within the "inactive" zip code is above a threshold number (e.g., 5). Gastronomical items **302** associated with the aforementioned one or more retail establishment(s) **304** may be marketed to users associated with a region around the previously "inactive" zip code (now "active" zip code). FIG. **10** shows a flowchart detailing the operations involved in a method of qualifying a retail establishment **304** in an "inactive" zip code as a retail establishment **304** in an "active" zip code through central server **102** associated with service provider **306**, according to one or more embodiments.

[0068] In one or more embodiments, operation **1002** may involve verifying, through central server **102**, as to whether a number of users in a zip code is below a threshold value (e.g., 200) and/or a purchase history associated with the zip code is below a threshold monetary value/quantity of orders. In one or more embodiments, if yes, operation **1004** may involve classifying, through central server **102**, that the zip code is "inactive." In one or more embodiments, operation **1006** may involve checking as to whether retail establishment(s) **304** in the "inactive" zip code is above a threshold number. In one or more embodiments, if the number of retail establishment(s) has increased above the threshold number, operation **1008** may involve modifying, through central server **102**, a status of retail establishment **304** within the "inactive" zip code to reflect the change of the zip code to "active." One or more module(s) executing on processor **202** (or, stored in memory **204**) may be configured to perform action(s) associated with the abovementioned qualification.

[0069] In one or more embodiments, service provider **306** may also be configured to purchase a set of gastronomical item(s) **302** from a preferred retail establishment **304** at a wholesale price (e.g., at 50% discount). Then, in one or more embodiments, service provider **306** may then market the aforementioned set of gastronomical item(s) **302** through the bidding platform associated therewith to the users thereof. Here, in one or more embodiments, not only does service provider **306** increase exposure thereof, but also service provider **306** provides means to increase exposure of the preferred retail establishment **304**. Now, in one or more embodi-

ments, service provider **306** may not be required to credit the preferred retail establishment **304** for the bids and/or the fixed fee purchases.

[0070] FIG. **11** shows a flowchart detailing the operations involved in a method of transacting a conditional purchase offer to be paid for by a user (e.g., associated with client device $\mathbf{104}_{1\text{-}N}$) between service provider **306** and retail establishment **304**, according to one or more embodiments. In one or more embodiments, the conditional purchase offer may only be available to users within an active specific zip code. Here, the user may be configured to input a desired price thereof (or, offer price) through the bidding platform provided through service provider **306** to be matched with conditional offer(s) within the active zip code. In one or more embodiments, operation **1102** may involve processing, through central server **102**, a conditional purchase offer having the offer price of the user within the active zip code for a gastronomical item associated with one or more retail establishment(s) **304**.

[0071] In one or more embodiments, operation **1104** may involve processing, through central server **102**, a payment identifier specifying payment details associated with the user (e.g., credit card/debit card details). In one or more embodiments, the payment identifier may be associated with the conditional purchase offer. In one or more embodiments, operation **1106** may involve transmitting the conditional purchase offer to a number of retail establishment(s) **304** within the active zip code following the processing of the payment identifier. In one or more embodiments, operation **1108** may involve verifying as to whether the conditional purchase offer is accepted by a retail establishment **304** within the active zip code.

[0072] In one or more embodiments, if yes, operation **1110** may involve inputting, into central server **102**, the acceptance from retail establishment **304** within the active zip code. In one or more embodiments, the acceptance is responsive to the conditional purchase offer by the user within the geospatial constraint of the active zip code. In one or more embodiments, operation **1112** may then involve service provider **306** paying retail establishment **304** (e.g., monetary value of payout price **312**) based on a secure communication between retail establishment device $\mathbf{106}_{1\text{-}N}$ associated with retail establishment **304** and central server **102** associated with service provider **306**.

[0073] Now, in one or more embodiments, more than one retail establishment **304** may accept the conditional purchase offer by the user. Here, in one or more embodiments, acceptances from each retail establishment **304** (e.g., through retail establishment device $\mathbf{106}_{1\text{-}N}$ associated therewith) may be input into central server **102**. Again, in one or more embodiments, each acceptance may be responsive to the conditional purchase offer. In one or more embodiments, one of the received acceptance(s) may be selected through central server **102** (e.g., through processor **202**) to determine a selected retail establishment **304** from the number of retail establishments **304** accepting the conditional purchase offer. Again, in one or more embodiments, payment to the selected retail establishment **304** may be as discussed above.

[0074] It is obvious that one or more processes associated with service provider **306** may be performed through processor **202** of central server **102**. FIG. **12** shows a process flow diagram detailing the operations involved in a method of realizing geospatially constrained bidding of a gastronomical item (e.g., gastronomical item **302**), according to one or more embodiments. In one or more embodiments, operation **1202** may involve determining, through one or more central server (s) (e.g., central server **102**) associated with a gastronomic bidding service provider (e.g., service provider **306**), that a bidding platform provided by the gastronomic bidding service provider has a number of requests for gastronomical offers within a residential location zip code and/or a daytime location zip code associated with a user thereof. In one or more embodiments, the one or more central server(s) includes processor **202** communicatively coupled to memory **204**.

[0075] In one or more embodiments, operation **1204** may involve permitting the user to access the number of requests for gastronomical offers within the residential location zip code and/or the daytime location zip code thereof. In one or more embodiments, operation **1206** may then involve denying the user access to a request for a gastronomical offer within a zip code outside a geospatially constrained region around the residential location zip code and/or the daytime location zip code thereof.

[0076] FIG. **13** shows an example user profile associated with the bidding platform provided through service provider **306**. Specifically, FIG. **13** shows an example user profile of Jane Smith associated with the **94301** zip code at website **400**. The example user profile may be accessed through client device $\mathbf{104}_{1\text{-}N}$ by clicking on an appropriate link associated therewith. The user profile may include a compiled list of winning bids and/or recent activity associated therewith, as shown in FIG. **13**. Other list(s) such as a list of comment(s) (not shown) of the user may also be compiled at the profile page associated with the user.

[0077] FIG. **13** also shows the user profile as providing a capability to other users to "follow" the user (see Follow Button **1302**). "Following" a user may enable other users to be apprised of activity, updates, form posts, discussions, winning bids, purchases etc. associated therewith. Thus, the bidding platform may provide "online" networking capabilities to subscribed users thereof.

[0078] FIG. **14** shows location feed **1402** being provided the bidding platform (accessed through client device $\mathbf{104}_{1\text{-}N}$) associated with service provider **306**. Location feed **1402** may be analogous to the zip feed discussed with regard to FIG. **6** above. Location feed **1402** for a zip code associated with a user may be accessed, for example, by the user logging into website **400**. Alternately, users of client devices $\mathbf{104}_{1\text{-}N}$ may obtain location feed **1402** for a specific zip code by choosing the zip code on website **400** with/without logging into website **400**. The user(s) may also be provided a capability to subscribe to location feed **1402** (e.g., through subscribe button **1404**) by logging into website **400**. The aforementioned user(s) may or may not be associated with the zip code related to location feed **1402**. In one or more embodiments, a user may directly be subscribed to location feed **1402** based on the zip code(s) associated therewith. Other implementations are within the scope of the exemplary embodiments. Generation of and/or subscription to location feed **1402** (and other examples of active feed **606**) may be enabled through central server **102**.

[0079] Although the present embodiments have been described with reference to specific example embodiments, it will be evident that various modifications and changes may be made to these embodiments without departing from the broader spirit and scope of the various embodiments. For example, the various devices and modules described herein may be enabled and operated using hardware circuitry (e.g.,

CMOS based logic circuitry), firmware, software or any combination of hardware, firmware, and software (e.g., embodied in a machine readable medium). For example, the various electrical structure and methods may be embodied using transistors, logic gates, and electrical circuits (e.g., application specific integrated (ASIC) circuitry and/or Digital Signal Processor (DSP) circuitry).

[0080] In addition, it will be appreciated that the various operations, processes, and methods disclosed herein may be embodied in a machine-readable medium and/or a machine accessible medium compatible with a data processing system (e.g., a computer device). Accordingly, the specification and drawings are to be regarded in an illustrative rather than a restrictive sense.

What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising:

determining, through at least one central server, which includes a processor communicatively coupled to a memory and which is associated with a gastronomic bidding service provider, that a bidding platform provided by the gastronomic bidding service provider has a number of requests for gastronomical offers within at least one of a residential location zip code and a daytime location zip code associated with a user thereof;

permitting the user to access the number of requests for gastronomical offers within the at least one of the residential location zip code and the daytime location zip code thereof; and

denying the user access to a request for a gastronomical offer within a zip code outside a geospatially constrained region around the at least one of the residential location zip code and the daytime location zip code thereof.

2. The method of claim **1**, further comprising:

permitting a retail establishment within the at least one of the residential location zip code and the daytime location zip code of the user to create a minimum reserve price of a gastronomical item associated therewith based on a discount percentage automatically applied to a retail price thereof, the minimum reserve price also being a first payout price of the gastronomical item;

increasing subsequent payout prices of the gastronomical item from the first payout price up to a constrained price associated therewith;

increasing accept prices corresponding to the payout prices of the gastronomical item such that a rate of change of the accept prices as a function of a number of times the gastronomical item is sold is faster than a rate of change of the payout prices as the function of the number of times the gastronomical item is sold; and

hiding each accept price and payout price from a view of the user of the bidding platform at a client device associated therewith such that the user is configured to bid for the gastronomical item with primarily the retail price of the gastronomical item as a guidance thereto.

3. The method of claim **2**, further comprising at least one of:

permitting the retail establishment to create a limited special offering comprising at least one of the gastronomical item and other gastronomical items associated therewith;

generating a user feed that publishes a winning bid of a particular user to other users within the bidding platform at least one of socially and geographically associated therewith;

generating a zip feed that publishes winning bids of various retail establishments within the zip feed to users who at least one of reside and work in the at least one of the residential location zip code and the daytime location zip code;

generating a retail establishment feed that publishes winning bids of a particular retail establishment to users at least one of socially and geographically associated therewith; and

permitting users of the bidding platform to subscribe to at least one of the user feed, the zip feed and the retail establishment feed such that updates associated therewith are accessible through a client device of each of the subscribed users.

4. The method of claim **2**, further comprising:

permitting the user to create a series of standing bid amounts spread across a spectrum of time such that the standing bid amounts are submitted periodically to a set of retail establishments based on at least one of the gastronomical item, a business name, a cuisine type, the residential location zip code and the daytime location zip code.

5. The method of claim **2**,

wherein the constrained price is one of below and equal to a threshold percentage of the retail price of the gastronomical item when the first payout price is at most the threshold percentage of the retail price, and

wherein the constrained price is equal to the retail price of the gastronomical item when the first payout price is within another threshold percentage value equal to a difference between **100** and the threshold percentage value.

6. The method of claim **2**, further comprising:

crediting an account associated with the gastronomic bidding service provider on the at least one central server with an amount between a bid price of the gastronomical item and a particular payout price thereof when the bid price is at least a particular accept price corresponding to the particular payout price.

7. The method of claim **2**, further comprising:

qualifying each of at least a threshold number of retail establishments in accordance with an agreement between the at least the threshold number of retail establishments and the gastronomic bidding service provider in which the at least the threshold number of retail establishments agree to permit the user and other users to receive corresponding gastronomical items thereof based on receipts generated through the at least one central server upon securitization of at least one of a winning bid consideration and a fixed fee purchase consideration of the user and the other users.

8. The method of claim **7**, further comprising:

appending a delivery charge to the at least one of the winning bid consideration and the fixed fee purchase consideration when the user provides a physical address that is within a threshold distance from a location address of the retail establishment.

9. The method of claim **6**, further comprising:

hiding a fixed fee request for an offer in the bidding platform presented to the user through the at least one central server when the particular accept price is above the fixed fee request for the offer.

10. The method of claim **7**, further comprising:

automatically publishing a message associated with a saving associated with the at least one of the winning bid consideration and the fixed fee purchase consideration of the user to a social networking page associated with the user following completion of the securitization thereof.

11. The method of claim **1**, further comprising:

qualifying another retail establishment in an inactive location zip code when the another retail establishment lists gastronomical items to be marketed to users in a region around the inactive location zip code through the bidding platform; and

transforming the inactive location zip code to an active location zip code when there are at least a threshold number of retail establishments qualifying in the inactive location zip code.

12. The method of claim **1**, further comprising:

pre-purchasing, through the at least one central server, a set of gastronomical items from a preferred retail establishment; and

marketing, to a plurality of users, the set of gastronomical items through the bidding platform provided by the gastronomic bidding service provider.

13. The method of claim **1**, further comprising:

processing, through the at least one central server, a conditional purchase offer having an offer price of the user within the at least one of the residential location zip code and the daytime location zip code for a gastronomical item associated with a plurality of retail establishments therein;

processing, through the at least one central server, a payment identifier specifying payment information of the user, the payment identifier being associated with the conditional purchase offer;

transmitting the conditional purchase offer to the plurality of retail establishments within the at least one of the residential location zip code and the daytime location zip code;

receiving, at the at least one central server, an acceptance from a retail establishment within the at least one of the residential location zip code and the daytime location zip code, the acceptance being responsive to the conditional purchase offer by the user therein; and

paying the retail establishment associated with the acceptance based on the payment identifier.

14. The method of claim **13**, wherein when a plurality of retail establishments transmits acceptances to the at least one central server, the method further comprises selecting one received acceptance to determine a selected retail establishment.

15. A bidding platform server associated with a gastronomic bidding service provider, comprising:

a memory; and

a processor configured to address storage locations associated with the memory, the processor further being configured to execute instructions associated with:

determining that a bidding platform provided by the gastronomic bidding service provider has a number of requests for gastronomical offers within at least one of a residential location zip code and a daytime location zip code associated with a user thereof,

permitting the user to access the number of requests for gastronomical offers within the at least one of the residential location zip code and the daytime location zip code thereof, and

denying the user access to a request for a gastronomical offer within a zip code outside a geospatially constrained region around the at least one of the residential location zip code and the daytime location zip code thereof.

16. The bidding platform server of claim **15**, wherein the processor is further configured to execute instructions associated with:

creating, in conjunction with a retail establishment device of a retail establishment within the at least one of the residential location zip code and the daytime location zip code of the user, a minimum reserve price of a gastronomical item associated therewith based on a discount percentage automatically applied to a retail price thereof, the minimum reserve price also being a first payout price of the gastronomical item,

increasing subsequent payout prices of the gastronomical item from the first payout price up to a constrained price associated therewith,

increasing accept prices corresponding to the payout prices of the gastronomical item such that a rate of change of the accept prices as a function of a number of times the gastronomical item is sold is faster than a rate of change of the payout prices as the function of the number of times the gastronomical item is sold, and

hiding each accept price and payout price from a view of the user of the bidding platform at a client device associated therewith such that the user is configured to bid for the gastronomical item with primarily the retail price of the gastronomical item as a guidance thereto.

17. The bidding platform server of claim **16**, wherein the processor is further configured to execute instructions associated with at least one of:

creating, in conjunction with the retail establishment device of the retail establishment within the at least one of the residential location zip code and the daytime location zip code of the user, a limited special offering comprising at least one of the gastronomical item and other gastronomical items associated therewith

generating a user feed that publishes a winning bid of a particular user to other users within the bidding platform at least one of socially and geographically associated therewith;

generating a zip feed that publishes winning bids of various retail establishments within the zip feed to users who at least one of reside and work in the at least one of the residential location zip code and the daytime location zip code;

generating a retail establishment feed that publishes winning bids of a particular retail establishment to users at least one of socially and geographically associated therewith; and

permitting users of the bidding platform to subscribe to at least one of the user feed, the zip feed and the retail establishment feed such that updates associated therewith are accessible through a client device of each of the subscribed users.

18. The bidding platform server of claim **16**, wherein the processor is further configured to execute instructions associated with:

permitting the user to create a series of standing bid amounts on the bidding platform spread across a spectrum of time such that the standing bid amounts are submitted periodically to a set of retail establishments based on at least one of the gastronomical item, a business name, a cuisine type, the residential location zip code and the daytime location zip code.

19. The bidding platform server of claim **16**,

wherein the constrained price is one of below and equal to a threshold percentage of the retail price of the gastronomical item when the first payout price is at most the threshold percentage of the retail price, and

wherein the constrained price is equal to the retail price of the gastronomical item when the first payout price is within another threshold percentage value equal to a difference between **100** and the threshold percentage value.

20. The bidding platform server of claim **16**, wherein the processor is further configured to execute instructions associated with:

crediting an account associated with the gastronomic bidding service provider on the bidding platform server with an amount between a bid price of the gastronomical item and a particular payout price thereof when the bid price is at least a particular accept price corresponding to the particular payout price.

21. The bidding platform server of claim **16**, wherein the processor is further configured to execute instructions associated with:

qualifying each of at least a threshold number of retail establishments in accordance with an agreement between the at least the threshold number of retail establishments and the gastronomic bidding service provider in which the at least the threshold number of retail establishments agree to permit the user and other users to receive corresponding gastronomical items thereof based on receipts generated through the bidding platform server upon securitization of at least one of a winning bid consideration and a fixed fee purchase consideration of the user and the other users.

22. The bidding platform server of claim **21**, wherein the processor is further configured to execute instructions associated with:

appending a delivery charge to the at least one of the winning bid consideration and the fixed fee purchase consideration when the user provides a physical address that is within a threshold distance from a location address of the retail establishment.

23. The bidding platform server of claim **20**, wherein the processor is further configured to execute instructions associated with:

hiding a fixed fee request for an offer in the bidding platform presented to the user through the bidding platform server when the particular accept price is above the fixed fee request for the offer.

24. The bidding platform server of claim **21**, wherein the processor is further configured to execute instructions associated with:

automatically publishing a message associated with a saving associated with the at least one of the winning bid consideration and the fixed fee purchase consideration of the user to a social networking page associated with the user following completion of the securitization thereof.

25. The bidding platform server of claim **15**, wherein the processor is further configured to execute instructions associated with:

qualifying another retail establishment in an inactive location zip code when the another retail establishment lists gastronomical items to be marketed to users in a region around the inactive location zip code through the bidding platform, and

transforming the inactive location zip code to an active location zip code when there are at least a threshold number of retail establishments qualifying in the inactive location zip code.

26. The bidding platform server of claim **15**, wherein the processor is further configured to execute instructions associated with:

pre-purchasing a set of gastronomical items from a preferred retail establishment; and

marketing, to a plurality of users, the set of gastronomical items through the bidding platform provided by the gastronomic bidding service provider.

27. The bidding platform server of claim **15**, wherein the processor is further configured to execute instructions associated with:

processing a conditional purchase offer having an offer price of the user within the at least one of the residential location zip code and the daytime location zip code for a gastronomical item associated with a plurality of retail establishments therein,

processing a payment identifier specifying payment information of the user, the payment identifier being associated with the conditional purchase offer,

transmitting the conditional purchase offer to the plurality of retail establishments within the at least one of the residential location zip code and the daytime location zip code,

receiving an acceptance from a retail establishment within the at least one of the residential location zip code and the daytime location zip code, the acceptance being responsive to the conditional purchase offer by the user therein, and

paying the retail establishment associated with the acceptance based on the payment identifier.

28. The bidding platform server of claim **27**, wherein when a plurality of retail establishments transmits acceptances to the bidding platform server, the processor is further configured to execute instructions associated with selecting one received acceptance to determine a selected retail establishment.

29. A gastronomic bidding system comprising:

at least one central server configured to serve as a bidding platform provided by a gastronomic bidding service provider;

a network;

a retail establishment device to submit at least one request for a gastronomical offer associated with a gastronomical item of a retail establishment to the at least one central server, the retail establishment device being coupled to the at least one central server through the network;

a client device associated with a user of the bidding platform configured to submit an offer for the gastronomical

item, the client device also being coupled to the at least one central server through the network,

wherein the at least one central server is further configured to:

determine that the retail establishment associated with the submitted at least one request for the gastronomical offer is within at least one of a residential location zip code and a daytime location zip code associated with the user,

permit the user of the client device to access the submitted at least one request when the retail establishment is established to be within the at least one of the residential location zip code and the daytime location zip code thereof, and

deny the user access to the submitted at least one request when the retail establishment is established to be outside the at least one of the residential location zip code and the daytime location zip code thereof.

30. The gastronomic bidding system of claim **29**, wherein the at least one central server is further configured to enable qualification of each of at least a threshold number of retail establishments in accordance with an agreement between the at least the threshold number of retail establishments and the gastronomic bidding service provider in which the at least the threshold number of retail establishments agree to permit the user to receive the gastronomical item thereof based on a receipt generated through the at least one central server upon securitization of at least one of a winning bid consideration and a fixed fee purchase consideration of the user.

31. The gastronomic bidding system of claim **29**, wherein the at least one central server is configured to enable pre-purchasing a set of gastronomical items from a preferred retail establishment, and marketing, to a plurality of users, the set of gastronomical items through the bidding platform provided by the gastronomic bidding service provider.

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