



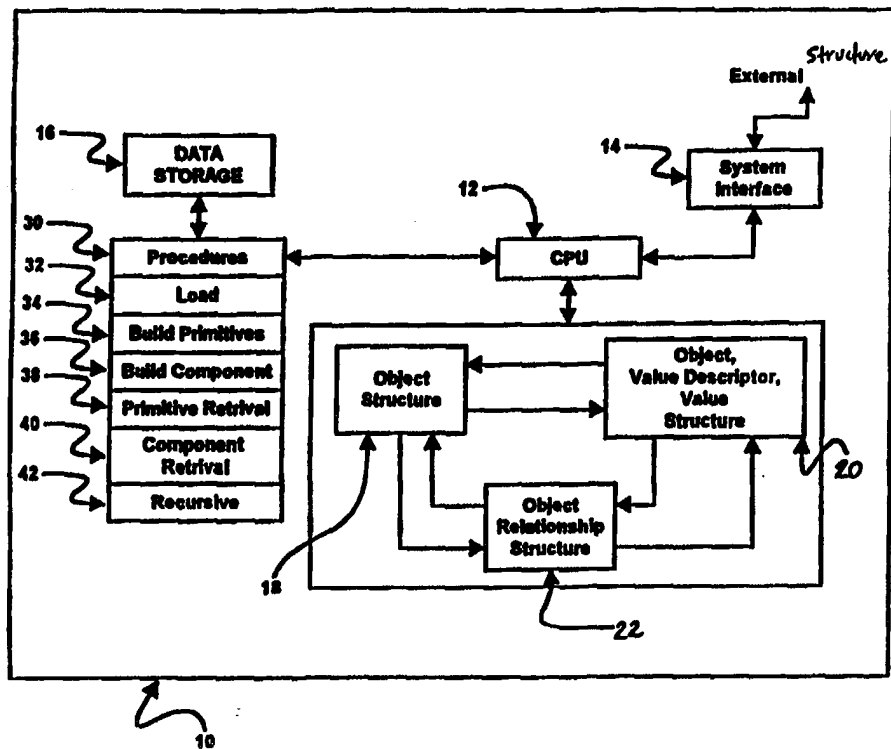
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(54) Title: UNIVERSAL SOFTWARE STRUCTURE FOR REPRESENTING MODEL STRUCTURES

(57) Abstract

An embodiment of a computer for storing, manipulating and retrieving data structures includes a memory configured to store a plurality of data in a plurality of data structures types including a first data structure type (18), a second data structure type (20) and a relationship data structure type (22). An interface (14) is configured to receive instructions and calls from an external structure and to respond to the instructions and the calls. A processor (12) is coupled to the memory and the interface circuit and configured to receive the instructions and to associate information in the instructions with the first data structure type (18), the second data structure type (20) and the relationship data structure type (22). The instruction including information to store in the relationship data structure type (22) that relates one or more of the first data structure type (18) and the second data structure type (20). The processor (12) is also configured to receive the calls and to manipulate the first data structure type (18), the second data structure type (20) and the relationship data structure type (22) according to the call, to retrieve a data structure type based on the call and to provide information in the first data structure type (18) as a call response. Advantages of the invention include the ability to characterize information and data structure types in a minimal set of primitives in order to model more complex systems.



An embodiment of a computer for storing, manipulating and retrieving data structures includes a memory configured to store a plurality of data in a plurality of data structures types including a first data structure type (18), a second data structure type (20) and a relationship data structure type (22). An interface (14) is configured to receive instructions and calls from an external structure and to respond to the instructions and the calls. A processor (12) is coupled to the memory and the interface circuit and configured to receive the instructions and to associate information in the instructions with the first data structure type (18), the second data structure type (20) and the relationship data structure type (22). The instruction including information to store in the relationship data structure type (22) that relates one or more of the first data structure type (18) and the second data structure type (20). The processor (12) is also configured to receive the calls and to manipulate the first data structure type (18), the second data structure type (20) and the relationship data structure type (22) according to the call, to retrieve a data structure type based on the call and to provide information in the first data structure type (18) as a call response. Advantages of the invention include the ability to characterize information and data structure types in a minimal set of primitives in order to model more complex systems.

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UNIVERSAL SOFTWARE STRUCTURE FOR REPRESENTING MODEL STRUCTURES

FIELD

The invention relates to a universal software structure for representing model structures. The invention is used to define a computer software "Meta-Model" that is used to create other software models. The invention has the capabilities of capturing
5 and embodying structures, activities, triggers/controls and contexts.

BACKGROUND

Models are often used to characterize various static and dynamic structures and systems in order to predict behavior. In this specification, the word system is used to
10 refer to static and dynamic models. One reason for models is to reduce cost and improve predictability of systems so that a system will operate as designed. For example, models of automobile traffic are made before the roads are built in order to determine whether the planned roads are sufficient for the expected amount of traffic. Moreover, the models are helpful for determining what happens to the system, for
15 example, when an accident causes congestion on one of the roads or when traffic patterns change.

The computer software industry has created a myriad of specialized programs intended to be "turn-key" solutions for specific tasks. Many of these programs are very useful for the specific jobs they were intended to address. These software programs
20 effectively address the single need of each job, but are incapable of application to address multiple needs within the same organization across multiple industries/markets.

Accordingly, the limitation of existing models is the inability to apply structure and information for a variety of different applications.

What is needed is a universal software structure for representing model structures, or "Meta-Model," which is implemented as a single system with numerous processes that provide the ability to represent several different models simultaneously. This would allow a single implementation layer to represent several different specialized models to address the individual needs of applications within the same organization or software system. By addressing the specialized needs across several software models at the same time, a Meta-Model can reduce the effort required to create specialized models.

SUMMARY

The invention represents a universal set of computer software model structures, or "Meta-Model," having the ability to represent a multitude of software models. The invention provides a set of primitives that represents fundamental elements of software models. The primitives are used to create virtual models to manage and control sequences of activities, information content and information relationships, and decision points within processes. The primitives can further define models from a particular point of view or perspective.

The foundation of the Meta-Model is based on a set of primitives that are defined using a symbolic language described below. This symbolic language represents a set of unchanging primitive level of procedures, giving it a "plug in" functionality to adapt to other requirements. Construction of a model is accomplished by defining the structures, activities and processes of the virtual model. These definitions are then implemented and executed by accessing the procedures within the Meta-Model representing the individual definitions and context of perspective used by the virtual model.

A computer according to an embodiment of the invention includes a memory configured to store a plurality of data in a plurality of data structure types including a first data structure type, a second data structure type and a relationship data structure type. An interface is configured to receive instructions and calls from an external structure and to respond to the instructions and the calls. A processor is coupled to the

memory and the interface circuit and configured to receive the instructions and to associate information in the instructions with the first data structure type, the second data structure type and the relationship data structure type, the instruction including information to store in the relationship data structure type that relates one or more of
5 the second data structure type(s) and another second data structure type. The processor is also configured to receive the calls and to manipulate the first data structure type, the second data structure type and the relationship data structure type according to the call, to retrieve a data structure type based on the call and to provide information in the first data structure type as a call response.

10 Advantages of the invention include the ability to characterize information and data structure types in a minimal set of primitives in order to model more complex systems.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

15 Additional advantages of the invention will become apparent upon reading the following detailed description and upon reference to the drawings, in which:

Figures 1A-D represent objects that are related to one another as shown;

Figure 2 is a block diagram of a computer according to an embodiment of the invention;

20 Figure 3 depicts an object structure type according to an embodiment of the invention;

Figure 4 depicts a value data structure type according to an embodiment of the invention;

25 Figure 5 depicts a relationship data structure type according to an embodiment of the invention;

Figure 6 depicts a relationship-value data structure type according to an embodiment of the invention;

Figure 7 illustrates a train network example;

30 Figure 8 is a block diagram of a computer according to another embodiment of the invention; and

Figure 9 is a block diagram of a value descriptor data structure type according to an embodiment of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The exemplary embodiments are described herein with reference to specific configurations. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that various changes and modifications can be made to the exemplary embodiments while remaining within the scope of the invention.

A. Meta-Models

Software construction is extremely labor-intensive and expensive. If changes need to be made during the life cycle of the software, which is normally the case, this increases the overall expense of the project or product. To decrease costs and repetitive efforts, there is clearly a need for the base software to have a substantially fixed structure. A Meta-Model allows a reduction in both the original construction effort and the ongoing maintenance of a system. This is because the same basic structure is used throughout the life cycle of the system. The initial design for the implementation of a Meta Model is greater than for normal software models, but any maintenance and rework efforts are decreased. A Meta-Model must be based on a set of substantially fixed principles that are described within a language that delineates models (i.e. a Meta Language). By using a Meta Language, new concepts, structures and processes can be implemented within a Meta-Model that supports that language.

Identified advantages of using a Meta-Model to create Virtual Models include: enabling the creation of truly customized virtual models; dramatically decreased development time for follow-on projects; dramatically reduced maintenance effort; and since the Meta-Model has the ability to accommodate and adapt to unforeseen requirements of a system it can dynamically adapt its own structures of deployed models and can even dynamically change data within an already deployed Meta-Model. Further, Meta-Models are not required to be implemented within any specific software language. The Meta-Model's fundamental principles are substantially the same across software languages. This allows transporting of the virtual model's logic to another Meta-Model that has been implemented in a different software language.

A Meta-Model is used to create other software models. The exemplary embodiments describe in detail the Meta-Model structure and process of implementing and interacting with the Meta-Model. The preferred embodiments are based on three

core data structures and a set of procedures to manipulate these data structures. The data structures are used to contain the low level primitives. The Meta-Model procedures are used to store, update and animate the primitives within the data structures.

5 For a Meta-Model to function, it must be able to emulate a wide variety of virtual models. Virtual morphing is possible through an implementation layer that has the ability to manage and store a set of unchanging universal primitives that are used to define virtual models. Software models in general, address a major problem domain that commonly contains three sub-domains: Structure, Process (or energy expended),
10 and Trigger/Event.

Virtual models embodied in a Meta-Model should address the same three problem domains. This covers some aspects of a Meta-Model and required functionality virtual models. Some aspects of Meta-Language must also be addressed, such as, for a Meta-Language to function it must address the same problem domains.

15 To further explain the concepts regarding Meta-Models and the Meta-Language examples shown below will be based on a simple train system. In this virtual model, the train will be traveling from New York to Los Angeles through several stations.

B. Software Models Using Meta-Models

20 Software models contain several structures that are used to address the problem sub-domains. These structures are based on several basic principles. To convey an understanding of a Meta-Model and the concepts required to create the virtual models that are stored within a Meta-Model, we will start with some basic structures that software systems address. Software models are built within code and data structures to
25 address the problem sub-domains. The Meta-Model addresses the same problem domains via implementing the primitives defined within the Meta-Language.

The examples here are based on a very simple train system to describe how a virtual model is stored within a Meta-Model. To begin, several basic structures are shown. In essence, these are very small virtual models. The Meta-Model clearly needs
30 to have the ability to describe these basic virtual models. These examples are overly simplified and are not intended to be a real-world description of an actual train system, but will demonstrate certain aspects of constructing a Meta-Model.

1. Basic Structures

Shown below are examples of basic structures (virtual models) that the Meta-Language needs to describe. Examples based on a train system are shown for each of the basic conceptual models.

5

(a) One to One

One to one relationships carry information about each object and their relationship to each other. The relationship itself can also be classified as an object that can carry details about the relationship between the objects. This type of object recursion of objects spawning other objects is common within the Meta-Model. The spawned object is treated just as another object within the Meta-Model.

10

An example of a one to one relationship:

The train system example has several one-to-one relationships of both object to object and object to value. Figure 1A depicts "Object 1" related to "Object 2". The two objects could be the New York and Philadelphia train stations. The relationship object (Train Network Relationship 1) could have an attached value of 90 miles describing the distance between the two stations. The term "Train Network Relationship 1" is the declaration of the concept of one object related to another object and in itself is also an object. The term is arbitrary and is only used to declare the unique relationship between two objects.

15

20

(b) One to Many

Another basic relationship is from one object to many objects. A relationship of this type is used to relate one object to several other objects for a specific subject, such as that shown in Figure 1B. The objects that are being related can be of the same basic type or of several different types. Like different children who share the same mother or the parts of an internal combustion engine.

25

Example - One to Many

An example of this would be one train having a relationship to each of the passengers being transported on that train. The parent object would be the train and the related objects would be each passenger.

30

(c) Many to Many

Multiple objects can have a set of relationships between each other. This allows a group of objects to have several interconnections to other members within the same group, as shown in Figure 1C.

5 Example - Many to Many

All passengers are related to all other passengers when taking the 9:00 AM train from New York to Philadelphia.

(d) Ordered List

10 Objects can have an "ordered" relationship between themselves. This relationship may be used to imply the order in which something occurs (like siblings in the order of birth- child #1, child #2, child #3) or to imply a priority (Step #1 occurs prior to Step #2, etc.). A relationship of this type is shown in Figure 1D.

Example - Ordered List

15 An example of an ordered list in our Train System is the locomotive (first object) to the caboose (last object) and the cars in between in the sequence in which they are joined. This example is shown in Table 1.

Locomotive	Object #1
Coal Transport Car	Object #2
Passenger Car #1	Object #3
Passenger Car #2	Object #4
Lumber Transport Car	Object #5
Caboose	Object #6

25 TABLE 1

These structures form the basis for the objects and relationships used to develop more complex models.

30 C. First Embodiment

A first embodiment is described with reference to Figures 2 through 5. Figure 2 is a block diagram of a computer 10 according to an embodiment of the invention. A processor (CPU) 12 is coupled to a system interface 14, data storage 16 and program

storage 30. The data storage and program storage can reside on any known memory structure such as a disk memory, read only memory, random access memory or other types of memory. The system interface 14 provides for communication between the processor 12 and any external structures such as a user interface or other computers.

- 5 The data storage 16 includes a plurality of data structure types such as an object data structure type 18, an object relationship data structure type 20 and an object-value descriptor-value data structure type 22. These data structure types are the primitives that serve to define the model.

The procedures in the program memory 30 are also important to defining the model. These procedures include a load procedure 32 for loading the primitives into the data structures. A build primitives procedure 34 is used to construct the low level primitives. A build component procedure 36 is used for assembly of the primitives into higher level components. A set of primitive retrieval procedures 38 is used to retrieve the low level primitives. A set of component retrieval procedures 40 is used to retrieve higher level components based on the information of the low level primitives. A recursive procedure 42 is to iterate across the higher level components to manage virtual models. These procedures serve to provide the functions to build and run the desired virtual model. The procedures further have the ability to manipulate the Meta-language primitives and components within the data structures.

20

1. The Meta-Language

(a) Meta-Language Definitions:

The following primitives form the foundation of this Meta-Language. They are the most basic building blocks of the language and are used to construct higher level components within the language itself. These primitives are assembled with a specific syntax to describe these higher level components, which are then used in "sets" by assembling several components into a group. These sets are used to address specific virtual model definitions within the Meta-Model. The Meta-Language symbols for the primitives are " \exists , C, o, d, v, r".

30

(b) Meta-Language Primitives

The \exists symbol is be used to declare fundamental existence. By combining \exists with one of the subscript symbols, this will be used to declare existence for that type of item. The following list shows the possible subscript items, a detailed description

5 follows within this section of the document for each of the subscript items:

Item	Subscript
object	\exists_o
value descriptor	\exists_d
value	\exists_v
10 relationship	\exists_r

Examples of these combinations are as follows. \exists_o is a declaration of a physical object or concept. The term object within the Meta-Language is used in a larger sense than just the meaning of physical objects. Within the language the word "Object" is also used to reference concepts like the ones listed here. As an example the types of physical objects that can be declared are: John Doe; Locomotive #99; or New York. As an example the types of concept objects that could be declared are: Relationship between two cities, New York to Philadelphia; Price of a Train Ticket; and Virtual Model.

15 \exists_d is a declaration of the existence of a descriptor for a value, which has a label for a value type. As an example the types of descriptor that could be declared are: hair color; weight; dollar amount; and height.

\exists_v is an assignment of a value for a specific combination of \exists_o and \exists_d . An \exists_v value can also be a reference to another \exists_o within the system. As an example the types of combinations with values that could be declared are: John Doe, Hair Color, Brown; Locomotive #99, Weight, 85 Tons; and Train Ticket, Dollar Amount, \$85.00.

\exists_r is a declaration of a relationship between primitives. This declaration is a grouping of the primitives within a Meta-Model. This grouping is usually an implied relationship managed within the implementation layer of the model.

There is one more primitive used for context. The symbol "C" will be used for the declaration of context. Context is important in a Meta-Language that is used to define Meta-Models, because it defines the circumstances in which information within the system is viewed, analyzed, impacted, or another function performed on it.

There are some basic rules on the use and assembly of these primitives. These rules are explained in detail within this section, and apply to all types of Meta-Language primitives.

5 Rule 1: C , \exists_o , \exists_d , \exists_v and \exists_r are the lowest level primitives. In this embodiment, this set of primitives is the complete set of low level primitives.

Rule 2: Any item or declaration that is not a value is an object by default (i.e. process, action, concept, physical things, locations, etc.). All are of the primitive "object" type.

10 Rule 3: Values cannot be directly related to other values (values must always be associated to an object). A value that needs to be related to another value must be related to an Object, and then the objects can be related to each other.

Rule 4: Data structures M_o , M_v , M_r and M_{rv} are the compound definitions based on the lower level primitives except for M_o . These symbols are described below. While these data structures provide a basic set of data structures to describe the
15 invention, additional data structures can be constructed with the Meta-Language primitives.

2. Meta-Models

20 With the defined primitives, a meta-model is constructed according to rules that define the respective model data structures. Higher level components will be indicated with an "M", which stands for a model, comprised of the lower level primitives. These M subscript models are managed within the implementation layer of a Meta-Model at a very low management level. These models are assembled from the low level primitives list above. The exemplary meta-model includes three data structure types. The first
25 represents a value of an object, and is called an M_v . The second represents a relationship between objects, and is called an M_r . The third represents a relationship between objects and also a value, and is called an M_{rv} . Using these three data structure types virtual models can be generated.

30 (a) Object, M_o

An M_o is an example of a component that is used to declare and describe an object. Figure 3 depicts the object descriptor structure type 18 according to an

embodiment of the invention. The object data structure includes a structure containing an object 18a. The definition of M_o is $([\exists_o])$. This is explained as \exists_o represents the existence of an object.

5 (b) Value, M_v

An M_v is an example of a higher level component that is assembled from the lower level primitives and is used to describe a value attached to an object. Figure 4 depicts the object-value descriptor-value structure type 20 according to an embodiment of the invention. The object data structure includes a structure containing a context
 10 20a and an object 20b. The definition of M_v is $([C, \exists_o, \exists_d, \exists_v] \exists_r)$. These are explained as C represents context, \exists_o represents the existence of an object, \exists_d represents the existence of a value descriptor, \exists_v represents the existence of a value, and \exists_r represents an imposed relationship between the components C, \exists_o , \exists_d , \exists_v of the data structure.

15 The listed primitives will be used as input parameters to this component with the imposed relationship. When defining virtual models, the symbol M_v is used instead of referring to the primitives that constitute the structure, thereby permitting the shortening of definitions and easier management.

To retrieve an object value (M_v), the retrieval requires identification of the
 20 primitives C, \exists_o and \exists_d to identify the specific value. To perform this procedure, the inputs are (C, \exists_o , \exists_d) and the output is \exists_v .

(c) Relationship, M_r

An M_r is an example of a higher level component that is assembled from the
 25 lower level primitives and is used to describe a relationship between objects. Figure 5 depicts a relationship data object according to an embodiment of the invention. The relationship data object includes a structure containing a context 22a, object 22b, object
 1 22c and object 2 22d. The definition of M_r is $([C, \exists_o, \exists_{o1}, \exists_{o2}] \exists_r)$. These are explained as C represents context, \exists_o represents the existence of an object which is the
 30 object identifier for the relationship, \exists_{o1} represents the existence of a second object, \exists_{o2} represents the existence of a third object, and \exists_r represents the application of a relationship between the three objects and context of the data structure.

To retrieve a relationship between objects M_r , the retrieval requires identification of the primitives C and \exists_o to identify the context and object. To perform this procedure, the inputs are (C, \exists_o) and the output is $(\exists_{o1}, \exists_{o2})$.

5 (d) Relationship and Value, M_{rv}

An M_{rv} is an example of a higher level component that is assembled from the lower level primitives and is used to describe a relationship between objects including a value. By combining an M_r and M_v , which is expressed as M_{rv} , compound definitions can be formed to define more complex components. Figure 6 depicts a relationship-
 10 value data object according to an embodiment of the invention. The relationship-value data object includes a structure containing a context 24a, object 24b, object 1 24c, object 2 24d, value descriptor 24e and value 24f. The definition of M_{rv} is $([C, \exists_o (\exists_{o1}, \exists_{o2}) (\exists_d, \exists_v)] \exists_r)$, or $[M_r, M_v]$. These are explained as C represents context, \exists_o represents the existence of an object which is the object identifier for the relationship,
 15 \exists_{o1} represents the existence of a second object, \exists_{o2} represents the existence of a third object, \exists_d represents the existence of a value descriptor, \exists_v represents the existence of a value and \exists_r represents the application of a relationship between the three objects, value descriptor, value and context of the data structure.

20 D. Train Example

The following is an example of a Meta-Model describing a train system that would define and allow a train to travel from New York to Los Angeles according to Figure 7. The worksheets below define the Meta-Model information and components that are subsequently assembled into the Meta-Model to build the virtual train model.

25 To begin, some basic examples of M_v and M_r are defined to see how small sub-models are defined within a Meta-Model.

A basic example of $M_v = ([C, \exists_o, \exists_d, \exists_v] \exists_r)$

This example shows the primitives for two structures (M_v) to define two ticket prices for a First Class Passenger and for Economy Class Passenger.

30

M-Type: M_v	Context (C)	Object (\exists_o)	Value Descriptor	Value (\exists_v)
M_v	Ticketing	First Class Ticket	Ticket Price	125
M_v	Ticketing	Economy Class Ticket	Ticket Price	85

5

TABLE 2

A basic example of $M_r = ([C, \exists_o, \exists_{o1}, \exists_{o2}] \exists_r)$

This example shows the primitives for two components (M_r) that define two relationships between train stations. The first M_r defines the relationship between New York and Philadelphia the second M_r defines the relationship between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. Note that the first "Object" (\exists_o) for each M_r is an arbitrary description that is unique within the system with the same context. This description can be used to retrieve the object \exists_{o1} and related \exists_{o2} .

15

M-Type:	Context (C)	Object (\exists_o)	Object (\exists_{o1})	Object (\exists_{o2})
M_r	Train	Train Network	Station #1	Station #2
M_r	Train	Train Network	Station #2	Station #3

20

TABLE 3

A basic example of $M_{rv} = ([C, \exists_o (\exists_{o1}, \exists_{o2}) (\exists_d, \exists_v)] \exists_r)$

This example shows the primitives for a component (M_{rv}) that defines the relationship between train stations and the distance between the stations in miles.

25

M-Type:	Context	Object (\exists_o)	Object	Object (\exists_{o2})	Value	Value
M_{rv}	Train	Train Network	Station #1	Station #2	Distance in	90

30

TABLE 4

An Evaluator Example:

Within a Meta-Model several small virtual models can be defined. By combining several M_v and M_r 's, an evaluator can be assembled to do evaluations. An evaluator is constructed by defining all of the components needed to do the math.

35

These are the components of the equation like the operator and the items that need to be compared.

The following example is a basic evaluator used to determine whether a passenger can afford to take a trip from New York to Philadelphia based on their current checking account balance. The M_r defines the Object to the left of the “Operator”, the Operator, the Object to the right of the Operator and the values for the left and right Objects. By defining the items to the left and right of the Operator as references to other Objects the process of the evaluation can become generic and the values of the objects can be used or changed by other actions within the same Meta-Model.

Step	M-type	(C)	\exists_o	\exists_{o1}	\exists_{o2}
1	M_v	Evaluator	checking	evaluator	my checking
2	M_v	Evaluator	checking	operator	
3	M_v	Evaluator	checking	evaluator	cost of
4	M_v	Evaluator	my checking	evaluator	\$100
5	M_v	Evaluator	cost of a	evaluator	\$85

TABLE 5

To process an evaluator like the one described above we need to retrieve the details of the evaluator. The steps listed in Table 6 shows the actions of retrieving each M_v to construct the math equation. Shown in the “Result” column is the math equation as each step is processed to build up the equation.

Symbol	Description of Step	Result
M_v	Retrieve and insert “Evaluator Object”	My checking account
M_v	Locate the Operator	Greater than or equal to
M_v	Retrieve and insert “Evaluator Object”	Cost of the ticket to Philadelphia
M_v	Retrieve left value based on left object	\$100
M_v	Retrieve right value based on right object	\$85

TABLE 6

The results of the retrieval and replacement of the left and right “Evaluator Objects” the formula $\$100 \geq \85 is assembled. By performing the math, the passenger can afford to take a trip from New York to Philadelphia.

5

E. Second Embodiment

Figure 8 is a block diagram of a computer according to a second embodiment of the invention. The second embodiment employs many of the same components as the figure embodiment and those components are commonly numbered. The primary
10 difference is the addition of a value-descriptor structure 26 (M_d). This additional structure explicitly delineates the value-descriptors \exists_d that are referenced within the object-value descriptor-value structure. The definition of M_d is ($[\exists_d]$). These are explained as \exists_d represents the existence of a value descriptor. The value-descriptor data structure type 26 (M_d) is similar to the object data structure type 18 (M_o) in the
15 first embodiment but instead of an object, the structure contains a value descriptor. This structure is used to contain the value descriptors for the second embodiment versus the object structure 18 that stores both the value descriptors and all objects. The addition of the value-descriptor structure can provide in some cases, an increase in performance and reduction the number of abstractions that are required to implement
20 the model.

F. Conclusion

Advantages of the invention include the ability to characterize information and data types in a minimal set of contents to model various more complex systems.

25 Having disclosed exemplary embodiments and the best mode, modifications and variations may be made to the exemplary embodiments while remaining within the scope of the invention as defined by the following claims.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A computer for storing, manipulating and retrieving data structures, comprising:
 - 5 a memory configured to store a plurality of data in a plurality of data structure types including a first data structure type, a second data structure type and a relationship data structure type;
an interface configured to receive instructions and calls from an external structure and to respond to said instructions and said calls;
 - 10 a processor coupled to said memory and said interface circuit and configured to receive said instructions and to associate information in said instructions with said first data structure type, said second data structure type and said relationship data structure type, said instruction including information to store in said relationship data structure type that relates one or more of said first data structure type and said second data
 - 15 structure type, and configured to receive said calls and to manipulate said first data structure type, said second data structure type and said relationship data structure type according to said call, to retrieve a data structure type based on said call and to provide information in said first data structure type as a call response.
- 20 2. The computer of claim 1, wherein:
said first data structure type is a declarative data structure including an object;
said second data structure type is a value data structure including a context, object, value descriptor and value;
said relationship data structure type includes a context, a first object, a second
- 25 object and a third object to identify a relationship between said context and said first object, said second object and said third object; and
said computer further comprises a composite data structure type including a context, a first object, a second object, a third object, a value descriptor and a value.
- 30 3. The computer of claim 1, wherein:
said first data structure type is a declarative data structure consisting of an object;

said second data structure type is a value data structure consisting of a context, object, value descriptor and value;

said relationship data structure type consists of a context, a first object, a second object and a third object to identify a relationship between said context and said first object, said second object and said third object; and

said computer further comprises a composite data structure type consisting of a context, a first object, a second object, a third object, a value descriptor and a value.

4. The computer of claim 1, further comprising:

10 an evaluator configured to manipulate said first data structure type, said second data structure type and said relationship data structure type and to provide information to respond to said call.

5. The computer of claim 2, further comprising:

15 an evaluator configured to manipulate said first data structure type, said second data structure type and said relationship data structure type and to generate at least one evaluator object type.

6. The computer of claim 4, wherein:

20 said evaluator is configured to modify at least one if said first data structure type, said second data structure type and said relationship data structure type in response to said call.

7. The computer of claim 5, wherein:

25 said evaluator is configured to modify at least one if said first data structure type, said second data structure type and said relationship data structure type in response to said call.

8. A structure for use with a computer system having a processor, a memory and a user interface, said structure comprising:

a plurality of data structures including a first data structure type, a second data structure type and a relationship data structure type;

- an instruction interface configured to receive instructions from said user interface and to respond to said instructions;
- a call interface configured to receive calls from other structures and to respond to said calls; and
- 5 an execution procedure configured to receive said instructions and to associate information in said instructions with said first data structure type, said second data structure type and said relationship data structure type, said instruction including information to store in said relationship data structure type that relates one or more of said first data structure type and said second data structure type, and configured to
- 10 receive said calls and to manipulate said first data structure type, said second data structure type and said relationship data structure type according to said call, to retrieve a data structure type based on said call and to provide information in said first data structure type as a call response.
- 15 9. The structure of claim 8, wherein:
- said first data structure type is a declarative data structure including an object;
- said second data structure type is a value data structure including a context, object, value descriptor and value;
- said relationship data structure type includes a context, a first object, a second
- 20 object and a third object to identify a relationship between said context and said first object, said second object and said third object; and
- said computer further comprises a composite data structure type including a context, a first object, a second object, a third object, a value descriptor and a value.
- 25 10. The structure of claim 8, wherein:
- said first data structure type is a declarative data structure consisting of an object;
- said second data structure type is a value data structure consisting of a context, object, value descriptor and value;
- 30 said relationship data structure type consists of a context, a first object, a second object and a third object to identify a relationship between said context and said first object, said second object and said third object; and

said computer further comprises a composite data structure type consisting of a context, a first object, a second object, a third object, a value descriptor and a value.

11. The structure of claim 8, further comprising:
5 an evaluator procedure configured to manipulate said first data structure type, said second data structure type and said relationship data structure type and to provide information to respond to said call.
12. The structure of claim 9, further comprising:
10 an evaluator procedure configured to manipulate said first data structure type, said second data structure type and said relationship data structure type and to generate at least one evaluator object type.
13. The structure of claim 11, wherein:
15 said evaluator procedure is configured to modify at least one if said first data structure type, said second data structure type and said relationship data structure type in response to said call.
14. The structure of claim 12, wherein:
20 said evaluator procedure is configured to modify at least one if said first data structure type, said second data structure type and said relationship data structure type in response to said call.
15. A method of storing, manipulating and retrieving data structures, comprising
25 the steps of:
storing a plurality of data structures including a first data structure type, a second data structure type and a relationship data structure type;
receiving instructions from an external structure and responding to the instructions;
30 receiving calls from an external structure and responding to the calls;
associating information in the instructions with the first data structure type, the second data structure type and the relationship data structure type, the instruction

including information to store in the relationship data structure type that relates one or more of the first data structure type and the second data structure type; and

manipulating the first data structure type, the second data structure type and the relationship data structure type according to the call, to retrieve a data structure type based on the call and to provide information in the first data structure type as a call response.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein:

said storing step includes the steps of storing the plurality of data structures where the first data structure type is a declarative data structure including an object;

said storing step includes the steps of storing the plurality of data structures where the second data structure type is a value data structure including a context, object, value descriptor and value;

said storing step includes the steps of storing the plurality of data structures where the relationship data structure type includes a context, a first object, a second object and a third object to identify a relationship between the context and the first object, the second object and the third object; and

said storing step includes the steps of storing a composite data structure type including a context, a first object, a second object, a third object, a value descriptor and a value.

17. The method of claim 15, wherein:

said storing step includes the steps of storing the plurality of data structures where the first data structure type is a declarative data structure consisting of an object;

said storing step includes the steps of storing the plurality of data structures where the second data structure type is a value data structure consisting of a context, object, value descriptor and value;

said storing step includes the steps of storing the plurality of data structures where the relationship data structure type consists of a context, a first object, a second object and a third object to identify a relationship between the context and the first object, the second object and the third object; and

said storing step includes the steps of storing a composite data structure type consisting of a context, a first object, a second object, a third object, a value descriptor and a value.

- 5 18. The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of:
evaluating the calls and manipulating the first data structure type, the second data structure type and the relationship data structure type and providing information to respond to the call.
- 10 19. The method of claim 16, further comprising the step of:
evaluating the calls and manipulating the first data structure type, the second data structure type and the relationship data structure type and providing information to respond to the call.
- 15 20. The method of claim 18, wherein:
said evaluating step includes to step of modifying at least one if the first data structure type, the second data structure type and the relationship data structure type in response to the call.
- 20 21. The method of claim 19, wherein:
said evaluating step includes to step of modifying at least one if the first data structure type, the second data structure type and the relationship data structure type in response to the call.

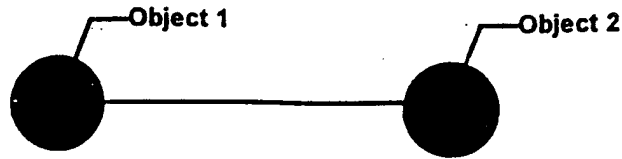


Figure 1A

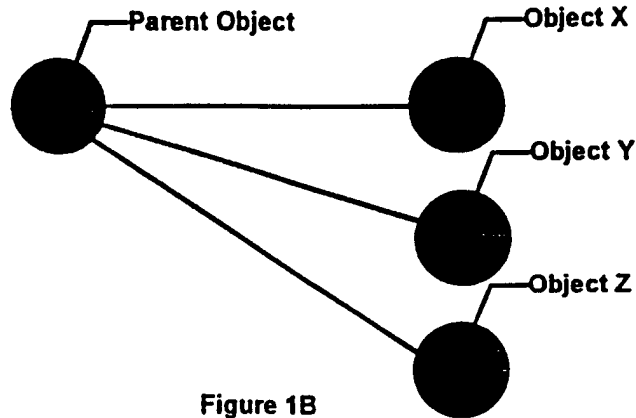


Figure 1B

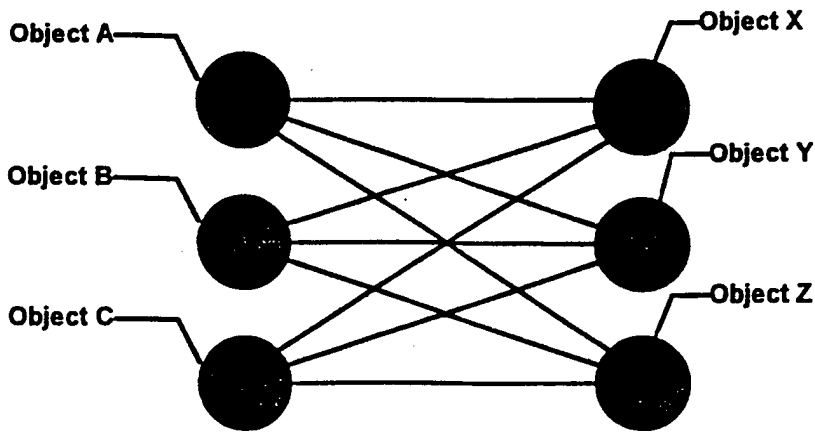


Figure 1C

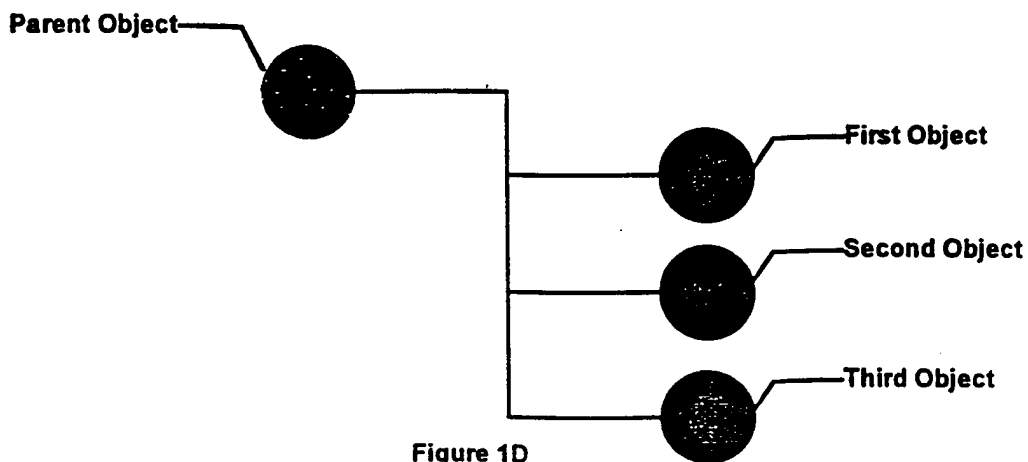


Figure 1D

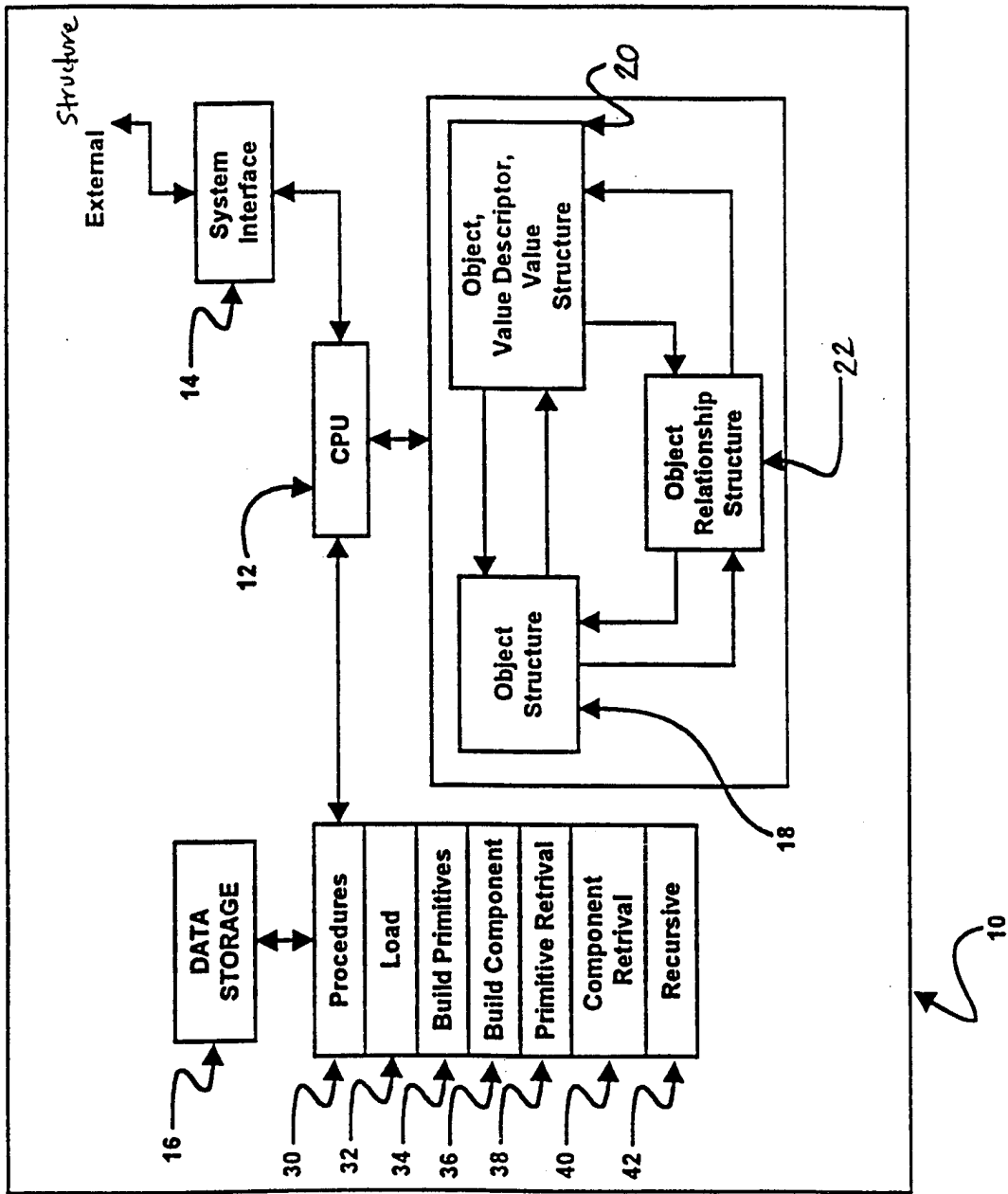


Figure 2

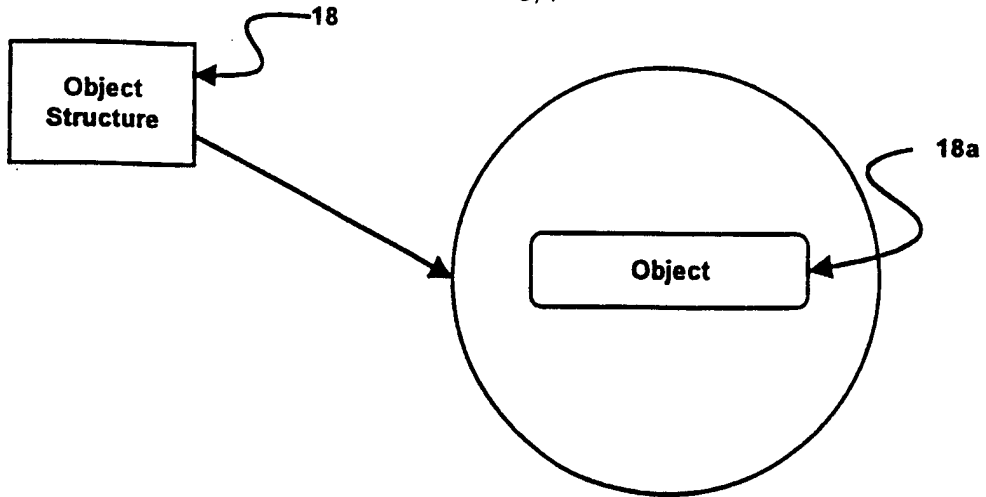


Figure 3

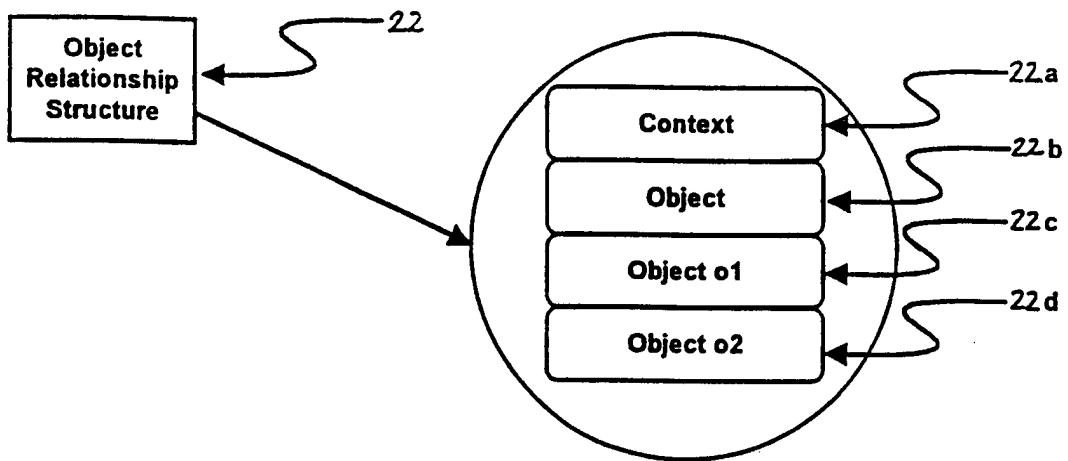


Figure 5

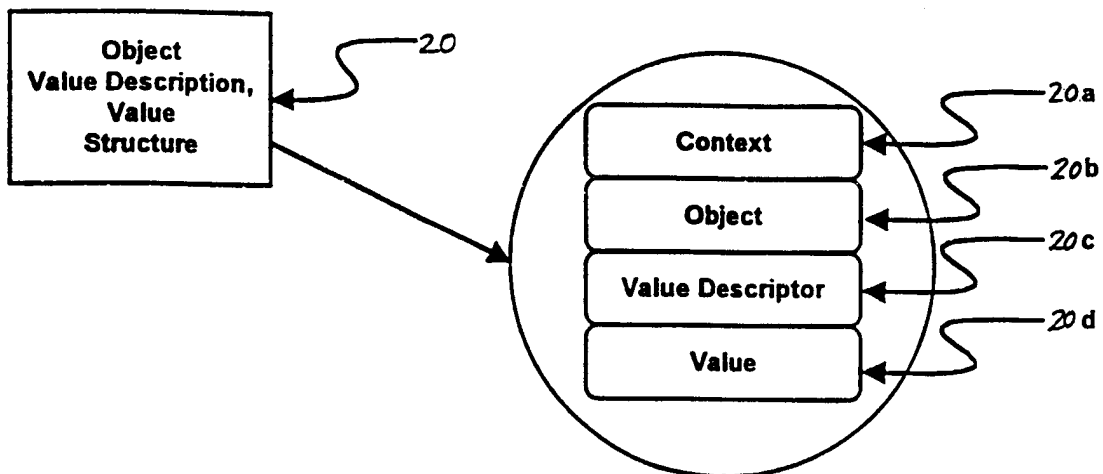


Figure 4

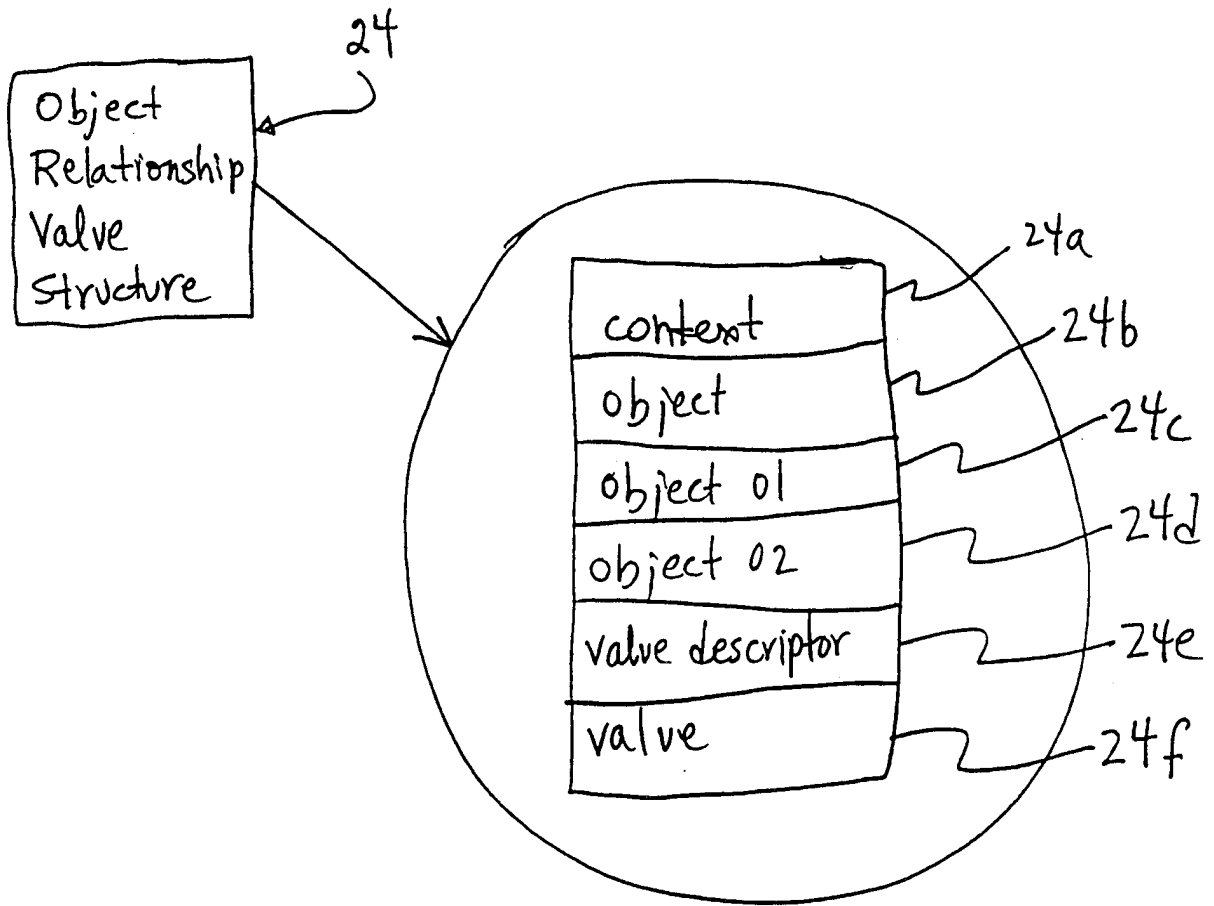


Fig. 6

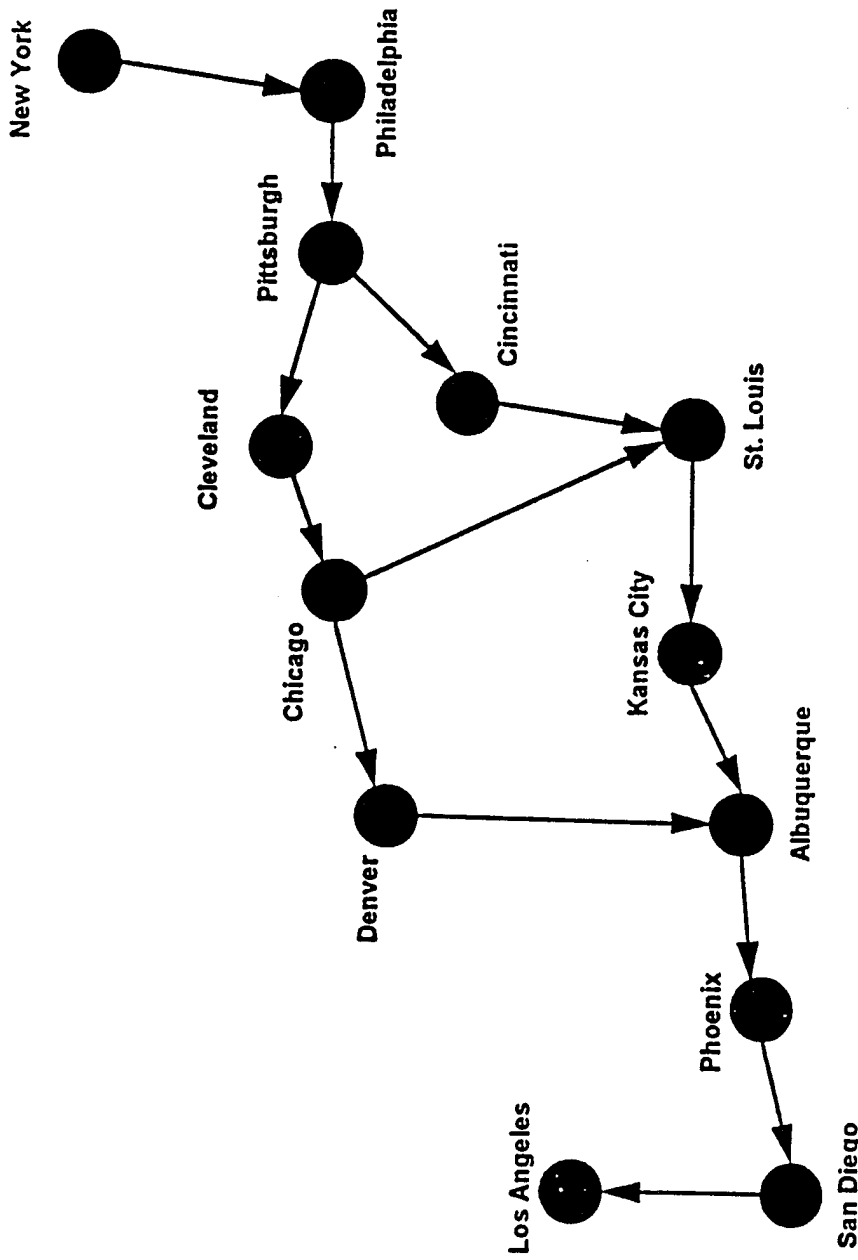


Figure 7

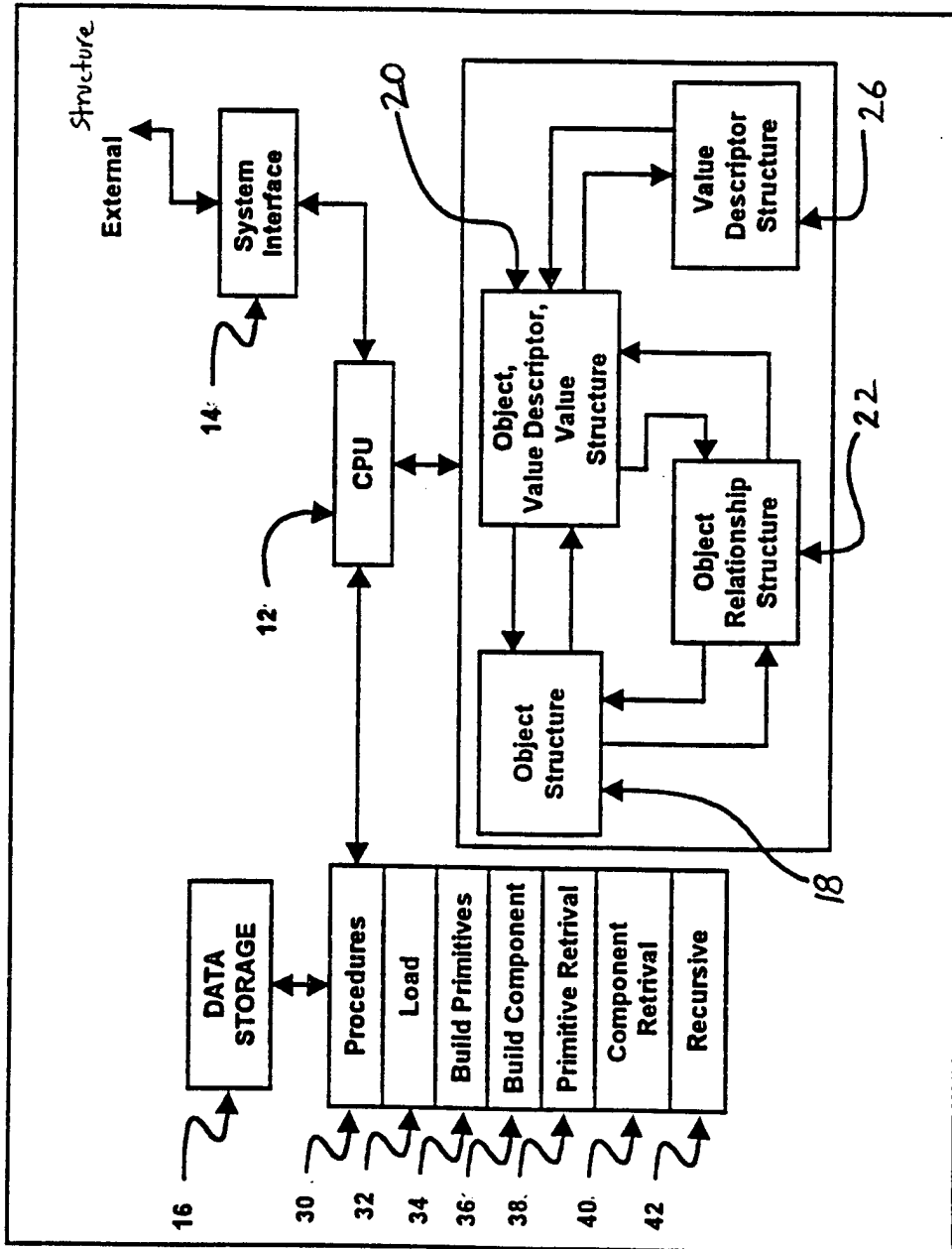


Figure 8

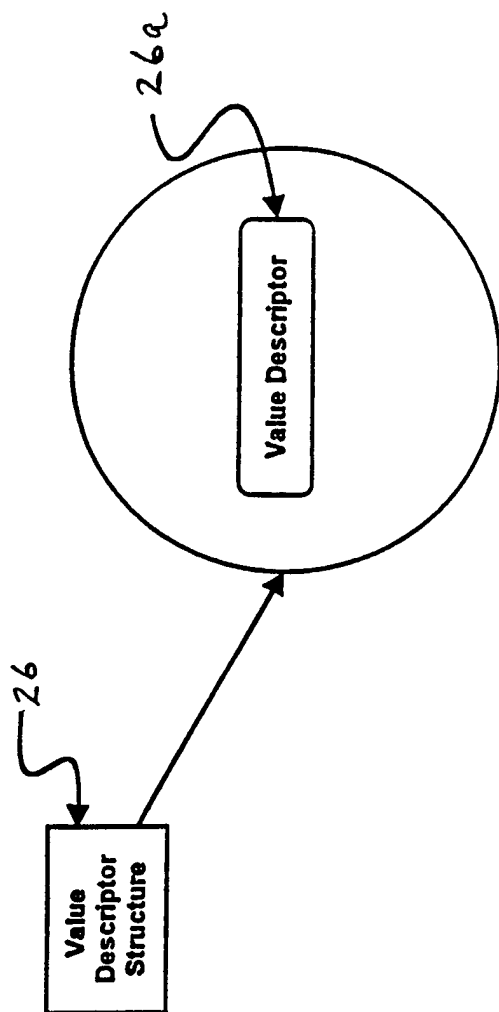


Figure 9

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US98/08618

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
 IPC(6) :GO6F 3/00, 9/06, 9/44, 17/00, 15/20, 15/00, 15/40,
 US CL :707/1, 100, 101; 395/703, 706, 712
 According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED
 Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
 U.S. : 707/1, 100, 101; 395/703, 706, 712

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

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)
 APS, IEEE ONLINE, MAYA(EDS)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	US 5,247,666 A (BUCKWOLD) 21 September 1993 (21.09.93), col. 4, lines 1-53.	1-21
Y	US 5,193,183 A (BACHMAN) 09 March 1993 (09.03.93), col. 2, line 60-col. 3, line 27.	1-21
X, P	US 5,724,589 A (WOLD) 03 March 1998 (03.03.98), col. 3, line 58-col. 4, line 67.	1-21
Y	US 5,390,330 A (TALATI) 14 February 1995 (14.02.95), col. 2, line 8-col. 4, line 36.	1-21
Y	US 4,558,413 A (SCHMIDT et al.)10 December 1985 (10.12.85), col. 9, line 28-col. 11, line 59.	1-21
Y, P	US 5,640,567 A (PHIPPS) 17 June 1997 (17.06.97, col. 3, line 53-col.4, line 3.	1-21

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

* Special categories of cited documents:	"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
"E" earlier document published on or after the international filing date	"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	"&" document member of the same patent family
"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means	
"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed	

Date of the actual completion of the international search 19 AUGUST 1998	Date of mailing of the international search report 13 OCT 1998
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Name and mailing address of the ISA/US Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks Box PCT Washington, D.C. 20231 Facsimile No. (703) 305-3230	Authorized officer FRANTZ COBY <i>Diane Smith for</i> Telephone No. (703) 305-9707
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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US98/08618

C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	US 5,587,935 A (BROOKS et al.) 24 December 1996 (24.12.96), col. 3, line 39-col.4, line 51.	1-21
Y, P	US 5,689,711 A (BARDASZ et al.) 18 November 1997 (18.11.97), col. 2, line 33-col.3, line 41.	1-21
Y	US 5,421,017 A (SCHOLTZ et al.) 30 MAY 1995 (30.05.95), col. 1, line 15-col. 2, line 15.	1-21
Y	US 4,809,170 A (LEBLANG et al.) 28 February 1989 (28.02.89), col. 4, line 59-col. 6, line 41.	1-21
Y	US 5,303,367 A (LEENSTRA, SR. et al.) 12 April 1994 (12.04.94), see abstract.	1
Y	US 4,951,192 A (CHASE, JR. et al.) 21 August 1990 (21.08.90), col. see abstract.	1-21