Overture Services, Inc. v. Google Inc. Doc. 67

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sued under its former name GOOGLE INC.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

SAN FRANCISCO DIVISION

OVERTURE SERVICES, INC., a Delaware Corporation,

Plaintiff,

vs.

GOOGLE INC., a California Corporation,

Defendant.

No. C 02-01991 JSW

JOINT CLAIM CONSTRUCTION STATEMENT

Dockets.Justia.com

Pursuant to Patent L.R. 4-3 (a) and (b) and Judge Jeffrey S. White's Standing Order For Patent Cases, Overture Services, Inc. ("Overture") and Google Technology Inc. ("Google") hereby submit the following Joint Claim Construction Statement.

Pursuant to Patent L.R. 4-3 (c), the parties note that Judge Jeffrey S. White's Standing Order For Patent Cases states that the Claim Construction Hearing will generally be scheduled for no longer than four hours. The parties anticipate that the Claim Construction Hearing will last approximately four hours.

Pursuant to Patent L.R. 4-3 (d), neither party presently anticipates calling any witnesses at the Claim Construction Hearing.

Pursuant to Patent L.R. 4-3 (e), the parties note that Judge Jeffrey S. White's Standing Order For Patent Cases states that prehearing conferences are not generally held. Neither party presently intends to request a prehearing conference. In the event that either party later determines that a prehearing conference is necessary, that party will follow the procedures identified in Judge Jeffrey S. White's Standing Order For Patent Cases for requesting such a hearing. To the extent that issues related to the Tutorial or the Claim Construction Hearing require discussion with the Court, the parties intend to raise those issues at the July 25, 2003 Case Management Conference.

As required by Judge Jeffrey S. White's Standing Order For Patent Cases, a copy of the patent-in-suit, U.S. Patent No. 6,269,361 (the "'361 Patent"), is attached hereto at Tab A, and a complete copy of the prosecution history for the '361 Patent will be made available to the Court upon request.

Because Google has listed certain patent applications claiming priority to the '361 patent as intrinsic evidence, Overture has done so as well for the Court's convenience. However, Overture reserves the right to contest whether these applications constitute intrinsic evidence. Overture further reserves the right to object to extrinsic evidence offered by Google as alleged support for its claim constructions.

Both parties reserve the right to supplement their disclosure based on information of which they hereafter become aware through discovery.

Claim Language (Disputed Terms in **Bold**) '361 Patent	Plaintiff's Proposed Construction and Evidence in Support	Defendant's Proposed Construction and Evidence in Support
search listing Found in claims: 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67	**PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION:** a collection of information that includes at least one search term and that can be included in a search result list **DICTIONARY DEFINITIONS:** Search to examine (one or more files, as databases or texts) electronically, to locate specific items (The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, Second Edition, 1987) to examine data in a computer in order to locate items having a given property (Webster's New World College Dictionary, Third Edition, 1997) try to find something by looking or otherwise seeking carefully and thoroughly; an act of searching for someone or something (The New Oxford Dictionary of English 1998) to make a thorough examination of; look over carefully in order to find something; explore (The American Heritage College Dictionary, Fourth Edition, 2002) to look into or over carefully or thoroughly in an effort to find something (Merriam Webster's Unabridged Dictionary) Listing an act or instance of making or including in a list or catalog; specifically: the admission of securities to trading on a securities exchange; an authorization to a real-estate broker to sell or rent property; a broker's record of available properties; a piece of property listed with a real-estate broker (Merriam	**PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION:** an entry in (or intended to be in) a search result list **INTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** *'361 Patent Specification* Abstract, ll. 3-4, 8-12, 15, 19, 20, 24-32; fig. 5; fig. 7; col. 3, ll. 51-54; col. 4, ll. 34-48, 55-67; col. 5, ll. 1-67; col.6. ll. 1-8, 20-24, 26, 28-34, 51-52, 57-58; col. 8, ll. 59-67; col. 9, ll. 1-12, 25-41, 66-67; col. 10, ll. 1-6, 22-35; col. 12, ll. 21-25, 28-29, 40-67; col. 13, ll. 1-2, 13-20, 41; col. 14, ll. 7-11, 14-16, 25-27; col. 17, ll. 14-67; col. 18, ll. 1-36, 40, 45, 47, 49; col. 19, ll. 1, 3, 8-9, 12, 15, 18-20, 25, 32-33, 59-67; col. 20, ll. 1-5, 8, 14-17, 22-23, 27, 29, 32-40, 61, 63-64; col. 21, ll. 1-2, 8-18, 29-40; col. 22, ll. 20, 24-26. **DICTIONARY DEFINITIONS:** The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 4th ed. The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, 2nd ed., Unabridged Webster's New World College Dictionary, 3rd ed. Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed. The New Oxford Dictionary of English

	Webster's Unabridged Dictionary) a list; record; catalog (The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, Second Edition, 1987) **INTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** '361 Patent – col. 6, ll. 16-34 One embodiment of the system and method of the present invention provides a database having accounts for the web site promoters. Each account includes contact and billing information for a web site promoter. In addition, each account includes at least one **search listing**, each **search listing** having five components: a description of the web site to be listed, the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) of the web site, a search term comprising one or more keywords, a bid amount, and a title for the **search listing**. Each account may also include the promoter's payment history and a history of **search listings** entered by the user. The promoter logs in to his or her account via an authentication process running on a secure server. Once logged in, the promoter may add, delete, or modify a **search listing**. The functions of adding or deleting a **search listing**, or modifying the bid amount of a **search listing** is to initiate the competitive bidding process described above. All **search listing** changes and modifications are processed substantially in real time to support the online competitive bidding process. '361 Patent – col. 12, l. 40 – col. 13, l. 2 The **search listing** 344 corresponds to a search term/bid pairing and contains key information to conduct the online competitive bidding process. Preferably, each **search listing** comprises the following information: search term 352, web site description 354, URL 356, bid amount 358, and a title 360. The search term 352 comprises one or	**EXTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** www.jsonline.com at GOG 1659-61. www.tundrawolfpromotions.com at GOG 32230-31. searchengineoptimism.com at GOG 32242-43, 32246-47. www.searchengineposition.com at GOG 32252. Documents produced by Overture: OVGE 52678, 52692, 52950, 52961, 52966-67, 52976, 53032, 53035, 53039, 53059, 53062, 53072-73, 53076-78, 53082, 53129-30, 53133, 53144, 53151, 53482, 53484, 53493, 53521, 53524-26, 53528, 53561, 53563, 53568-69, 53573, 53580, 53584, 53590, 53596, 53600, 53638, 53640, 53645-46, 53650, 53712, 54303, 54312, 55954, 55967, 55981, 55991-92, 55995-97, 56001, 56983, 59003, 59009-11, 59014, 59233-38, 59309, OVG 31561, 31563, 31565-67, 31576, 31578, 31579, 31583-85.

	more keywords which may be common words in English (or any other language). Each keyword in turn comprises a character string. The search term is the object of the competitive online bidding process. The advertiser selects a search term to bid on that is relevant to the content of the advertiser's web site. Ideally, the advertiser may select a search term that is targeted to terms likely to be entered by searchers seeking the information on the advertiser's web site, although less common search terms may also be selected to ensure comprehensive coverage of relevant search terms for bidding. The web site description 354 is a short textual description (preferably less than 190 characters) of the content of the advertiser's web site and may be displayed as part of the advertiser's entry in a search result list. The **search listing** 344 may also contain a title 360 of the web site that may be displayed as the hyperlinked heading to the advertiser's entry in a search result list. The URL 356 contains the Uniform Resource Locator address of the advertiser's web site. When the user clicks on the hyperlink provided in the advertiser's search result list entry, the URL is provided to the browser program. The browser program, in turn, accesses the advertiser's web site through the redirection mechanism discussed above. The URL may also be displayed as part of the advertiser's entry in a search result list '361 Patent – Abstract, ll. 8-19 In addition, each account contains at least one **search listing** having at least three components: a description, a search term comprising one or more keywords, and a bid amount. The network information provider may add, delete, or modify a **search listing** after logging into his or her account via an authentication process. The network information provider influences a position for a **search**	

	listing in the provider's account by first selecting a search term relevant to the content of the web site or other information source to be listed. The network information provider enters the search term and the description into a **search listing**. '361 Patent – col. 9, ll. 30-34 In one embodiment of the present invention, the relevance of a bidded search term to an advertiser's web site is determined through a manual editorial process prior to insertion of the **search listing** containing the search term and advertiser web site URL into the database 40. '361 Patent – col. 17, ll. 9-18 As indicated above and shown in FIG. 2, a routine displaying the account management menu 170 may be invoked from the advertiser main menu 120. Aside from the "Allocate Money Between Subaccounts" selection described above, the remaining selections all use to some extent the **search listings** present in the advertiser's account on the database, and may also affect the advertiser's entry in the search result list. '361 Patent – col. 18, ll. 37-53 As shown in the campaign management menu 170 of FIG. 2, several choices are presented to the advertiser to manage **search listings**. First, in the "Change Bids" selection, the advertiser may change the bid of **search listings** currently in the account. The process invoked by the system for the change bids function is shown in FIG. 8. After the advertiser indicates the intent to change bids by selecting the "Change Bids" menu option, the system searches the user's account in the database and displays the **search listings** for the entire account or a default subaccount in the advertiser's account, as shown in step 810. **Search listings** may be grouped into subaccounts defined by the advertiser and may comprise one or more **search listings**. Only one	

	subaccount may be displayed at a time. The display should also preferably permit the advertiser to change the subaccount selected, as shown in step 815. The screen display will then show the **search listings** for the selected subaccount, as indicated in step 820. '361 Patent – col. 19, ll. 50-54 For example, the system may invoke a routine to locate the **search listing** in the search database having the desired rank/search term combination, retrieve the associated bid amount of said combination, and then calculate a bid amount that is N cents higher; where N=1, for example. '361 Patent – col. 19, l. 59 - col. 20, l. 12 The "Modify Listing Component" selection on Account Management menu 170 of FIG. 2 may also generate a display similar to the format of FIG. 9. When the advertiser selects the "Modify Listing Component" option, the advertiser may input changes to the URL, title, or description of a **search listing** via web-based forms set up for each **search listing**. Similar to the process discussed above, the forms for the URL, title, and description fields may initially contain the old URL, title and description as default values. After the advertiser enters the desired changes, the advertiser may transmit a request to the system to update the changes. The system then displays a read-only confirmation screen, and then writes the changes to the persistent state (e.g., the user account database) after the advertiser approves the changes. A process similar to those discussed above may be implemented for changing any other peripheral options related to a **search listing**; for example, changing the matching options related to a bidded search term. Any recalculations of bids or ranks required by the changes may also be	

	determined in a manner similar to the processes discussed above. '361 Patent – col. 20, ll. 13-28 In the "Delete Bidded Search Term" option, the system retrieves all of the **search listings** in the account of the advertiser and displays the **search listings** in an organization and a format similar to the display of FIG. 9. Each **search listing** entry may include, instead of the new bid field, a check box for the advertiser to click on. The advertiser would then click to place a check (X) mark next to each search term to be deleted, although any other means known in the art for selecting one or more items from a list on a web page may be used. After the advertiser selects all the **search listings** to be deleted and requests that the system update the changes, the system preferably presents a read-only confirmation of the requested changes, and updates the advertiser's account only after the advertiser approves the changes. The "deleted" **search listings** are removed from the search database 36 and will not appear in subsequent searches. '361 Patent – col. 20, ll. 32-44 In the "Add Bidded Search Term" option, the system provides the advertiser with a display having a number of entry fields corresponding to the elements of a **search listing**. The advertiser then enters into each field information corresponding to the respective **search listing** element, including the search term, the web site URL, the web site title, the web site description, and the bid amount, as well as any other relevant information. After the advertiser has completed entering the data and has indicated thus to the system, the system returns a read-only confirmation screen to the advertiser. The system then creates a new **search listing** instance and writes it into the account database and the search database upon receiving approval from the	

	advertiser. Additional Citations to '361 Patent Figure 2 Figure 5 Abstract, ll. 19-34 Col. 4, ll. 55-60 Col. 7, ll. 6-15 Col. 12, ll. 21-29 Col. 13, ll. 9-16 Col. 14, ll. 25-27 Col. 17, ll. 19-34 Col. 17, l. 53 – col. 18, l. 14 Col. 19, ll. 8-37 Col. 22, ll. 22-27 Prosecution History of '361 Patent Davis Declaration in Support of Petition to Make Special, ¶ 7(e) **EXTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** Overture does not believe that extrinsic evidence is necessary to interpret this term, and therefore has not proffered or cited any extrinsic evidence. However, if the Court considers any extrinsic evidence offered by Google, Overture reserves the right to cite to any of Google's extrinsic evidence, in rebuttal.	

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	PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION:	PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION:
search result list Found in claims: 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67	a set of search listings that is obtained by calculation **DICTIONARY DEFINITIONS:** Search to examine (one or more files, as databases or texts) electronically, to locate specific items (The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, Second Edition, 1987) to examine data in a computer in order to locate items having a given property (Webster's New World College Dictionary, Third Edition, 1997) try to find something by looking or otherwise seeking carefully and thoroughly; an act of searching for someone or something (The New Oxford Dictionary of English 1998) to make a thorough examination of; look over carefully in order to find something; explore (The American Heritage College Dictionary, Fourth Edition, 2002) to look into or over carefully or thoroughly in an effort to find something (Merriam Webster's Unabridged Dictionary) Result something that happens as a consequence; outcome; a quantity, expression, etc. obtained by calculation (The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, Second Edition, 1987) something obtained by calculation or investigation (Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition, 1995) anything that comes about as a	the series of entries, selected from the database being searched by a searcher, arranged one after the other, containing the information responsive to the searcher's search **INTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** *'361 Patent Specification* Abstract, ll. 1-34; fig. 7; col. 2, ll. 24-67; col. 3, ll. 1-67; col. 4, ll. 1-19; 26-29; 34-67; col. 5, ll. 4-14, 25-27, 35-67; col. 6, ll. 1-8, 19-23, 57-58; 66-67; col. 7, ll. 1-2; col. 8, ll. 52-67; col. 9, ll. 1-18, 42-67; col. 10, ll. 1-35; col. 12, ll. 21-25, 40-67; col. 13, ll. 1-24; col. 14, ll. 8-20, 24-27; col. 17, ll. 16, 19-67; col. 18, ll. 1-36. **DICTIONARY DEFINITIONS:** The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 4th ed. The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, 2nd ed., Unabridged Webster's New World College Dictionary, 3rd ed. Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed. The New Oxford Dictionary of English **EXTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** www.tundrawolfpromotions.com at GOG 32230-31. searchengineoptimism.com at GOG 32242-43, 32246-47. www.searchengineposition.com at GOG 32252.

	consequence or outcome of some action, process, etc. (Webster's New World College Dictionary, Third Edition, 1997) a consequence, effect, or outcome of something (The New Oxford Dictionary of English 1998) the consequence of a particular action, operation, or course (The American Heritage College Dictionary, Fourth Edition, 2002) something obtained, achieved, or brought about by calculation, investigation, or similar activity (Merriam Webster's Unabridged Dictionary) List a series of names or other items written or printed together in a meaningful grouping or sequence so as to constitute a record; a series of records in a file (The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, Second Edition, 1987) a simple series of words or numerals (Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition, 1995) a series of names, words, numbers, etc. set forth in order (Webster's New World College Dictionary, Third Edition, 1997) a number of connected items or names written or printed consecutively, typically one below the other (The New Oxford Dictionary of English 1998) a series of names, words, or other items written, printed, or imagined one after the other (The American Heritage College Dictionary, Fourth Edition, 2002) a simple series of words or numerals (as the names of persons or objects); index, catalog, checklist (Merriam Webster's Unabridged Dictionary)	Documents produced by Overture: OVGE 52678, 52692, 52950, 52961, 52966-67, 52976, 53032, 53035, 53039, 53059, 53062, 53072-73, 53076-78, 53082, 53129-30, 53133, 53144, 53151, 53482, 53484, 53493, 53521, 53524-26, 53528, 53561, 53563, 53568-69, 53573, 53580, 53584, 53590, 53596, 53600, 53638, 53640, 53645-46, 53650, 53712, 54303, 54312, 55954, 55967, 55981, 55991-92, 55995-97, 56001, 56983, 59003, 59009-11, 59014, 59233-38, 59309, OVG 31561, 31563, 31565-67, 31576, 31578, 31579, 31583-85.

	INTRINSIC EVIDENCE: '361 Patent – col. 8, l. 53 – col. 9, l. 7 A search engine program permits network users, upon navigating to the search engine web server URL or sites on other web servers capable of submitting queries to the search engine web server 24 through their browser program 16, to type keyword queries to identify pages of interest among the millions of pages available on the World Wide Web. In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the search engine web server 24 generates a **search result list** that includes, at least in part, relevant entries obtained from and formatted by the results of the bidding process conducted by the account management server 22. The search engine web server 24 generates a list of hypertext links to documents that contain information relevant to search terms entered by the user at the client computer 12. The search engine web server transmits this list, in the form of a web page, to the network user, where it is displayed on the browser 16 running on the client computer 12. A presently preferred embodiment of the search engine web server may be found by navigating to the web page at URL http://www.goto.com/. In addition, the search result list web page, an example of which is presented in FIG. 7, will be discussed below in further detail. '361 Patent – col. 10, ll. 16-21 When the searcher has finished entering the search term, the searcher may transmit the query to the search engine web server 24 by clicking on a provided hyperlink. The search engine web server 24 will then generate a search result list page and transmit this page to the searcher at the client computer 12. '361 Patent – col. 6, ll. 1-8 The rank value determines the position where the promoter's web	

	site description will appear on the search results list page that is generated when the search term is entered into the query box on the search engine by a searcher. A higher bid will result in a higher rank value and a more advantageous placement, which is preferably near the beginning of the search results list page. '361 Patent – col. 17, ll. 19-26 When a remote searcher accesses the search query page on the search engine web server 24 and executes a search request according to the procedure described previously, the search engine web server 24 preferably generates and displays a **search result list** where the "canonicalized" entry in search term field of each search listing in the **search result list** exactly matches the canonicalized search term query entered by the remote searcher. '361 Patent – col. 17, ll. 53-56 An example of a search result list display used in an embodiment of the present invention is shown in FIG. 7, which is a display of the first several entries resulting from a search for the term "zip drives". Additional Citations to '361 Patent Figure 7 Abstract, ll. 1-4 Abstract, ll. 27-32 Col. 4, ll. 60-64 Col. 5, ll. 35-52 Col. 7, ll. 6-15 Col. 9, l. 42 – col. 10, l. 6 Col. 12, ll. 21-25 Col. 12, l. 40 – col. 13, l. 2 Col. 14, ll. 8-17 Col. 17, l. 56 – col. 18, l. 36 Col. 27, ll. 65-67 Col. 28, ll. 1-3 Col. 30, ll. 10-12 Patent Applications Claiming Priority to the '361 Patent Application Soulanille U.S. Patent App. (GOG 32122-51) at ¶¶ 110-132.	

	EXTRINSIC EVIDENCE: Overture does not believe that extrinsic evidence is necessary to interpret this term, and therefore has not proffered or cited any extrinsic evidence. However, if the Court considers any extrinsic evidence offered by Google, Overture reserves the right to cite to any of Google's extrinsic evidence, in rebuttal.	

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[modifiable] bid amount Found in claims: 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67	**PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION:** a quantity of money [which can be changed] that a customer or client is willing to pay per click **DICTIONARY DEFINITIONS:** Modifiable capable of being modified (Merriam Webster's Unabridged Dictionary) Modify to change somewhat the form or qualities of; alter partially; amend (The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, Second Edition, 1987) to make minor changes in (Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition, 1995) to change or alter; esp., to change slightly or partially in character, form, etc. (Webster's New World College Dictionary, Third Edition, 1997) make partial or minor changes to (something), typically so as to improve it or to make it less extreme (The New Oxford Dictionary of English 1998) to change in form or character; alter (The American Heritage College Dictionary, Fourth Edition, 2002) to make minor changes in the form or structure of : alter without transforming (Merriam Webster's Unabridged Dictionary) Bid an offer of a price, especially at an auction (The New Oxford	**PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION:** the price the website promoter will pay upon occurrence of a triggering event [changes to which can be controlled by the website promoter] **INTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** *'361 Patent Specification* Abstract, ll. 8-13, 19-34; fig. 2; fig. 5; fig. 7; fig. 8; fig. 9; col. 3, ll. 54-67, col. 4, ll. 1-9, 20-39, 65-67; col. 5, ll. 1-67; col.6, ll. 1-35, 43-44, 51-52, 57-62; col. 8, ll. 59-65; col. 9, ll. 19-67; col. 10, ll. 1-7, 36-58; col. 12, ll. 21-31, 40-55; col. 13, ll. 3-24, 50-56; col. 14, ll. 11-17; col. 18, ll. 8-28, 37-67; col. 19, ll. 1-17, 31-58; col. 20, ll. 33-67; col. 21, ll. 1-65. *Microfiche Appendix to '361 Patent Application* <goto/content/jhdocs/about /advertisers/mediakit /rates.jhtml> at 2.[1] *File History* Davis Decl. in Supp. of Petition to Make Special, at ¶ 7(c)-(e) & Exhs. 10-11, 17, 20-21. Jan. 12, 2000 Preliminary Amendment at 1-8. Jan. 17, 2000 Office Action (misdated Jan. 17, 1999) at 2-3. April 6, 2000 Response at 2. June 18, 2000 Office Action at 2-3. March 23, 2001 Notice of Allowability at 2-3.

[1] The first two pages of this document are on the final two frames of the microfiche sheet labeled OVG 022003 ("Consumer Site (J) HTML 1 of 4," Series 33, Fiche # 1 of 2) and the last two pages are on the third and fourth frames of the microfiche sheet labeled OVG 022004 ("Consumer Site (J) HTML 1 of 4," Series 33, Fiche # 2 of 2).

	Dictionary of English 1998) an offer or proposal or a price; the amount offered or proposed (The American Heritage College Dictionary, Fourth Edition, 2002) to offer (a price) whether for payment or acceptance (Merriam Webster's Unabridged Dictionary) Amount quantity; measure (The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, Second Edition, 1987) the total number or quantity (Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition, 1995) a quantity (Webster's New World College Dictionary, Third Edition, 1997) a quantity of something, especially the total of a thing or things in number, size, value, or extent (The New Oxford Dictionary of English 1998) a number; a sum (The American Heritage College Dictionary, Fourth Edition, 2002) the total number or quantity (Merriam Webster's Unabridged Dictionary) **INTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** Microfiche Appendix to '361 Patent The bid price is the amount you're willing to pay for a user to click-through to your site from the GoTo search results listings after they have performed a search on one of your search terms. (See frames 81-82 of the microfiche sheet labeled OVG 022003). '361 Patent – Abstract, ll. 19-24 The network information provider influences the position for a search listing through a continuous online competitive bidding process. The	*Prior Art Cited in the File History* OVG 001402. *Patent Applications Claiming Priority to the '361 Patent Application* Soulanille U.S. Patent App. (GOG 32122-51) at ¶ 93. Singh et al. U.S. Patent App. (GOG 32152-206) at ¶¶ 17-19, 30. **DICTIONARY DEFINITIONS:** Webster's New World College Dictionary, 4th ed. The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, 2nd ed., Unabridged Webster's New World College Dictionary, 3rd ed. Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed. The New Oxford Dictionary of English **EXTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** Roth et al. U.S. Patent (GOG 31921-46) at col. 2, ll. 20-65; col. 3 l. 51 – col. 4, l. 25; col. 4, l. 58 – col. 5, l. 63; col.7, ll.11-33; col. 8, ll. 29-31; col. 8, ll. 44-48); figs. 2B & 6C. Colorstamps, Inc. PCT Patent App. (GOG 32061-121) at 10:6-12:3, 19:9-20:3, 23:20-28. Cheung et al. U.S. Patent App. (GOG 32207-24) (whole document). pages.ebay.com at GOG 32225-27. www.alphastudiosinc.com at GOG 32228. www.tundrawolfpromotions.com at GOG 32231.

	bidding process occurs when the network information provider enters a new **bid amount**, which is preferably a money amount, for a search listing. '361 Patent – col. 6, ll. 8-15 Preferably, the quantity used in the competitive bidding process is a money amount that the web site promoter will pay to an owner of the Internet search engine each time the advertiser's web site is referred by the search engine. Most preferably, this money amount will be deducted from an account balance that is retained in the promoter's account for each time the promoter's web site is referred by the search engine. '361 Patent – col. 9, ll. 45-52 In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the amount bid by an advertiser comprises a money amount that is deducted from the account of the advertiser for each time the advertiser's web site is accessed via a hyperlink on the search result list page. A searcher "clicks" on the hyperlink with a computer input device to initiate a retrieval request to retrieve the information associated with the advertiser's hyperlink. '361 Patent – col. 19, ll. 38-58 Many of the other selections listed in the "Account Management" menu 170 of FIG. 2 function as variants of the "Change Bid" function described above. For example, if the advertiser selects the "Change Rank Position" option, the advertiser may be presented with a display similar to the display of FIG. 9 used in the "Change Bid" function. However, in the "Change Rank Position" option, the "New Bid" field would be replaced by a "New Rank" field, in which the advertiser enters the new desired rank position for a search term. After the advertiser requests that the ranks be updated, the system then calculates a new bid price by any of a variety of algorithms easily available to one skilled in the art.	www.payperclickanalyst.com at GOG 32234-41. searchengineoptimism.com at GOG 32244-45. www.searchengineposition.com at GOG 32252. www.searchengines.com at GOG 32255. searchenginesinfo.com at GOG 32256. Documents produced by Overture: OVGE 52650-52, 52678, 52950, 53035, 53130, 53484, 53521, 53563, 53580, 53640, 55954, 59019, 59309, Depo. Exh. 15 at 1.

	For example, the system may invoke a routine to locate the search listing in the search database having the desired rank/search term combination, retrieve the associated **bid amount** of said combination, and then calculate a **bid amount** that is N cents higher; where N=1, for example. After the system calculates the new bid price and presents a read-only confirmation display to the advertiser, the system updates the bid prices and rank values upon receiving approval from the advertiser. '361 Patent – col. 18, l. 66 – col. 19, l. 4 As shown in step 840 of FIG. 8, upon receiving the request to update the advertiser's bids, the system calculates the new current bid amounts for every search listing displayed, the rank values, and the bid amount needed to become the highest ranked search listing matching the search term field. '361 Patent – col. 20, ll. 6-12 A process similar to those discussed above may be implemented for changing any other peripheral options related to a search listing; for example, changing the matching options related to a bidded search term. Any recalculations of bids or ranks required by the changes may also be determined in a manner similar to the processes discussed above. Additional Citations to '361 Patent Figure 5 Figure 8 Figure 9 Col. 4, l. 65 – col 5, l. 34 Col. 5, ll. 53-65 Col. 6, ll. 28-34 Col. 7, ll. 6-15 Col. 13, ll. 3-9 Col. 13, ll. 50-56 Col. 18, l. 37 – col. 19, l. 17	

	Patent Applications Claiming Priority to the '361 Patent Application Singh *et al.* U.S. Patent App. (GOG 32152-206) at ¶ 264. **EXTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** Overture does not believe that extrinsic evidence is necessary to interpret this term, and therefore has not proffered or cited any extrinsic evidence. However, if the Court considers any extrinsic evidence offered by Google, Overture reserves the right to cite to any of Google's extrinsic evidence, in rebuttal.	

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a modifiable bid amount that is **independent of** other components of the search listing Found in claims: 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67	**PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION:** a modifiable bid amount that is **not dependent or contingent upon** other components of the search listing **DICTIONARY DEFINITIONS:** Independent not dependent; not depending or contingent upon something else for existence, operation, etc. (The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, Second Edition, 1987) not dependent: as not subject to control by others (Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition, 1995) not connected or related to another, to each other, or to a group; separate (Webster's New World College Dictionary, Third Edition, 1997) not connected with another or each other (The New Oxford Dictionary of English 1998) not determined or influenced by someone or something else; not contingent (The American Heritage College Dictionary, Fourth Edition, 2002) not dependent: as not subject to control by others (Merriam Webster's Unabridged Dictionary) **INTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** '361 Patent – col. 18, ll. 37-47 As shown in the campaign management menu 170 of FIG. 2, several choices are presented to the advertiser to manage search listings. First, in the "Change Bids" selection, the advertiser may change the bid of search listings currently in the account. The process invoked by the system for the change bids	**PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION:** modifiable bid amount that is **unconstrained by** other components of the search listing **INTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** *'361 Patent Specification* Title; Abstract, ll. 1-4, 14-34; fig. 2; fig. 7; fig. 8; fig. 9; col. 2, ll. 46-67; col. 3, ll. 12-15, 42-67; col. 4, ll. 1-19, 26-29, 34-39, 59-60, 65-67; col. 5, ll. 1-67; col. 6, ll. 1-15, 43-44, 57-62; col. 8, ll. 59-64; col. 9, ll. 25-30, 42-45; col. 10, ll. 27-35; col. 12, ll. 21-25, 40-55; col. 13, ll. 9-24; col. 14, ll. 8-16; col. 18, ll. 4-28, 30-36, 66-67; col. 19, ll. 1-5, 10-15, 38-58; col. 20, ll. 66-67; col. 21, ll. 1-65. *Prior Art Cited in the File History* OVG 001222, 001226, 001229, 001232, 001235, 001236, 001242, 001249, 001251, 001254, 001366, 001402. **DICTIONARY DEFINITIONS:** The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, 2nd ed., Unabridged Webster's New World College Dictionary, 3rd ed. Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed. The New Oxford Dictionary of English **EXTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** Roth et al. U.S. Patent (GOG 31921-46) at col. 2, ll. 20-65; col. 3 l. 51 – col. 4, l. 25; col. 4, l. 58 – col. 5, l. 63; col.7, ll.11-33; col. 8, ll. 29-31; col. 8, ll. 44-48); figs. 2B & 6C.

		function is shown in FIG. 8. After the advertiser indicates the intent to change bids by selecting the "Change Bids" menu option, the system searches the user's account in the database and displays the search listings for the entire account or a default subaccount in the advertiser's account, as shown in step 810. '361 Patent – col. 18, l. 54 – col. 19, l. 7 An example of screen display shown to the advertiser in step 810 is shown in FIG. 9 and will be discussed below. To change bids, the advertiser user may specify new bids for search terms for which the advertiser already has an existing bid by entering a new bid amount into the new bid input field for the search term. The advertiser-entered bid changes are displayed to the advertiser at step 820 of FIG. 8 as discussed above. To update the bids for the display page, the advertiser requests, at step 830 of FIG. 8, to update the result of changes. The advertiser may transmit such a request to the account management server by a variety of means, including clicking on a button graphic. As shown in step 840 of FIG. 8, upon receiving the request to update the advertiser's bids, the system calculates the new current bid amounts for every search listing displayed, the rank values, and the bid amount needed to become the highest ranked search listing matching the search term field. Preferably, the system then presents a display of changes at step 850. After the user confirms the changes, the system updates the persistent state by writing the changes to the account in the database. Col. 19, ll. 31-37 The advertiser may specify a new bid for a displayed search listing by entering a new bid amount into the new bid input field 908 for the search listing. To update the result of the advertiser-entered changes,	Colorstamps, Inc. PCT Patent App. (GOG 32061-121) at 10:6-12:3, 19:9-20:3, 23:20-28. Cheung et al. U.S. Patent App. (GOG 32207-24) (whole document). pages.ebay.com at GOG 32225-27. www.alphastudiosinc.com at GOG 32228. www.tundrawolfpromotions.com at GOG 32231. www.payperclickanalyst.com at GOG 32234-41. searchengineoptimism.com at GOG 32244-45. www.searchengineposition.com at GOG 32252. www.searchengines.com at GOG 32255. searchenginesinfo.com at GOG 32256. Documents produced by Overture: OVGE 52650-52, 52678, 52950, 53035, 53130, 53484, 53521, 53563, 53580, 53640, 55954, 59019, 59309, Depo. Exh. 15 at 1.

	the advertiser clicks on button graphic 912 to transmit an update request to the account management server, which updates the bids as described above. Col. 19, ll. 38-47 Many of the other selections listed in the "Account Management" menu 170 of FIG. 2 function as variants of the "Change Bid" function described above. For example, if the advertiser selects the "Change Rank Position" option, the advertiser may be presented with a display similar to the display of FIG. 9 used in the "Change Bid" function. However, in the "Change Rank Position" option, the "New Bid" field would be replaced by a "New Rank" field, in which the advertiser enters the new desired rank position for a search term. Additional Citations to '361 Patent Figure 2 Figure 5 Figure 8 Figure 9 Abstract, ll. 1-34 Col. 6, ll. 16-34 Col. 7, ll. 6-15 Col. 12, l. 21 – col. 13, l. 24 Col. 18, ll. 47-53 Col. 19, ll. 7-37 Col. 19, l. 47 – col. 20, l. 65 **EXTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** Overture does not believe that extrinsic evidence is necessary to interpret this term, and therefore has not proffered or cited any extrinsic evidence. However, if the Court considers any extrinsic evidence offered by Google, Overture reserves the right to cite to any of Google's extrinsic evidence, in rebuttal.	

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ordering . . . **in accordance with** the values of the respective bid amounts Found in claims: 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13	**PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION:** ordering **in agreement with** the values of the respective bid amounts **DICTIONARY DEFINITIONS:** Accordance agreement; conformity (The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, Second Edition, 1987) agreement, conformity (Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition, 1995) agreement; harmony; conformity (Webster's New World College Dictionary, Third Edition, 1997) in a manner conforming with (The New Oxford Dictionary of English 1998) agreement, conformity (The American Heritage College Dictionary, Fourth Edition, 2002) agreement, accord (Merriam Webster's Unabridged Dictionary) **INTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** '361 Patent – Abstract, ll. 19-34 The network information provider influences a position for a search listing in the provider's account by first selecting a search term relevant to the content of the web site or other information source to be listed. The network information provider enters the search term and the description into a search listing. The network information provider influences the position for a search listing through a continuous online competitive bidding process. The bidding process occurs when the network information provider enters a new bid amount, which is preferably a money amount, for a	**PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION:** ordering . . . **in conformance with** the values of the respective bid amounts **INTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** *'361 Patent Specification* Title; Abstract, ll. 1-4, 14-34; fig. 2; fig. 7; fig. 8; fig. 9; col. 2, ll. 46-67; col. 3, ll. 12-15, 42-67; col. 4, ll. 1-19, 26-29, 34-39, 59-60, 65-67; col. 5, ll. 1-67; col. 6, ll. 1-15, 43-44, 57-62; col. 8, ll. 59-64; col. 9, ll. 25-30, 42-45; col. 10, ll. 27-35; col. 12, ll. 21-25, 40-55; col. 13, ll. 9-24; col. 14, ll. 8-16; col. 18, ll. 4-28, 30-36, 66-67; col. 19, ll. 1-5, 10-15, 38-58; col. 20, ll. 66-67; col. 21, ll. 1-65. *Microfiche Appendix to '361 Patent Application* <goto/content/jhdocs/about /advertisers/mediakit /rates.jhtml> at 2. *File History* Davis Decl. in Supp. of Petition to Make Special, at ¶ 7(c)-(e) & Exhs. 10-11, 17, 20-21. Nov. 8, 2000 Office Action at 4. *Prior Art Cited in the File History* OVG 001222, 001226, 001229, 001232, 001235, 001236, 001242, 001249, 001251, 001254, 001366. **DICTIONARY DEFINITIONS:** The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, 2nd ed., Unabridged Webster's New World College Dictionary, 3rd ed.

	search listing. The system and method of the present invention then compares this bid amount with all other bid amounts for the same search term, and generates a rank value for all search listings having that search term. The rank value generated by the bidding process determines where the network information providers listing will appear on the search results list page that is generated in response to a query of the search term by a searcher located at a client computer on the computer network. A higher bid by a network information provider will result in a higher rank value and a more advantageous placement. '361 Patent – col. 3, l. 51 – col. 4, l. 9 Ideally, web site promoters should be able to control their placement in search result listings so that their listings are prominent in searches that are relevant to the content of their web site. The search engine functionality of the Internet needs to be focused in a new direction to facilitate an on-line marketplace which offers consumers quick, easy and relevant search results while providing Internet advertisers and promoters with a cost-effective way to target consumers. A consumer utilizing a search engine that facilitates this on-line marketplace will find companies or businesses that offer the products, services, or information that the consumer is seeking. In this on-line marketplace, companies selling products, services, or information bid in an open auction environment for positions on a search result list generated by an Internet search engine. Since advertisers must pay for each click-through referral generated through the search result lists generated by the search engine, advertisers have an incentive to select and bid on those search keywords that are most relevant to their web site offerings. The higher an advertiser's position on a search	Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed. The New Oxford Dictionary of English **EXTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** www.searchengineposition.com at GOG 32252. Documents produced by Overture: Depo. Exh. 15 at 1.

	result list, the higher likelihood of a "referral"; that is, the higher the likelihood that a consumer will be referred to the advertiser's web site through the search result list. The openness of this advertising marketplace is further facilitated by publicly displaying, to consumers and other advertisers, the price bid by an advertiser on a particular search result listing. '361 Patent – col. 4, l. 55 – col. 5, l. 40 More particularly, the present invention relates to a system and method to enable a web site promoter to define a search listing for a search result list, select a search term relevant to the promoter's web site, and influence a search result list position for the search listing on an Internet search engine. When an Internet user enters the search terms in a search engine query, the search engine will generate a search result list with the web site promoter's listing in a position influenced by one or more parameters defined by the promoter. In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, a web site promoter selects a search term and influences a position within the search result list generated by that search term by participating in an online competitive bidding process. This online competitive bidding process is known as a "pay-for-performance" process and may be employed in conjunction with an Internet search engine. "Pay-for-performance" applies market principles to advertising on the Internet. Conventional Internet search engines do not provide a way for web site promoters to easily predict the position of their web site in search results or guarantee their appearance in search results containing their web site description. A tool enabling advertisers to target web search terms relevant to their business and to pinpoint the placement of their web site description within the search results	

	provides a powerful advantage to businesses and others seeking to increase their web exposure. Furthermore, a competitive bidding process and pricing based on number of web site referrals generated helps ensure that the pricing structure reflects the market and is accessible to advertisers of all budget sizes. To participate in the process, an advertiser, such as a web site promoter, may access the advertiser's user account through a secure web site. The advertiser may use the account to place bids on search terms that are relevant to the advertiser's web site. Each bid is specific to a search term web site combination and corresponds to a money amount that the advertiser will pay to the owner of the search engine each time a searcher clicks on the advertiser's hyperlinked listing in the search result list generated by the search engine. The searcher's click will result in an access request being sent to the advertiser's web site, which will respond by transmitting the advertiser's web page to the searcher's browser. The charge to the advertiser for the placement is therefore directly proportional to the benefit received, since the charge is based on the number of referrals to the advertiser's web site that were generated by the search engine. The higher the bid, the more advantageous the placement in the search result list that is generated when the bidded search term is entered by a searcher using the search engine. The search result list is arranged in order of decreasing bid amount, with the search listing corresponding to the highest bids displayed first to the searcher. '361 Patent – col. 5, l. 53 – col. 6, l. 8 According to a first embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a system and method for enabling the web site promoters to influence a position for a search	

	listing within a search result list generated by an Internet search engine. The web site promoter first selects a search term comprising one or more keywords relevant to the content of the web site to be listed. The web site promoter influences the rank position for the search listing through an ongoing online competitive bidding process with other web site promoters. The bidding process occurs when an advertiser enters a new bid amount for an existing search listing or enters a bid amount for a new search listing. Preferably, the promoter's bid is then processed in real time. This bid amount is compared with all other bid amounts from other promoters for the same search term, and generates new rank values for all search listings having that search term. The rank value determines the position where the promoter's web site description will appear on the search results list page that is generated when the search term is entered into the query box on the search engine by a searcher. A higher bid will result in a higher rank value and a more advantageous placement, which is preferably near the beginning of the search results list page. '361 Patent – col. 9, ll. 42-45 The higher bids receive more advantageous placement on the search result list page generated by the search engine 24 when a search using the search term bid on by the advertiser is executed. '361 Patent – col. 13, ll. 9-24 Finally, a rank value is a value generated dynamically, preferably by the processing system 34 of the account management server 22 shown in FIG. 1, each time an advertiser places a bid or a search enters a search query. The rank value of an advertiser's search listing determines the placement location of the advertiser's entry in the search result list generated when a search is executed on the corresponding	

search term. Preferably, rank value is an ordinal value determined in a direct relationship to the bid amount 358; the higher the bid amount, the higher the rank value, and the more advantageous the placement location on the search result list. Most preferably, the rank value of 1 is assigned to the highest bid amount with successively higher ordinal values (e.g., 2, 3, 4, . . .) associated with successively lower ranks and assigned to successively lower bid amounts.

'361 Patent – col. 18, ll. 4-28
Search result list entries 710a-710h may also show the rank value of the advertiser's search listing. The rank value is an ordinal value, preferably a number, generated and assigned to the search listing by the processing system 34 of FIG. 1. Preferably, the rank value is assigned through a process, implemented in software, that establishes an association between the bid amount, the rank, and the search term of a search listing. The process gathers all search listings that match a particular search term, sorts the search listings in order from highest to lowest bid amount, and assigns a rank value to each search listing in order. The highest bid amount receives the highest rank value, the next highest bid amount receives the next highest rank value, proceeding to the lowest bid amount, which receives the lowest rank value. Most preferably, the highest rank value is 1 with successively increasing ordinal values (e.g., 2, 3, 4, . . .) assigned in order of successively decreasing rank. The correlation between rank value and bid amount is illustrated in FIG. 7, where each of the paid search list entries 710a through 710f display the advertiser's bid amount 750a through 750f for that entry. Preferably, if two search listings having the same search term also have the same bid amount, the bid that was received earlier in time will be assigned the higher rank value. Unpaid listings 710g and

	710h do not display a bid amount and are displayed following the lowest-ranked paid listing. '361 Patent – col. 19, ll. 38-58 Many of the other selections listed in the "Account Management" menu 170 of FIG. 2 function as variants of the "Change Bid" function described above. For example, if the advertiser selects the "Change Rank Position" option, the advertiser may be presented with a display similar to the display of FIG. 9 used in the "Change Bid" function. However, in the "Change Rank Position" option, the "New Bid" field would be replaced by a "New Rank" field, in which the advertiser enters the new desired rank position for a search term. After the advertiser requests that the ranks be updated, the system then calculates a new bid price by any of a variety of algorithms easily available to one skilled in the art. For example, the system may invoke a routine to locate the search listing in the search database having the desired rank/search term combination, retrieve the associated bid amount of said combination, and then calculate a bid amount that is N cents higher; where N=1, for example. After the system calculates the new bid price and presents a read-only confirmation display to the advertiser, the system updates the bid prices and rank values upon receiving approval from the advertiser. '361 Patent – col. 20, l. 66 – col. 21, l. 53 The "Account Management" menu 170 of FIG. 2 also preferably provides advertisers with a "Project Expenses" selection. In this selection, the advertiser specifies a search listing or subaccount for which the advertiser would like to predict a "daily run rate" and "days remaining to expiration." The system calculates the projections based on a cost projection algorithm, and displays the predictions to the advertiser on a read-only screen.	

	The predictions may be calculated using a number of different algorithms known in the art. However, since the cost of a search listing is calculated by multiplying the bid amount by the total number of clicks received by the search listing at that bid amount during a specified time period, every cost projection algorithm must generally determine an estimated number of clicks per month (or other specified time period) for a search listing. The clicks on a search listing may be tracked via implementation of a software counting mechanism as is well known in the art. Clicks for all search listings may be tracked over time, this data may be used to generate estimated numbers of clicks per month overall, and for individual search terms. For a particular search term, an estimated number of searches per day is determined and is multiplied by the cost of a click. This product is then multiplied by a ratio of the average number of clicks over the average number of impressions for the rank of the search listing in question to obtain a daily run rate. The current balance may be divided by the daily run rate to obtain a projected number of days to exhaustion or "expiration" of account funds. One embodiment of the present invention bases the cost projection algorithm on a simple predictor model that assumes that every search term performs in a similar fashion. This model assumes that the rank of the advertiser's search listing will remain constant and not fluctuate throughout the month. This algorithm has the advantages of being simple to implement and fast to calculate. The predictor model is based on the fact that the click through rate, e.g. the total number of clicks, or referrals, for a particular searcher listing, is considered to be a function of the rank of the search listing. The model therefore assumes that the usage curve of each search term, that is, the curve that result when the number of clicks on a	

	search listing is plotted against the rank of the search listing, is similar to the usage curve for all search terms. Thus, known values extrapolated over time for the sum of all clicks for all search terms, the sum of all clicks at a given rank for all search terms, and the sum of all clicks for the selected search term may be employed in a simple proportion to determine the total of all clicks for the given rank for the selected search term. The estimated daily total of all clicks for the selected search term at the selected rank is then multiplied by the advertiser's current bid amount for the search term at that rank to determine a daily expense projection. In addition, if particular search terms or classes of search terms are known to differ markedly from the general pattern, correction values specific to the search term, advertiser, or other parameter may be introduced to fine-tune the projected cost estimate. Additional Citations to '361 Patent Figure 7 Col. 7, ll. 6-15 **EXTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** Overture does not believe that extrinsic evidence is necessary to interpret this term, and therefore has not proffered or cited any extrinsic evidence. However, if the Court considers any extrinsic evidence offered by Google, Overture reserves the right to cite to any of Google's extrinsic evidence, in rebuttal.	

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	PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION:	PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION:
arranged in an order **determined using** the bid amounts Found in claims: 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 48	arranged in an order **ascertained by an analysis that utilizes** the bid amounts	arranged in an order **established by** the bid amounts
position . . . **determined using** the bid amount Found in claim: 14, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67	position . . . **ascertained by an analysis that utilizes** the bid amount **DICTIONARY DEFINITIONS:** Determine to conclude or ascertain, as after reasoning, observation, etc. (The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, Second Edition, 1987) to find out or come to a decision about by investigation, reasoning, or calculation (Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition, 1995) to reach a decision about after thought and investigation; decide upon (Webster's New World College Dictionary, Third Edition, 1997) ascertain or establish exactly, typically as a result of research or calculation (The New Oxford Dictionary of English 1998) to establish or ascertain definitively, as after investigation or calculation (The American Heritage College Dictionary, Fourth Edition, 2002) to come to a decision concerning as the result of investigation or reasoning (Merriam Webster's Unabridged Dictionary)	position . . . **established by** the bid amount **INTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** *'361 Patent Specification* Title; Abstract, ll. 1-4, 14-34; fig. 2; fig. 7; fig. 8; fig. 9; col. 2, ll. 46-67; col. 3, ll. 12-15, 42-67; col. 4, ll. 1-19, 26-29, 34-39, 59-60, 65-67; col. 5, ll. 1-67; col. 6, ll. 1-15, 43-44, 57-62; col. 8, ll. 59-64; col. 9, ll. 25-30, 42-45; col. 10, ll. 27-35; col. 12, ll. 21-25, 40-55; col. 13, ll. 9-24; col. 14, ll. 8-16; col. 18, ll. 4-28, 30-36, 66-67; col. 19, ll. 1-5, 10-15, 38-58; col. 20, ll. 66-67; col. 21, ll. 1-65 *Microfiche Appendix to '361 Patent Application* <goto/content/jhdocs/about /advertisers/mediakit /rates.jhtml> at 2. *File History* Davis Decl. in Supp. of Petition to Make Special, ¶ 2(b) & Exhs. 1-2 & 4. *Prior Art Cited in the File History* OVG 001222, 001226, 001229, 001232, 001235, 001236, 001242, 001249, 001251, 001254, 001366, 001402.

	Using to employ for some purpose; put into service; make use of (The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, Second Edition, 1987) to put into action or service; synonyms USE, EMPLOY, UTILIZE (Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition, 1995) to put or bring into action or service; employ for or apply to a given purpose (Webster's New World College Dictionary, Third Edition, 1997) take, hold, or deploy (something) as a means of accomplishing a purpose or achieving a result; employ (The New Oxford Dictionary of English 1998) to put into action or service; synonyms EMPLOY, UTILIZE, APPLY, AVAIL (Merriam Webster's Unabridged Dictionary) **INTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** '361 Patent – col. 4, ll. 55-64 More particularly, the present invention relates to a system and method to enable a web site promoter to define a search listing for a search result list, select a search term relevant to the promoter's web site, and influence a search result list position for the search listing on an Internet search engine. When an Internet user enters the search terms in a search engine query, the search engine will generate a search result list with the web site promoter's listing in a position influenced by one or more parameters defined by the promoter. '361 Patent – Abstract, ll. 19-34 The network information provider influences a position for a search listing in the provider's account by first selecting a search term relevant	**DICTIONARY DEFINITIONS:** Merriam-Webster Unabridged (online) (GOG 32257-63) The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, 2nd ed., Unabridged Webster's New World College Dictionary, 3rd ed. Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed. The New Oxford Dictionary of English **EXTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** www.jsonline.com at GOG 1659-61. www.searchengineposition.com at GOG 32252. Documents produced by Overture: Depo. Exh. 15 at 1.

	to the content of the web site or other information source to be listed. The network information provider enters the search term and the description into a search listing. The network information provider influences the position for a search listing through a continuous online competitive bidding process. The bidding process occurs when the network information provider enters a new bid amount, which is preferably a money amount, for a search listing. The system and method of the present invention then compares this bid amount with all other bid amounts for the same search term, and generates a rank value for all search listings having that search term. The rank value generated by the bidding process determines where the network information providers listing will appear on the search results list page that is generated in response to a query of the search term by a searcher located at a client computer on the computer network. A higher bid by a network information provider will result in a higher rank value and a more advantageous placement. '361 Patent – col. 5, l. 53 – col. 6, l. 8 According to a first embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a system and method for enabling the web site promoters to influence a position for a search listing within a search result list generated by an Internet search engine. The web site promoter first selects a search term comprising one or more keywords relevant to the content of the web site to be listed. The web site promoter influences the rank position for the search listing through an ongoing online competitive bidding process with other web site promoters. The bidding process occurs when an advertiser enters a new bid amount for an existing search listing or enters a bid amount for a new search listing. Preferably, the promoter's	

	bid is then processed in real time. This bid amount is compared with all other bid amounts from other promoters for the same search term, and generates new rank values for all search listings having that search term. The rank value determines the position where the promoter's web site description will appear on the search results list page that is generated when the search term is entered into the query box on the search engine by a searcher. A higher bid will result in a higher rank value and a more advantageous placement, which is preferably near the beginning of the search results list page. '361 Patent – col. 18, ll. 4-28 Search result list entries 710a-710h may also show the rank value of the advertiser's search listing. The rank value is an ordinal value, preferably a number, generated and assigned to the search listing by the processing system 34 of FIG. 1. Preferably, the rank value is assigned through a process, implemented in software, that establishes an association between the bid amount, the rank, and the search term of a search listing. The process gathers all search listings that match a particular search term, sorts the search listings in order from highest to lowest bid amount, and assigns a rank value to each search listing in order. The highest bid amount receives the highest rank value, the next highest bid amount receives the next highest rank value, proceeding to the lowest bid amount, which receives the lowest rank value. Most preferably, the highest rank value is 1 with successively increasing ordinal values (e.g., 2, 3, 4, . . .) assigned in order of successively decreasing rank. The correlation between rank value and bid amount is illustrated in FIG. 7, where each of the paid search list entries 710a through 710f display the advertiser's bid amount 750a through 750f for that entry. Preferably, if two search listings having the same search term	

	also have the same bid amount, the bid that was received earlier in time will be assigned the higher rank value. Unpaid listings 710g and 710h do not display a bid amount and are displayed following the lowest-ranked paid listing. Addition Citations to '361 Patent Figure 7 Col. 7, ll. 6-15 Col. 25, ll. 65-67 Col. 26, ll. 1-7 Col. 30, ll. 1-9 **EXTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** Overture does not believe that extrinsic evidence is necessary to interpret this term, and therefore has not proffered or cited any extrinsic evidence. However, if the Court considers any extrinsic evidence offered by Google, Overture reserves the right to cite to any of Google's extrinsic evidence, in rebuttal.	

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arranged in an order **corresponding to** the bid amounts Found in claims: 30, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 49, 50, 51	**PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION:** arranged in an order **similar to** the order of the bid amounts **DICTIONARY DEFINITIONS:** Corresponding similar in position, purpose, form, etc. (The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, Second Edition, 1987) having or participating in the same relationship (as kind, degree, position, correspondence, or function) especially with regard to the same or like wholes (as geometric figures or sets)(~parts of similar triangles); RELATED, ACCOMPANYING (Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition, 1995) having the same or nearly the same relationship (The American Heritage College Dictionary, Fourth Edition, 2002) Correspond to be similar, analogous, or equal (to something) (Webster's New World College Dictionary, Third Edition, 1997) have a close similarity; match or agree almost exactly (The New Oxford Dictionary of English 1998) **INTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** '361 Patent – col. 4, l. 55 – col. 5, l. 37 More particularly, the present invention relates to a system and method to enable a web site promoter to define a search listing for a search result list, select a search term relevant to the promoter's web site, and influence a search result list position for the search listing on an Internet search engine. When an Internet user enters	**PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION:** arranged in an order **conforming to** the bid amounts **INTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** *'361 Patent Specification* Title; Abstract, ll. 1-4, 14-34; fig. 2; fig. 7; fig. 8; fig. 9; col. 2, ll. 46-67; col. 3, ll. 12-15, 42-67; col. 4, ll. 1-19, 26-29, 34-39, 59-60, 65-67; col. 5, ll. 1-67; col. 6, ll. 1-15, 43-44, 57-62; col. 8, ll. 59-64; col. 9, ll. 25-30, 42-45; col. 10, ll. 27-35; col. 12, ll. 21-25, 40-55; col. 13, ll. 9-24; col. 14, ll. 8-16; col. 18, ll. 4-28, 30-36, 66-67; col. 19, ll. 1-5, 10-15, 38-58; col. 20, ll. 66-67; col. 21, ll. 1-65. *Microfiche Appendix to '361 Patent Application* <goto/content/jhdocs/about /advertisers/mediakit /rates.jhtml> at 2. *File History* Davis Decl. in Supp. of Petition to Make Special, at ¶ 7(c)-(e) & Exhs. 10-11, 17, 20-21. *Prior Art Cited in the File History* OVG 001222, 001226, 001229, 001232, 001235, 001236, 001242, 001249, 001251, 001254, 001366, 001402. **DICTIONARY DEFINITIONS:** Merriam-Webster Unabridged (online) (GOG 32257-63) The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, 2nd ed., Unabridged Webster's New World College Dictionary, 3rd ed.

	the search terms in a search engine query, the search engine will generate a search result list with the web site promoter's listing in a position influenced by one or more parameters defined by the promoter. In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, a web site promoter selects a search term and influences a position within the search result list generated by that search term by participating in an online competitive bidding process. This online competitive bidding process is known as a "pay-for-performance" process and may be employed in conjunction with an Internet search engine. "Pay-for-performance" applies market principles to advertising on the Internet. Conventional Internet search engines do not provide a way for web site promoters to easily predict the position of their web site in search results or guarantee their appearance in search results containing their web site description. A tool enabling advertisers to target web search terms relevant to their business and to pinpoint the placement of their web site description within the search results provides a powerful advantage to businesses and others seeking to increase their web exposure. Furthermore, a competitive bidding process and pricing based on number of web site referrals generated helps ensure that the pricing structure reflects the market and is accessible to advertisers of all budget sizes. To participate in the process, an advertiser, such as a web site promoter, may access the advertiser's user account through a secure web site. The advertiser may use the account to place bids on search terms that are relevant to the advertiser's web site. Each bid is specific to a search term web site combination and corresponds to a money amount that the advertiser will pay to the owner of the search engine each time a searcher clicks on the advertiser's hyperlinked	Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed. The New Oxford Dictionary of English **EXTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** www.jsonline.com at GOG 1659-61. www.searchengineposition.com at GOG 32252. Documents produced by Overture: Depo. Exh. 15 at 1.

	listing in the search result list generated by the search engine. The searcher's click will result in an access request being sent to the advertiser's web site, which will respond by transmitting the advertiser's web page to the searcher's browser. The charge to the advertiser for the placement is therefore directly proportional to the benefit received, since the charge is based on the number of referrals to the advertiser's web site that were generated by the search engine. The higher the bid, the more advantageous the placement in the search result list that is generated when the bidded search term is entered by a searcher using the search engine. '361 Patent – Abstract, ll. 19-34 The network information provider influences a position for a search listing in the provider's account by first selecting a search term relevant to the content of the web site or other information source to be listed. The network information provider enters the search term and the description into a search listing. The network information provider influences the position for a search listing through a continuous online competitive bidding process. The bidding process occurs when the network information provider enters a new bid amount, which is preferably a money amount, for a search listing. The system and method of the present invention then compares this bid amount with all other bid amounts for the same search term, and generates a rank value for all search listings having that search term. The rank value generated by the bidding process determines where the network information providers listing will appear on the search results list page that is generated in response to a query of the search term by a searcher located at a client computer on the computer network. A higher bid by a network information provider will result in a higher rank	

	value and a more advantageous placement. '361 Patent – col. 3, l. 51 – col. 4, l. 9 Ideally, web site promoters should be able to control their placement in search result listings so that their listings are prominent in searches that are relevant to the content of their web site. The search engine functionality of the Internet needs to be focused in a new direction to facilitate an on-line marketplace which offers consumers quick, easy and relevant search results while providing Internet advertisers and promoters with a cost-effective way to target consumers. A consumer utilizing a search engine that facilitates this on-line marketplace will find companies or businesses that offer the products, services, or information that the consumer is seeking. In this on-line marketplace, companies selling products, services, or information bid in an open auction environment for positions on a search result list generated by an Internet search engine. Since advertisers must pay for each click-through referral generated through the search result lists generated by the search engine, advertisers have an incentive to select and bid on those search keywords that are most relevant to their web site offerings. The higher an advertiser's position on a search result list, the higher likelihood of a "referral"; that is, the higher the likelihood that a consumer will be referred to the advertiser's web site through the search result list. The openness of this advertising marketplace is further facilitated by publicly displaying, to consumers and other advertisers, the price bid by an advertiser on a particular search result listing. '361 Patent – col. 5, l. 53 – col. 6, l. 8 According to a first embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a system and method for	

	enabling the web site promoters to influence a position for a search listing within a search result list generated by an Internet search engine. The web site promoter first selects a search term comprising one or more keywords relevant to the content of the web site to be listed. The web site promoter influences the rank position for the search listing through an ongoing online competitive bidding process with other web site promoters. The bidding process occurs when an advertiser enters a new bid amount for an existing search listing or enters a bid amount for a new search listing. Preferably, the promoter's bid is then processed in real time. This bid amount is compared with all other bid amounts from other promoters for the same search term, and generates new rank values for all search listings having that search term. The rank value determines the position where the promoter's web site description will appear on the search results list page that is generated when the search term is entered into the query box on the search engine by a searcher. A higher bid will result in a higher rank value and a more advantageous placement, which is preferably near the beginning of the search results list page. '361 Patent – col. 9, ll. 42-45 The higher bids receive more advantageous placement on the search result list page generated by the search engine 24 when a search using the search term bid on by the advertiser is executed. '361 Patent – col. 13, ll. 9-20 Finally, a rank value is a value generated dynamically, preferably by the processing system 34 of the account management server 22 shown in FIG. 1, each time an advertiser places a bid or a search enters a search query. The rank value of an advertiser's search listing determines the placement location of the advertiser's entry in the search	

	result list generated when a search is executed on the corresponding search term. Preferably, rank value is an ordinal value determined in a direct relationship to the bid amount 358; the higher the bid amount, the higher the rank value, and the more advantageous the placement location on the search result list. '361 Patent – col. 18, ll. 4-11 Search result list entries 710a-710h may also show the rank value of the advertiser's search listing. The rank value is an ordinal value, preferably a number, generated and assigned to the search listing by the processing system 34 of FIG. 1. Preferably, the rank value is assigned through a process, implemented in software, that establishes an association between the bid amount, the rank, and the search term of a search listing. '361 Patent – col. 19, ll. 38-58 Many of the other selections listed in the "Account Management" menu 170 of FIG. 2 function as variants of the "Change Bid" function described above. For example, if the advertiser selects the "Change Rank Position" option, the advertiser may be presented with a display similar to the display of FIG. 9 used in the "Change Bid" function. However, in the "Change Rank Position" option, the "New Bid" field would be replaced by a "New Rank" field, in which the advertiser enters the new desired rank position for a search term. After the advertiser requests that the ranks be updated, the system then calculates a new bid price by any of a variety of algorithms easily available to one skilled in the art. For example, the system may invoke a routine to locate the search listing in the search database having the desired rank/search term combination, retrieve the associated bid amount of said combination, and then calculate a bid amount that is N cents higher; where N=1, for example. After the system calculates the new bid price and presents a	

	read-only confirmation display to the advertiser, the system updates the bid prices and rank values upon receiving approval from the advertiser. '361 Patent – col. 20, l. 66 – col. 21, l. 53 The "Account Management" menu 170 of FIG. 2 also preferably provides advertisers with a "Project Expenses" selection. In this selection, the advertiser specifies a search listing or subaccount for which the advertiser would like to predict a "daily run rate" and "days remaining to expiration." The system calculates the projections based on a cost projection algorithm, and displays the predictions to the advertiser on a read-only screen. The predictions may be calculated using a number of different algorithms known in the art. However, since the cost of a search listing is calculated by multiplying the bid amount by the total number of clicks received by the search listing at that bid amount during a specified time period, every cost projection algorithm must generally determine an estimated number of clicks per month (or other specified time period) for a search listing. The clicks on a search listing may be tracked via implementation of a software counting mechanism as is well known in the art. Clicks for all search listings may be tracked over time, this data may be used to generate estimated numbers of clicks per month overall, and for individual search terms. For a particular search term, an estimated number of searches per day is determined and is multiplied by the cost of a click. This product is then multiplied by a ratio of the average number of clicks over the average number of impressions for the rank of the search listing in question to obtain a daily run rate. The current balance may be divided by the daily run rate to obtain a projected number of days to exhaustion or "expiration" of account funds.	

	One embodiment of the present invention bases the cost projection algorithm on a simple predictor model that assumes that every search term performs in a similar fashion. This model assumes that the rank of the advertiser's search listing will remain constant and not fluctuate throughout the month. This algorithm has the advantages of being simple to implement and fast to calculate. The predictor model is based on the fact that the click through rate, e.g. the total number of clicks, or referrals, for a particular searcher listing, is considered to be a function of the rank of the search listing. The model therefore assumes that the usage curve of each search term, that is, the curve that result when the number of clicks on a search listing is plotted against the rank of the search listing, is similar to the usage curve for all search terms. Thus, known values extrapolated over time for the sum of all clicks for all search terms, the sum of all clicks at a given rank for all search terms, and the sum of all clicks for the selected search term may be employed in a simple proportion to determine the total of all clicks for the given rank for the selected search term. The estimated daily total of all clicks for the selected search term at the selected rank is then multiplied by the advertiser's current bid amount for the search term at that rank to determine a daily expense projection. In addition, if particular search terms or classes of search terms are known to differ markedly from the general pattern, correction values specific to the search term, advertiser, or other parameter may be introduced to fine-tune the projected cost estimate. <u>Additional Citations to '361 Patent</u> Figure 7 Col. 7, ll. 6-15 Col. 27, ll. 55-64	

	EXTRINSIC EVIDENCE: Overture does not believe that extrinsic evidence is necessary to interpret this term, and therefore has not proffered or cited any extrinsic evidence. However, if the Court considers any extrinsic evidence offered by Google, Overture reserves the right to cite to any of Google's extrinsic evidence, in rebuttal.	

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	PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION:	PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION:
in response to Found in claims: 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67	in reaction to **DICTIONARY DEFINITIONS:** Response an answer or reply, as in words or in some action (The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, Second Edition, 1987) something constituting a reply or reaction (Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition, 1995) something said or done in answer; reply or reaction (Webster's New World College Dictionary, Third Edition, 1997) a reaction to something (The New Oxford Dictionary of English 1998) a reply or answer (The American Heritage College Dictionary, Fourth Edition, 2002) an act or action of responding (as by an answer) (Merriam Webster's Unabridged Dictionary) **INTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** (1) Generating A Search Result List **In Response To** A Search Request '361 Patent – col. 10, ll. 16-21 When the searcher has finished entering the search term, the searcher may transmit the query to the search engine web server 24 by clicking on a provided hyperlink. The search engine web server 24 will then generate a search result list page and transmit this page to the searcher at the client computer 12. '361 Patent – Abstract, ll. 27-32 The rank value generated by the bidding process determines where the network information providers	in fulfillment of **INTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** *'361 Patent Specification* Figure 7; Column 2, ll. 24-35, 42-67; col. 3, ll. 6-45, 54-62; col. 4, ll. 34-39, 51-67; col. 5, ll. 1-14, 35-50; col. 6, ll. 56-58; col. 8, ll. 52-67; col. 9, ll. 1-18, 42-44; col. 10, ll. 7-35; col.17, ll. 53-67; col.18, ll. 1-3. **DICTIONARY DEFINITIONS:** The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, 2nd ed., Unabridged Webster's New World College Dictionary, 3rd ed. Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed. The New Oxford Dictionary of English

	listing will appear on the search results list page that is generated **in response to** a query of the search term by a searcher located at a client computer on the computer network. '361 Patent – col. 9, ll. 9-12 In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, search engine web server 24 includes a search database 40 comprised of search listing records used to generate search results **in response to** user queries. '361 Patent – col. 4, ll. 60-64 When an Internet user enters the search terms in a search engine query, the search engine will generate a search result list with the web site promoter's listing in a position influenced by one or more parameters defined by the promoter. '361 Patent – col. 17, ll. 19-26 When a remote searcher accesses the search query page on the search engine web server 24 and executes a search request according to the procedure described previously, the search engine web server 24 preferably generates and displays a search result list where the "canonicalized" entry in search term field of each search listing in the search result list exactly matches the canonicalized search term query entered by the remote searcher. '361 Patent – col. 6, ll. 1-8 The rank value determines the position where the promoter's web site description will appear on the search results list page that is generated when the search term is entered into the query box on the search engine by a searcher. A higher bid will result in a higher rank value and a more advantageous placement, which is preferably near the beginning of the search results list page.	

	(2) Providing Login Access **In Response To** Authentication '361 Patent – col. 6, ll. 26-29 The promoter logs in to his or her account via an authentication process running on a secure server. Once logged in, the promoter may add, delete, or modify a search listing. '361 Patent – col. 10, ll. 39-46 The advertiser, upon entering the URL of the account management server 22 into the browser program 16 of FIG. 1, invokes a login application, discussed below as shown at screen 110 of FIG. 2, running on the processing system 34 of the server 22. Once the advertiser is logged-in, the processing system 34 provides a menu 120 that has a number of options and further services for advertisers. '361 Patent – col. 11, ll. 12-16 According to FIG. 3, after the user has been authenticated as an advertiser, the advertiser is provided with the menu screen 120 of FIG. 2 and limited read/write access privileges only to the corresponding advertiser account, as shown in step 278. (3) Updating A Search Listing **In Response To** A Change Request '361 Patent – col. 18, l. 54 – col. 19, l. 7 An example of screen display shown to the advertiser in step 810 is shown in FIG. 9 and will be discussed below. To change bids, the advertiser user may specify new bids for search terms for which the advertiser already has an existing bid by entering a new bid amount into the new bid input field for the search term. The advertiser-entered bid changes are displayed to the advertiser at step 820 of FIG. 8 as discussed above. To update the bids for the display page, the advertiser requests, at step 830 of FIG. 8, to	

	update the result of changes. The advertiser may transmit such a request to the account management server by a variety of means, including clicking on a button graphic. As shown in step 840 of FIG. 8, upon receiving the request to update the advertiser's bids, the system calculates the new current bid amounts for every search listing displayed, the rank values, and the bid amount needed to become the highest ranked search listing matching the search term field. Preferably, the system then presents a display of changes at step 850. After the user confirms the changes, the system updates the persistent state by writing the changes to the account in the database. '361 Patent – col. 19, ll. 47-58 After the advertiser requests that the ranks be updated, the system then calculates a new bid price by any of a variety of algorithms easily available to one skilled in the art. For example, the system may invoke a routine to locate the search listing in the search database having the desired rank/search term combination, retrieve the associated bid amount of said combination, and then calculate a bid amount that is N cents higher; where N=1, for example. After the system calculates the new bid price and presents a read-only confirmation display to the advertiser, the system updates the bid prices and rank values upon receiving approval from the advertiser. '361 Patent – col. 19, l. 67 – col. 20, l. 5 After the advertiser enters the desired changes, the advertiser may transmit a request to the system to update the changes. The system then displays a read-only confirmation screen, and then writes the changes to the persistent state (e.g., the user account database) after the advertiser approves the changes.	

	'361 Patent – col. 20, ll. 22-26 After the advertiser selects all the search listings to be deleted and requests that the system update the changes, the system preferably presents a read-only confirmation of the requested changes, and updates the advertiser's account only after the advertiser approves the changes. Additional Citations to '361 Patent Col. 7, ll. 6-15 **EXTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** Overture does not believe that extrinsic evidence is necessary to interpret this term, and therefore has not proffered or cited any extrinsic evidence. However, if the Court considers any extrinsic evidence offered by Google, Overture reserves the right to cite to any of Google's extrinsic evidence, in rebuttal.	

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database Found in claims: 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67	**PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION:** a collection of related data, organized in such a way that its contents can be accessed, managed, and updated by a computer[2] **DICTIONARY/TREATISE DEFINITIONS:** Database a comprehensive collection of related data organized for convenient access, generally in a computer (The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, Second Edition, 1987) a usually large collection of data organized especially for rapid search and retrieval (as by a computer) (Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition, 1995) a structured set of data held in a computer, especially one that is accessible in various ways (The New Oxford Dictionary of English 1998) A database is a collection of related data. By data, we mean known facts that can be recorded and that have implicit meaning. (Fundamentals of Database Systems, by Elmasri and Navathe, Benjamin/Cummings, 1989) a collection of data arranged for ease of retrieval (The American Heritage College Dictionary, Fourth Edition, 2002) a collection of data organized especially for rapid search and	**PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION:** a computer based system for recording and maintaining information **INTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** *'361 Patent Specification* fig. 4; col. 1, ll. 45-51; col. 3, ll. 3-6; col. 5, ll. 46-48; col. 6, ll. 16-18, 48-50; col. col. 8, ll. 30-36; col. 9, ll. 9-12, 30-34, 60-66; col. 10, ll. 32-33; col. 11, ll. 8-10, 15-20, 30-33, 36-42, 53-58, 61-63; col. 14, ll. 16-18, 36-39, 57-59; col. 15, ll. 1-7, 40-42; col. 16, ll. 9-11; col. 17, ll. 5-8, 45-48, 50-52, 66; col. 18, ll. 1-3, 30-32; col. 19, ll. 5-7, 50-52; col. 20, ll. 2-5, 43-45, 54-57; col. 22, ll. 22-33. **DICTIONARY/TREATISE DEFINITIONS:** C.J. Date, An Introduction to Database Systems, 3rd ed. (GOG 32264-69) at 3-6. Chambers Science and Technology Dictionary The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 4th ed. Merriam-Webster Unabridged (online) (GOG 32257-63) Elmasri & Navathe, Fundamentals of Database Systems, at 3-4, 65-76. The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, 2nd ed., Unabridged

[2] For purposes of interpreting claims 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, and 51, Overture contends that the term "account database" should be interpreted as "a collection of related data, organized in such a way that its contents can be accessed, managed, and updated by a computer, where the data relates to a customer or client."

	retrieval (as by a computer) (Merriam Webster's Unabridged Dictionary) **INTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** '361 Patent – col. 6, ll. 16-26 One embodiment of the system and method of the present invention provides a **database** having accounts for the web site promoters. Each account includes contact and billing information for a web site promoter. In addition, each account includes at least one search listing, each search listing having five components: a description of the web site to be listed, the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) of the web site, a search term comprising one or more keywords, a bid amount, and a title for the search listing. Each account may also include the promoter's payment history and a history of search listings entered by the user. '361 Patent – col. 9, ll. 9-12 In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, search engine web server 24 includes a search **database** 40 comprised of search listing records used to generate search results in response to user queries. '361 Patent – col. 11, ll. 16-24 The advertiser login event 278 may also be recorded in step 280 in an audit trail data structure as part of the advertiser's account record in the **database**. The audit trail is preferably implemented as a series of entries in **database** 38, where each entry corresponds to an event wherein the advertiser's account record is accessed. Preferably, the audit trail information for an account record may be viewed by the account owner and other appropriate administrators. '361 Patent – col. 15, ll. 1-7 The default values displayed to the advertiser are obtained from a persistent state, e.g., stored in the	Webster's New World College Dictionary, 3rd ed. Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed. The New Oxford Dictionary of English **EXTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** Colorstamps, Inc. PCT Patent App. (GOG 32061-121) at 20:5-10.

	account **database**. In an embodiment of the present invention, the stored billing information values may comprise the values set by the advertiser the last (e.g. most recent) time the process of adding money was invoked and completed for the advertiser's account. '361 Patent – col. 19, l. 61 – col. 20, l. 5 When the advertiser selects the "Modify Listing Component" option, the advertiser may input changes to the URL, title, or description of a search listing via web-based forms set up for each search listing. Similar to the process discussed above, the forms for the URL, title, and description fields may initially contain the old URL, title and description as default values. After the advertiser enters the desired changes, the advertiser may transmit a request to the system to update the changes. The system then displays a read-only confirmation screen, and then writes the changes to the persistent state (e.g., the user account **database**) after the advertiser approves the changes. '361 Patent – col. 20, ll. 32-44 In the "Add Bidded Search Term" option, the system provides the advertiser with a display having a number of entry fields corresponding to the elements of a search listing. The advertiser then enters into each field information corresponding to the respective search listing element, including the search term, the web site URL, the web site title, the web site description, and the bid amount, as well as any other relevant information. After the advertiser has completed entering the data and has indicated thus to the system, the system returns a read-only confirmation screen to the advertiser. The system then creates a new search listing instance and writes it into the account **database**	

	and the search **database** upon receiving approval from the advertiser. Additional Citations to '361 Patent Figure 3 Figure 4 Col. 1, ll. 44-51 Col. 7, ll. 6-15 Col. 8, ll. 34-36 **EXTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** Overture does not believe that extrinsic evidence is necessary to interpret this term, and therefore has not proffered or cited any extrinsic evidence. However, if the Court considers any extrinsic evidence offered by Google, Overture reserves the right to cite to any of Google's extrinsic evidence, in rebuttal.	

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deducted from an account Found in claims: 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10	**PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION:** taken away from a record of financial transactions **DICTIONARY DEFINITIONS:** Deduct to take away, as from a sum or amount (The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, Second Edition, 1987) to take away an amount from a total (Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition, 1995) to take away or subtract (a quantity) (Webster's New World College Dictionary, Third Edition, 1997) subtract or take away (an amount or part) from a total (The New Oxford Dictionary of English 1998) to take away (a quantity) from another; subtract (The American Heritage College Dictionary, Fourth Edition, 2002) to take (an amount) away from a total : take off: remove (Merriam Webster's Unabridged Dictionary) Account any customer or client, especially one carried on a regular credit basis (The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, Second Edition, 1987) a record of debit and credit entries to cover transactions involving a particular item or a particular person or concern (Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition, 1995) a record of the financial data pertaining to a specific asset, liability, income item, expense item, or net-worth item; a record of the financial transactions relating to a specific person, property, business,	**PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION:** subtracted from a prepaid account **INTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** *'361 Patent Specification* fig. 2; fig. 6; col. 6, ll. 8-15, 43-44, 53-55; col. 9, ll. 45-66; col. 10, ll. 36-58; col. 13, ll. 4-9, 43-67; col. 14, ll. 1-8, 21-67; col. 15, ll. 36-40, 43-67; col. 16, ll. 1-67; col. 17, ll. 1-8; col. 22, ll. 19-21. **DICTIONARY DEFINITIONS:** The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, 2nd ed., Unabridged Webster's New World College Dictionary, 3rd ed. Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed. The New Oxford Dictionary of English

	etc.; charge account; a business or firm that is a customer or client, esp. on a regular credit basis (Webster's New World College Dictionary, Third Edition, 1997) a record or statement of financial expenditure and receipts relating to a particular period or purpose (The New Oxford Dictionary of English 1998) a formal baking, brokerage, or business relationship established to provide for financial transactions; a precise list or enumeration of financial transactions; money deposited for checking, savings, or brokerage use; a customer having a business or credit relationship with a firm (The American Heritage College Dictionary, Fourth Edition, 2002) a record of debit and credit entries chronologically posted to a ledger page from books of original entry to cover transactions involving a particular item (as cash or notes receivable) or a particular person or concern (Merriam Webster's Unabridged Dictionary) **INTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** '361 Patent – col. 13, ll. 3-9 The bid amount 358 preferably is a money amount bid by an advertiser for a listing. This money amount is deducted from the advertiser's prepaid account or is recorded for advertiser accounts that are invoiced for each time a search is executed by a user on the corresponding search term and the search result list hyperlink is used to refer the searcher to the advertiser's web site. '361 Patent – col. 14, ll. 21-33 Referring back to FIG. 2, a selection also appears in menu 120 that permits an advertiser to add money to the advertiser's account, so that the advertiser will have funds in their account to pay for referrals to	

	the advertiser's site through the search results page. Preferably, only advertisers with funds in their advertiser's accounts may have their paid listings included in any search result lists generated. Most preferably, advertisers meeting selected business criteria may elect, in place of maintaining a positive account balance at all times, incur account charges regardless of account balance and pay an invoiced amount at regular intervals which reflects the charges incurred by actual referrals to the advertiser's site generated by the search engine. '361 Patent – col. 6, ll. 8-15 Preferably, the quantity used in the competitive bidding process is a money amount that the web site promoter will pay to an owner of the Internet search engine each time the advertiser's web site is referred by the search engine. Most preferably, this money amount will be deducted from an account balance that is retained in the promoter's account for each time the promoter's web site is referred by the search engine. '361 Patent – col. 9, ll. 45-49 In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the amount bid by an advertiser comprises a money amount that is **deducted from the account** of the advertiser for each time the advertiser's web site is accessed via a hyperlink on the search result list page. Additional Citations to'361 Patent Col. 7, ll. 6-15 Col. 16, ll. 23-34 Col. 22, ll. 19-21 **EXTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** Overture does not believe that extrinsic evidence is necessary to interpret this term, and therefore has not proffered or cited any extrinsic evidence. However, if the Court considers any extrinsic evidence offered by Google, Overture	

	reserves the right to cite to any of Google's extrinsic evidence, in rebuttal.	

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	PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION:	PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION:
account record Found in claims: 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67	a collection of data that is part of a database, where the data relates to a customer or client **DICTIONARY/TREATISE DEFINITIONS:** Account any customer or client, especially one carried on a regular credit basis (The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, Second Edition, 1987) a record of debit and credit entries to cover transactions involving a particular item or a particular person or concern (Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition, 1995) a record of the financial data pertaining to a specific asset, liability, income item, expense item, or net-worth item; a record of the financial transactions relating to a specific person, property, business, etc.; charge account; a business or firm that is a customer or client, esp. on a regular credit basis (Webster's New World College Dictionary, Third Edition, 1997) a record or statement of financial expenditure and receipts relating to a particular period or purpose (The New Oxford Dictionary of English 1998) a formal baking, brokerage, or business relationship established to provide for financial transactions; a precise list or enumeration of financial transactions; money deposited for checking, savings, or brokerage use; a customer having a business or credit relationship with a firm (The American Heritage College Dictionary, Fourth Edition, 2002) a record of debit and credit entries	a record of information pertaining to an account **INTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** *'361 Patent Specification* Abstract, ll. 4-11; fig. 2; fig. 5; fig. 6; fig. 8; col. 5, ll. 18-22; col. 6, ll. 12-28, 43-44, 51-56, 59-60; col. 7, ll. 43-44, 49-50, 63, 65-66; col. 8, ll. 22, 28, 30-45; col. 9, ll. 16, 22-28, 38, 47, 52-66; col. 10, ll. 38, 40, 53-54, 67; col. 11, ll. 2-3, 8-24, 27-28, 30-33, 39-46, 50-67; col. 12, ll. 4-8, 11-20, 25-39; col. 13, ll. 4-9, 36-37, 43-59; col. 14, ll. 4, 6-7, 20, 22-23, 26, 30-31, 33-44, 51, 56-59; col. 15, ll. 1-2, 6-7, 22, 33-42, 58-63, 65-67; col. 16, ll. 1-3, 5-14, 18, 21-22, 30-34, 36-37, 41-50, 61, 65-67; col. 3-8, 10, 12-15, 45-48, 50-52, 67; col. 18, ll. 1-2, 41-53, 64; col. 19, 5-7, 18-25, 33-39, 59-60; col. 20, ll. 2-5, 14-16, 25-27, 30-32, 44-46, 66; col. 21, ll. 2, 54, 56, 58, 61; col. 22, ll. 10-27. **DICTIONARY DEFINITIONS:** The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, 2nd ed., Unabridged Webster's New World College Dictionary, 3rd ed. Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed. The New Oxford Dictionary of English

	chronologically posted to a ledger page from books of original entry to cover transactions involving a particular item (as cash or notes receivable) or a particular person or concern (Merriam Webster's Unabridged Dictionary) Record Computers. a group of related fields, or a single field, treated as a unit and comprising part of a file or data set, for purposes of input, processing, output, or storage by a computer (The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, Second Edition, 1987) a collection of related items of information (as in a database) treated as a unit (Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition, 1995) a group of logically related fields, dealt with as a unit (Webster's New World College Dictionary, Third Edition, 1997) data is usually stored in the form of *records*. Each record consists of a collection of related data *values* or *items*, where each value is formed of one or more bytes and corresponds to a particular *field* of the record (Fundamentals of Database Systems, by Elmasri and Navathe, Benjamin/Cummings, 1989) a collection of related, often adjacent items of data, treated as a unit (The American Heritage College Dictionary, Fourth Edition, 2002) **INTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** '361 Patent – col. 6, ll. 16-26 One embodiment of the system and method of the present invention provides a database having accounts for the web site promoters. Each account includes contact and billing information for a web site promoter.	

	In addition, each account includes at least one search listing, each search listing having five components: a description of the web site to be listed, the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) of the web site, a search term comprising one or more keywords, a bid amount, and a title for the search listing. Each account may also include the promoter's payment history and a history of search listings entered by the user. '361 Patent – col. 8, ll. 34-36 A database 38 is stored on the storage medium 32 of the account management server 22. The database 38 contains advertiser account information. '361 Patent – col. 11, ll. 16-24 The advertiser login event 278 may also be recorded in step 280 in an audit trail data structure as part of the advertiser's **account record** in the database. The audit trail is preferably implemented as a series of entries in database 38, where each entry corresponds to an event wherein the advertiser's **account record** is accessed. Preferably, the audit trail information for an **account record** may be viewed by the account owner and other appropriate administrators. '361 Patent – col. 11, l. 61 – col. 12, l. 20 FIG. 5 is a diagram showing the types of information contained in each advertiser **account record** 300 in the database. First, an advertiser **account record** 300 contains a username 302 and a password 304, used for online authentication as described above. The **account record** also contains contact information 310 (e.g., contact name, company name, street address, phone, e-mail address). Contact information 310 is preferably utilized to direct communications to the advertiser when the advertiser has requested notification of key advertiser events under the notification option,	

	discussed below. The **account record** 300 also contains billing information 320 (e.g., current balance, credit card information). The billing information 320 contains data accessed when the advertiser selects the option to add money to the advertiser's account. In addition, certain billing information, such as the current balance, may trigger events requiring notification under the notification option. The audit trail section 325 of an **account record** 300 contains a list of all events wherein the **account record** 300 is accessed. Each time an **account record** 300 is accessed or modified, by an administrator or advertiser a short entry describing the account access and/or modification event will be appended to the audit trail section 330 of the administrator or advertiser account that initiated the event. The audit trail information may then be used to help generate a history of transactions made by the account owner under the account. Additional Citations to '361 Patent Figure 5 Figure 6 Col. 7, ll. 6-15 Col. 12, l. 21 – col. 13, l. 24 **EXTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** Overture does not believe that extrinsic evidence is necessary to interpret this term, and therefore has not proffered or cited any extrinsic evidence. However, if the Court considers any extrinsic evidence offered by Google, Overture reserves the right to cite to any of Google's extrinsic evidence, in rebuttal.	

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	PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION:	PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION:
from a/the searcher Found in claims: 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 48, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67	originated by the user who is seeking information **DICTIONARY DEFINITIONS:** From (used to specify a starting point in spatial movement); (used to indicate source or origin) (The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, Second Edition, 1987) used as a function word to indicate the source, cause, agent, or basis (Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition, 1995) a particle used with verbs or other words to indicate a point of departure for motion, duration, distance, action, etc.; beginning at [to leave from the station]; starting with (the first of two named limits) [from noon to midnight]; out of; derived or coming out of [to take a comb from the pocket] (Webster's New World College Dictionary, Third Edition, 1997) indicating the source or provenance of someone or something (The New Oxford Dictionary of English 1998) used to indicate a source, cause, agent, or instrument (The American Heritage College Dictionary, Fourth Edition, 2002) used as a function word to indicate the source or origin or moving force of something (Merriam Webster's Unabridged Dictionary) Searcher one that searches (Merriam Webster's Unabridged Dictionary) Search to examine (one or more files, as databases or texts) electronically, to locate specific items (The Random House Dictionary of the English	input by the individual using the search engine to perform a search **INTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** *'361 Patent Specification* Abstract, ll. 27-32; fig. 7; col. 1, ll. 64-67; col. 2, ll. 1, 24-46, 64-67; col. 3, ll. 6-15, 30-41, 54-62; col. 4, ll. 3-6, 34-39, 60-64; col. 5, ll. 22-37; 48-50; col. 6, ll. 1-5; col. 9, 8-12; col. 10, ll. 7-24; col. 13, ll. 3-20; col. 17, ll. 19-34, 53-67; col. 18, ll. 1-3, 34-36 *Patent Applications Claiming Priority to the '361 Patent Application* Soulanille U.S. Patent App. (GOG 32122-51) at ¶ 45. **DICTIONARY DEFINITIONS:** The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, 2nd ed., Unabridged Webster's New World College Dictionary, 3rd ed. Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed. The New Oxford Dictionary of English **EXTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** www.jsonline.com at GOG 1659-61. Documents produced by Overture: OVGE 52678, 52950, 53035, 53130, 53484, 53521, 53563, 53580, 53640, 55954, 59309.

	Language, Second Edition, 1987) to examine data in a computer in order to locate items having a given property (Webster's New World College Dictionary, Third Edition, 1997) try to find something by looking or otherwise seeking carefully and thoroughly; an act of searching for someone or something (The New Oxford Dictionary of English 1998) to make a thorough examination of; look over carefully in order to find something; explore (The American Heritage College Dictionary, Fourth Edition, 2002) to look into or over carefully or thoroughly in an effort to find something (Merriam Webster's Unabridged Dictionary) **INTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** '361 Patent – col. 10, ll. 7-20 A second class of users at client computers 12 may comprise searchers seeking specific information on the web. The searchers may access, through their browsers 16, a search engine web page 36 residing on web server 24. The search engine web page 36 includes a query box in which a searcher may type a search term comprising one or more keywords. Alternatively, the searcher may query the search engine web server 24 through a query box hyperlinked to the search engine web server 24 and located on a web page stored at a remote web server. When the searcher has finished entering the search term, the searcher may transmit the query to the search engine web server 24 by clicking on a provided hyperlink. The search engine web server 24 will then generate a search result list page and transmit this page to the searcher at the client computer 12.	

	'361 Patent – Abstract, ll. 27-32 The rank value generated by the bidding process determines where the network information providers listing will appear on the search results list page that is generated in response to a query of the search term by a searcher located at a client computer on the computer network. '361 Patent – col. 12, ll. 51-55 Ideally, the advertiser may select a search term that is targeted to terms likely to be entered by searchers seeking the information on the advertiser's web site, although less common search terms may also be selected to ensure comprehensive coverage of relevant search terms for bidding. '361 Patent – col. 17, ll. 19-26 When a remote searcher accesses the search query page on the search engine web server 24 and executes a search request according to the procedure described previously, the search engine web server 24 preferably generates and displays a search result list where the "canonicalized" entry in search term field of each search listing in the search result list exactly matches the canonicalized search term query entered by the remote searcher. Additional Citations to '361 Patent Col. 5, ll. 27-30 Col. 5, ll. 35-37 Col. 6, ll. 1-5 Col. 7, ll. 6-15 Col. 9, ll. 49-60 **EXTRINSIC EVIDENCE:** Overture does not believe that extrinsic evidence is necessary to interpret this term, and therefore has not proffered or cited any extrinsic evidence. However, if the Court considers any extrinsic evidence offered by Google, Overture reserves the right to cite to any of Google's extrinsic evidence, in rebuttal.	

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DECLARATION OF CHARLES M. MCMAHON

I, Charles M. McMahon, declare that prior to filing the above Joint Claim Construction Statement, I sent it to Michael S. Kwun for his review, and he authorized me to file the Joint Claim Construction Statement on his behalf.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on this 24th day of June 2003 at Chicago, Illinois.

s/Charles M. McMahon
Charles M. McMahon

Exhibit A

U.S. Patent No. 6,269,361

US006269361B1

(12) **United States Patent**
Davis et al.

(10) **Patent No.: US 6,269,361 B1**
(45) **Date of Patent: Jul. 31, 2001**

(54) **SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR INFLUENCING A POSITION ON A SEARCH RESULT LIST GENERATED BY A COMPUTER NETWORK SEARCH ENGINE**

(75) Inventors: **Darren J. Davis**, Rowland Heights; **Matthew Derer**, Sierra Madre; **Johann Garcia**, Chino Hills; **Larry Greco**, Glendale; **Tod E. Kurt**, Pasadena; **Thomas Kwong**, Temple City; **Jonathan C. Lee**, Culver City; **Ka Luk Lee**, San Gabriel; **Preston Pfarner**; **Steve Skovran**, both of Pasadena, all of CA (US)

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

(21) Appl. No.: **09/322,677**

(22) Filed: **May 28, 1999**

(51) **Int. Cl.**[7] **G06F 17/30**
(52) **U.S. Cl.** **707/3**; 707/2; 707/4; 707/5
(58) **Field of Search** 707/2–5, 10, 501; 706/12; 709/219, 202; 705/1, 14, 10, 37, 26–29; G06F 17/60

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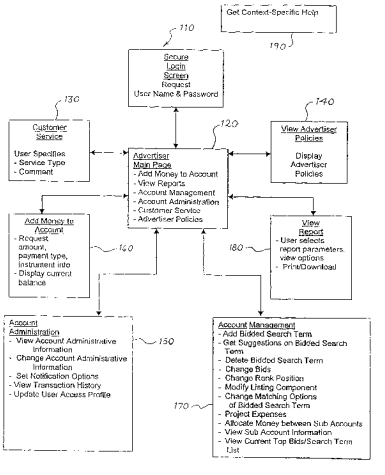
Primary Examiner—Vincent Millin
Assistant Examiner—Cuong H. Nguyen
(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm*—Brinks Hofer Gilson & Lione

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A system and method for enabling information providers using a computer network such as the Internet to influence a position for a search listing within a search result list generated by an Internet search engine. The system and method of the present invention provides a database having accounts for the network information providers. Each account contains contact and billing information for a network information provider. In addition, each account contains at least one search listing having at least three components: a description, a search term comprising one or more keywords, and a bid amount. The network information provider may add, delete, or modify a search listing after logging into his or her account via an authentication process. The network information provider influences a position for a search listing in the provider's account by first selecting a search term relevant to the content of the web site or other information source to be listed. The network information provider enters the search term and the description into a search listing. The network information provider influences the position for a search listing through a continuous online competitive bidding process. The bidding process occurs when the network information provider enters a new bid amount, which is preferably a money amount, for a search listing. The system and method of the present invention then compares this bid amount with all other bid amounts for the same search term, and generates a rank value for all search listings having that search term. The rank value generated by the bidding process determines where the network information providers listing will appear on the search results list page that is generated in response to a query of the search term by a searcher located at a client computer on the computer network. A higher bid by a network information provider will result in a higher rank value and a more advantageous placement.

67 Claims, 9 Drawing Sheets



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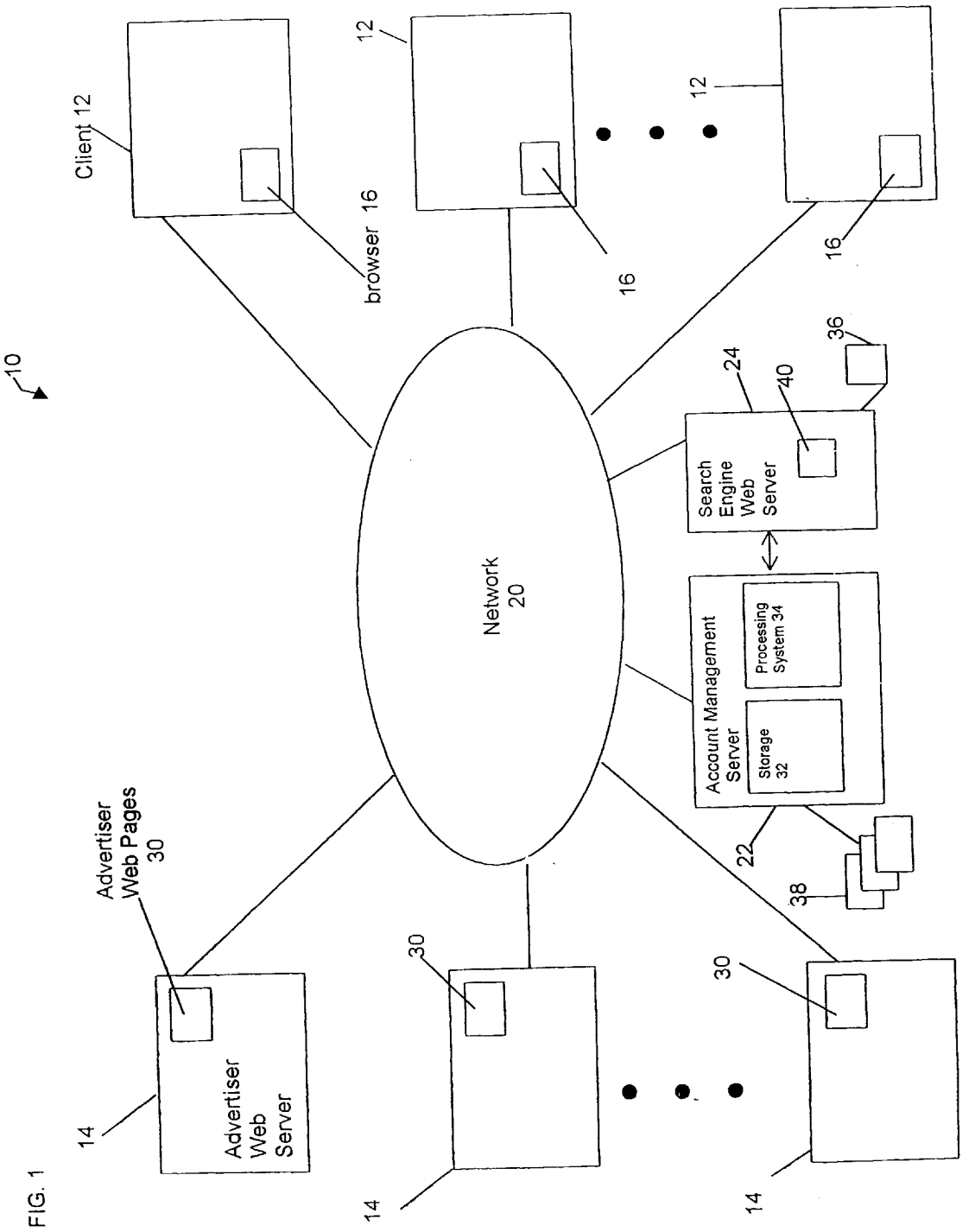

10
Client 12
browser 16
12
16
12
16
Network
20
Search Engine Web Server
24
40
36
Account Management Server
Processing System 34
Storage 32
22
38
Advertiser Web Pages
30
Advertiser Web Server
14
30
14
30
14

FIG. 1

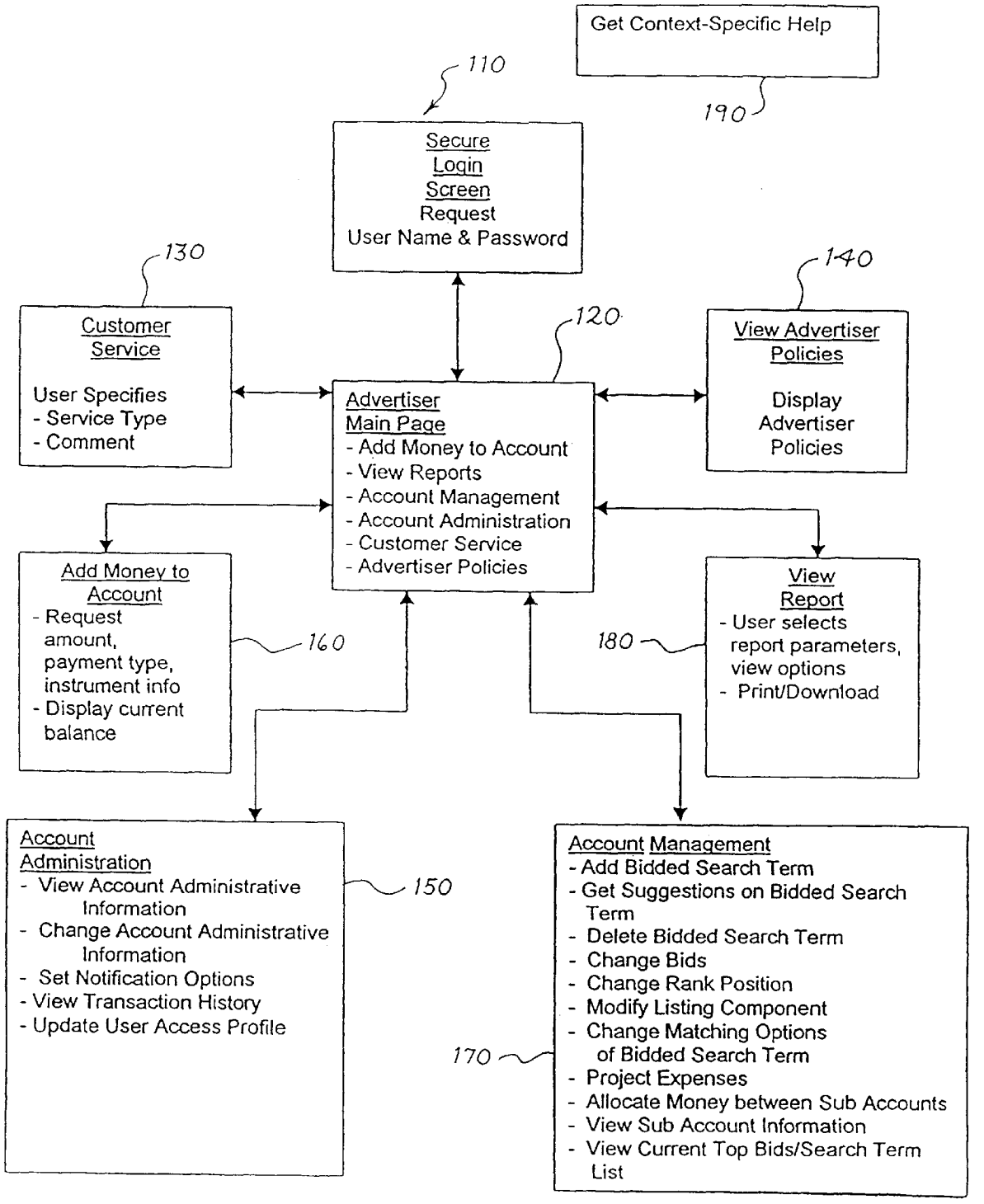

Get Context-Specific Help
190
110
Secure Login Screen Request User Name & Password
130
Customer Service
User Specifies
- Service Type
- Comment
120
Advertiser Main Page
- Add Money to Account
- View Reports
- Account Management
- Account Administration
- Customer Service
- Advertiser Policies
140
View Advertiser Policies
Display Advertiser Policies
Add Money to Account
- Request amount, payment type, instrument info
- Display current balance
160
180
View Report
- User selects report parameters, view options
- Print/Download
Account Administration
- View Account Administrative Information
- Change Account Administrative Information
- Set Notification Options
- View Transaction History
- Update User Access Profile
150
Account Management
- Add Bidded Search Term
- Get Suggestions on Bidded Search Term
- Delete Bidded Search Term
- Change Bids
- Change Rank Position
- Modify Listing Component
- Change Matching Options of Bidded Search Term
- Project Expenses
- Allocate Money between Sub Accounts
- View Sub Account Information
- View Current Top Bids/Search Term List
170

Fig. 2

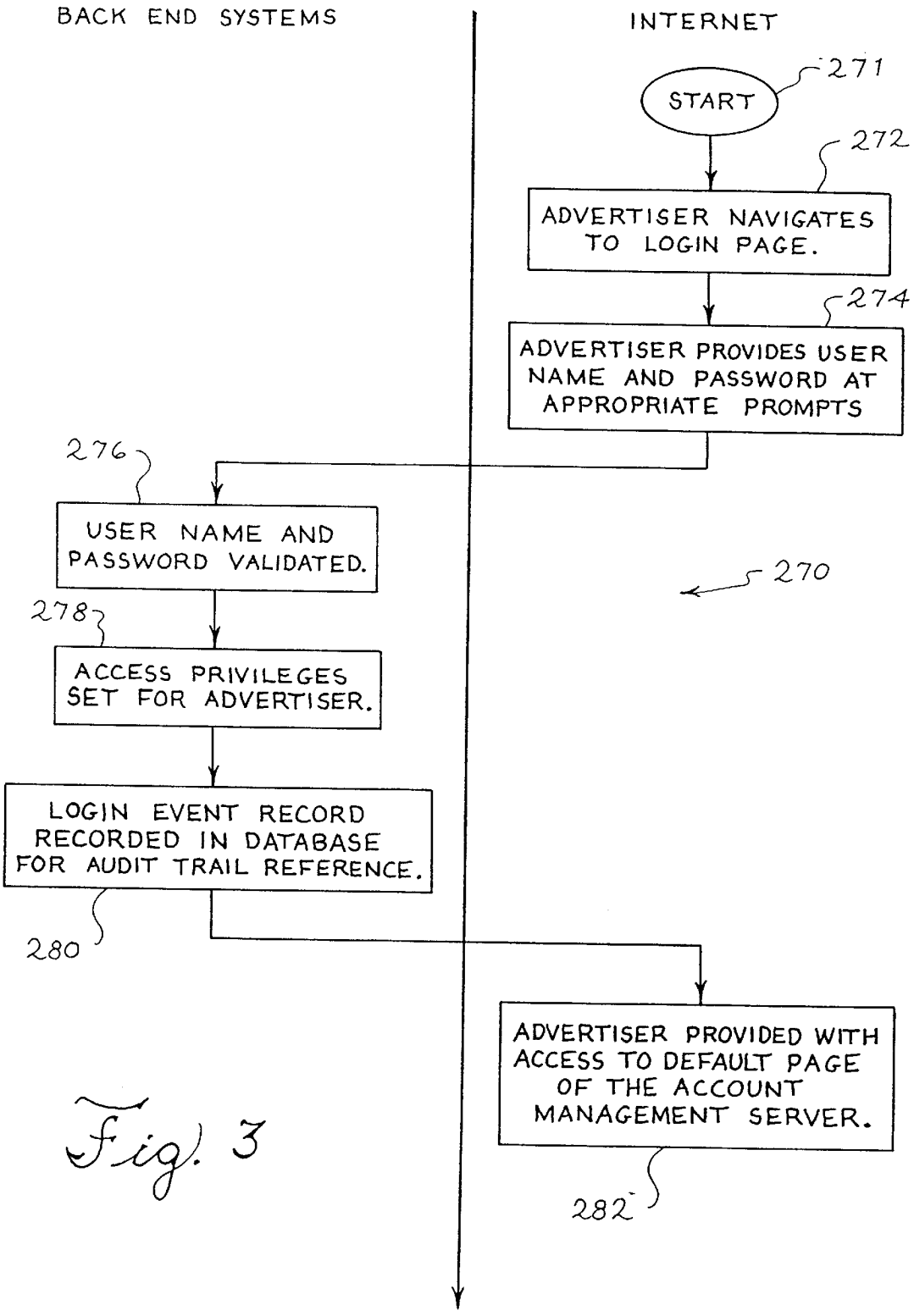

BACK END SYSTEMS
INTERNET
START
271
272
ADVERTISER NAVIGATES TO LOGIN PAGE.
274
ADVERTISER PROVIDES USER NAME AND PASSWORD AT APPROPRIATE PROMPTS
276
USER NAME AND PASSWORD VALIDATED.
270
278
ACCESS PRIVILEGES SET FOR ADVERTISER.
LOGIN EVENT RECORD RECORDED IN DATABASE FOR AUDIT TRAIL REFERENCE.
280
ADVERTISER PROVIDED WITH ACCESS TO DEFAULT PAGE OF THE ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT SERVER.
282

Fig. 3

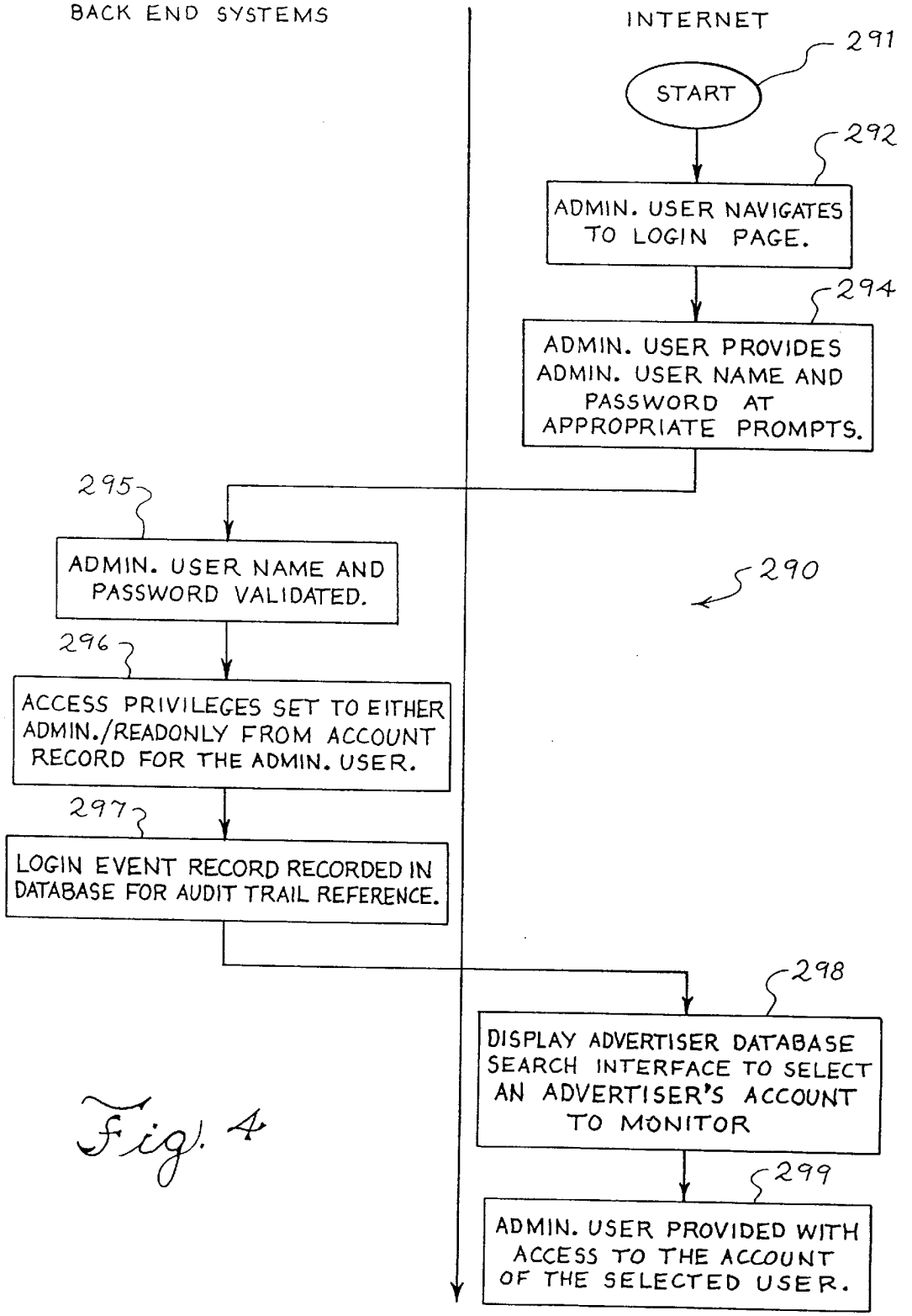

BACK END SYSTEMS
INTERNET
291
START
292
ADMIN. USER NAVIGATES TO LOGIN PAGE.
294
ADMIN. USER PROVIDES ADMIN. USER NAME AND PASSWORD AT APPROPRIATE PROMPTS.
295
ADMIN. USER NAME AND PASSWORD VALIDATED.
290
296
ACCESS PRIVILEGES SET TO EITHER ADMIN./READONLY FROM ACCOUNT RECORD FOR THE ADMIN. USER.
297
LOGIN EVENT RECORD RECORDED IN DATABASE FOR AUDIT TRAIL REFERENCE.
298
DISPLAY ADVERTISER DATABASE SEARCH INTERFACE TO SELECT AN ADVERTISER'S ACCOUNT TO MONITOR
299
ADMIN. USER PROVIDED WITH ACCESS TO THE ACCOUNT OF THE SELECTED USER.

Fig. 4

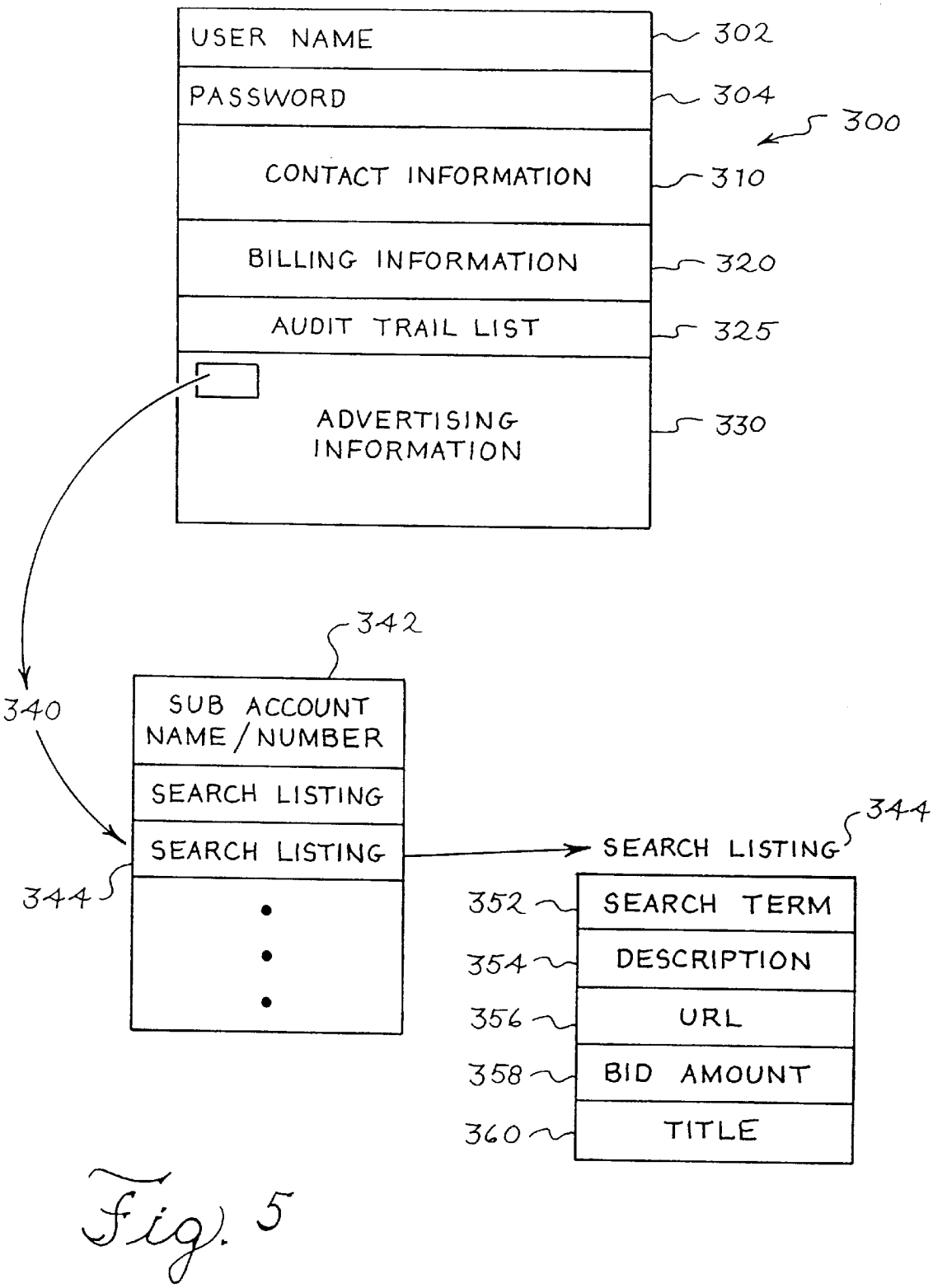

USER NAME
302
PASSWORD
304
300
CONTACT INFORMATION
310
BILLING INFORMATION
320
AUDIT TRAIL LIST
325
ADVERTISING INFORMATION
330
342
340
SUB ACCOUNT NAME / NUMBER
SEARCH LISTING
SEARCH LISTING
344
344
SEARCH LISTING
352
SEARCH TERM
354
DESCRIPTION
356
URL
358
BID AMOUNT
360
TITLE

Fig. 5

Fig. 6

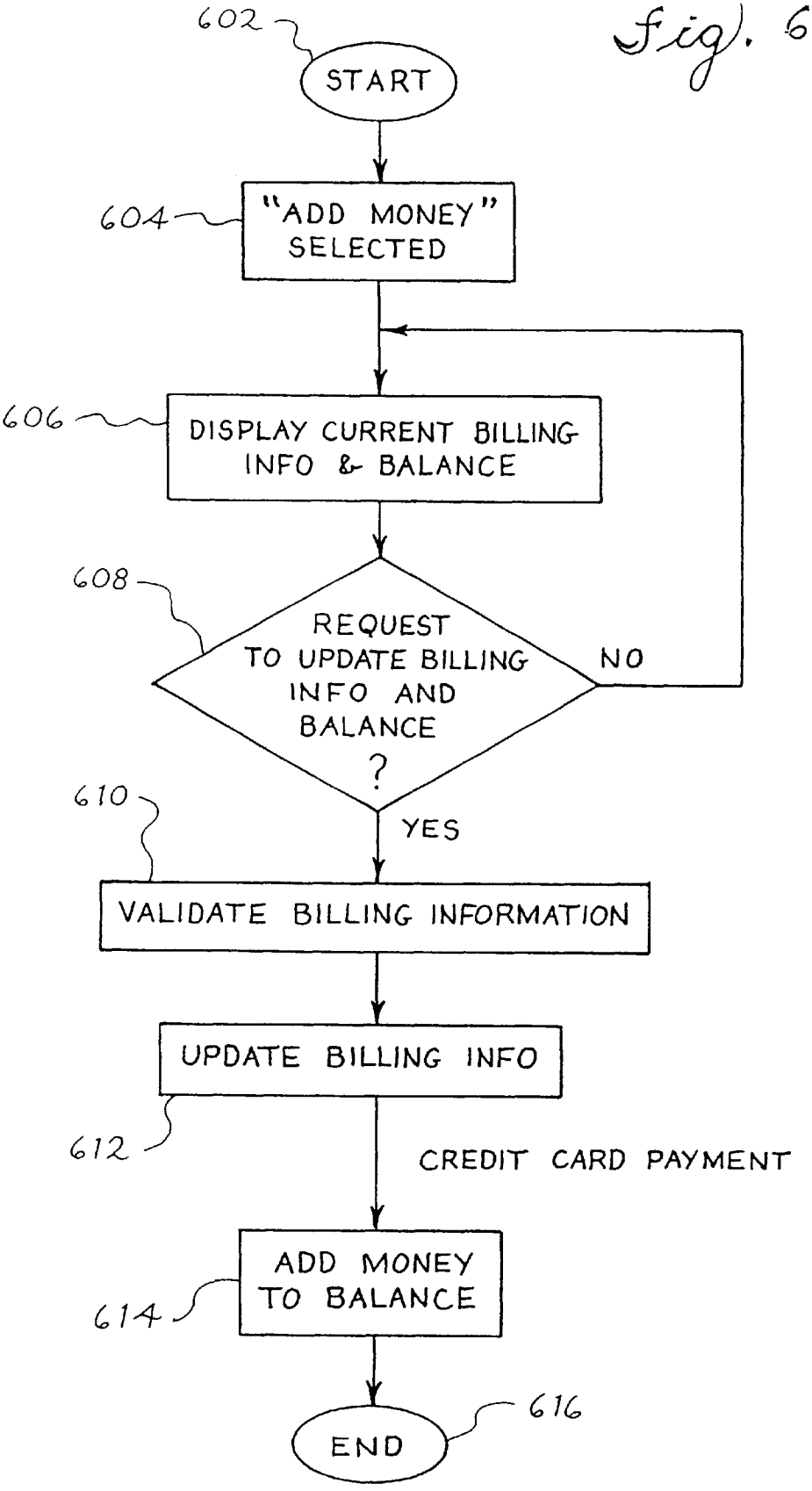
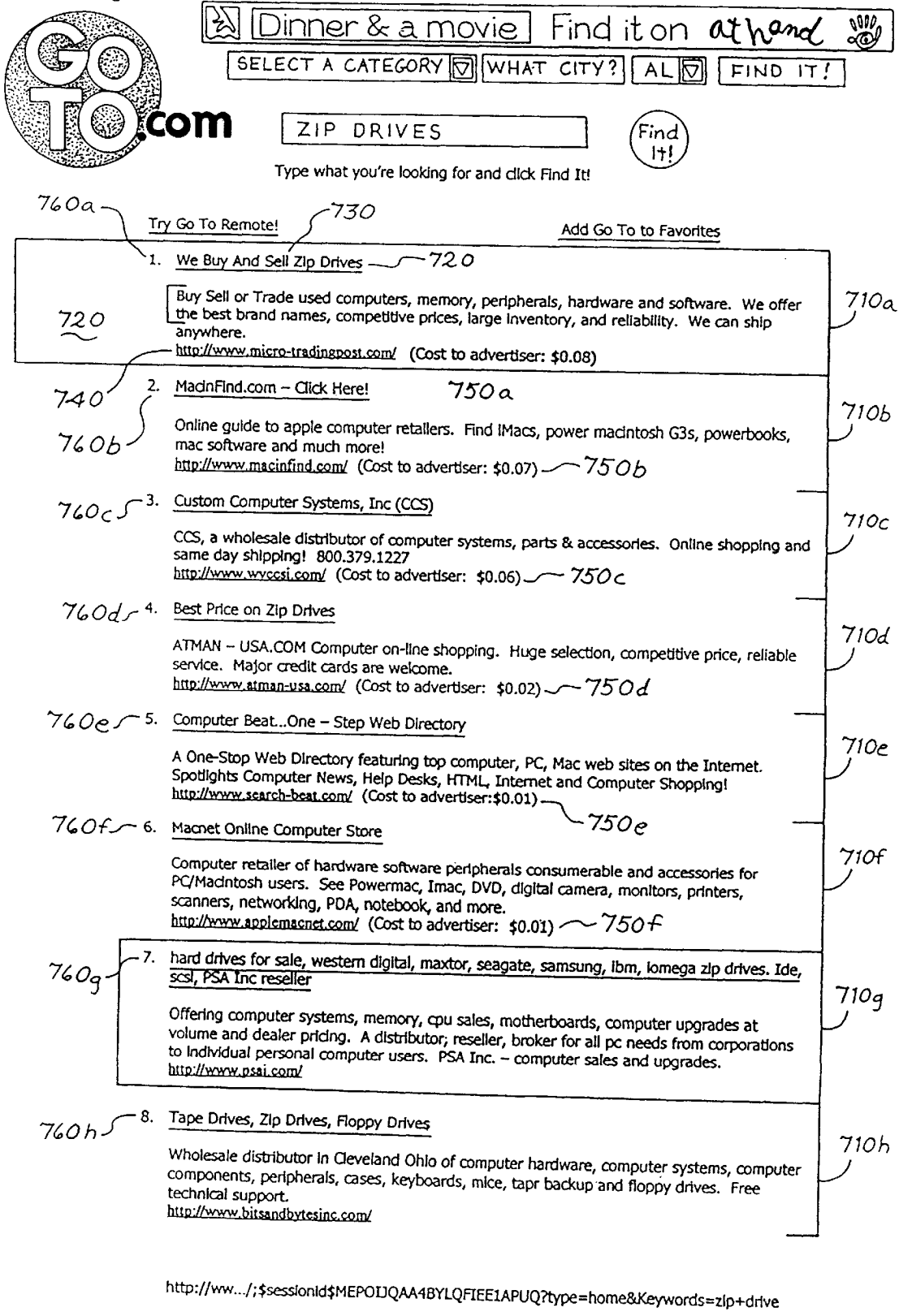

602
START
604
"ADD MONEY" SELECTED
606
DISPLAY CURRENT BILLING INFO & BALANCE
608
REQUEST TO UPDATE BILLING INFO AND BALANCE ?
NO
YES
610
VALIDATE BILLING INFORMATION
UPDATE BILLING INFO
612
CREDIT CARD PAYMENT
ADD MONEY TO BALANCE
614
END
616

Fig. 7


GO TO.com
Dinner & a movie
Find it on athand
SELECT A CATEGORY
WHAT CITY?
AL
FIND IT!
ZIP DRIVES
Find It!
Type what you're looking for and click Find It!
760a
Try Go To Remote!
730
Add Go To to Favorites
1. We Buy And Sell Zip Drives
720
Buy Sell or Trade used computers, memory, peripherals, hardware and software. We offer the best brand names, competitive prices, large inventory, and reliability. We can ship anywhere.
http://www.micro-tradingpost.com/ (Cost to advertiser: $0.08)
710a
740
2. MacInFind.com – Click Here!
750a
760b
Online guide to apple computer retailers. Find iMacs, power macintosh G3s, powerbooks, mac software and much more!
http://www.macinfind.com/ (Cost to advertiser: $0.07)
750b
710b
760c
3. Custom Computer Systems, Inc (CCS)
CCS, a wholesale distributor of computer systems, parts & accessories. Online shopping and same day shipping! 800.379.1227
http://www.wvccsi.com/ (Cost to advertiser: $0.06)
750c
710c
760d
4. Best Price on Zip Drives
ATMAN – USA.COM Computer on-line shopping. Huge selection, competitive price, reliable service. Major credit cards are welcome.
http://www.atman-usa.com/ (Cost to advertiser: $0.02)
750d
710d
760e
5. Computer Beat...One – Step Web Directory
A One-Stop Web Directory featuring top computer, PC, Mac web sites on the Internet. Spotlights Computer News, Help Desks, HTML, Internet and Computer Shopping!
http://www.search-beat.com/ (Cost to advertiser:$0.01)
750e
710e
760f
6. Macnet Online Computer Store
Computer retailer of hardware software peripherals consumerable and accessories for PC/Macintosh users. See Powermac, Imac, DVD, digital camera, monitors, printers, scanners, networking, PDA, notebook, and more.
http://www.applemacnet.com/ (Cost to advertiser: $0.01)
750f
710f
760g
7. hard drives for sale, western digital, maxtor, seagate, samsung, ibm, iomega zip drives. Ide, scsi, PSA Inc reseller
Offering computer systems, memory, cpu sales, motherboards, computer upgrades at volume and dealer pricing. A distributor; reseller, broker for all pc needs from corporations to individual personal computer users. PSA Inc. – computer sales and upgrades.
http://www.psai.com/
710g
760h
8. Tape Drives, Zip Drives, Floppy Drives
Wholesale distributor in Cleveland Ohio of computer hardware, computer systems, computer components, peripherals, cases, keyboards, mice, tapr backup and floppy drives. Free technical support.
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710h
http://ww.../;$sessionid$MEPOIJQAA4BYLQFIEE1APUQ?type=home&Keywords=zip+drive

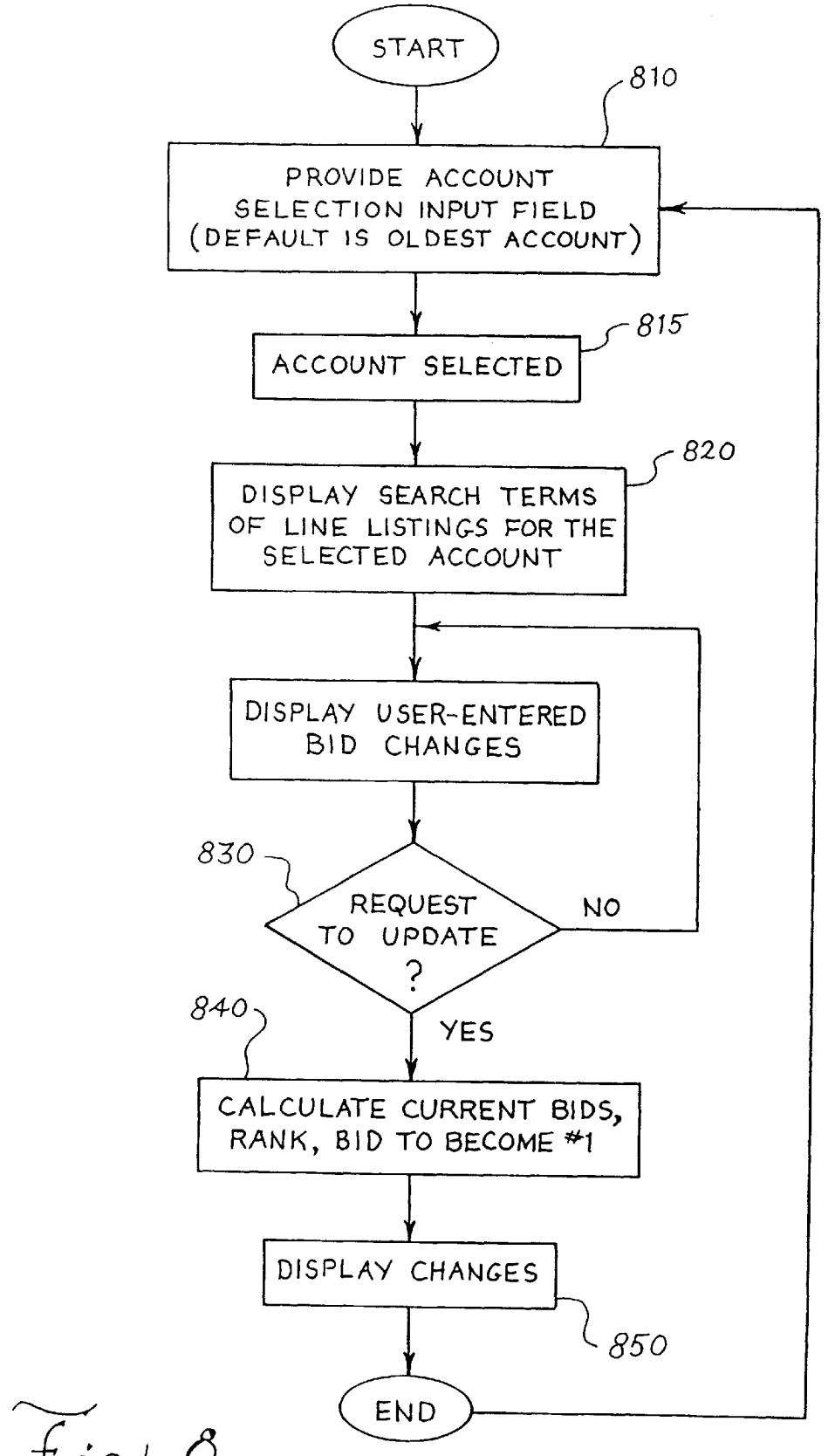
START
810
PROVIDE ACCOUNT SELECTION INPUT FIELD (DEFAULT IS OLDEST ACCOUNT)
815
ACCOUNT SELECTED
820
DISPLAY SEARCH TERMS OF LINE LISTINGS FOR THE SELECTED ACCOUNT
DISPLAY USER-ENTERED BID CHANGES
830
REQUEST TO UPDATE ?
NO
YES
840
CALCULATE CURRENT BIDS, RANK, BID TO BECOME #1
DISPLAY CHANGES
850
END

Fig. 8

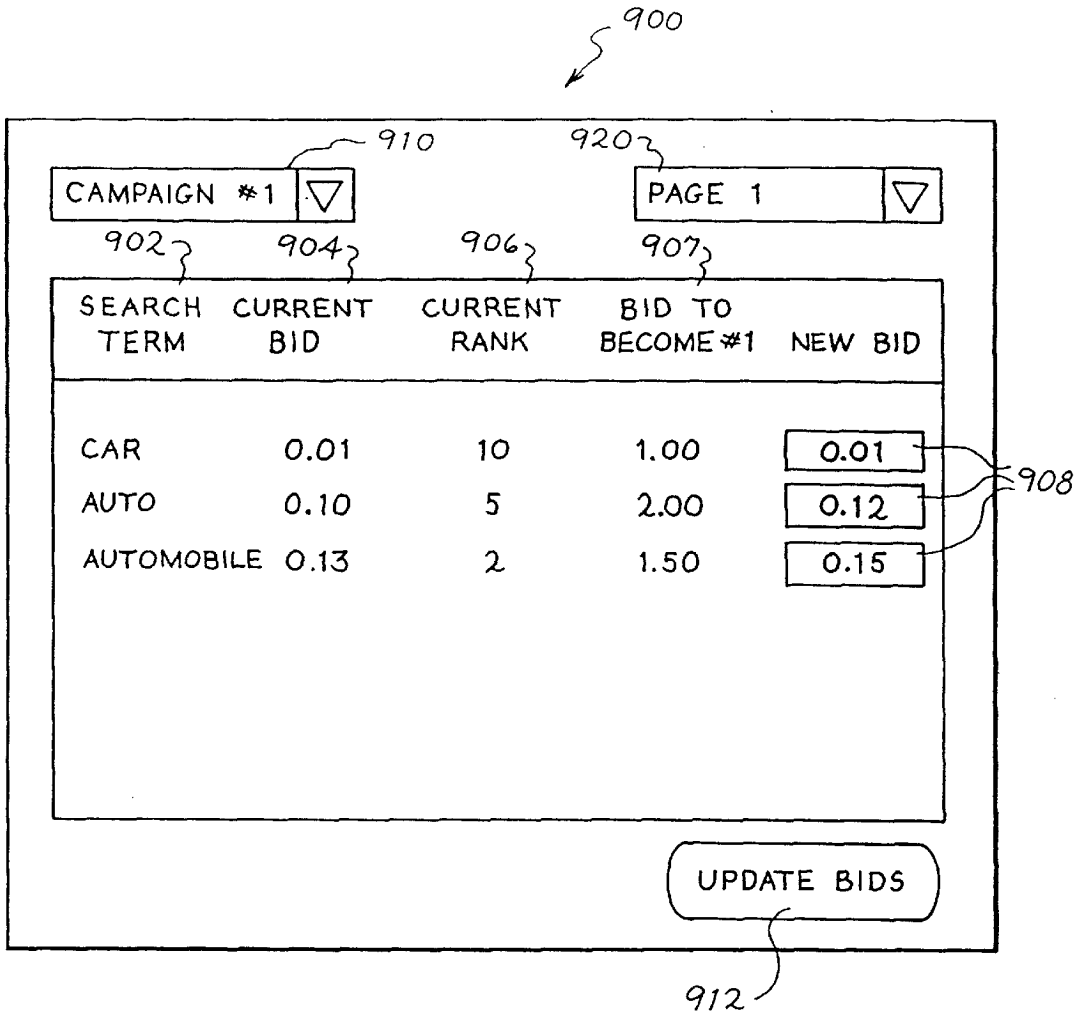
900
910
920
CAMPAIGN #1
PAGE 1
902
904
906
907
SEARCH TERM
CURRENT BID
CURRENT RANK
BID TO BECOME #1
NEW BID
CAR 0.01 10 1.00 0.01
AUTO 0.10 5 2.00 0.12
AUTOMOBILE 0.13 2 1.50 0.15
908
UPDATE BIDS
912

Fig. 9

SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR INFLUENCING A POSITION ON A SEARCH RESULT LIST GENERATED BY A COMPUTER NETWORK SEARCH ENGINE

MICROFICHE/COPYRIGHT REFERENCE

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The transfer of information over computer networks has become an increasingly important means by which institutions, corporations, and individuals do business. Computer networks have grown over the years from independent and isolated entities established to serve the needs of a single group into vast internets which interconnect disparate physical networks and allow them to function as a coordinated system. Currently, the largest computer network in existence is the Internet. The Internet is a worldwide interconnection of computer networks that communicate using a common protocol. Millions of computers, from low end personal computers to high end super computers, are connected to the Internet.

The Internet has emerged as a large community of electronically connected users located around the world who readily and regularly exchange significant amounts of information. The Internet continues to serve its original purposes of providing for access to and exchange of information among government agencies, laboratories, and universities for research and education. In addition, the Internet has evolved to serve a variety of interests and forums that extend beyond its original goals. In particular, the Internet is rapidly transforming into a global electronic marketplace of goods and services as well as of ideas and information.

This transformation of the Internet into a global marketplace was driven in large part by the introduction of an information system known as the World Wide Web ("the web"). The web is a unique distributed database designed to give wide access to a large universe of documents. The database records of the web are in the form of documents known as "pages". These pages reside on web servers and are accessible via the Internet. The web is therefore a vast database of information dispersed across countless individual computer systems that is constantly changing and has no recognizable organization or morphology. Computers connected to the Internet may access the web pages via a program known as a browser, which has a powerful, simple-to-learn graphical user interface. One powerful technique supported by the web browser is known as hyperlinking, which permits web page authors to create links to other web pages which users can then retrieve by using simple point-and-click commands on the web browser.

The pages may be constructed in any one of a variety of formatting conventions, such as Hyper Text Markup Language (HTML), and may include multimedia information content such as graphics, audio, and moving pictures. Any person with a computer and a connection to the Internet may access any publicly accessible page posted on the web. Thus, a presence on the World Wide Web has the capability to introduce a worldwide base of consumers to businesses, individuals, and institutions seeking to advertise their products and services to potential customers. Furthermore, the ever increasing sophistication in the design of web pages, made possible by the exponential increase in data transmission rates and computer processing speeds, makes the web an increasingly attractive medium for advertising and other business purposes, as well as for the free flow of information.

The availability of powerful new tools that facilitate the development and distribution of Internet content has led to a proliferation of information, products, and services offered on the Internet and dramatic growth in the number of consumers using the Internet. International Data Corporation, commonly referred to as IDC, estimates that the number of Internet users will grow from approximately 97 million worldwide in 1998 to approximately 320 million worldwide by the end of 2002. In addition, commerce conducted over the Internet has grown and is expected to grow dramatically. IDC estimates that the percentage of Internet users buying goods and services on the Internet will increase from approximately 28% at the end of 1998 to approximately 40% in 2002, and that over the same period of time, the total value of goods and services purchased over the Internet will increase from approximately $32.4 billion to approximately $425.7 billion.

The Internet has emerged as an attractive new medium for advertisers of information, products and services to reach consumers. However, the World Wide Web is composed of a seemingly limitless number of web pages dispersed across millions of different computer systems all over the world in no discernible organization. Mechanisms, such as directories and search engines, have been developed to index and search the information available on the web and thereby help Internet users locate information of interest. These search services enable consumers to search the Internet for a listing of web sites based on a specific topic, product, or service of interest.

Search services are, after e-mail, the most frequently used tool on the Internet. As a result, web sites providing search services have offered advertisers significant reach into the Internet audience and have given advertisers the opportunity to target consumer interests based on keyword or topical search requests.

In a web-based search on an Internet search engine, a user enters a search term comprising one or more keywords, which the search engine then uses to generate, in real time, a listing of web pages that the user may access via a hyperlink. The search engines and web site directories of the prior art, however, rely upon processes for assigning results to keywords that often generate irrelevant search results. The automated search technology that drives many search engines in the prior art rely in large part on complex, mathematics-based database search algorithms that select and rank web pages based on multiple criteria such as keyword density and keyword location. The search results generated by such mechanisms often rely on blind mathematical formulas and may be random and even irrelevant. In addition, search engines that use automated search technology to catalog search results generally rely on invisible web site descriptions, or "meta tags", that are authored by web site promoters. Web site owners may freely tag their sites as they choose. Consequently, some web site promoters or promoters insert popular search terms into their web site meta tags which are not relevant because by doing so they may attract additional consumer attention at little to no marginal cost. Finally, many web sites have similar meta tags, and the search engines of the prior art are simply not equipped to prioritize results in accordance with consumers' preferences.

Search engines and web site directories may also rely on the manual efforts of limited editorial staffs to review web page information. Since comprehensive manual review and indexing of an unpredictable, randomly updated database such as the web is an impossible task, search engine results are often incomplete or out-of-date. Moreover, as the volume and diversity of Internet content has grown, on many popular web search sites, consumers must frequently click-through multiple branches of a hierarchical directory to locate web sites responsive to their search request, a process that is slow and unwieldy from the consumer's standpoint. Thus, the prior art search engines are ineffective for web page owners seeking to target their web exposure and distribute information to the attention of interested users on a current and comprehensive basis.

Furthermore, current paradigms for generating web site traffic, such as banner advertising, follow traditional advertising paradigms and fail to utilize the unique attributes of the Internet. In the banner advertising model, web site promoters seeking to promote and increase their web exposure often purchase space on the pages of popular commercial web sites. The web site promoters usually fill this space with a colorful graphic, known as a banner, advertising their own web site. The banner may act a hyperlink a visitor may click on to access the site. Like traditional advertising, banner advertising on the Internet is typically priced on an impression basis with advertisers paying for exposures to potential consumers. Banners may be displayed at every page access, or, on search engines, may be targeted to search terms. Nonetheless, impression-based advertising inefficiently exploits the Internet's direct marketing potential, as the click-through rate, the rate of consumer visits a banner generates to the destination site, may be quite low. Web site promoters are therefore paying for exposure to many consumers who are not interested in the product or service being promoted, as most visitors to a web site seek specific information and may not be interested in the information announced in the banner. Likewise, the banner often fails to reach interested individuals, since the banner is not generally searchable by search engines and the interested persons may not know where on the web to view the banner.

Thus, the traditional paradigms of advertising and search engine algorithms fail to effectively deliver relevant information via the World Wide Web to interested parties in a cost-effective manner. Internet advertising can offer a level of targetability, interactivity, and measurability not generally available in other media. With the proper tools, Internet advertisers have the ability to target their messages to specific groups of consumers and receive prompt feedback as to the effectiveness of their advertising campaigns.

Ideally, web site promoters should be able to control their placement in search result listings so that their listings are prominent in searches that are relevant to the content of their web site. The search engine functionality of the Internet needs to be focused in a new direction to facilitate an on-line marketplace which offers consumers quick, easy and relevant search results while providing Internet advertisers and promoters with a cost-effective way to target consumers. A consumer utilizing a search engine that facilitates this on-line marketplace will find companies or businesses that offer the products, services, or information that the consumer is seeking. In this on-line marketplace, companies selling products, services, or information bid in an open auction environment for positions on a search result list generated by an Internet search engine. Since advertisers must pay for each click-through referral generated through the search result lists generated by the search engine, advertisers have an incentive to select and bid on those search keywords that are most relevant to their web site offerings. The higher an advertiser's position on a search result list, the higher likelihood of a "referral"; that is, the higher the likelihood that a consumer will be referred to the advertiser's web site through the search result list. The openness of this advertising marketplace is further facilitated by publicly displaying, to consumers and other advertisers, the price bid by an advertiser on a particular search result listing.

It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a system and method for enabling promoters to influence a position on a search result listing generated by an Internet search engine for a specified set of search terms.

A further object of the present invention is to provide a system and method for enabling promoters to specify key search terms to the search engine so as to target their search result list placement to the search queries most relevant to their business.

A still further object of the present invention is to provide a system and method for enabling promoters to examine their current search term and placement couplings online and to make substantially instantaneous changes to their selected search terms, placements, and web site titles and descriptions.

It is also an object of the present invention to provide promoters with a search engine that permits such promoters to influence a higher placement in a search result list via a continuous, competitive online bidding process.

It is another object of the present invention to provide a cost-effective method of Internet advertising where the web site promoter is charged in direct proportion to the number of actual visits generated by the search engine.

It is still another object of the present invention to create a new system of advertising where advertisers target the most interested consumers by participating in a free market which attaches a monetary cost for an advertiser's listing in a search result list generated using advertiser-selected search terms.

It is yet another object of the present invention to create an open market for Internet advertising that is fair to consumers and advertisers, where advertiser-placed listings in a search result list are clearly labeled as paid advertising.

It is also an object of the present invention to allow a web site promoter to control a title or description associated with the promoters listing in a search result list generated by the search engine.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention seeks to address the aforementioned problems by providing a system and method for enabling a web site promoter using a computer network to influence a position within a search result list generated by an Internet search engine. More particularly, the present invention relates to a system and method to enable a web site promoter to define a search listing for a search result list, select a search term relevant to the promoter's web site, and influence a search result list position for the search listing on an Internet search engine. When an Internet user enters the search terms in a search engine query, the search engine will generate a search result list with the web site promoter's listing in a position influenced by one or more parameters defined by the promoter.

In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, a web site promoter selects a search term and influences a position within the search result list generated by that search term by

participating in an online competitive bidding process. This online competitive bidding process is known as a "pay-for-performance" process and may be employed in conjunction with an Internet search engine. "Pay-for-performance" applies market principles to advertising on the Internet. Conventional Internet search engines do not provide a way for web site promoters to easily predict the position of their web site in search results or guarantee their appearance in search results containing their web site description. A tool enabling advertisers to target web search terms relevant to their business and to pinpoint the placement of their web site description within the search results provides a powerful advantage to businesses and others seeking to increase their web exposure. Furthermore, a competitive bidding process and pricing based on number of web site referrals generated helps ensure that the pricing structure reflects the market and is accessible to advertisers of all budget sizes.

To participate in the process, an advertiser, such as a web site promoter, may access the advertiser's user account through a secure web site. The advertiser may use the account to place bids on search terms that are relevant to the advertiser's web site. Each bid is specific to a search termweb site combination and corresponds to a money amount that the advertiser will pay to the owner of the search engine each time a searcher clicks on the advertiser's hyperlinked listing in the search result list generated by the search engine. The searcher's click will result in an access request being sent to the advertiser's web site, which will respond by transmitting the advertiser's web page to the searcher's browser. The charge to the advertiser for the placement is therefore directly proportional to the benefit received, since the charge is based on the number of referrals to the advertiser's web site that were generated by the search engine.

The higher the bid, the more advantageous the placement in the search result list that is generated when the bidded search term is entered by a searcher using the search engine. The search result list is arranged in order of decreasing bid amount, with the search listing corresponding to the highest bids displayed first to the searcher. Preferably, each search listing corresponding to a bid is identified on the display as a paid listing. Most preferably, the bid amount is included on the identification. In addition, the search result list of the present invention is preferably combined with "non-paid" web site descriptions generated by a conventional Internet search engine, preferably including listings generated according to mathematics-based database search algorithms as discussed above. The combination of paid and unpaid listings helps ensure that the searcher will receive the most complete and relevant search results. Most preferably, the non-paid listings are considered to have a bid amount of zero and are therefore underneath the paid results.

According to a first embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a system and method for enabling the web site promoters to influence a position for a search listing within a search result list generated by an Internet search engine. The web site promoter first selects a search term comprising one or more keywords relevant to the content of the web site to be listed. The web site promoter influences the rank position for the search listing through an ongoing online competitive bidding process with other web site promoters. The bidding process occurs when an advertiser enters a new bid amount for an existing search listing or enters a bid amount for a new search listing. Preferably, the promoter's bid is then processed in real time. This bid amount is compared with all other bid amounts from other promoters for the same search term, and generates new rank values for all search listings having that search term. The rank value determines the position where the promoter's web site description will appear on the search results list page that is generated when the search term is entered into the query box on the search engine by a searcher. A higher bid will result in a higher rank value and a more advantageous placement, which is preferably near the beginning of the search results list page. Preferably, the quantity used in the competitive bidding process is a money amount that the web site promoter will pay to an owner of the Internet search engine each time the advertiser's web site is referred by the search engine. Most preferably, this money amount will be deducted from an account balance that is retained in the promoter's account for each time the promoter's web site is referred by the search engine.

One embodiment of the system and method of the present invention provides a database having accounts for the web site promoters. Each account includes contact and billing information for a web site promoter. In addition, each account includes at least one search listing, each search listing having five components: a description of the web site to be listed, the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) of the web site, a search term comprising one or more keywords, a bid amount, and a title for the search listing. Each account may also include the promoter's payment history and a history of search listings entered by the user. The promoter logs in to his or her account via an authentication process running on a secure server. Once logged in, the promoter may add, delete, or modify a search listing. The functions of adding or deleting a search listing, or modifying the bid amount of a search listing is to initiate the competitive bidding process described above. All search listing changes and modifications are processed substantially in real time to support the online competitive bidding process.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** is a block diagram illustrating the relationship between a large network and one embodiment of the system and method for generating a pay-for-performance search result of the present invention;

FIG. **2** is a chart of menus, display screens, and input screens used in one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. **3** is a flow chart illustrating the advertiser user login process performed in one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. **4** is a flow chart illustrating the administrative user login process performed in one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. **5** is a diagram of data for an account record for use with one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. **6** is a flow chart illustrating a method of adding money to an account record used in one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. **7** illustrates an example of a search result list generated by one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. **8** is a flow chart illustrating a change bids process used in one embodiment of the present invention; and

FIG. **9** illustrates an example of a screen display used in the change bids process of FIG. **8**.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Methods and systems for generating a pay-for-performance search result determined by a site promoter,

such as an advertiser, over a client/server based computer network system are disclosed. The following description is presented to enable any person skilled in the art to make and use the invention. For purposes of explanation, specific nomenclature is set forth to provide a thorough understanding of the present invention. Descriptions of specific applications are provided only as examples. Various modifications to the preferred embodiments will be readily apparent to those skilled in the art, and the general principles defined herein may be applied to other embodiments and applications without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. Thus, the present invention is not intended to be limited to the embodiments shown, but is to be accorded the widest scope consistent with the principles and features disclosed herein.

Referring now to the drawings, FIG. **1** is an example of a distributed system **10** configured as client/server architecture used in a preferred embodiment of the present invention. A "client" is a member of a class or group that uses the services of another class or group to which it is not related. In the context of a computer network, such as the Internet, a client is a process (i.e. roughly a program or task) that requests a service which is provided by another process, known as a server program. The client process uses the requested service without having to know any working details about the other server program or the server itself. In networked systems, a client process usually runs on a computer that accesses shared network resources provided by another computer running a corresponding server process. However, it should also be noted that it is possible for the client process and the server process to run on the same computer.

A "server" is typically a remote computer system that is accessible over a communications medium such as the Internet. The client process may be active in a second computer system, and communicate with the server process over a communications medium that allows multiple clients to take advantage of the information-gathering capabilities of the server. Thus, the server essentially acts as an information provider for a computer network.

The block diagram of FIG. **1** therefore shows a distributed system **10** comprising a plurality of client computers **12**, a plurality of advertiser web servers **14**, an account management server **22**, and a search engine web server **24**, all of which are connected to a network **20**. The network **20** will be hereinafter generally referred to as the Internet. Although the system and method of the present invention is specifically useful for the Internet, it should be understood that the client computers **12**, advertiser web servers **14**, account management server **22**, and search engine web server **24** may be connected together through one of a number of different types of networks. Such networks may include local area networks (LANs), other wide area networks (WANs), and regional networks accessed over telephone lines, such as commercial information services. The client and server processes may even comprise different programs executing simultaneously on a single computer.

The client computers **12** can be conventional personal computers (PCs), workstations, or computer systems of any other size. Each client **12** typically includes one or more processors, memories, input/output devices, and a network interface, such as a conventional modem. The advertiser web servers **14**, account management server **22**, and the search engine web server **24** can be similarly configured. However, advertiser web servers **14**, account management server **22**, and search engine web server **24** may each include many computers connected by a separate private network. In fact, the network **20** may include hundreds of thousands of individual networks of computers.

The client computers **12** can execute web browser programs **16**, such as the NAVIGATOR, EXPLORER, or MOSAIC browser programs, to locate the web pages or records **30** stored on advertiser server **14**. The browser programs **16** allow the users to enter addresses of specific web pages **30** to be retrieved. These addresses are referred to as Uniform Resource Locators, or URLs. In addition, once a page has been retrieved, the browser programs **16** can provide access to other pages or records when the user "clicks" on hyperlinks to other web pages. Such hyperlinks are located within the web pages **30** and provide an automated way for the user to enter the URL of another page and to retrieve that page. The pages can be data records including as content plain textual information, or more complex digitally encoded multimedia content, such as software programs, graphics, audio signals, videos, and so forth.

In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, shown in FIG. **1**, client computers **12** communicate through the network **20** with various network information providers, including account management server **22**, search engine server **24**, and advertiser servers **14** using the functionality provided by a HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP), although other communications protocols, such as FTP, SNMP, TELNET, and a number of other protocols known in the art, may be used. Preferably, search engine server **24**, account management server **22**, and advertiser servers **14** are located on the World Wide Web.

As discussed above, at least two types of server are contemplated in a preferred embodiment of the present invention. The first server contemplated is an account management server **22** comprising a computer storage medium **32** and a processing system **34**. A database **38** is stored on the storage medium **32** of the account management server **22**. The database **38** contains advertiser account information. It will be appreciated from the description below that the system and method of the present invention may be implemented in software that is stored as executable instructions on a computer storage medium, such as memories or mass storage devices, on the account management server **22**. Conventional browser programs **16**, running on client computers **12**, may be used to access advertiser account information stored on account management server **22**. Preferably, access to the account management server **22** is accomplished through a firewall, not shown, which protects the account management and search result placement programs and the account information from external tampering. Additional security may be provided via enhancements to the standard communications protocols such as Secure HTTP or the Secure Sockets Layer.

The second server type contemplated is a search engine web server **24**. A search engine program permits network users, upon navigating to the search engine web server URL or sites on other web servers capable of submitting queries to the search engine web server **24** through their browser program **16**, to type keyword queries to identify pages of interest among the millions of pages available on the World Wide Web. In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the search engine web server **24** generates a search result list that includes, at least in part, relevant entries obtained from and formatted by the results of the bidding process conducted by the account management server **22**. The search engine web server **24** generates a list of hypertext links to documents that contain information relevant to search terms entered by the user at the client computer **12**. The search engine web server transmits this

list, in the form of a web page, to the network user, where it is displayed on the browser **16** running on the client computer **12**. A presently preferred embodiment of the search engine web server may be found by navigating to the web page at URL http://www.goto.com/. In addition, the search result list web page, an example of which is presented in FIG. **7**, will be discussed below in further detail.

Search engine web server **24** is connected to the Internet **20**. In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, search engine web server **24** includes a search database **40** comprised of search listing records used to generate search results in response to user queries. In addition, search engine web server **24** may also be connected to the account management server **22**. Account management server **22** may also be connected to the Internet. The search engine web server **24** and the account management server **22** of the present invention address the different information needs of the users located at client computers **12**.

For example, one class of users located at client computers **12** may be network information providers such as advertising web site promoters or owners having advertiser web pages **30** located on advertiser web servers **14**. These advertising web site promoters, or advertisers, may wish to access account information residing in storage **32** on account management server **22**. An advertising web site promoter may, through the account residing on the account management server **22**, participate in a competitive bidding process with other advertisers. An advertiser may bid on any number of search terms relevant to the content of the advertiser's web site. In one embodiment of the present invention, the relevance of a bidded search term to an advertiser's web site is determined through a manual editorial process prior to insertion of the search listing containing the search term and advertiser web site URL into the database **40**. In an alternate embodiment of the present invention, the relevance of a bidded search term in a search listing to the corresponding web site may be evaluated using a computer program executing at processor **34** of account management server **22**, where the computer program will evaluate the search term and corresponding web site according to a set of predefined editorial rules.

The higher bids receive more advantageous placement on the search result list page generated by the search engine **24** when a search using the search term bid on by the advertiser is executed. In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the amount bid by an advertiser comprises a money amount that is deducted from the account of the advertiser for each time the advertiser's web site is accessed via a hyperlink on the search result list page. A searcher "clicks" on the hyperlink with a computer input device to initiate a retrieval request to retrieve the information associated with the advertiser's hyperlink. Preferably, each access or "click" on a search result list hyperlink will be redirected to the search engine web server **24** to associate the "click" with the account identifier for an advertiser. This redirect action, which is not apparent to the searcher, will access account identification information coded into the search result page before accessing the advertiser's URL using the search result list hyperlink clicked on by the searcher. The account identification information is recorded in the advertiser's account along with information from the retrieval request as a retrieval request event. Since the information obtained through this mechanism conclusively matches an account identifier with a URL in a manner not possible using conventional server system logs known in the art, accurate account debit records will be maintained. Most preferably, the advertiser's web site description and hyperlink on the search result list page is accompanied by an indication that the advertiser's listing is a paid listing. Most preferably, each paid listing displays a "cost to advertiser," which is an amount corresponding to a "price-per-click" paid by the advertiser for each referral to the advertiser's site through the search result list.

A second class of users at client computers **12** may comprise searchers seeking specific information on the web. The searchers may access, through their browsers **16**, a search engine web page **36** residing on web server **24**. The search engine web page **36** includes a query box in which a searcher may type a search term comprising one or more keywords. Alternatively, the searcher may query the search engine web server **24** through a query box hyperlinked to the search engine web server **24** and located on a web page stored at a remote web server. When the searcher has finished entering the search term, the searcher may transmit the query to the search engine web server **24** by clicking on a provided hyperlink. The search engine web server **24** will then generate a search result list page and transmit this page to the searcher at the client computer **12**.

The searcher may click on the hypertext links associated with each listing on the search results page to access the corresponding web pages. The hypertext links may access web pages anywhere on the Internet, and include paid listings to advertiser web pages **18** located on advertiser web servers **14**. In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the search result list also includes non-paid listings that are not placed as a result of advertiser bids and are generated by a conventional World Wide Web search engine, such as the INKTOMI, LYCOS, or YAHOO! search engines. The non-paid hypertext links may also include links manually indexed into the database **40** by an editorial team. Most preferably, the non-paid listings follow the paid advertiser listings on the search results page.

FIG. **2** is a diagram showing menus, display screens, and input screens presented to an advertiser accessing the account management server **22** through a conventional browser program **16**. The advertiser, upon entering the URL of the account management server **22** into the browser program **16** of FIG. **1**, invokes a login application, discussed below as shown at screen **110** of FIG. **2**, running on the processing system **34** of the server **22**. Once the advertiser is logged-in, the processing system **34** provides a menu **120** that has a number of options and further services for advertisers. These items, which will be discussed in more detail below, cause routines to be invoked to either implement the advertiser's request or request further information prior to implementing the advertiser's request. In one embodiment of the present invention, the advertiser may access several options through menu **120**, including requesting customer service **130**, viewing advertiser policies **140**, performing account administration tasks **150**, adding money to the advertiser's account **160**, managing the account's advertising presence on the search engine **170**, and viewing activity reports **180**. Context-specific help **190** may also generally be available at menu **120** and all of the above-mentioned options.

The login procedure of the preferred embodiment of the present invention is shown in FIGS. **3** and **4** for two types of user. FIG. **3** shows the login procedures **270** for an advertiser. FIG. **4** shows the login procedures **290** for an administrator managing and maintaining the system and method of the present invention. As discussed above, the advertiser or administrator at a client computer **12** must first use a browser program at steps **271** or **291** to access the account management server. After the advertiser navigates

to the URL of the login page to start the login process at step **272** or **292**, the processing system **34** of the account management server **22** invokes a login application at steps **274** or **294**. According to this application, the processor provides an input screen **110** (FIG. **2**) that requests the advertiser's or administrator's user name and password. These items of information are provided at steps **276** or **296** to a security application known in the art for the purpose of authentication, based on the account information stored in a database stored in storage **32** of account management server **22**.

According to FIG. **3**, after the user has been authenticated as an advertiser, the advertiser is provided with the menu screen **120** of FIG. **2** and limited read/write access privileges only to the corresponding advertiser account, as shown in step **278**. The advertiser login event **278** may also be recorded in step **280** in an audit trail data structure as part of the advertiser's account record in the database. The audit trail is preferably implemented as a series of entries in database **38**, where each entry corresponds to an event wherein the advertiser's account record is accessed. Preferably, the audit trail information for an account record may be viewed by the account owner and other appropriate administrators.

However, if the user is authenticated as an administrator in step **295** of FIG. **4**, the administrator is provided with specified administrative access privileges to all advertiser accounts as shown in step **296**. The administrator login event **296** is recorded in step **297** in the audit trail data structure portion of the administrator's account record. This audit trail is preferably implemented as a series of entries in database **38**, where each entry corresponds to an event wherein the administrator's account record is accessed. Most preferably, the administrator's audit trail information may be viewed by the account owner and other appropriate administrators.

Furthermore, instead of the general advertiser main menu shown to the authenticated advertiser users in step **282**, the authenticated administrator is provided in step **298** with access to search the database **38** of advertiser accounts. Preferably, a database search interface is provided to the administrator that enables the administrator to select an advertiser account to monitor. For example, the interface may include query boxes in which the administrator may enter an account number or username or contact name corresponding to an account the administrator wishes to access. When the administrator selects an advertiser account to monitor in step **299**, the administrator is then brought to the main advertiser page **120** of FIG. **2**, which is also seen by the advertisers.

Access to the account information **32** located on the account management server **22** is restricted to users having an account record on the system, as only those users are provided with a valid login name and password. Password and login name information is stored along with the user's other account information in the database **38** of the account management server **22**, as shown in FIG. **1**. Account information, including a login user name and password, is entered in the database **38** of FIG. **1** via a separate online registration process that is outside the scope of the present invention.

FIG. **5** is a diagram showing the types of information contained in each advertiser account record **300** in the database. First, an advertiser account record **300** contains a username **302** and a password **304**, used for online authentication as described above. The account record also contains contact information **310** (e.g., contact name, company name, street address, phone, e-mail address).

Contact information **310** is preferably utilized to direct communications to the advertiser when the advertiser has requested notification of key advertiser events under the notification option, discussed below. The account record **300** also contains billing information **320** (e.g., current balance, credit card information). The billing information **320** contains data accessed when the advertiser selects the option to add money to the advertiser's account. In addition, certain billing information, such as the current balance, may trigger events requiring notification under the notification option. The audit trail section **325** of an account record **300** contains a list of all events wherein the account record **300** is accessed. Each time an account record **300** is accessed or modified, by an administrator or advertiser a short entry describing the account access and/or modification event will be appended to the audit trail section **330** of the administrator or advertiser account that initiated the event. The audit trail information may then be used to help generate a history of transactions made by the account owner under the account.

The advertising information section **330** contains information needed to conduct the online bidding process of the present invention, wherein a position is determined for a web site description and hyperlink within a search result list generated by a search engine. The advertising data **330** for each user account **300** may be organized as zero or more subaccounts **340**. Each subaccount **340** comprises at least one search listing **344**. Each search listing corresponds to a bid on a search term. An advertiser may utilize subaccounts to organize multiple bids on multiple search terms, or to organize bids for multiple web sites. Subaccounts are also particularly useful for advertisers seeking to track the performance of targeted market segments. The subaccount superstructure is introduced for the benefit of the advertisers seeking to organize their advertising efforts, and does not affect the method of operation of the present invention. Alternatively, the advertising information section need not include the added organizational layer of subaccounts, but may simply comprise one or more search listings.

The search listing **344** corresponds to a search term/bid pairing and contains key information to conduct the online competitive bidding process. Preferably, each search listing comprises the following information: search term **352**, web site description **354**, URL **356**, bid amount **358**, and a title **360**. The search term **352** comprises one or more keywords which may be common words in English (or any other language). Each keyword in turn comprises a character string. The search term is the object of the competitive online bidding process. The advertiser selects a search term to bid on that is relevant to the content of the advertiser's web site. Ideally, the advertiser may select a search term that is targeted to terms likely to be entered by searchers seeking the information on the advertiser's web site, although less common search terms may also be selected to ensure comprehensive coverage of relevant search terms for bidding.

The web site description **354** is a short textual description (preferably less than **190** characters) of the content of the advertiser's web site and may be displayed as part of the advertiser's entry in a search result list. The search listing **344** may also contain a title **360** of the web site that may be displayed as the hyperlinked heading to the advertiser's entry in a search result list. The URL **356** contains the Uniform Resource Locator address of the advertiser's web site. When the user clicks on the hyperlink provided in the advertiser's search result list entry, the URL is provided to the browser program. The browser program, in turn, accesses the advertiser's web site through the redirection

mechanism discussed above. The URL may also be displayed as part of the advertiser's entry in a search result list.

The bid amount **358** preferably is a money amount bid by an advertiser for a listing. This money amount is deducted from the advertiser's prepaid account or is recorded for advertiser accounts that are invoiced for each time a search is executed by a user on the corresponding search term and the search result list hyperlink is used to refer the searcher to the advertiser's web site. Finally, a rank value is a value generated dynamically, preferably by the processing system **34** of the account management server **22** shown in FIG. **1**, each time an advertiser places a bid or a search enters a search query. The rank value of an advertiser's search listing determines the placement location of the advertiser's entry in the search result list generated when a search is executed on the corresponding search term. Preferably, rank value is an ordinal value determined in a direct relationship to the bid amount **358**; the higher the bid amount, the higher the rank value, and the more advantageous the placement location on the search result list. Most preferably, the rank value of 1 is assigned to the highest bid amount with successively higher ordinal values (e.g., 2, 3, 4, . . .) associated with successively lower ranks and assigned to successively lower bid amounts.

Once logged in, an advertiser can perform a number of straightforward tasks set forth in menu **120** of FIG. **2**, including viewing a list of rules and policies for advertisers, and requesting customer service assistance. These items cause routines to be invoked to implement the request. For example, when "Customer Service" is selected, an input screen **130** is displayed to allow the advertiser to select the type of customer service requested. In addition, forms may be provided on screen **130** so that an advertiser may type a customer comment into a web-based input form.

When "View Advertiser Policies" is selected, a routine will be invoked by processing system **34** of the account management server **22** FIG. **1**. As shown in FIG. **2**, the routine will display an informational web page **140**. The web page **140** sets forth the advertiser policies currently in effect (e.g., "All search listing descriptions must clearly relate to the search term").

Menu **120** of FIG. **2** also includes an "Account Administration" selection **150** which allows an advertiser, among other things, to view and change the advertiser's contact information and billing information, or update the advertiser's access profile, if any. Web-based forms well known in the art and similar to those discussed above are provided for updating account information.

The "Account Administration" menu also includes a selection enabling an advertiser to view the transaction history of the advertiser's account. Under the "View Transaction History" selection, the advertiser may invoke routines to view a listing of past account transactions (e.g., adding money to account, adding or deleting bidded search terms, or changing a bid amount). Additional routines may be implemented to permit advertisers to display a history of transactions of a specified type, or that occur within a specified time. The transaction information may be obtained from the audit trail list **325** of FIG. **5**, described above. Clickable buttons that may be implemented in software, web-based forms, and/or menus may be provided as known in the art to enable advertisers to specify such limitations.

In addition, the "Account Administration" menu **150** of FIG. **2** includes a selection enabling an advertiser to set notification options. Under this selection, the advertiser may select options that will cause the system to notify the advertiser when certain key events have occurred. For example, the advertiser may elect to set an option to have the system send conventional electronic mail messages to the advertiser when the advertisers account balance has fallen below a specified level. In this manner, the advertiser may receive a "warning" to replenish the account before the account is suspended (meaning the advertiser's listings will no longer appear in search result lists). Another key event for which the advertiser may wish notification is a change in position of an advertiser's listing in the search result list generated for a particular search term. For example, an advertiser may wish to have the system send a conventional electronic mail message to the advertiser if the advertiser has been outbid by another advertiser for a particular search term (meaning that the advertiser's listing will appear in a position farther down on the search result list page than previously). When one of the system-specified key events occurs, a database search is triggered for each affected search listing. The system will then execute the appropriate notification routine in accordance with the notification options specified in the advertiser's account.

Referring back to FIG. **2**, a selection also appears in menu **120** that permits an advertiser to add money to the advertiser's account, so that the advertiser will have funds in their account to pay for referrals to the advertiser's site through the search results page. Preferably, only advertisers with funds in their advertiser's accounts may have their paid listings included in any search result lists generated. Most preferably, advertisers meeting selected business criteria may elect, in place of maintaining a positive account balance at all times, incur account charges regardless of account balance and pay an invoiced amount at regular intervals which reflects the charges incurred by actual referrals to the advertiser's site generated by the search engine. The process that is executed when the "Add Money to Account" selection is invoked is shown in further detail in FIG. **6**, beginning at step **602**. When the "Add Money to Account" selection is clicked in step **604**, a function is invoked which receives data identifying the advertiser and retrieves the advertiser's account from the database. The executing process then stores the advertiser's default billing information and displays the default billing information for the advertiser in step **606**. The displayed billing information includes a default amount of money to be added, a default payment type, and default instrument information.

In the preferred embodiment of the present invention, an advertiser may add funds online and substantially in real time through the use of a credit card, although the use of other payment types are certainly well within the scope of the present invention. For example, in an alternate embodiment of the present invention, advertisers may add funds to their account by transferring the desired amount from the advertiser's bank account through an electronic funds verification mechanism known in the art such as debit cards, in a manner similar to that set forth in U.S. Pat. No. 5,724,424 to Gifford. In another alternate embodiment of the present invention, advertisers can add funds to their account using conventional paper-based checks. In that case, the additional funds may be updated in the account record database through manual entry. The instrument information includes further details regarding the type of payment. For example, for a credit card, the instrument information may include data on the name of the credit card (e.g., MasterCard, Visa, or American Express), the credit card number, the expiration date of the credit card, and billing information for the credit card (e.g., billing name and address). In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, only a partial credit card number is displayed to the advertiser for security purposes.

The default values displayed to the advertiser are obtained from a persistent state, e.g., stored in the account database. In an embodiment of the present invention, the stored billing information values may comprise the values set by the advertiser the last (e.g. most recent) time the process of adding money was invoked and completed for the advertiser's account. The default billing information is displayed to the advertiser in a web-based form. The advertiser may click on the appropriate text entry boxes on the web-based form and make changes to the default billing information. After the advertiser completes the changes, the advertiser may click on a hyperlinked "Submit" button provided on the form to request that the system update the billing information and current balance in step **608**. Once the advertiser has requested an update, a function is invoked by the system which validates the billing information provided by the advertiser and displays it back to the advertiser for confirmation, as shown in step **610**. The confirmation billing information is displayed in read-only form and may not be changed by the advertiser.

The validation step functions as follows. If payment is to be debited from an advertiser's external account, payment may be authenticated, authorized and completed using the system set forth in U.S. Pat. No. 5,724,424 to Gifford. However, if the payment type is by credit card, a validating algorithm is invoked by the system, which validates the credit card number using a method such as that set forth in U.S. Pat. No. 5,836,241 to Stein et al. The validating algorithm also validates the expiration date via a straightforward comparison with the current system date and time. In addition, the function stores the new values in a temporary instance prior to confirmation by the advertiser.

Once the advertiser ascertains that the displayed data is correct, the advertiser may click on a "Confirm" button provided on the page to indicate that the account should be updated in step **612**. In step **612**, a function is invoked by the system which adds money to the appropriate account balance, updates the advertiser's billing information, and appends the billing information to the advertiser's payment history. The advertiser's updated billing information is stored to the persistent state (e.g., the account record database) from the temporary instance.

Within the function invoked at step **612**, a credit card payment function may be invoked by the system at step **614**. In an alternate embodiment of the present invention, other payment functions such as debit card payments may be invoked by defining multiple payment types depending on the updated value of the payment type.

If the payment type is credit card, the user's account is credited immediately at step **616**, the user's credit card having already been validated in step **610**. A screen showing the status of the add money transaction is displayed, showing a transaction number and a new current balance, reflecting the amount added by the just-completed credit card transaction.

In an alternate embodiment of the present invention, after the money has been added to the account, the amount of money added to the account may be allocated between subaccounts the end of the add money process at step **616**. If the advertiser has no subaccounts, all of the money in the account is a general allocation. However, if the advertiser has more than one subaccount, the system will display a confirmation and default message prompting the advertiser to "Allocate Money Between Subaccounts".

The menu selection "Allocate Money Between Subaccounts" may be invoked when money is added to the advertiser account after step **616** of FIG. **6**, or it may be invoked within the "Account Management" menu **170** shown in FIG. **2**. The "Account Management" menu **170** is accessible from the Advertiser Main Page **120**, as shown in FIG. **2**. This "Allocate Money Between Subaccounts" menu selection permits an advertiser to allocate current and any pending balances of the advertiser's account among the advertiser's subaccounts. The system will then update the subaccount balances. The current balance allocations will be made in real time, while the pending balance allocations will be stored in the persistent state. A routine will be invoked to update the subaccount balances to reflect the pending balance allocations when the payment for the pending balance is processed. Automatic notification may be sent to the advertiser at that time, if requested. This intuitive online account management and allocation permits advertisers to manage their online advertising budget quickly and efficiently. Advertisers may replenish their accounts with funds and allocate their budgets, all in one easy web-based session. The computer-based implementation eliminates time consuming, high cost manual entry of the advertiser's account transactions.

The "Allocate Money Between Subaccounts" routine begins when an advertiser indicates the intent to allocate money by invoking the appropriate menu selection at the execution points indicated above. When the advertiser indicates the intent to allocate, a function is invoked by the system to determine whether there are funds pending in the current balance (i.e., unactivated account credits) that have not yet been allocated to the advertiser's subaccounts, and displays the balance selection options. In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, an account instance is created and a pending current balance account field is set from the persistent state.

If there are no unallocated pending funds, the system may display the current available balances for the account as a whole as well as for each subaccount. The advertiser then distributes the current available balance between subaccounts and submits a request to update the balances. A function is invoked which calculates and displays the current running total for subaccount balances. The current running total is stored in a temporary variable which is set to the sum of current balances for all subaccounts for the specified advertiser. The function also validates the new available subaccount balances to make sure that the total does not exceed the authorized amount. If the new advertiser-set available subaccount balances does not exceed the authorized amount, a function is invoked which will update all of the subaccount balances in the persistent state and display the update in read-only format.

If there are pending funds in the current account balance, the pending funds must be allocated separately from the available current balance. The pending funds will then be added into the available current balance when the funds are received. The function must therefore prompt the advertiser to choose between allocating pending funds or allocating available funds. The allocating pending funds selection works in much the same manner as the allocating available funds selection outlined above. After the advertiser chooses to allocate pending funds, a routine is invoked to display current pending balances for the account and the subaccounts. The advertiser distributes the pending subaccount balances between campaigns and submits a request to update the balances. A function is invoked which calculates and displays the current running totals for the pending subaccount balances. This function also validates the new pending subaccount allocations to make sure that the allocations do

not exceed any authorized amount. The current running total of pending allocations is set to the sum of current pending balances for all subaccounts for the advertiser. If the new user-set pending subaccount balances or the total of such balances do not exceed any authorized amount, the function will update all of the pending subaccount allocations in the persistent state, e.g. the advertiser's account in the database, and display the update in read-only format.

As indicated above and shown in FIG. **2**, a routine displaying the account management menu **170** may be invoked from the advertiser main menu **120**. Aside from the "Allocate Money Between Subaccounts" selection described above, the remaining selections all use to some extent the search listings present in the advertiser's account on the database, and may also affect the advertiser's entry in the search result list. Thus, a further description of the search result list generated by the search engine is needed at this point.

When a remote searcher accesses the search query page on the search engine web server **24** and executes a search request according to the procedure described previously, the search engine web server **24** preferably generates and displays a search result list where the "canonicalized" entry in search term field of each search listing in the search result list exactly matches the canonicalized search term query entered by the remote searcher. The canonicalization of search terms used in queries and search listings removes common irregularities of search terms entered by searches and web site promoters, such as capital letters and pluralizations, in order to generate relevant results. However, alternate schemes for determining a match between the search term field of the search listing and the search term query entered by the remote searcher are well within the scope of the present invention. For example, string matching algorithms known in the art may be employed to generate matches where the keywords of the search listing search term and the search term query have the same root but are not exactly the same (e.g., computing vs. computer). Alternatively a thesaurus database of synonyms may be stored at search engine web server **24**, so that matches may be generated for a search term having synonyms. Localization methodologies may also be employed to refine certain searches. For example, a search for "bakery" or "grocery store" may be limited to those advertisers within a selected city, zip code, or telephone area code. This information may be obtained through a cross-reference of the advertiser account database stored at storage **32** on account management server **22**. Finally, internationalization methodologies may be employed to refine searches for users outside the United States. For example, country or language-specific search results may be generated, by a cross-reference of the advertiser account database, for example.

An example of a search result list display used in an embodiment of the present invention is shown in FIG. **7**, which is a display of the first several entries resulting from a search for the term "zip drives". As shown in FIG. **7**, a single entry, such as entry **710***a* in a search result list consists of a description **720** of the web site, preferably comprising a title and a short textual description, and a hyperlink **730** which, when clicked by a searcher, directs the searcher's browser to the URL where the described web site is located. The URL **740** may also be displayed in the search result list entry **710***a*, as shown in FIG. **7**. The "click through" of a search result item occurs when the remote searcher viewing the search result item display **710** of FIG. **7** selects, or "clicks" on the hyperlink **730** of the search result item display **710**. In order for a "click through" to be completed, the searcher's click should be recorded at the account management server and redirected to the advertiser's URL via the redirect mechanism discussed above.

Search result list entries **710***a*–**710***h* may also show the rank value of the advertiser's search listing. The rank value is an ordinal value, preferably a number, generated and assigned to the search listing by the processing system **34** of FIG. **1**. Preferably, the rank value is assigned through a process, implemented in software, that establishes an association between the bid amount, the rank, and the search term of a search listing. The process gathers all search listings that match a particular search term, sorts the search listings in order from highest to lowest bid amount, and assigns a rank value to each search listing in order. The highest bid amount receives the highest rank value, the next highest bid amount receives the next highest rank value, proceeding to the lowest bid amount, which receives the lowest rank value. Most preferably, the highest rank value is 1 with successively increasing ordinal values (e.g., 2, 3, 4, . . .) assigned in order of successively decreasing rank. The correlation between rank value and bid amount is illustrated in FIG. **7**, where each of the paid search list entries **710***a* through **710***f* display the advertiser's bid amount **750***a* through **750***f* for that entry. Preferably, if two search listings having the same search term also have the same bid amount, the bid that was received earlier in time will be assigned the higher rank value. Unpaid listings **710***g* and **710***h* do not display a bid amount and are displayed following the lowest-ranked paid listing. Preferably, unpaid listings are displayed if there are an insufficient number of listings to fill the **40** slots in a search results page. Unpaid listings are generated by a search engine utilizing objective distributed database and text searching algorithms known in the art. An example of such a search engine may be operated by Inktomi Corporation. The original search query entered by the remote searcher is used to generate unpaid listings through the conventional search engine.

As shown in the campaign management menu **170** of FIG. **2**, several choices are presented to the advertiser to manage search listings. First, in the "Change Bids" selection, the advertiser may change the bid of search listings currently in the account. The process invoked by the system for the change bids function is shown in FIG. **8**. After the advertiser indicates the intent to change bids by selecting the "Change Bids" menu option, the system searches the user's account in the database and displays the search listings for the entire account or a default subaccount in the advertiser's account, as shown in step **810**. Search listings may be grouped into subaccounts defined by the advertiser and may comprise one or more search listings. Only one subaccount may be displayed at a time. The display should also preferably permit the advertiser to change the subaccount selected, as shown in step **815**. The screen display will then show the search listings for the selected subaccount, as indicated in step **820**.

An example of screen display shown to the advertiser in step **810** is shown in FIG. **9** and will be discussed below. To change bids, the advertiser user may specify new bids for search terms for which the advertiser already has an existing bid by entering a new bid amount into the new bid input field for the search term. The advertiser-entered bid changes are displayed to the advertiser at step **820** of FIG. **8** as discussed above. To update the bids for the display page, the advertiser requests, at step **830** of FIG. **8**, to update the result of changes. The advertiser may transmit such a request to the account management server by a variety of means, including clicking on a button graphic.

As shown in step **840** of FIG. **8**, upon receiving the request to update the advertiser's bids, the system calculates

the new current bid amounts for every search listing displayed, the rank values, and the bid amount needed to become the highest ranked search listing matching the search term field. Preferably, the system then presents a display of changes at step **850**. After the user confirms the changes, the system updates the persistent state by writing the changes to the account in the database.

The search listing data is displayed in tabular format, with each search listing corresponding to one row of the table **900**. The search term **902** is displayed in the leftmost column, followed by the current bid amount **904**, and the current rank **906** of the search listing. The current rank is followed by a column entitled "Bid to become #1" **907**, defined as the bid amount needed to become the highest ranked search listing for the displayed search term. The rightmost column of each row comprises a new bid input field **908** which is set initially to the current bid amount.

As shown in FIG. **9**, the search listings may be displayed as "subaccounts." Each subaccount comprises one search listing group, with multiple subaccounts residing within one advertiser account. Each subaccount may be displayed on a separate display page having a separate page. The advertiser should preferably be able to change the subaccount being displayed by manipulating a pull-down menu **910** on the display shown in FIG. **9**. In addition, search listing groups that cannot be displayed completely in one page may be separated into pages which may be individually viewed by manipulating pull-down menu **920**. Again, the advertiser should preferably be able to change the page displayed by clicking directly on a pull-down menu **920** located on the display page of FIG. **9**. The advertiser may specify a new bid for a displayed search listing by entering a new bid amount into the new bid input field **908** for the search listing. To update the result of the advertiser-entered changes, the advertiser clicks on button graphic **912** to transmit an update request to the account management server, which updates the bids as described above.

Many of the other selections listed in the "Account Management" menu **170** of FIG. **2** function as variants of the "Change Bid" function described above. For example, if the advertiser selects the "Change Rank Position" option, the advertiser may be presented with a display similar to the display of FIG. **9** used in the "Change Bid" function. However, in the "Change Rank Position" option, the "New Bid" field would be replaced by a "New Rank" field, in which the advertiser enters the new desired rank position for a search term. After the advertiser requests that the ranks be updated, the system then calculates a new bid price by any of a variety of algorithms easily available to one skilled in the art. For example, the system may invoke a routine to locate the search listing in the search database having the desired rank/search term combination, retrieve the associated bid amount of said combination, and then calculate a bid amount that is N cents higher; where N=1, for example. After the system calculates the new bid price and presents a read-only confirmation display to the advertiser, the system updates the bid prices and rank values upon receiving approval from the advertiser.

The "Modify Listing Component" selection on Account Management menu **170** of FIG. **2** may also generate a display similar to the format of FIG. **9**. When the advertiser selects the "Modify Listing Component" option, the advertiser may input changes to the URL, title, or description of a search listing via web-based forms set up for each search listing. Similar to the process discussed above, the forms for the URL, title, and description fields may initially contain the old URL, title and description as default values. After the advertiser enters the desired changes, the advertiser may transmit a request to the system to update the changes. The system then displays a read-only confirmation screen, and then writes the changes to the persistent state (e.g., the user account database) after the advertiser approves the changes.

A process similar to those discussed above may be implemented for changing any other peripheral options related to a search listing; for example, changing the matching options related to a bidded search term. Any recalculations of bids or ranks required by the changes may also be determined in a manner similar to the processes discussed above.

In the "Delete Bidded Search Term" option, the system retrieves all of the search listings in the account of the advertiser and displays the search listings in an organization and a format similar to the display of FIG. **9**. Each search listing entry may include, instead of the new bid field, a check box for the advertiser to click on. The advertiser would then click to place a check (X) mark next to each search term to be deleted, although any other means known in the art for selecting one or more items from a list on a web page may be used. After the advertiser selects all the search listings to be deleted and requests that the system update the changes, the system preferably presents a read-only confirmation of the requested changes, and updates the advertiser's account only after the advertiser approves the changes. The "deleted" search listings are removed from the search database **36** and will not appear in subsequent searches. However, the search listing will remain as part of the advertiser's account record for billing and account activity monitoring purposes.

In the "Add Bidded Search Term" option, the system provides the advertiser with a display having a number of entry fields corresponding to the elements of a search listing. The advertiser then enters into each field information corresponding to the respective search listing element, including the search term, the web site URL, the web site title, the web site description, and the bid amount, as well as any other relevant information. After the advertiser has completed entering the data and has indicated thus to the system, the system returns a read-only confirmation screen to the advertiser. The system then creates a new search listing instance and writes it into the account database and the search database upon receiving approval from the advertiser.

Preferably, the "Account Management" menu **170** of FIG. **2** provides a selection for the advertiser to "Get Suggestions On Bidded Search Term". In this case, the advertiser enters a bidded search term into a form-driven query box displayed to the advertiser. The system reads the search term entered by the advertiser and generates a list of additional related search terms to assist the advertiser in locating search terms relevant to the content of the advertiser's web site. Preferably, the additional search terms are generated using methods such as a string matching algorithm applied to a database of bidded search terms and/or a thesaurus database implemented in software. The advertiser may select search terms to bid on from the list generated by the system. In that case, the system displays to the advertisers the entry fields described above for the "Add Bidded Search Term" selection, with a form for entering a search listing for each search term selected. Preferably, the selected search term is inserted as a default value into the form for each search listing. Default values for the other search listing components may also be inserted into the forms if desired.

The "Account Management" menu **170** of FIG. **2** also preferably provides advertisers with a "Project Expenses"

selection. In this selection, the advertiser specifies a search listing or subaccount for which the advertiser would like to predict a "daily run rate" and "days remaining to expiration." The system calculates the projections based on a cost projection algorithm, and displays the predictions to the advertiser on a read-only screen. The predictions may be calculated using a number of different algorithms known in the art. However, since the cost of a search listing is calculated by multiplying the bid amount by the total number of clicks received by the search listing at that bid amount during a specified time period, every cost projection algorithm must generally determine an estimated number of clicks per month (or other specified time period) for a search listing. The clicks on a search listing may be tracked via implementation of a software counting mechanism as is well known in the art. Clicks for all search listings may be tracked over time, this data may be used to generate estimated numbers of clicks per month overall, and for individual search terms. For a particular search term, an estimated number of searches per day is determined and is multiplied by the cost of a click. This product is then multiplied by a ratio of the average number of clicks over the average number of impressions for the rank of the search listing in question to obtain a daily run rate. The current balance may be divided by the daily run rate to obtain a projected number of days to exhaustion or "expiration" of account funds.

One embodiment of the present invention bases the cost projection algorithm on a simple predictor model that assumes that every search term performs in a similar fashion. This model assumes that the rank of the advertiser's search listing will remain constant and not fluctuate throughout the month. This algorithm has the advantages of being simple to implement and fast to calculate. The predictor model is based on the fact that the click through rate, e.g. the total number of clicks, or referrals, for a particular searcher listing, is considered to be a function of the rank of the search listing. The model therefore assumes that the usage curve of each search term, that is, the curve that result when the number of clicks on a search listing is plotted against the rank of the search listing, is similar to the usage curve for all search terms. Thus, known values extrapolated over time for the sum of all clicks for all search terms, the sum of all clicks at a given rank for all search terms, and the sum of all clicks for the selected search term may be employed in a simple proportion to determine the total of all clicks for the given rank for the selected search term. The estimated daily total of all clicks for the selected search term at the selected rank is then multiplied by the advertiser's current bid amount for the search term at that rank to determine a daily expense projection. In addition, if particular search terms or classes of search terms are known to differ markedly from the general pattern, correction values specific to the search term, advertiser, or other parameter may be introduced to fine-tune the projected cost estimate.

Finally, the "Account Management" menu **170** of FIG. **2** provides several selections to view information related to the advertiser's campaigns. The "View Subaccount Information" selection displays read-only information related to the selected subaccount. The "View Search Term List" selection displays the list of the advertiser's selected search terms along with the corresponding URLs, bid price, and rank, with the search terms preferably grouped by subaccount. The advertiser may also view current top bids for a set of search terms selected from a list of search terms from a read-only display generated by the system upon receiving the requested search terms from the advertiser.

For an advertiser who requires a more comprehensive report of search listing activity, the "View Report" option may be selected from the Advertiser Main Page **120** of FIG. **2**. In an embodiment of the present invention, the "View Report" options generate reports comprehensive for up to one year preceding the current date. For example, daily reports are available for the each of the immediately preceding **7** days, weekly reports for the preceding four weeks, monthly reports for the preceding twelve months, and quarterly reports for the last four quarters. Additional reports may also be made available depending on advertiser interest. Other predefined report types may include activity tracked during the following time periods: Since Inception of the Account, Year To Date, Yearly, Quarter To Date, Month To Date, and Week to Date. Report Categories may include a Detail Report, viewable by Advertiser Account, by Search Listing, and by URL, and a Summary Report, viewable by Advertiser Account and by Subaccount. The reports may include identification data such as advertiser account and subaccount name, the dates covered by the report and the type of report. In addition, the reports may include key search listing account data such as current balance, pending current balance, average daily account debit, and run rate. Furthermore, the reports may also include key data, such as: search terms, URLs, bids, current ranks, and number of clicks, number of searches done for the search term, number of impressions (times that the search listing appeared in a search result list), and click through rate (defined as Number of Clicks/Number of Impressions). Preferably, the report is available in at least HTML view options for viewing via a browser program, printing, or downloading. Note, however, that other view options may be made available, such as Adobe Acrobat, PostScript, ASCII text, spreadsheet interchange formats (e.g., CSV, tabdelimited), and other well-known formats.

When the advertiser has selected the "View Report" option, the system invokes a function which displays a list of available report types, dates, categories, and view options. The system preferably creates a report instance with the following fields, all of which are initially set to null: report type, report date, report category, and view option. Once the advertiser has defined the parameters described above, the system invokes a function to generate the requested report, based on the advertiser-set parameters, and to display the report, based on the view option parameter.

Finally, a preferred embodiment of the present invention implements an option for context specific help that the advertiser may request at any time the advertiser is logged in. The help option may be implemented as a small icon or button located on the system generated display page. The advertiser may click on the icon or button graphic on the display page to request help, upon which the system generates and displays a help page keyed to the function of the particular display the user is viewing. The help may be implemented as separate display pages, a searchable index, dialog boxes, or by any other methods well known in the art.

The foregoing detailed description should be regarded as illustrative rather than limiting and the appended claims, including all equivalents, are intended to define the scope of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A method of generating a search result list substantially in real time in response to a search request from a searcher using a computer network, comprising:

maintaining a database including a plurality of search listings, wherein each search listing is associated with a network location, at least one search term and a modifiable bid amount that is independent of other components of the search listing, the bid amount being

associated with at least one of the search term and the network location, the bid amount corresponding to a money amount that is deducted from an account of a network information provider associated with the network location upon receipt of a retrieval request for the network location;

receiving a search request from the searcher;

identifying the search listings having search terms generating a match with the search request;

ordering the identified search listings into a search result list in accordance with the values of the respective bid amounts for the identified search listings;

receiving a retrieval request from the searcher to retrieve information associated with a search listing in the search result list; and

recording a retrieval request event including account identification information corresponding to the network information provider, to permit maintenance of accurate account debit records.

2. The method of claim **1**, further comprising the step of updating a search listing in the search listing database in response to a request from a network information provider.

3. The method of claim **1**, further comprising the step of including on the search result list search listings having a bid amount of zero.

4. The method of claim **1**, wherein the account database comprises at least one account record for each of a plurality of network information providers, said account record including

at least one search listing having a search term and a bid amount,

an account balance; and

a unique account identifier.

5. The method of claim **4**, wherein the search listings in the account record are organized into at least one subaccount within the account record.

6. The method of claim **4**, further comprising the step of including on the search result list search listings having a bid amount of zero.

7. The method of claim **4**, wherein the retrieval request event comprises the search term and the bid amount of the search listing, and an account identifier associated with the search listing.

8. The method of claim **7**, wherein the retrieval request event further includes a rank value.

9. The method of claim **7**, wherein the retrieval request event is linked to the account record having an account identifier that corresponds to the account identifier listed on the retrieval request event.

10. The method of claim **9**, wherein the bid amount of the retrieval request event is charged to the account balance of the account record having an account identifier that matches the account identifier of the retrieval request event.

11. A method of generating a search result list substantially in real time in response to a search request from a searcher using a computer network, comprising:

maintaining a database including a plurality of search listings, wherein each search listing is associated with a search term and a modifiable bid amount that is independent of other components of the search listing, each search listing being searchable in response to a received search request;

receiving a search request from the searcher;

identifying the search listings having search terms generating a match with the search request;

ordering the identified search listings into a search result list in accordance with the values of the respective bid amounts for the identified search listings;

receiving a retrieval request from the searcher to retrieve information associated with a search listing in the search result list; and

estimating the cost of including a search listing in the database for a specified time period upon receiving a request for an estimate from a network information provider.

12. The method of claim **11**, wherein the estimated cost of a search listing for the specified time period is calculated as a product of the current bid amount of the search listing and a projected number of times the search listing is expected to be selected by a searcher within a specified time period.

13. A method of generating a search result list substantially in real time in response to a search request from a searcher using a computer network, comprising:

maintaining a database including a plurality of search listings, wherein each search listing is associated with a search term and a modifiable bid amount that is independent of other components of the search listing;

receiving a search request from the searcher;

identifying the search listings having search terms generating a match with the search request;

ordering the identified search listings into a search result list in accordance with the values of the respective bid amounts for the identified search listings;

receiving a retrieval request from the searcher to retrieve information associated with a search listing in the search result list; and

generating a search listing activity report including information on retrieval requests received from searchers during a specified time period.

14. A system for enabling an advertising web site promoter using a computer network to update information relating to a search listing within a search result list generated by an Internet search engine comprising:

a computer system having stored thereon

a database having at least one account record for each of a plurality of advertising web site promoters using the computer network, the account record including:

at least one search listing including a search term having at least one keyword, a modifiable bid amount that is independent of other components of the search listing, a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) corresponding to the address of a document residing on a network server, a description, and a title;

an account balance;

a history of search listings included in the advertising web site promoter's account record;

payment processing information, wherein said payment processing information is accessible to the computer system and isolated from public access via the computer network; and

a payment history;

programming code for providing the advertising web site promoter with login access in response to authentication, wherein the advertising web site promoter's login access grants the advertising web site promoter access to modify the advertising web site promoter's account, the advertising web site promoter not being provided with access to modify the accounts of others;

programming code on said computer system for adding money to the account of an advertising web site promoter in substantially real time upon receiving a request from said advertising web site promoter;

programming code on said computer system for adding a search listing to an account of an advertising web site promoter in substantially real time upon receiving a request from said advertising web site promoter;

programming code on said computer system for deleting a search listing to an account of an advertising web site promoter in substantially real time upon receiving a request from said advertising web site promoter;

programming code on said computer system for modifying in substantially real time the search listing of an advertising web site promoter upon receiving a request from said advertising web site promoter;

programming code for generating in substantially real time an activity report for an advertising web site promoter upon receiving a request from said advertising web site promoter;

programming code for receiving a search request from a remote computer, the search request including at least one keyword, the search request being received over the computer network from the remote computer through a web site that is publicly accessible without authentication; and

programming code for generating in substantially real time a search result list in response to the search request, the search result list including search listings from the accounts on the database, wherein the search term for each search listing in the search result list generates a match with the search request, the search listings in the search result list arranged in an order determined using the bid amounts of the search listings.

15. A method of enabling a network information provider to update information relating to a search listing on a search result list generated by a computer network search engine, comprising the steps of:

maintaining an account database having at least one account record for each of a plurality of network information providers, said account record including

at least one search listing having a search term and a modifiable bid amount that is independent of the other components of the search listing; and

an account identifier;

receiving from a network information provider a change request for a search listing in the network information provider's account;

updating the search listing in the network information provider's account record in response to the change request; and

determining a position substantially in real time for the updated search listing in a search result list generated by the search engine in response to a search request received from a searcher using the computer network, where the search term of the updated search listing generates a match with the search request and the position of the updated search listing in the search result list is determined using the bid amount.

16. The method of claim **15**, where the search term of each search listing in the search result list generates a match with the search request.

17. The method of claim **16**, wherein the search listings in the search result list are sorted in order of decreasing bid amount.

18. The method of claim **17**, further comprising the step of assigning an ordinal rank value to each search listing in the search result list in order of decreasing bid amount, with the smallest rank value assigned to the search listing in the search result list having the highest bid amount, and the largest rank value assigned to the search listing having the lowest bid amount.

19. The method of claim **17**, further comprising the steps of

determining creation time value for each search listing in the account database;

identifying search listings within a search result list having equivalent bid amounts; and

within a group of search listings within a search result list that have equivalent bid amounts, sorting the search listings in order from earliest to most recent creation time value.

20. The method of claim **15**, wherein the account record further includes an account balance.

21. The method of claim **20**, wherein the account balance is positive.

22. The method of claim **20**, further comprising the step of subtracting the bid amount from the account balance substantially in real time when a search listing is selected by the searcher from the search result list.

23. The method of claim **20**, where the search listing further comprises a web site title, a web site description, and a web site Uniform Resource Locator (URL).

24. The method of claim **23**, further comprising the step of recording a retrieval request event substantially in real time when a search listing is selected by a remote searcher from the search result list.

25. The method of claim **24**, wherein the retrieval request event comprises an account identifier, and a bid amount.

26. The method of claim **25**, wherein the retrieval request event further comprises a search term.

27. The method of claim **25**, wherein the retrieval request event further comprises a web site URL.

28. The method of claim **25**, wherein the retrieval request event further comprises a rank value.

29. The method of claim **25**, further comprising the step of applying a charge to an account balance, where the charge corresponds to a bid amount recorded in a retrieval request event having an account identifier that matches the account identifier corresponding to the account balance.

30. A method of enabling a web site promoters using a computer network to update information relating to a search listing within a search result list generated by a search engine substantially in real time in response to a search request received from a remote computer over the computer network, comprising the steps of:

maintaining an account database having at least one account record for each of a plurality of web site promoters of the computer network, said account record including an account identifier, and at least one search listing having a search term and a modifiable bid amount that is independent of other components of the search listing;

providing the web site promoter with authenticated login access, wherein the web site promoter's login access permits the web site promoter to modify the web site promoter's account record;

modifying a search listing of the account record upon receiving a request from said web site promoter; and

generating a search result list comprised of search listings wherein the search term for each search listing gener-

ates a match with the search request, the search listings in the search result list arranged in an order corresponding to the bid amounts of the search listings.

31. The method of claim **30**, wherein the search result list further includes at least one search listing having a bid amount of zero.

32. The method of claim **30**, wherein the search result list further includes at least one search listing that is not included in the account database.

33. The method of claim **30**, wherein the step of modifying the search listing of the account record upon receiving a request from the web site promoter is performed substantially in real time.

34. The method of claim **30**, wherein the search listing further includes a title, a description, and a Uniform Resource Locator (URL).

35. The method of claim **30**, further comprising the step of adding a search listing substantially in real time to an account record of a web site promoter upon receiving a request from said web site promoter.

36. The method of claim **30**, further comprising the step of deleting a search listing substantially in real time from an account record of a web site promoter upon receiving a request from said web site promoter.

37. The method of claim **30**, wherein the account record further comprises an account balance.

38. The method of claim **37**, wherein the account balance is positive.

39. The method of claim **37**, further comprising the step of adding substantially in real time a money amount to the account balance of the web site promoters upon receiving a request from the web site promoter.

40. The method of claim **39**, wherein the money amount has been verified by an external financial authorization network.

41. The method of claim **30**, wherein the search term and the search request each comprise at least one character string.

42. The method of claim **30**, further comprising the step of generating an activity report for a web site promoter upon receiving a request from said web site promoter.

43. The method of claim **30**, further comprising the step of estimating a cost of a search listing for a specified time period upon receiving a request from a web site promoter.

44. The method of claim **43**, wherein the estimated cost of a search listing for the specified time period is calculated as a product of the current bid amount of the search listing and a projected number of times the search listing is selected by a searcher at a remote computer in a specified time period.

45. The method of claim **30**, wherein the bid amount of a web site promoters search listing comprises a money amount that is deducted from the account balance of said web site promoter's account each time the search listing is selected by a remote searcher.

46. The method of claim **30**, wherein the search listings of the web site promoters in the search result list are sorted in decreasing order from highest to lowest bid amounts.

47. The method of claim **46**, wherein an ordinal rank value is assigned in ascending order to each search listing of the search result list in the sorted order starting at the search listing with the highest bid amount, which is assigned the smallest rank value, and ending with the search listing with the lowest bid amount, which is assigned the largest rank value.

48. The method of claim **25**, further comprising the step of displaying data from the search result list at the remote computer.

49. The method of claim **30**, further comprising the step of displaying data from the search result liast at the remote computer.

50. The method of claim **30**, further comprising the step of suggesting alternative search terms for the creation of new search listings upon the request of the web site promoter.

51. The method of claim **30**, wherein said computer network is the Internet.

52. A method of enabling a web site promoter using a computer network to update information relating to a search listing within a search result list generated by an Internet search engine, said method comprising the steps of:

maintaining a database having at least one account record for at least one web site promoter using the computer network, said account record including:

at least one search listing, where each search listing includes a search term field having at least one keyword, a modifiable bid amount that is independent of the other components of the search listing, a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) corresponding to the address of a document residing on a network web server, a description, and a title;

an account balance;

payment processing information for the web site promoter, said payment processing information maintained isolated from public access via the computer network;

payment histories of the web site promoter; and

search listing histories of the web site promoter;

providing the web site promoter with login access in response to authentication, wherein the web site promoter's login access permits the web site promoter access to modify the web site promoter's account record, the web site promoter not being provided with access to modify account records of others;

modifying substantially in real time the search listing of a web site promoter upon receiving a request from said web site promoter;

receiving a search request, the search request including at least one keyword, the search request being received over the Internet from a searcher at a remote computer; and

generating a search result list in response to the search request, the search result list including search listings of the account records on the computer network, wherein the search term field for each search listing in the search result list generates a match with the search request, the search listings in the search result list arranged in an order determined using the bid amounts of the search listings.

53. The method of claim **52**, further comprising the step of adding a search listing substantially in real time to an account of web site promoter upon receiving a request from said web site promoter.

54. The method of claim **52**, further comprising the step of deleting a search listing substantiall in real time from the account record of a web site promoter upon receiving a request from said web site promoter.

55. The method of claim **52**, further comprising the step of adding a money amount to the account balance of a web site promoter substantially in real time upon receiving a request from said web site promoter.

56. The method of claim **55**, wherein the money amount has been verified by an external financial authorization network.

57. The method of claim 52, wherein the keyword comprises a character string.

58. The method of claim 52, further comprising the step of generating an account activity report for a web site promoter upon receiving a request from said web site promoter.

59. The method of claim 52, further comprising the step of estimating a cost of a search listing for a specified time period upon receiving a request from a web site promoter.

60. The method of claim 59, wherein the estimated cost is calculated as a product of the bid amount of the search listing and a projected number of times the search listing is selected in the specified time period.

61. The method of claim 52, wherein the bid amount of a web site promoter's search listing comprises a money amount that will be deducted from the account balance of said web site promoter's account each time the search listing is selected.

62. The method of claim 52, wherein the rank value is an ordinal value.

63. The method of claim 52, wherein the search listings of the search result list are sorted in decreasing order from highest to lowest bid amounts.

64. The method of claim 63, wherein a rank value is assigned to each search listing of the search result list in the sorted order starting at the search listing with the highest bid amount, which is assigned the smallest rank value, and ending with the search listing with the lowest bid amount, which is assigned the largest rank value.

65. The method of claim 64, further comprising the step of displaying data from the search result list at the remote computer.

66. The method of claim 52, further comprising the step of generating a search listing activity report.

67. The method of claim 52, further comprising the step of suggesting alternative search terms upon the request of the web site promoter.

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