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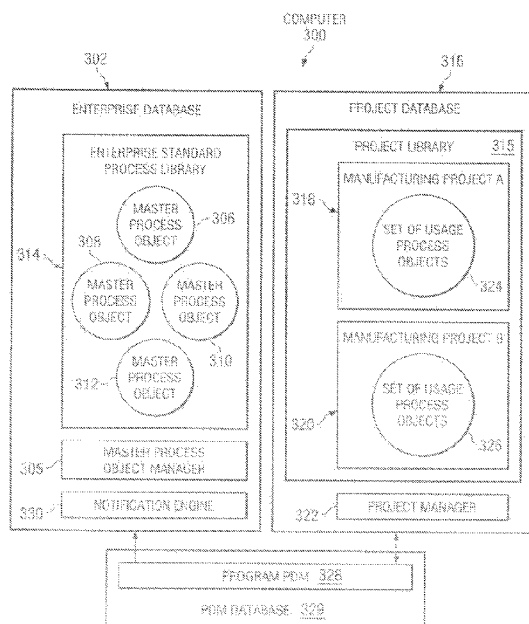


FIG. 3

(57) Abstract: A computer implemented method, apparatus, and computer program product for planning in a manufacturing process. In one embodiment, a library of standard manufacturing processes is created. The library comprises a plurality of master process objects. In response to generating a manufacturing project, a set of master process objects is selected from the plurality of master process objects in the library. The set of master process objects is associated with the manufacturing project to create a set of process usage objects within the manufacturing project. The set of master process objects in the library of standard manufacturing processes are linked to the manufacturing project without copying the set of master process objects into the manufacturing project. The set of usage process objects in the manufacturing project is populated with information specific to the manufacturing project.

STANDARD PROCESS AND RESOURCE REFERENCE AND INSTANCE

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Field:

The present disclosure is related generally to a data processing system, and in particular, to a method and apparatus for manufacturing processes. More particularly, the present disclosure is directed to a computer implemented method, apparatus, and computer usable program code for linking usage process objects with master process objects in standard manufacturing processes.

2. Background:

Currently, when manufacturing process plans are created, much of the manufacturing process plan data is copied and stored multiple times. For example, when parts and resources are given a consumption in relation to a software process object, a unique copy of the process object is created and stored in a project library and database to account for these unique relationships. The copy of the process object in the project library holds all the information of the master process object definition and any local attribute modifications. This repeated copying and storing of the same data consumes system resources and may adversely affect data storage, system performance, and data management.

SUMMARY

An embodiment of the present disclosure provides a computer implemented method for planning in a manufacturing process. In one embodiment, a library of standard manufacturing processes is created. The library comprises a plurality of master process objects. In response to generating a manufacturing project, a set of master process objects is selected from the plurality of master process objects in the library. The set of master process objects is associated with the manufacturing project to create a set of process usage objects within the manufacturing project. The set of master process objects in the library of standard manufacturing processes are linked to the manufacturing project without copying the set of master process objects into the

manufacturing project. The set of usage process objects in the manufacturing project is populated with information specific to the manufacturing project.

In another advantageous embodiment, a computer program product for planning in a manufacturing process is provided. The computer program product comprises a computer readable medium and program code stored on the computer readable medium that creates a library of standard manufacturing processes. The library comprises a plurality of master process objects. The program code stored on the computer readable medium selects a set of master process objects from the plurality of master process objects in the library in response to generating a manufacturing project. The program code stored on the computer readable medium associates the set of master process objects with the manufacturing project to create a set of process usage objects within the manufacturing project. The set of master process objects in the library of standard manufacturing processes are linked to the manufacturing project without copying the set of master process objects into the manufacturing project. The program code stored on the computer readable medium populates the set of usage process objects in the manufacturing project with information specific to the manufacturing project.

In yet another advantageous embodiment, an apparatus for production planning in a manufacturing process is provided. The apparatus includes a first database and a second database. The first database is configured as a library of standard manufacturing processes. The first database comprises a plurality of master process objects. Each master process object in the plurality of master process objects defines fixed attributes of processes. The second database is configured as a collection of manufacturing projects. Each manufacturing project comprises a set of usage process objects. Each usage process object corresponds to a master process object in the first database. Variable attributes associated with the manufacturing project are defined only in the set of usage process objects within the each manufacturing project.

Therefore, the advantageous embodiments provide master process objects linked to usage process objects in manufacturing processes to eliminate the use, management, and storage of multiple standard process software object copies in the project database. The features, functions, and advantages can be achieved independently in various embodiments of the present disclosure or may be combined in

yet other embodiments in which further details can be seen with reference to the following description and drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The novel features believed characteristic of the advantageous embodiments are set forth in the appended claims. The advantageous embodiments, however, as well as a preferred mode of use, further objectives and advantages thereof, will best be understood by reference to the following detailed description of an advantageous embodiment of the present disclosure when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 is an illustration of a network of data processing systems in which advantageous embodiments may be implemented;

Figure 2 is an illustration of a data processing system in accordance with an advantageous embodiment;

Figure 3 is a block diagram of a manufacturing project management system in accordance with an advantageous embodiment;

Figure 4 is an illustration of objects in a manufacturing project management system in accordance with an advantageous embodiment;

Figure 5 is an illustration of part and tool relationships linked to master process objects in accordance with an advantageous embodiment;

Figure 6 is an illustration of updating a master process object in accordance with an advantageous embodiment;

Figure 7 is an illustration of updating process usage object in accordance with an advantageous embodiment;

Figure 8 is an illustration of a notification sent to a user associated with a project when a master process object linked to the project is updated in accordance with an advantageous embodiment; and

Figure 9 is a flowchart of a process for project planning in a manufacturing process using a library of master process objects in accordance with an advantageous embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

With reference now to the figures and in particular with reference to **Figures 1-2**, exemplary diagrams of data processing environments are provided in which illustrative embodiments may be implemented. It should be appreciated that **Figures 1-2** are only exemplary and are not intended to assert or imply any limitation with regard to the environments in which different embodiments may be implemented. Many modifications to the depicted environments may be made.

Figure 1 depicts a pictorial representation of a network of data processing systems in which illustrative embodiments may be implemented. Network data processing system **100** is a network of computers in which the illustrative embodiments may be implemented. Network data processing system **100** contains network **102**, which is the medium used to provide communications links between various devices and computers connected together within network data processing system **100**. Network **102** may include connections, such as wire, wireless communication links, or fiber optic cables.

In the depicted example, server **104** and server **106** connect to network **102** along with storage unit **108**. In addition, clients **110**, **112**, and **114** connect to network **102**. Clients **110**, **112**, and **114** may be, for example, personal computers or network computers. In the depicted example, server **104** provides data, such as boot files, operating system images, and applications to clients **110**, **112**, and **114**. Clients **110**, **112**, and **114** are clients to server **104** in this example. Network data processing system **100** may include additional servers, clients, and other devices not shown.

In the depicted example, network data processing system **100** is the Internet with network **102** representing a worldwide collection of networks and gateways that use the Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) suite of protocols to communicate with one another. At the heart of the Internet is a backbone of high-speed data communication lines between major nodes or host computers, consisting of thousands of commercial, governmental, educational and other computer systems that route data and messages. Of course, network data processing system **100** also may be implemented as a number of different types of networks, such as for example, an intranet, a local area network (LAN), or a wide area network (WAN). **Figure 1** is

intended as an example, and not as an architectural limitation for the different illustrative embodiments.

The advantageous embodiments recognize that there is currently no solution or method to eliminate the use, management, and storage of multiple standard process software object copies in the project database, even if the information contained in the process object is identical to the master process object and definition.

Turning now to **Figure 2**, a diagram of a data processing system is depicted in accordance with an illustrative embodiment of the present invention. In this illustrative example, data processing system **200** includes communications fabric **202**, which provides communications between processor unit **204**, memory **206**, persistent storage **208**, communications unit **210**, input/output (I/O) unit **212**, and display **214**.

Processor unit **204** serves to execute instructions for software that may be loaded into memory **206**. Processor unit **204** may be a set of one or more processors or may be a multi-processor core, depending on the particular implementation. Further, processor unit **204** may be implemented using one or more heterogeneous processor systems in which a main processor is present with secondary processors on a single chip. As another illustrative example, processor unit **204** may be a symmetric multi-processor system containing multiple processors of the same type.

Memory **206**, in these examples, may be, for example, a random access memory or any other suitable volatile or non-volatile storage device. Persistent storage **208** may take various forms depending on the particular implementation. For example, persistent storage **208** may contain one or more components or devices. For example, persistent storage **208** may be a hard drive, a flash memory, a rewritable optical disk, a rewritable magnetic tape, or some combination of the above. The media used by persistent storage **208** also may be removable. For example, a removable hard drive may be used for persistent storage **208**.

Communications unit **210**, in these examples, provides for communications with other data processing systems or devices. In these examples, communications unit **210** is a network interface card. Communications unit **210** may provide communications through the use of either or both physical and wireless communications links.

Input/output unit **212** allows for input and output of data with other devices that may be connected to data processing system **200**. For example, input/output unit **212** may provide a connection for user input through a keyboard and mouse. Further,

input/output unit **212** may send output to a printer. Display **214** provides a mechanism to display information to a user.

Instructions for the operating system and applications or programs are located on persistent storage **208**. These instructions may be loaded into memory **206** for execution by processor unit **204**. The processes of the different embodiments may be performed by processor unit **204** using computer implemented instructions, which may be located in a memory, such as memory **206**. These instructions are referred to as program code, computer usable program code, or computer readable program code that may be read and executed by a processor in processor unit **204**. The program code in the different embodiments may be embodied on different physical or tangible computer readable media, such as memory **206** or persistent storage **208**.

Program code **216** is located in a functional form on computer readable media **218** that is selectively removable and may be loaded onto or transferred to data processing system **200** for execution by processor unit **204**. Program code **216** and computer readable media **218** form computer program product **220** in these examples. In one example, computer readable media **218** may be in a tangible form, such as, for example, an optical or magnetic disc that is inserted or placed into a drive or other device that is part of persistent storage **208** for transfer onto a storage device, such as a hard drive that is part of persistent storage **208**. In a tangible form, computer readable media **218** also may take the form of a persistent storage, such as a hard drive, a thumb drive, or a flash memory that is connected to data processing system **200**. The tangible form of computer readable media **218** is also referred to as computer recordable storage media. In some instances, computer readable media **218** may not be removable.

Alternatively, program code **216** may be transferred to data processing system **200** from computer readable media **218** through a communications link to communications unit **210** and/or through a connection to input/output unit **212**. The communications link and/or the connection may be physical or wireless in the illustrative examples. The computer readable media also may take the form of non-tangible media, such as communications links or wireless transmissions containing the program code.

The different components illustrated for data processing system **200** are not meant to provide architectural limitations to the manner in which different embodiments

may be implemented. The different illustrative embodiments may be implemented in a data processing system including components in addition to, or in place of, those illustrated for data processing system **200**. Other components shown in **Figure 2** can be varied from the illustrative examples shown.

As one example, a storage device in data processing system **200** is any hardware apparatus that may store data. Memory **206**, persistent storage **208** and computer readable media **218** are examples of storage devices in a tangible form.

In another example, a bus system may be used to implement communications fabric **202** and may be comprised of one or more buses, such as a system bus or an input/output bus. Of course, the bus system may be implemented using any suitable type of architecture that provides for a transfer of data between different components or devices attached to the bus system. Additionally, a communications unit may include one or more devices used to transmit and receive data, such as a modem or a network adapter. Further, a memory may be, for example, memory **206** or a cache such as found in an interface and memory controller hub that may be present in communications fabric **202**.

Current project management systems use copies of standard manufacturing process master objects in each project instance. For each usage of a copy of the master, the master information is saved along with the information that is unique for each usage in the project instance. The embodiments recognize that this results in inefficient utilization of data processing system memory and resources.

Therefore, the advantageous embodiments provide a computer implemented method, apparatus, and computer program product for planning in a manufacturing process. In one embodiment, a library of standard manufacturing processes is created. The library comprises a plurality of master process objects. In response to generating a manufacturing project, a set of master process objects is selected from the plurality of master process objects in the library. The set of master process objects is associated with the manufacturing project to create a set of process usage objects within the manufacturing project. The set of master process objects in the library of standard manufacturing processes are linked to the manufacturing project without copying the set of master process objects into the manufacturing project. The set of usage process objects in the manufacturing project is populated with information specific to the manufacturing project.

Thus, the process defines the creation of usage process objects that are associated to master process objects that allow for the creation and management of a single source of all process data.

Figure 3 is an illustration of manufacturing projects utilizing master process objects in an enterprise standard process library in accordance with an advantageous embodiment. Computer **300** may be implemented using any type of computing device, such as a personal computer, laptop, personal digital assistant, or any other computing device depicted in **Figures 1** and **2**.

In this example, computer **300** includes enterprise database **302**. Enterprise database **302** is any type of known or available database or database system for storing data. Enterprise database **302** may be implemented on a single data storage device, as well as two or more data storage devices in combination. A data storage device includes, without limitation, a hard disk, a read only memory (ROM), a non-volatile random access memory (NV-RAM), a flash memory, or any other type of data storage device.

Master process object manager **302** is software for creating, revising, updating, versioning, and managing master process objects, such as master process objects **306-312**. A user utilizes master process object manager **302** to create new versions of master project objects **306-312**.

A master process object is a reference process software object that defines fixed attributes of a process object in enterprise standard process library **314**. A master process object contains all required fixed attributes as created and defined in enterprise library **314**. This object type is created by master process object manager. Master process objects are maintained and stored in enterprise standard process library **314** in enterprise database **302**.

In this example, only four master process objects are depicted in enterprise standard process library **314**. However, any number of master project objects may be created using master process object manager **305** and stored in enterprise standard process library **314**. Enterprise standard library **314** may include a single master process object or two or more master process objects. For example, enterprise standard library **314** may include ten master process objects, a hundred master process objects, or any other number of master process objects.

Master process objects **308-312** are manufacturing process objects. However, master process objects **308-312** are not limited to implementation as manufacturing process objects. Master process objects **308-312** may also include, without limitation, business process objects, inspection process objects, testing process objects, design process objects, or any other type of process objects. In this example, master process objects **308-312** are reference manufacturing process software objects.

Project library **315** is a library of the manufacturing process objects, parts, tooling and requirements used to create a project in project database **316**. Project database **316** is a database for storing projects, such as manufacturing project A **318** and manufacturing project B **320**. Project database **316** may be implemented as any type of database or database system, such as, without limitation, a relational database system. In this example, project database **316** stores two projects. However, project database **316** may include any number of projects. In addition, project library **315** may include any type of projects or process instances. In this example, manufacturing project A **318** is a product specific change controlled manufacturing project.

Project manager **322** is process planning software for creating projects, such as manufacturing project A **318** and manufacturing project B **320**. A user and/or project manager **322** selects master process objects for a given project from enterprise standard process library **314**. The selected master process objects are associated to the given project to create usage process objects.

A usage process object is a process object instance that links to a master process object, such as master process objects **308-312** in enterprise standard process library **314**. A usage process object contains the part and resource associations to the process. The usage process object also has variable attributes that are populated from the relationship of the part instances and manufacturing specifications to define the required manufacturing processes. This linking of process instances in a project with a master process object in enterprise standard process library **314** allows a user to associate an instance of the manufacturing process where required in the process structure which is associated to a reference process, such as master process object **310**.

In this example, a user and/or project manager **322** selects a set of master process objects for manufacturing project A **318** that includes master project object **310**

to form set of usage process objects **324**. A usage process object is an instance of a master process object that defines variable attributes.

The user and/or project manager **322** populates usage information on the process usage objects in set of usage process objects **324**. Manufacturing project A **318** is saved in project database **316**. Likewise, the user and/or project manager **322** associates master process objects **310** and **312** with manufacturing project B **320** to form set of usage process objects **326**. The user and/or project manager **322** populates usage information on the one or more process objects in set of usage process objects **324**.

Set of usage process objects **324** define variable attributes of the master process objects. The usage process objects in set of usage process objects **324** do not contain information that is in master process objects **308-312**. The usage process objects in set of usage process objects **324** do not contain any copies of master process objects **308-312**. Set of usage process objects only contain information that is specific to manufacturing project A **318** and information that is not found in master process objects **308-312**.

The individual instances of a given master process object has the same basic behavior between manufacturing project instances and enterprise standard process library **314**. Thus, only the unique information for each usage is stored in project library **315**. The common information is stored in master process objects in enterprise standard process library **314** and is obtained by a project, such as project A **318**, directly from the enterprise standard process library **314**.

Program product data management (PDM) **328** is software for controlling data related to products. Program PDM **328** manages relations between data that defines products and stores those relationships in PDM database **329**. The user and project manager **322** associates part definitions, product definitions, tool definitions, manufacturing requirements, and documents in PDM database **329** to set of usage process objects **324** and set of usage process objects **326**.

Notification engine **330** is software for notifying a user, owner of a project, and/or project manager when a master process object linked to a given project is altered, modified, updated, or versioned. In other words, when a user or administrator revises and/or updates a master process object in enterprise standard process library **314** to an updated version, notification engine **330** sends a notification to a user, project owner,

and/or project manager **322** notifying the user or project owner that a master process object linked to the project has been updated.

The process usage object associated with the revised or versioned master process object is revised or versioned. The project with the associated set of usage process objects, such as manufacturing project A **318** with set of usage process objects **324**, is released and made available to a manufacturing factory with the latest released process master information included in usage information.

Referring now to **Figure 4**, an illustration of objects in a manufacturing project management system is depicted in accordance with an advantageous embodiment. Manufacturing project management system **400** is a system for creating, managing, and utilizing standard process and resource references and instances of manufacturing processes. Manufacturing project management system **400** may be implemented on a single computer, such as computer **300** in **Figure 3**, or on a plurality of computing devices, such as a network data processing system, a grid computing system, or a server cluster.

Enterprise library **402** is a library of standard manufacturing processes that are usable for multiple projects in an enterprise, such as, without limitation, enterprise standard process library **314** in **Figure 3**. Enterprise library **402** consists of a plurality of master standard process objects, such as master process objects **308-312** in **Figure 3**.

The master process objects include the master definition of the manufacturing processes to be used by all programs associated with projects. These definitions may include, without limitation, higher level process objects down through the associated factory work instructions used to define the individual process steps used by factory personnel. The utilization of master process objects in enterprise library **402** allows individual manufacturing programs to access enterprise library **402** during the creation and maintenance of manufacturing process plans to be executed on the production shop floor.

In this example, the master process objects include, without limitation, a control station version 1 master (CS_{VLM}) **404**, installation plan version 1 master (IP_{V1M}) **406**, operation version 1 master (OP_{V1M}) **408**, and operation version 2 master (OP_{V2M}) **410**. Control station version 1 master **404**, installation plan version 1 master **406**, operation version 1 master **408**, and operation version 1 master **410** are master control station software objects that are stored and managed in enterprise library **402**.

Control station version 1 master **404** is a master control station software object. Installation plan version 1 master **406** is a master installation plan software object. Operation version 1 master **408** and operation version 2 master **410** are master operation software objects that are the lowest level of manufacturing process definition. Operation version 2 master **410** is an updated or revised version of operation version 1 master **408**.

During manufacturing process planning, a link is created between a set of one or more master processes. The master processes are stored in enterprise library **402** and the usage process objects are stored with the manufacturing project.

Project **412** is a manufacturing project stored in a database. Project **412** is associated with a set of one or more usage process objects, such as set of usage process objects **324** in **Figure 3**. In this example, the set of usage process objects includes control station version 1 usage (CS1_{V1U}) **414**, installation plan version 1 usage (IP_{V1U}) **416** and operation version 1 usage (OP_{V1U}) **418** associated with a first project. Control station version 1 usage **414** is a collector of related installation plans. Control station version 1 usage **414** is a usage process object in project library **412** that is linked to control station version 2 master **404** in enterprise library **402**. Control station version 1 usage **414** has precedence and sequence with other control station usage process objects.

Control station version 1 master **404** is selected from enterprise library **402** and associated to the process structure of project **412**. Control station version 1 usage **414** is an instance of the control station reference, control station version 1 master **404**, in the process view associated with project **412**. Control station version 1 usage **414** is an instance of control station version 1 master **404** that only contains information specific to project **412**. Control station version 1 usage **414** does not contain information that is included in control station version 1 master **404**. Control station version 1 usage **414** is not a copy of the master process object, control station version 1 master **404**.

Installation plan version 1 usage **416** is a collector of related operations that is linked to installation plan version 1 master **406** in enterprise library **402**. Installation plan version 1 usage **414** has precedence and sequence with other installation plan usage process objects.

Operation version 1 usage **418** is the lowest level of the process structure. Operation version 1 usage **418** defines the lowest level of process to be performed in

the factory. Operation version 1 usage **418** is sequenced only with other operation usage process objects.

In this example, the set of usage process objects associated with project **412** also includes control station version 1 usage (CS2_{V1U}) **420**, installation plan version 1 usage (IP2_{V1U}) **422**, and operation version 1 usage (OP2_{V1U}) **424**.

The usage process objects, such as, without limitation, control station version 1 usage **420**, installation plan version 1 usage **422**, and operation version 1 usage **424** shows a user all the data held in the master process objects corresponding to the usage process objects. The usage process objects allow the user to add specific usage information, such as, but not limited to, process to process relations, process to part relations, tooling to process relationships, manufacturing effectivity and other usage information to the process without altering the master process objects or creating a copy of data and/or fields in the master process objects.

When data is updated in enterprise library **402**, all usages of this information will have this updated information available. No update or plan modification is required by personnel maintaining process data on individual manufacturing projects. However, data that is added to the usage information is not reflected in the master data which allows all programs to use the same master data without making a copy of this data.

In other words, usage process object instances **425** in a process view for project **412** originate from the latest approved version of a master object in enterprise library **402**. When a master process object is revised or versioned, the usage process object instances **425** of the master process object in the project are updated or versioned. For example, when operation version 1 master **408** is versioned to operation version 2 master **410**, operation version 1 usage **418** and operation version 1 usage **424** are also updated or versioned. In this example, the master process object and the instance of the usage process objects are versioned separately, rather than simultaneously.

Enterprise library **402** contains the latest approved version of each master process object. The usage process object instances used in the process view associated with project **412** originate from the latest approved version of the master process objects in enterprise library **402**. For example, enterprise library **402** contains operation version 2 master **410** which is a revision or updated version of operation version 1 master **408**. In this example, operation version 1 master **408** is updated or versioned to form operation version 2 master **410**.

In addition, the contents of the master process objects are linked to project **412** and the contents are not copied into project **412** in the project library. This versioning and linking of master process objects in enterprise library **402** to usage process objects associated with project instances in project library **412**, rather than copying the content of standard processes directly into project instances, minimizes the impact of revisions or versioning of standard process objects on project **412** and users associated with project **412**.

The individual instances of a given master process object has the same basic behavior between project **412** and enterprise library **402**. For example, control station version 1 usage **414** and control station version 1 usage **420** are two individual instances of the master process object control station version 1 master **404**. Both control station version 1 usage **414** and control station version 1 usage **420** have the same basic behavior.

Figure 5 is an illustration of part and tool relationships linked to master process objects in accordance with an advantageous embodiment. Manufacturing project management system **500** is a project management system showing part and tool relationships. In this example, part and tool definitions are stored in a product data management (PDM) database, such as PDM database **329** in **Figure 3**. Program product data management (Program PDM) **426** is software for managing part and tool information, such as program PDM **328** in **Figure 3**.

Part and tool relationships made from program PDM **426** to usage process objects in the process view of project **412** do not modify the master process objects in enterprise library **402**. In other words, when product components objects, such as part 1, usage 1 **428** is incorporated into operation version 1 usage **424**, operation version 2 master **410**, which is the master process object linked to operation version 1 usage **424**, is not modified or altered.

Part and tool relationships made to a master process object in enterprise library **402** automatically updates the corresponding usage process object instances attribute data in project **412**. The usage process object instances are updated from the latest released version of the master process objects to show the current part and tool associations. However, the usage process object version is not kept in sync with the master process object in enterprise library **402**. Thus, information from the PDM database regarding product components and program designed resource components

are added or copied into the usage process object instance and/or utilized to modify the usage process object instance in project **414**. However, the master process objects in enterprise library **402** are not altered, modified, or updated with the product component information, tool definitions, part definitions, part and tool relationships, or other product data management information.

However, part and tool relationships made to a master process object in enterprise library **402** updates the usage process objects in the process view of project **412** with the latest released version of the fields and information in the master process objects. For example, updates to operation version 2 master **410** with part and tool relationships automatically updates operation version 1 usage **418** and operation version 1 usage **424** in project **412**. Thus, updates made to master process object attributes in enterprise library **402** are automatically propagated to all usage process objects corresponding to the updated master process objects in the process view of project **412**.

Finally, engineering requirements (ER1.1) **440** are manufacturing requirements for one or more part instances. Manufacturing process specifications are associated to engineering requirements **440** as part of the definition of a part instance for project **412**. The part instance is associated as a first use once in the project. Subsequent processes to be performed on the part instance are defined by engineering requirements **440** with the individual process defined as a filtered view of the manufacturing process specification.

Turning now to **Figure 6**, an illustration of updating a master process object is shown in accordance with an advantageous embodiment. Manufacturing project management system **600** is a project management system in which a master process object is changed, updated, modified, versioned, or otherwise altered. In this example, fields in operation version 2 master **410** are updated in enterprise library to include information in field **602**, such as, without limitation, process identifier (ID), process title, and export control information fields. The update of fields in operation version 2 master **410** is only shown as an example and not as a limitation on the embodiments. An update to a master process object may include different changes to a master process object and/or fields associated with the master process object.

When updates are made to the fixed attributes in the master process object and operation version 2 master **410**, the updates are automatically made to the usage

process object, operation version 1 usage **418**. Thus, in this example, fields **602** including process identifier, process title, and export control are added to operation version 1 usage **418** as fields **604**. In other words, the process object instance in the process view of project **412** is updated automatically from the master process object in enterprise library **402** without user intervention and without copying fixed attribute data from the master process object into the process object instance in project **412**.

Figure 7 is an illustration of updating process usage object in accordance with an advantageous embodiment. Manufacturing project management system **700** is a project management system in which inputs are made to usage process objects in project **412**. A user and/or process add input data to a process object instance in project **412**, such as operation version 3 usage **701**. In this example, the inputs add the data 'basic' & 'freighter' & (1-500) to extended affectivity field **702**. However, the reference version, operation version 2 master **410** is not updated. Thus, field **704** does not include the project specific inputs made to usage process objects in project **412**.

Referring now to **Figure 8**, an illustration of a notification sent to a user associated with a project when a master process object linked to the project is updated is shown in accordance with an advantageous embodiment. Manufacturing project management system **800** is a project management system, such as project management system **400** in **Figure 4**.

When a master process object in enterprise library **402** is modified to form new process version **802**, an impact analysis is performed by the master process object manager software. The owner of the usage process object corresponding to the master process object in project **412** is notified that new process version **802** of the master process object is available by a notification engine, such as notification engine **330** in **Figure 3**.

The impact analysis is a list of where the process instances are associated. A process owner receives a single impact analysis for each library process object version change made to each master process object. The user goes to project **412** to validate process impacts and make planning changes in project **412** as required to assure the ability of the product to produce.

In this example, an operation attribute is modified in operation version 2 master **410**, which is a master process object in enterprise library **402**. In response, an impact

analysis is performed. The results of the impact analysis are sent as notification **804** to the process owner.

Thus, as shown in **Figure 3-8**, the advantageous embodiments may be used with a combination of non-three dimensional (3D) data such as part and process attributes, process software objects, part to process relationships, tooling to process relationships, process object to process object relationships. The embodiments may also be used with 3D product and tooling definition and their associated relation types.

Figure 9 is a flowchart of a process for project planning in a manufacturing process using a library of master process objects in accordance with an advantageous embodiment. Operations **902** are implemented by software for managing an enterprise database system, such as master process object manager **302** in **Figure 3**. Operations **904-920** are implemented by software for managing usage information in manufacturing project instances, such as project manager **314** in **Figure 3**.

The process begins by creating a new version of a plurality of master process objects in an enterprise library (operation **902**). A manufacturing project is created in a project database using process planning software (operation **904**). In this example, the manufacturing process is a product specific change controlled manufacturing project.

A set of master process objects are selected from the plurality of master process objects in the enterprise library (operation **906**). The set of master process objects is a set of one or more master process objects. The selected set of master objects is associated to the manufacturing project to create a set of process usage objects for the manufacturing project (operation **908**).

Usage information is populated on the set of process usage objects in the manufacturing project (operation **910**). The manufacturing project with the set of process usage objects is saved in the project database (operation **912**). Part definitions, product definitions, tool definitions, manufacturing requirements, and documents are incorporated in the set of process usage objects for the manufacturing project (operation **914**).

A determination is made as to whether any master process object in the set of master process objects in the enterprise library that is associated with the manufacturing project is revised and/or updated as a new version of the master process object by the process owner (operation **916**). If any of the master process objects are revised and/or updated as a new version, the set of process usage objects are

versioned and/or revised in accordance with the versioned and/or revised master process objects (operation **918**).

If any of the master process objects linked with the manufacturing project is not revised or updated as a new version at step **916** or after versioning and/or revising the process usage objects in operation **918**, the manufacturing project and associated set of process usage objects with the latest released process master information and usage information in the set of process usage objects is released and made available to the manufacturing factory (operation **920**).

Thus, this illustrative embodiment defines how to modify current copy based standard manufacturing process libraries to use master process objects and usage process objects in manufacturing process planning. Usage process objects are linked with master process objects to allow for an efficient manner to create, manage and use standard manufacturing processes.

The advantageous embodiments provide a computer implemented method, apparatus, and computer program product for planning in a manufacturing process. In one embodiment, a library of standard manufacturing processes is created. The library comprises a plurality of master process objects. In response to generating a manufacturing project, a set of master process objects is selected from the plurality of master process objects in the library. The set of master process objects is associated with the manufacturing project to create a set of process usage objects within the manufacturing project. The set of master process objects in the library of standard manufacturing processes are linked to the manufacturing project without copying the set of master process objects into the manufacturing project. The set of usage process objects in the manufacturing project is populated with information specific to the manufacturing project.

In this embodiment, usage process objects associated with a process instance are linked to master process objects to minimize the quantity of data that is stored and managed at the master process and the usage of the process. Only usage specific data, such as part to process relations, requirements, and requirement relations are stored with the usage objects in the process instance. All common information for a manufacturing process is stored with the reference object in the enterprise standard process library.

There is a single authority for each usage of a standard process due to utilization of a single master process object for each process stored and managed in an enterprise library, along with only specific usage data stored with each usage process in project instances in a project library. Modifications to the reference object are propagated to all usage process objects without user intervention and without copying of reference object data to every process instance. Thus, the utilization of reference process objects and usage process objects minimizes the duplication of manufacturing process data to be stored while creating manufacturing process plans and simplifies updating and versioning each usage process in project instances when master process objects are updated and/or versioned.

The process also results in cost savings by utilizing usage software objects linked to master process libraries to reduce the quantity of data saved, the quantity of backed up data, and the amount of configuration changes managed. The process may result in cost avoidance on the quantity of data to be stored, backed up and managed over time.

This process may also result in greater centralization and organization of standard processes for an enterprise. These standardized master process objects may be used by any program in a network data processing system. In addition, when the enterprise library is updated with mandatory changes, these revisions are propagated to all usages, which assure consistent manufacturing processes are used throughout the enterprise. In addition, when changes are made to a master process object, the programs do not need to change existing process plans due to the automated updates to the processes. The process enables manufacturing processes to be controlled at an enterprise level rather than individual program level. Also, less manual manufacturing plan updates are required due to the latest released master process version is always in the process plans.

The different advantageous embodiments can take the form of an entirely hardware embodiment, an entirely software embodiment, or an embodiment containing both hardware and software elements. Some embodiments are implemented in software, which includes but is not limited to forms, such as, for example, firmware, resident software, and microcode.

Furthermore, the different embodiments can take the form of a computer program product accessible from a computer-usable or computer-readable medium

providing program code for use by or in connection with a computer or any device or system that executes instructions. For the purposes of this disclosure, a computer-usable or computer readable medium can generally be any tangible apparatus that can contain, store, communicate, propagate, or transport the program for use by or in connection with the instruction execution system, apparatus, or device.

The computer usable or computer readable medium can be, for example, without limitation an electronic, magnetic, optical, electromagnetic, infrared, or semiconductor system, or a propagation medium. Non limiting examples of a computer-readable medium include a semiconductor or solid state memory, magnetic tape, a removable computer diskette, a random access memory (RAM), a read-only memory (ROM), a rigid magnetic disk, and an optical disk. Optical disks may include compact disk – read only memory (CD-ROM), compact disk – read/write (CD-R/W) and DVD.

Further, a computer-usable or computer-readable medium may contain or store a computer readable or usable program code such that when the computer readable or usable program code is executed on a computer, the execution of this computer readable or usable program code causes the computer to transmit another computer readable or usable program code over a communications link. This communications link may use a medium that is, for example without limitation, physical or wireless.

A data processing system suitable for storing and/or executing computer readable or computer usable program code will include one or more processors coupled directly or indirectly to memory elements through a communications fabric, such as a system bus. The memory elements may include local memory employed during actual execution of the program code, bulk storage, and cache memories which provide temporary storage of at least some computer readable or computer usable program code to reduce the number of times code may be retrieved from bulk storage during execution of the code.

Input/output or I/O devices can be coupled to the system either directly or through intervening I/O controllers. These devices may include, for example, without limitation to keyboards, touch screen displays, and pointing devices. Different communications adapters may also be coupled to the system to enable the data processing system to become coupled to other data processing systems or remote printers or storage devices through intervening private or public networks. Non-limiting

examples are modems and network adapters are just a few of the currently available types of communications adapters.

The description of the different advantageous embodiments has been presented for purposes of illustration and description, and is not intended to be exhaustive or limited to the embodiments in the form disclosed. Many modifications and variations will be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art. Further, different advantageous embodiments may provide different advantages as compared to other advantageous embodiments. The embodiment or embodiments selected are chosen and described in order to best explain the principles of the embodiments, the practical application, and to enable others of ordinary skill in the art to understand the disclosure for various embodiments with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated.

CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

1. A computer implemented method for planning in a manufacturing process, the computer implemented method comprising:
 - creating a library of standard manufacturing processes, wherein the library comprises a plurality of master process objects;
 - responsive to generating a manufacturing project, selecting a set of master process objects from the plurality of master process objects in the library;
 - associating the set of master process objects with the manufacturing project to create a set of process usage objects within the manufacturing project, wherein the set of master process objects in the library of standard manufacturing processes are linked to the manufacturing project without copying the set of master process objects into the manufacturing project; and
 - populating the set of usage process objects in the manufacturing project with information specific to the manufacturing project.
2. The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein associating the set of master process objects with the manufacturing project further comprises:
 - linking the set of master process objects with the manufacturing project, wherein the set of process usage objects access information in the set of master process objects in the library of standard manufacturing processes without copying the information in the set of master process objects into the manufacturing project.
3. The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein the set of usage process objects contain only the information specific to the manufacturing project.
4. The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein the set of master process objects contain only standard, fixed variable information for utilization by a plurality of projects.

5. The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein each master process object in the set of master process objects has fixed attributes associated with the manufacturing project that are defined in the library of standard manufacturing processes.
6. The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein variable attributes associated with the manufacturing project are defined only in the set of usage process objects within the manufacturing project.
7. The computer implemented method of claim 1 further comprising:
 - modifying a master process object in the set of master process objects to form a modified master process object; and
 - updating usage process objects in the set of usage process objects corresponding to the modified master process object, wherein updating the usage process objects only updates fixed attributes without modifying variable attributes unique to the manufacturing project.
8. The computer implemented method of claim 1 further comprising:
 - responsive to updating a master process object associated with the manufacturing project, sending a notification of an update to a user associated with the manufacturing project.
9. A computer program product for planning in a manufacturing process, the computer program product comprising:
 - a computer readable medium;
 - program code stored on the computer readable medium for creating a library of standard manufacturing processes, wherein the library comprises a plurality of master process objects;
 - program code stored on the computer readable medium for selecting a set of master process objects from the plurality of master process objects in the library in response to generating a manufacturing project;
 - program code stored on the computer readable medium for associating the set of master process objects with the manufacturing project to create a set of process usage

objects within the manufacturing project, wherein the set of master process objects in the library of standard manufacturing processes are linked to the manufacturing project without copying the set of master process objects into the manufacturing project; and
program code stored on the computer readable medium for populating the set of usage process objects in the manufacturing project with information specific to the manufacturing project.

10. The computer program product of claim 9 further comprising:

program code stored on the computer readable medium for modifying a master process object in the set of master process objects to form a modified master process object; and

program code stored on the computer readable medium for updating usage process objects in the set of usage process objects corresponding to the modified master process object, wherein updating the usage process objects only updates fixed attributes without modifying variable attributes unique to the manufacturing project.

11. The computer program product of claim 9 further comprising:

program code stored on the computer readable medium for sending a notification of an update to a user associated with the manufacturing project in response to updating a master process object associated with the manufacturing project.

12. An apparatus for production planning in a manufacturing process comprising:

a first database configured as a library of standard manufacturing processes, wherein the first database comprises a plurality of master process objects, wherein each master process object in the plurality of master process objects defines fixed attributes of processes; and

a second database configured as a collection of manufacturing projects, wherein each manufacturing project comprises a set of usage process objects, wherein each usage process object corresponds to a master process object in the first database, and wherein variable attributes associated with the manufacturing project are defined only in the set of usage process objects within the each manufacturing project.

13. The apparatus of claim 12 further comprising:

a master process object manager configured to create the library of standard manufacturing processes in the first database, wherein the set of master process objects in the library contain only standard, fixed variable information for utilization by the collection of manufacturing projects.

14. The apparatus of claim 12 further comprising:

a project manager configured to generate manufacturing projects, wherein a set of master process objects are selected from the plurality of master process objects and wherein the project manager associates the set of master process objects with a manufacturing project to create a set of process usage objects within the manufacturing project, wherein the set of master process objects in the library of standard manufacturing processes are linked to the manufacturing project without copying the set of master process objects into the manufacturing project, wherein the project manager populates the set of usage process objects in the manufacturing project with information specific to the manufacturing project, and wherein the set of usage process objects contain only the information specific to the manufacturing project.

15. The apparatus of claim 12 further comprising:

a notification engine configured to send a notification of an update to a user associated with a given manufacturing project in response to detecting the update of a master process object associated with the manufacturing project.

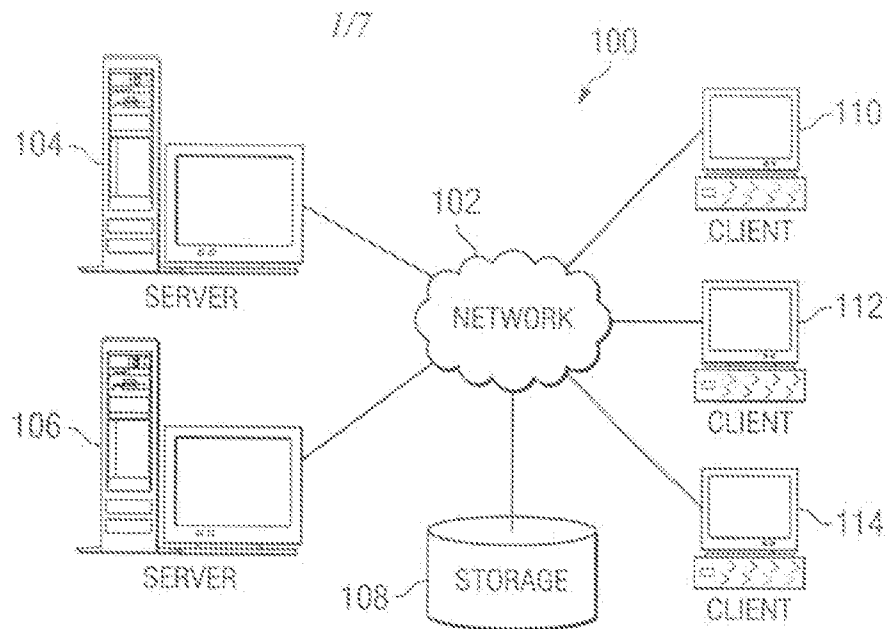


FIG. 1

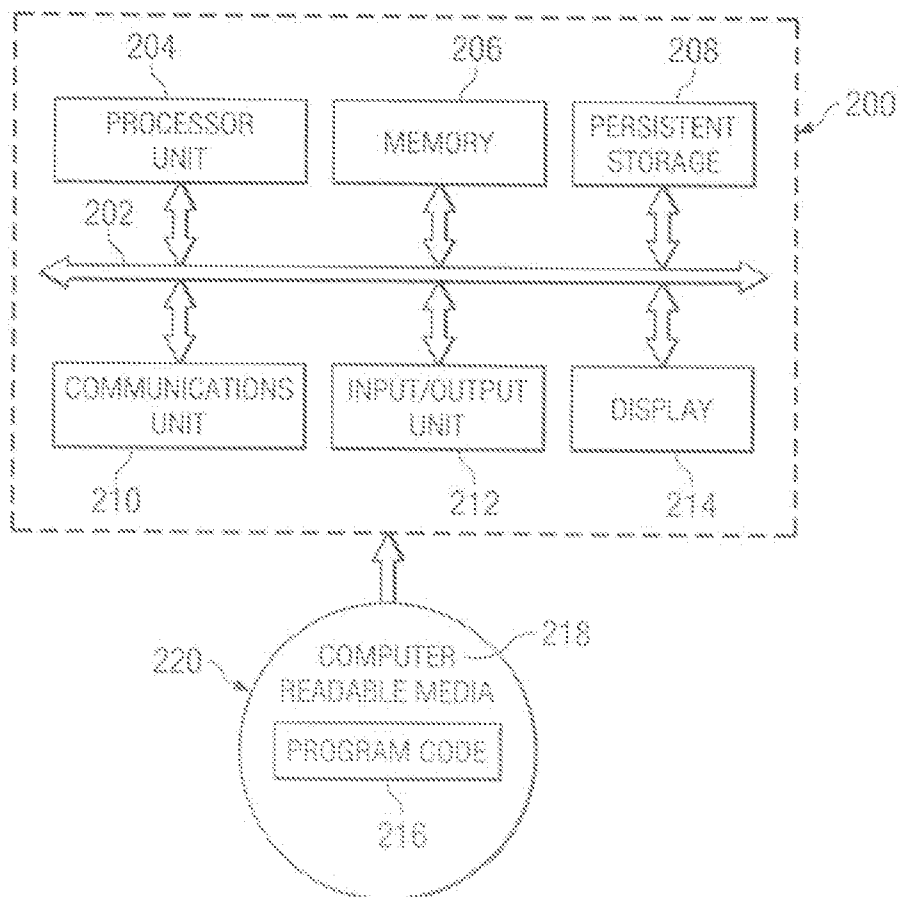


FIG. 2

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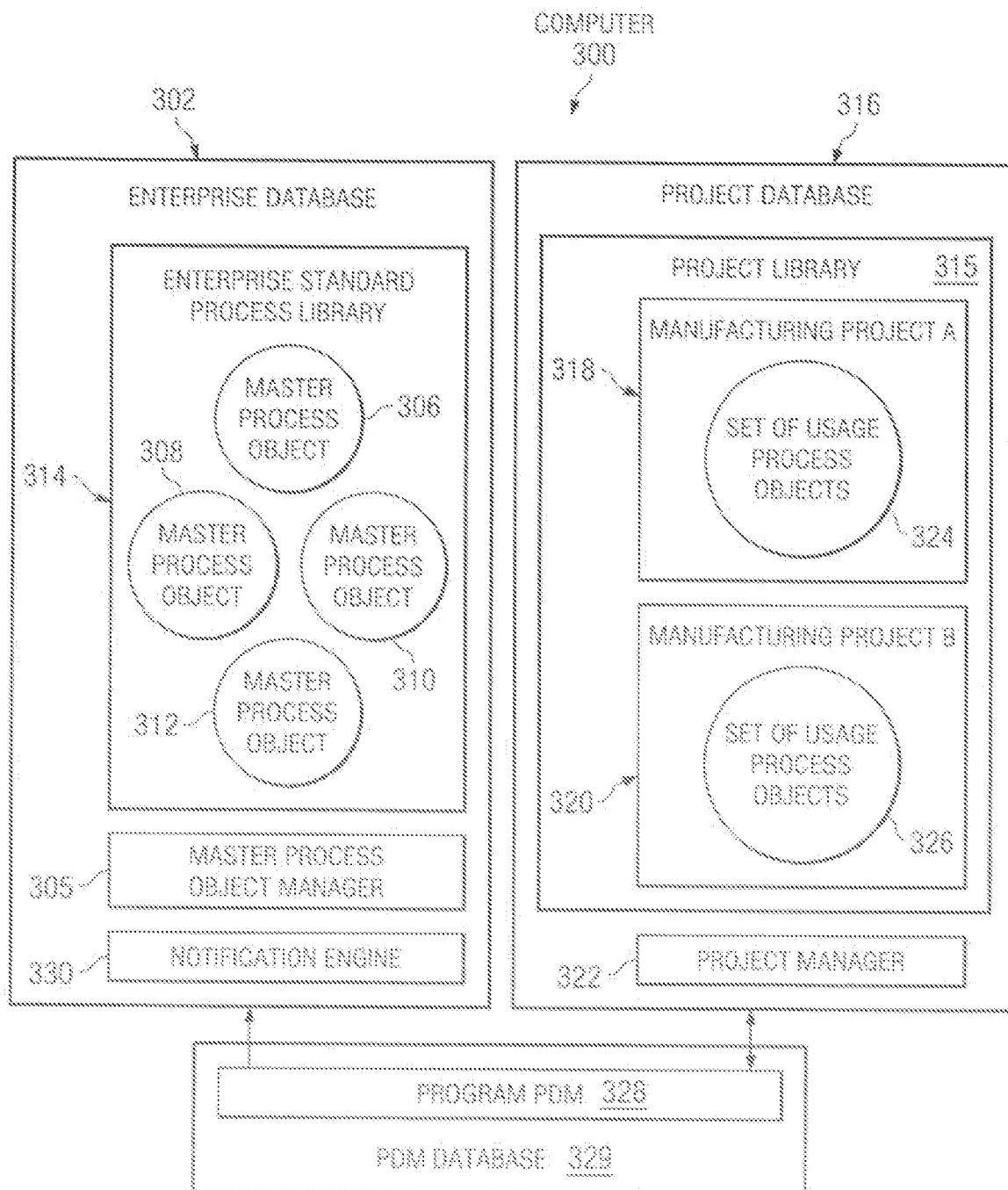
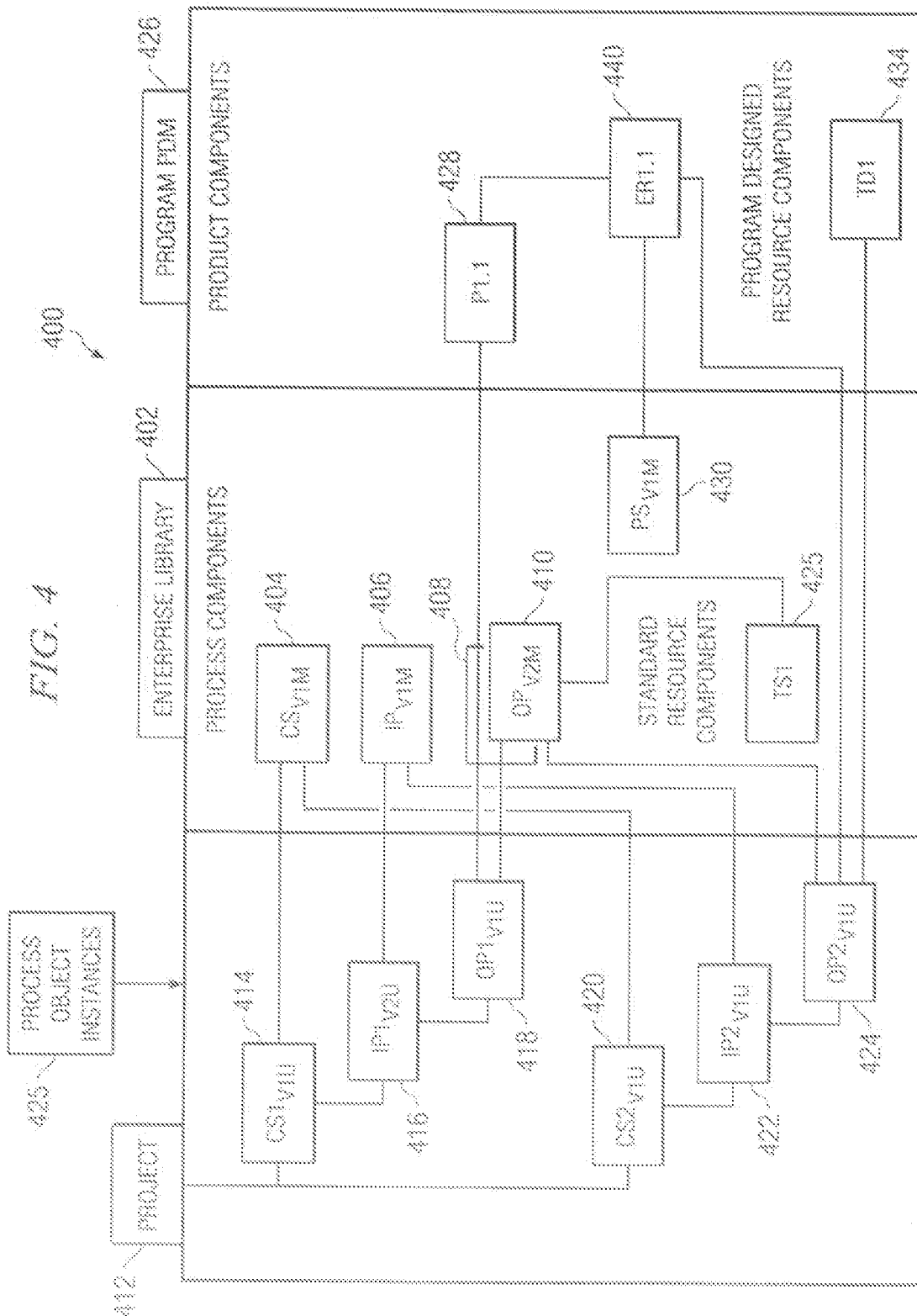
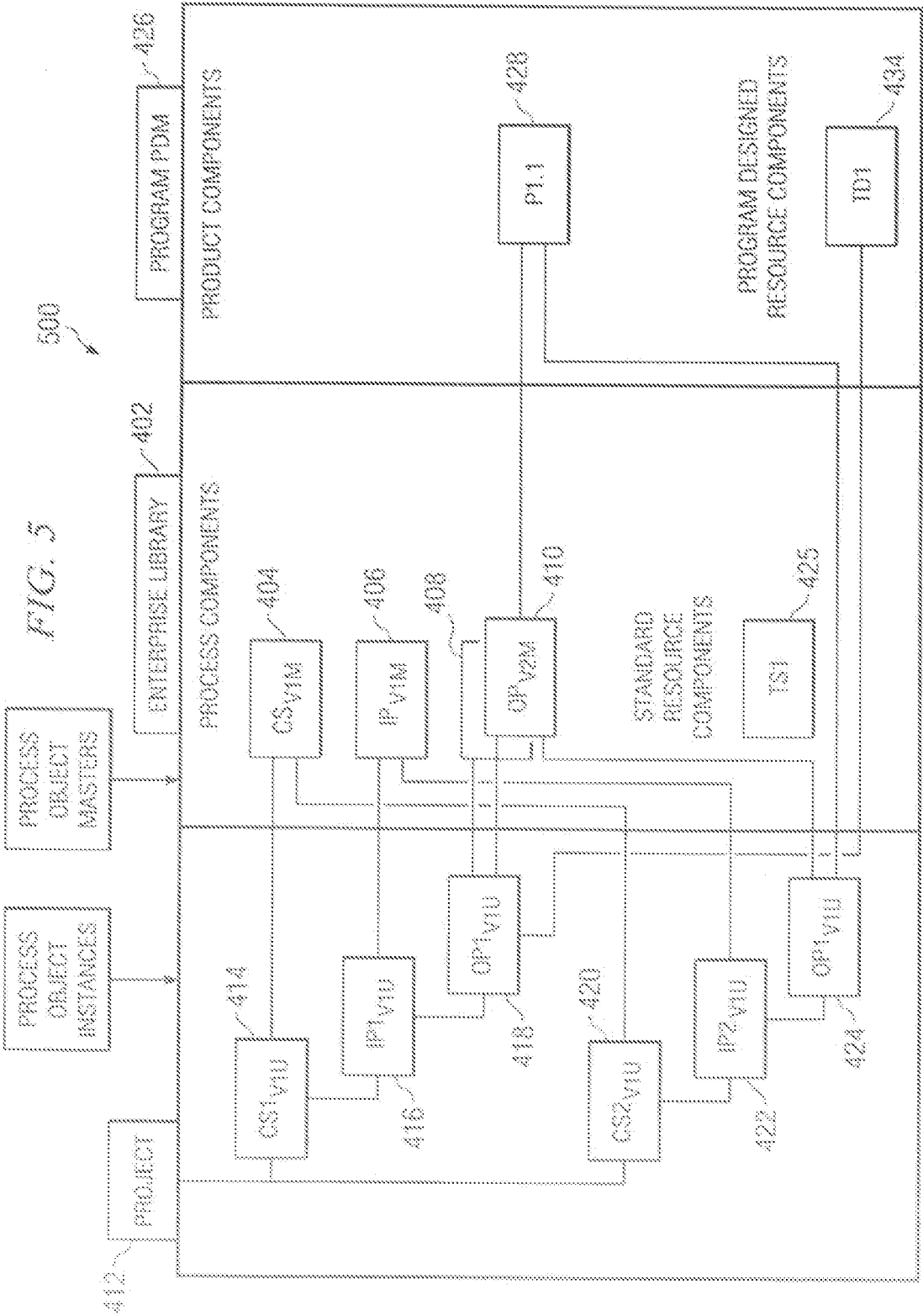


FIG. 3





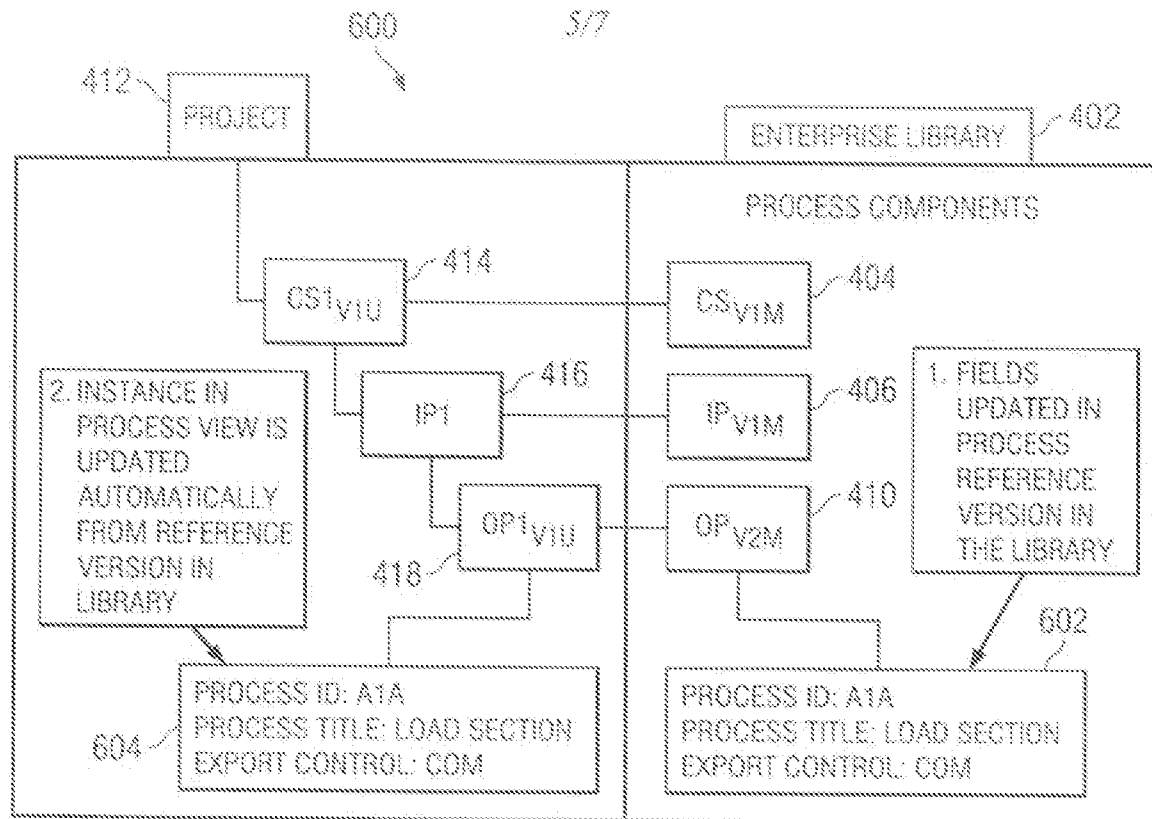


FIG. 6

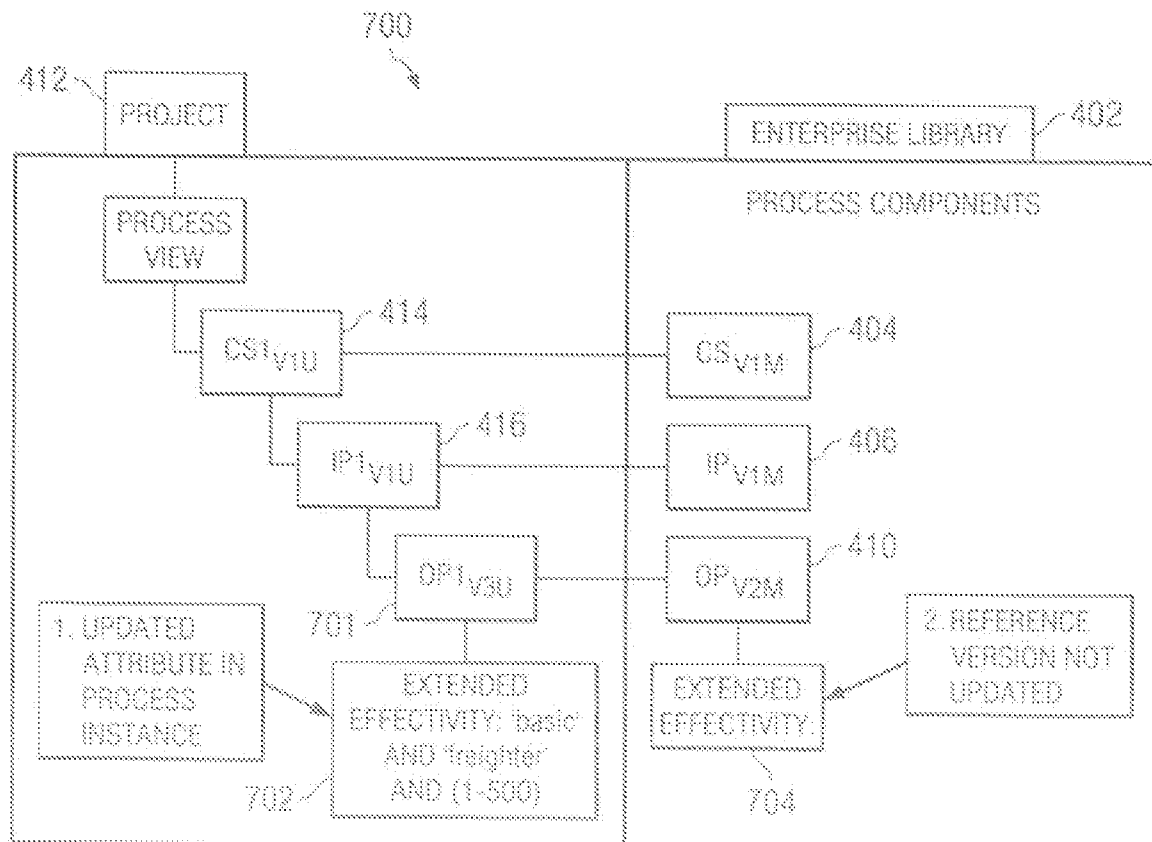


FIG. 7

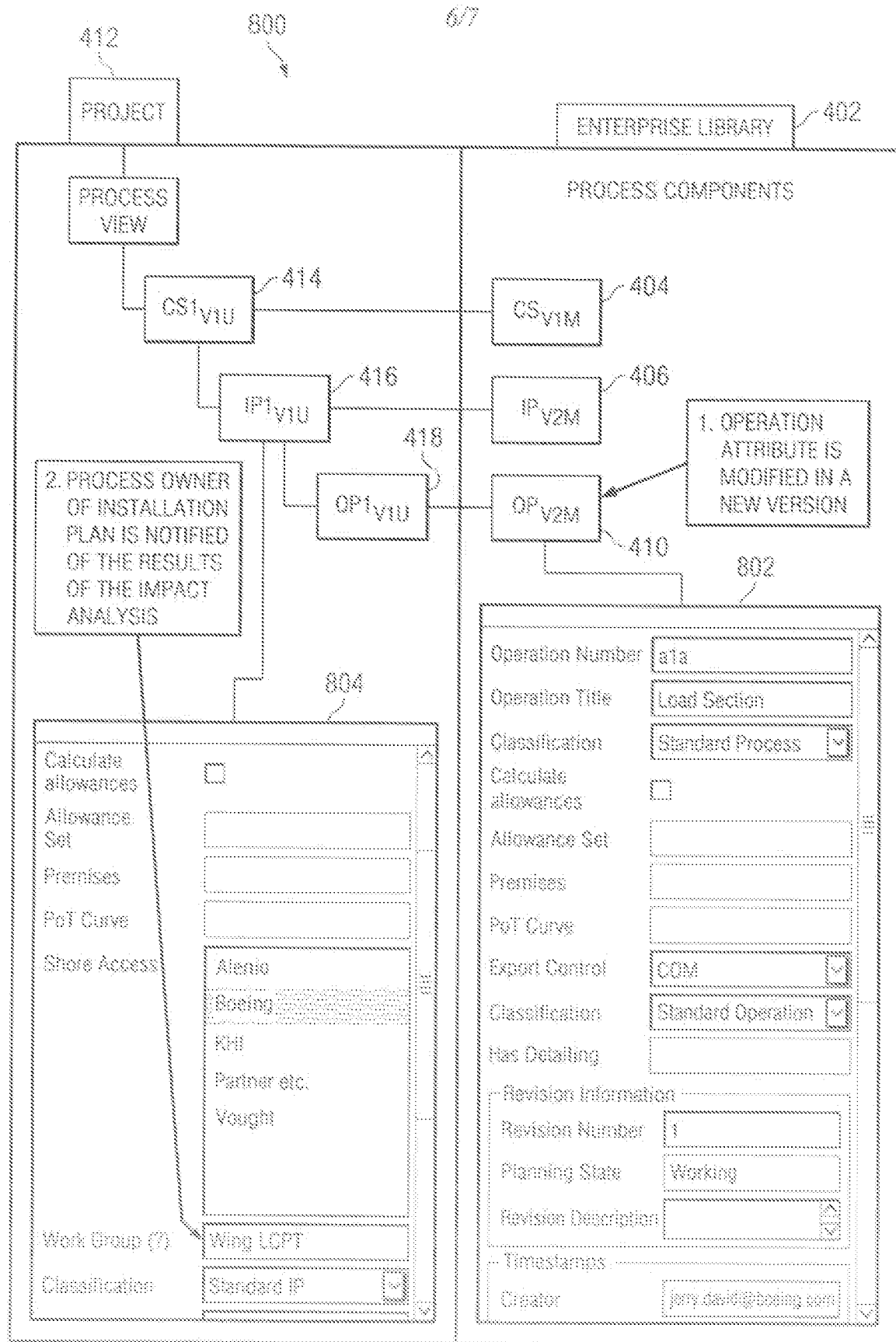
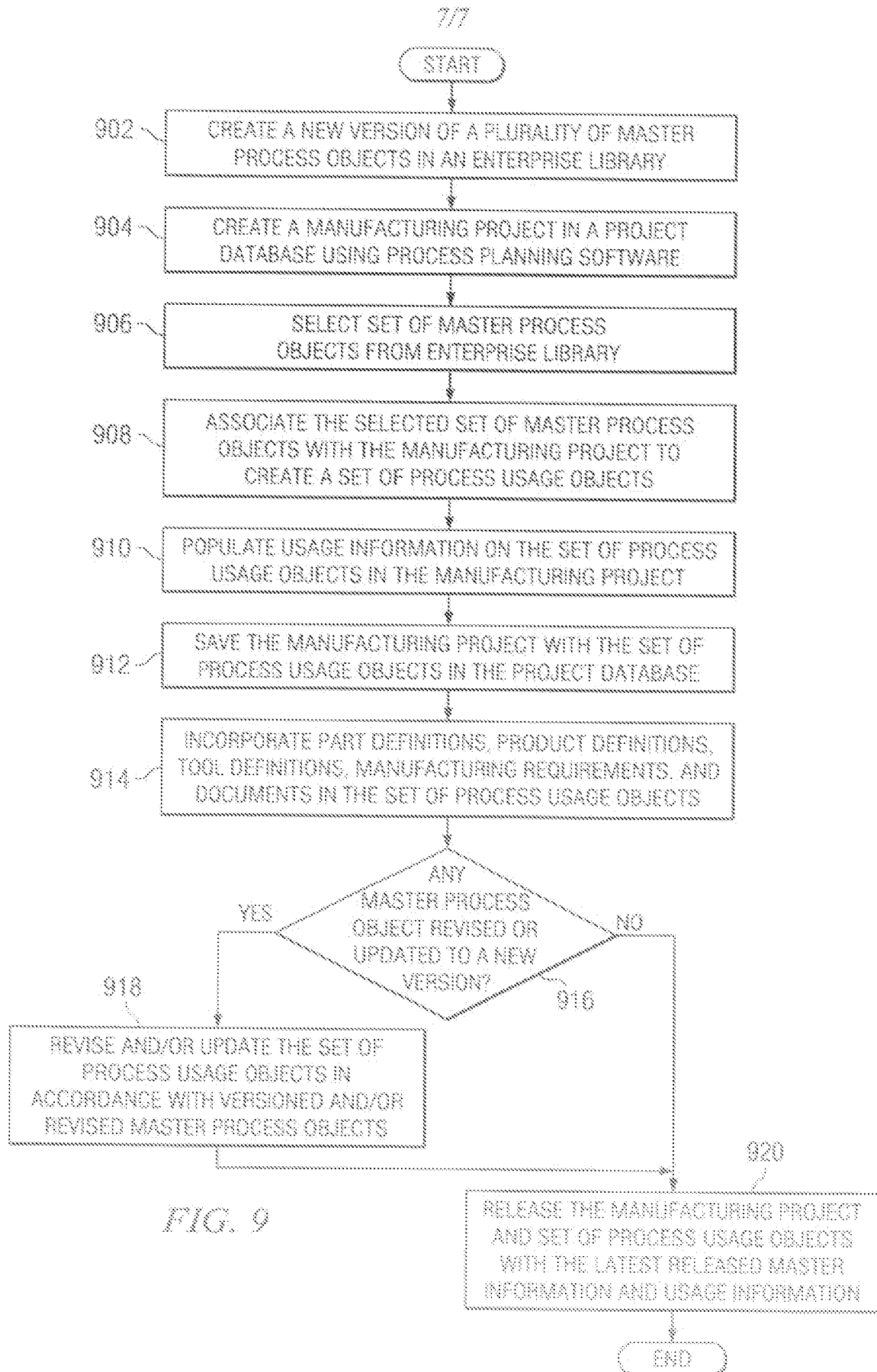


FIG. 8



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No

PCT/US2009/033748

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
INV. G05B19/418 G06Q10/00

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
G05B G06Q

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)

EPO-Internal, WPI Data

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 5 576 946 A (BENDER MARTIN P [US] ET AL) 19 November 1996 (1996-11-19) abstract column 4, lines 20-63 column 5, line 47 - column 7, line 7 column 7, line 59 - column 8, line 26 claim 1 figures 2,3,5	1-15

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

☒ See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents :

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Date of the actual completion of the international search

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No

PCT/US2009/033748

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
US 5576946	A	19-11-1996	NONE