

EXHIBIT B  
(Part 2 of 3)

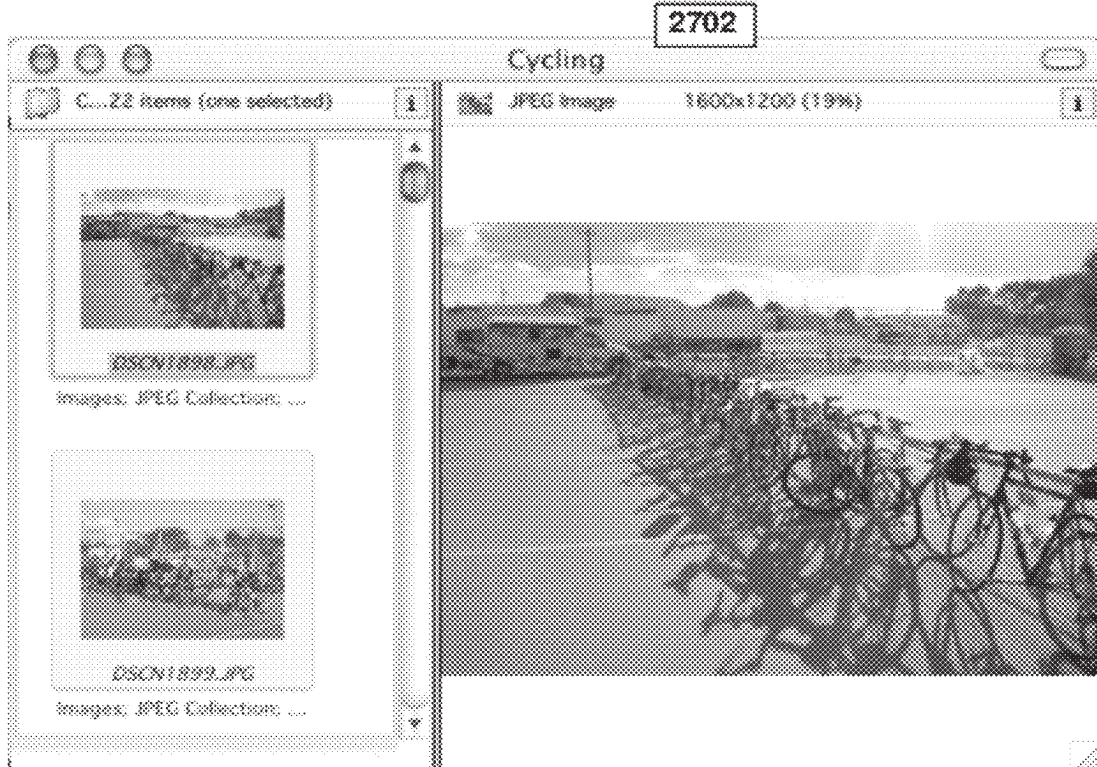
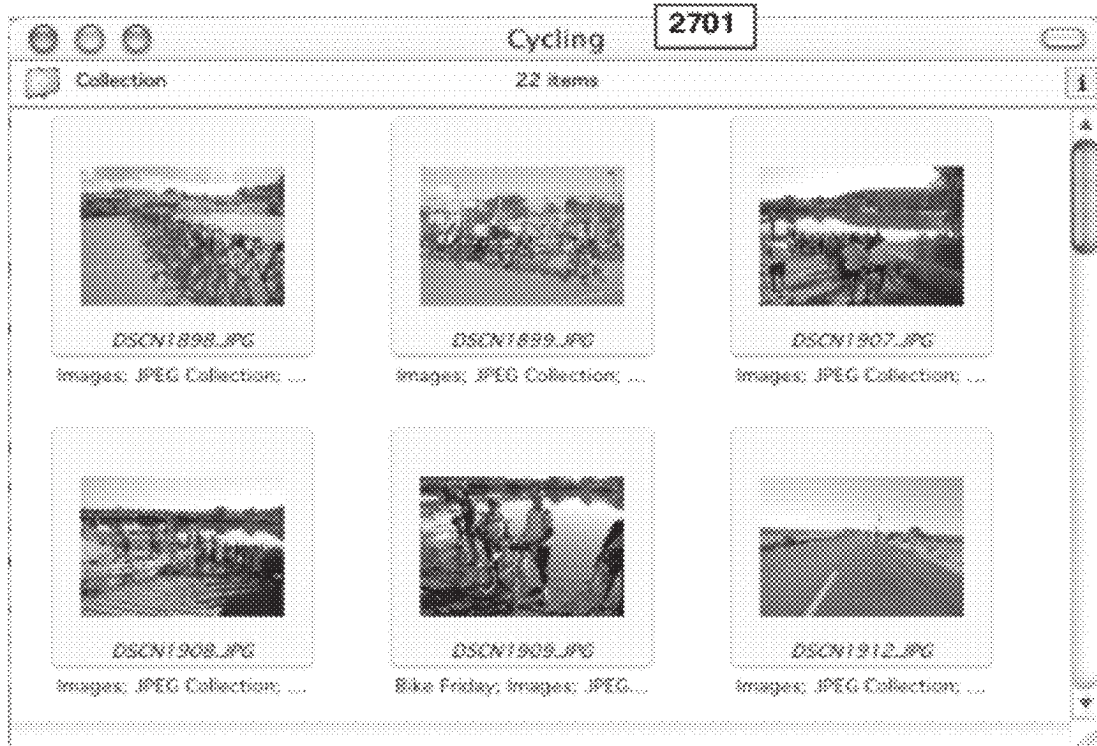


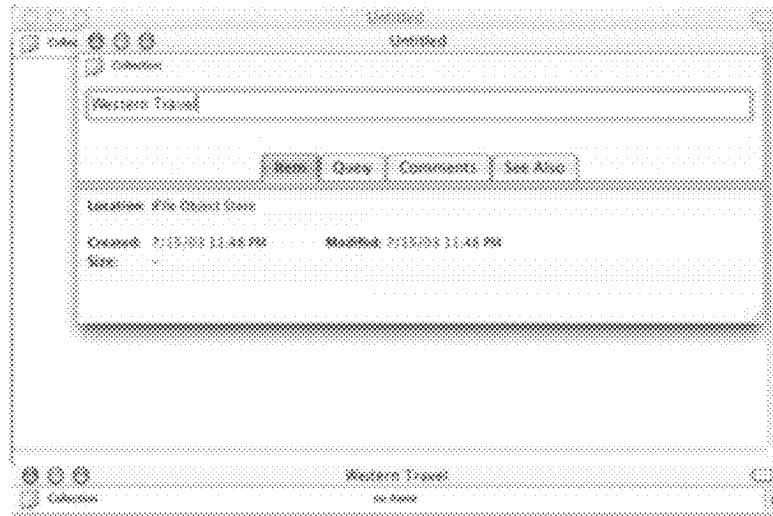
Figure 27

The screenshot shows a window titled "Collections" with a sub-header "116 Items". The window contains a table with the following columns: "Name", "Modified", and "Sticky Paths". The table lists several image files with their corresponding modification dates and paths.

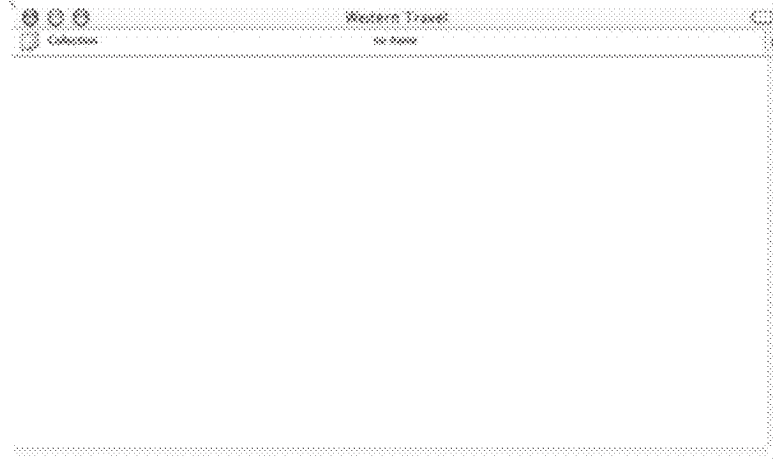
Name	Modified	Sticky Paths
Cycling	Tue, Jul 15, 2003 11:30 PM	Sticky Paths: Outdoor stuff
DSCN1898.JPG	Thu, Jan 23, 2003 9:20 PM	Images: JPEG Collection; Cycling
DSCN1918.JPG	Wed, Sep 25, 2002 2:19 PM	Images: JPEG Collection; Cycling
DSCN1912.JPG	Wed, Sep 25, 2002 2:19 PM	Images: JPEG Collection; Cycling
DSCN1974.JPG	Thu, Jan 23, 2003 9:19 PM	Images: JPEG Collection; Cycling
DSCN1907.JPG	Thu, Jan 23, 2003 9:20 PM	Images: JPEG Collection; Cycling
DSCN1939.JPG	Wed, Sep 25, 2002 2:19 PM	Hard Family: Images; Favorites; JPEG...
DSCN1928.JPG	Wed, Sep 25, 2002 2:19 PM	Bruce: Images; JPEG Collection; Cycling
DSCN2088.JPG	Wed, Sep 25, 2002 2:19 PM	Images: JPEG Collection; Cycling
DSCN1899.JPG	Thu, Jan 23, 2003 9:20 PM	Images: JPEG Collection; Cycling

Figure 28

2901



2902



2903

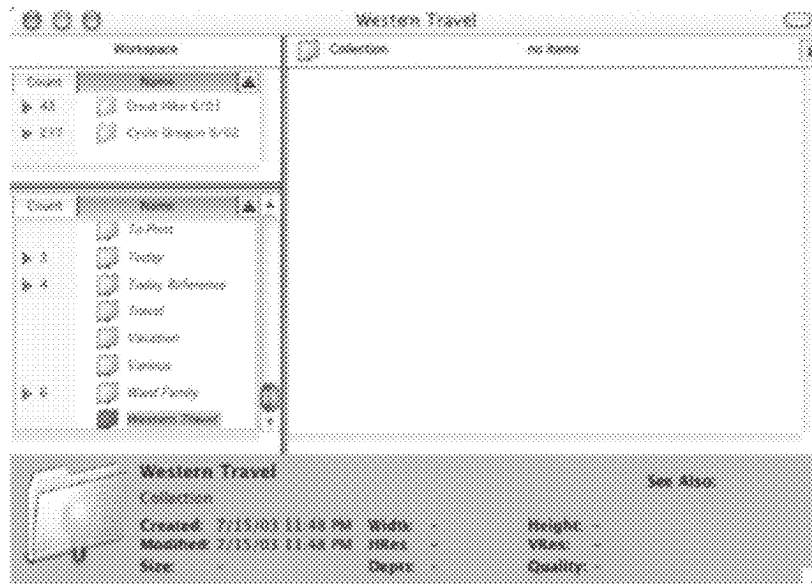


Figure 29

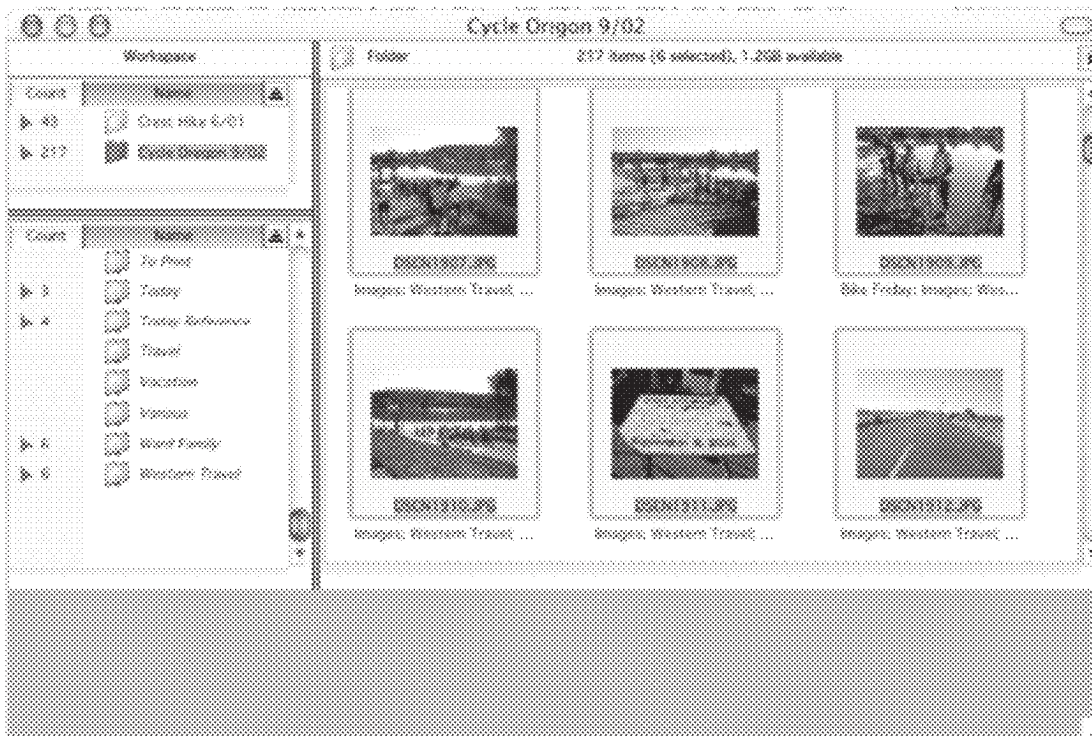
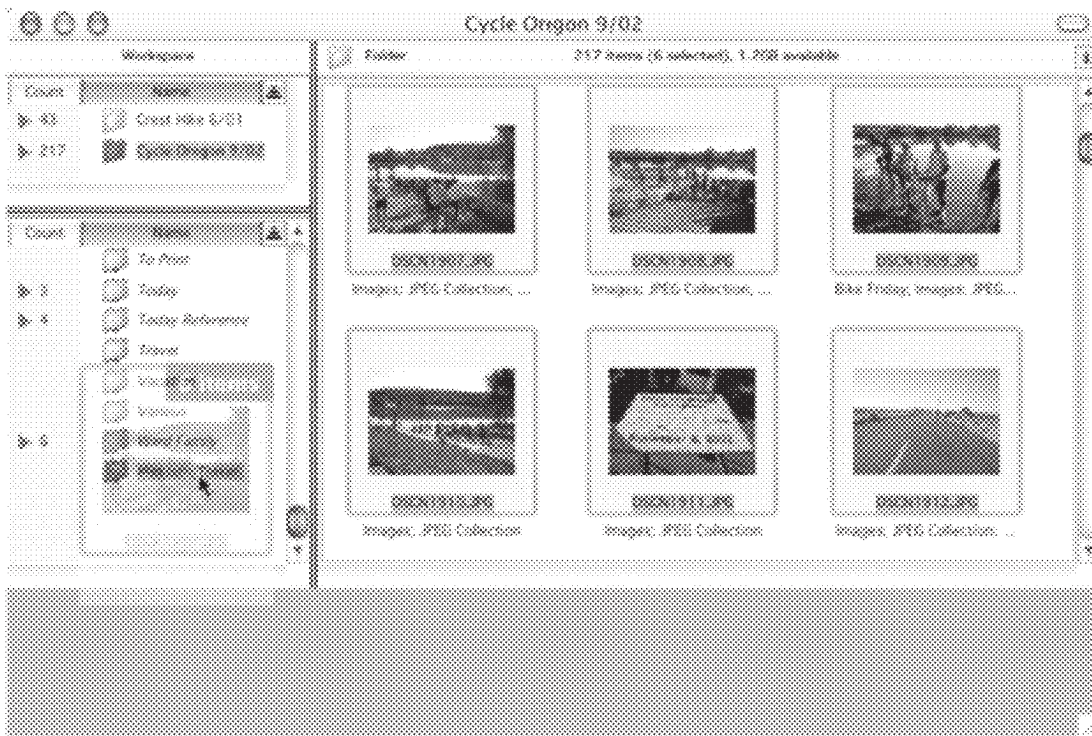


Figure 30

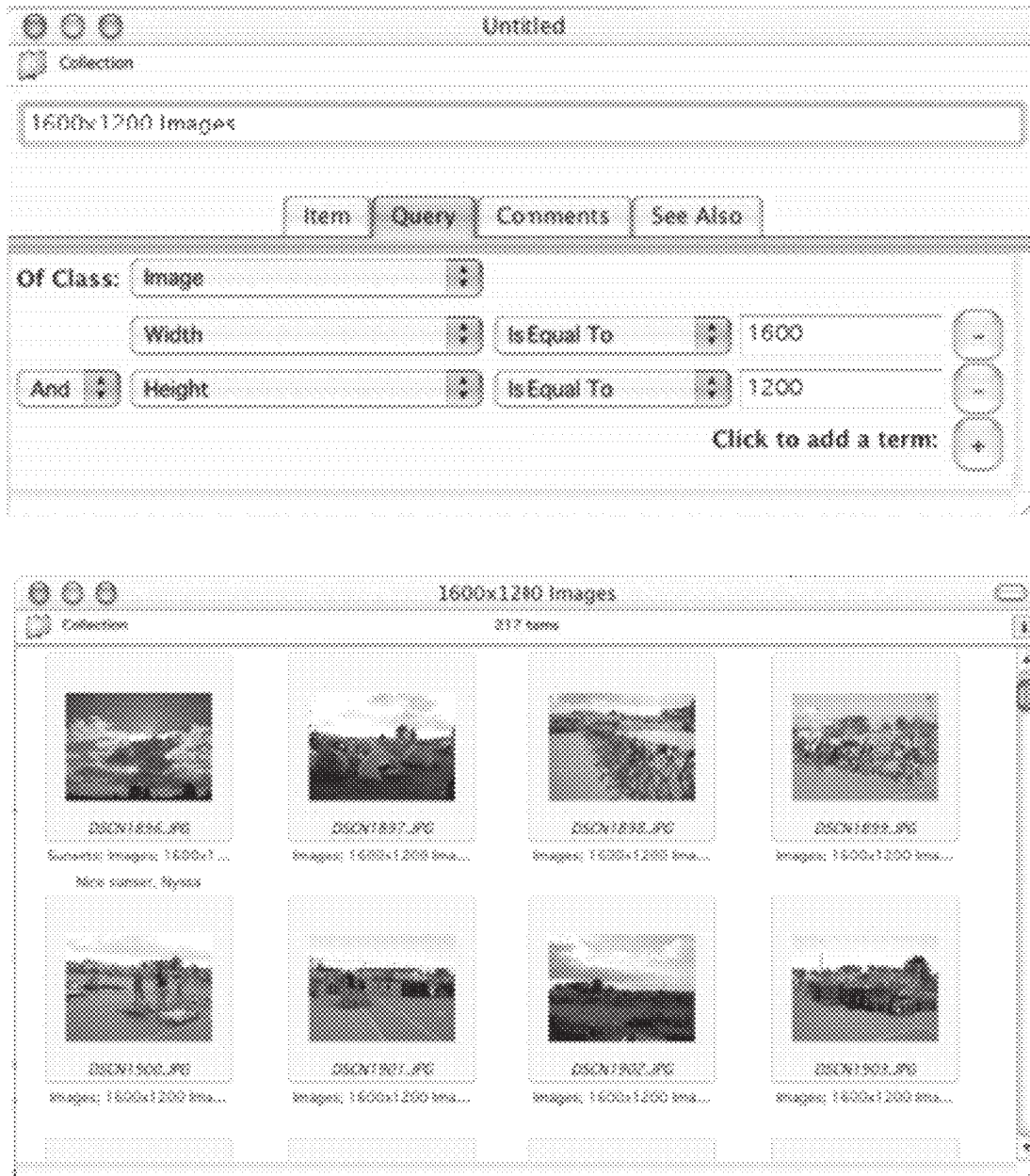


Figure 31

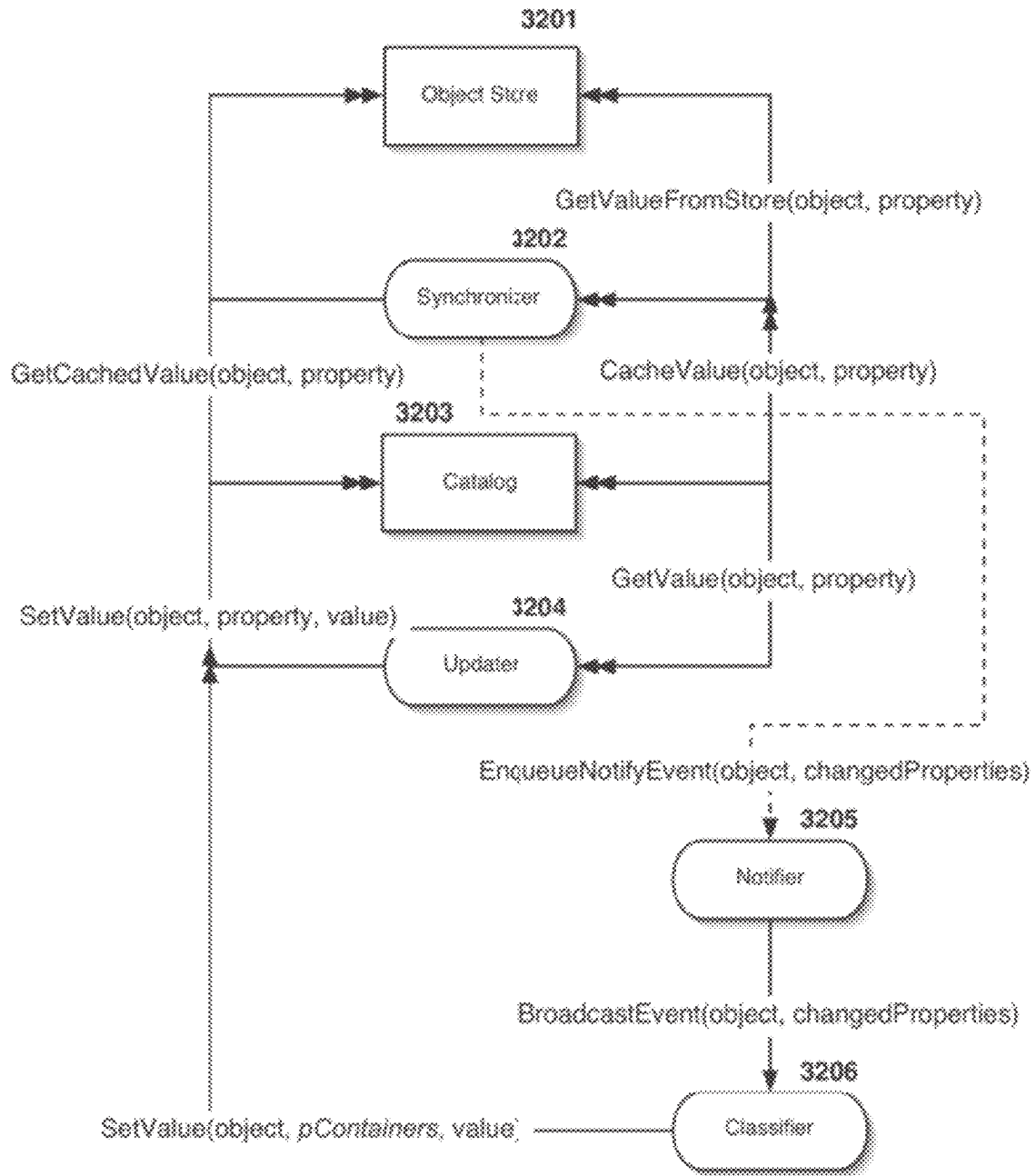


Figure 32

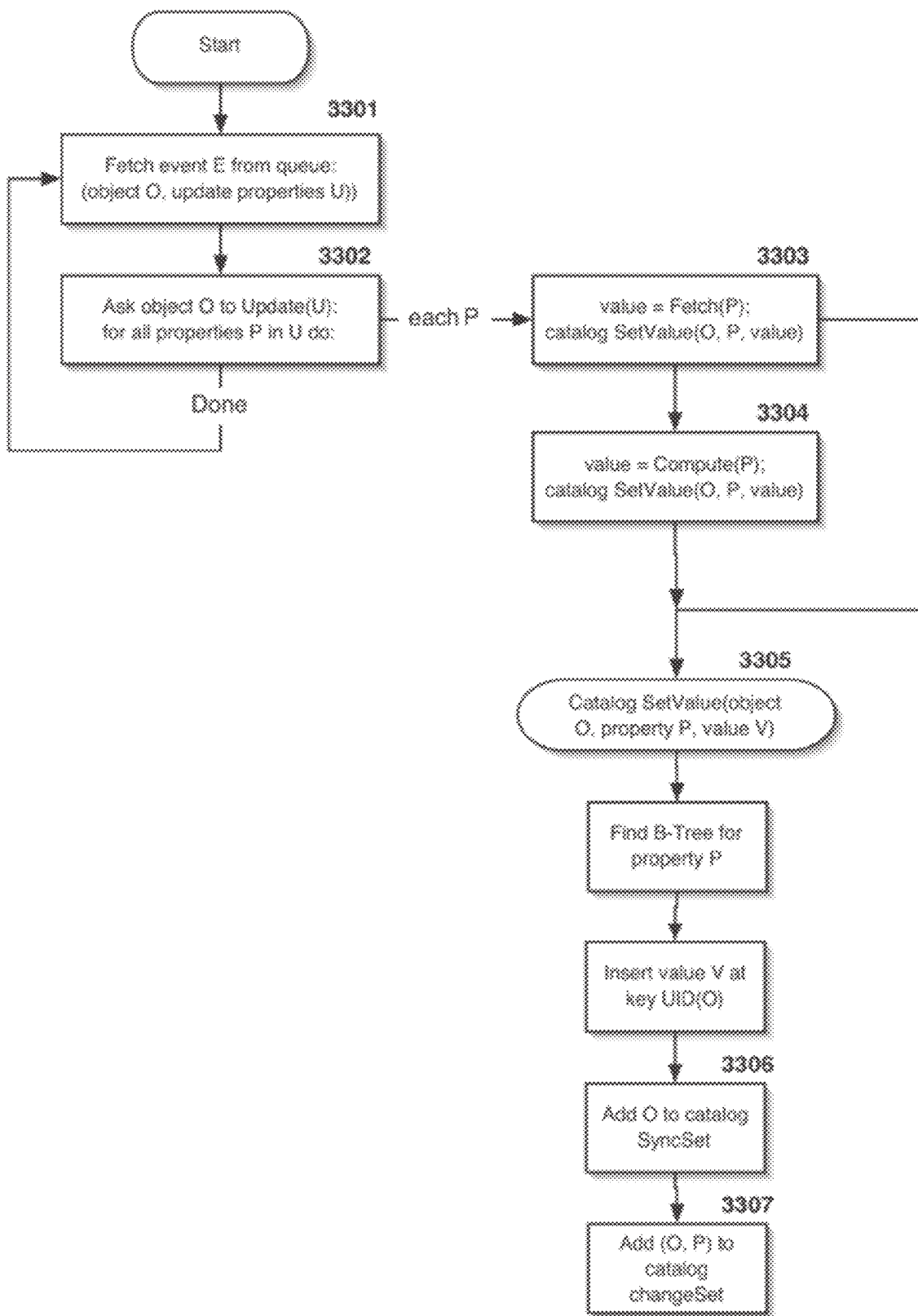


Figure 33



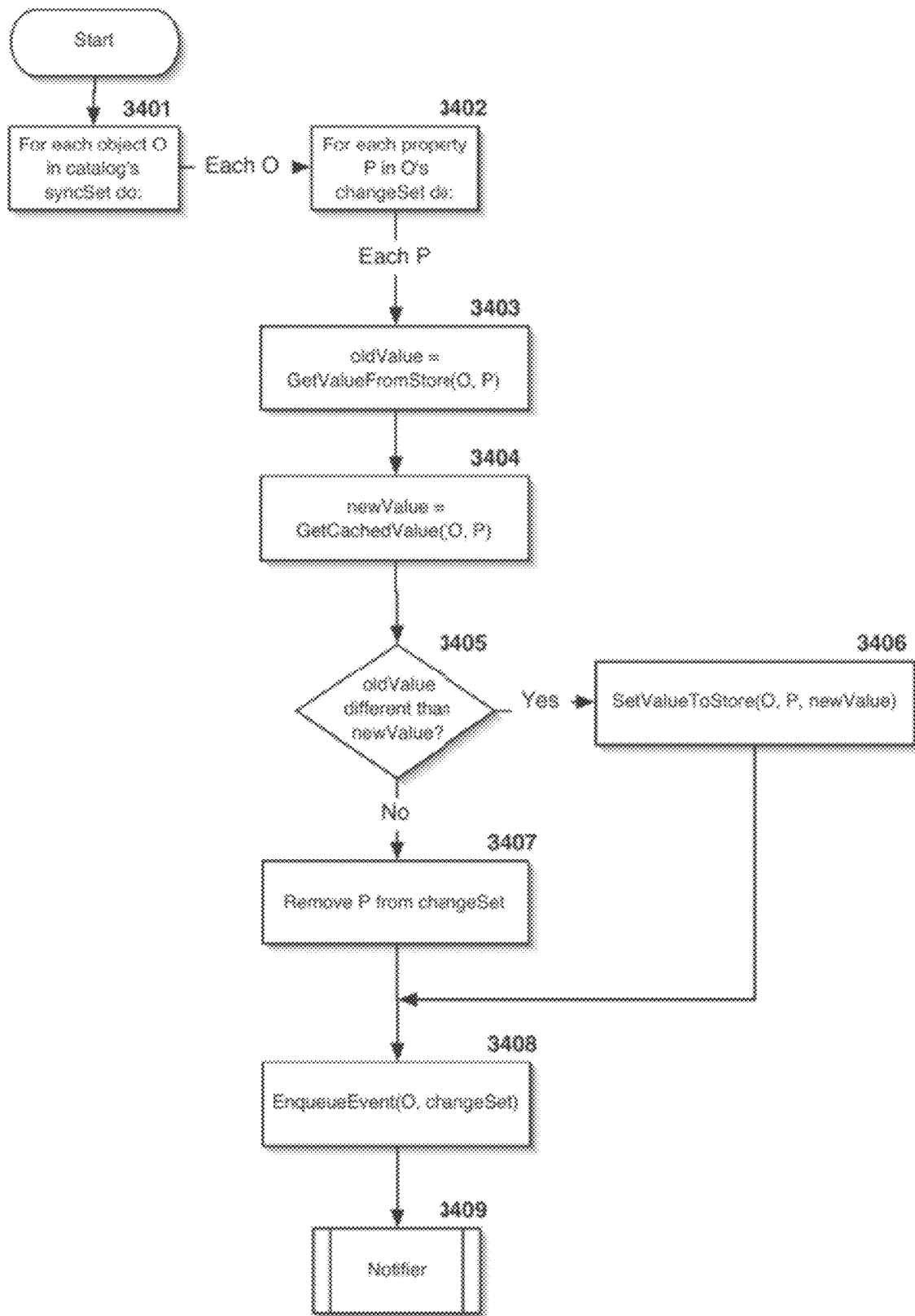


Figure 34

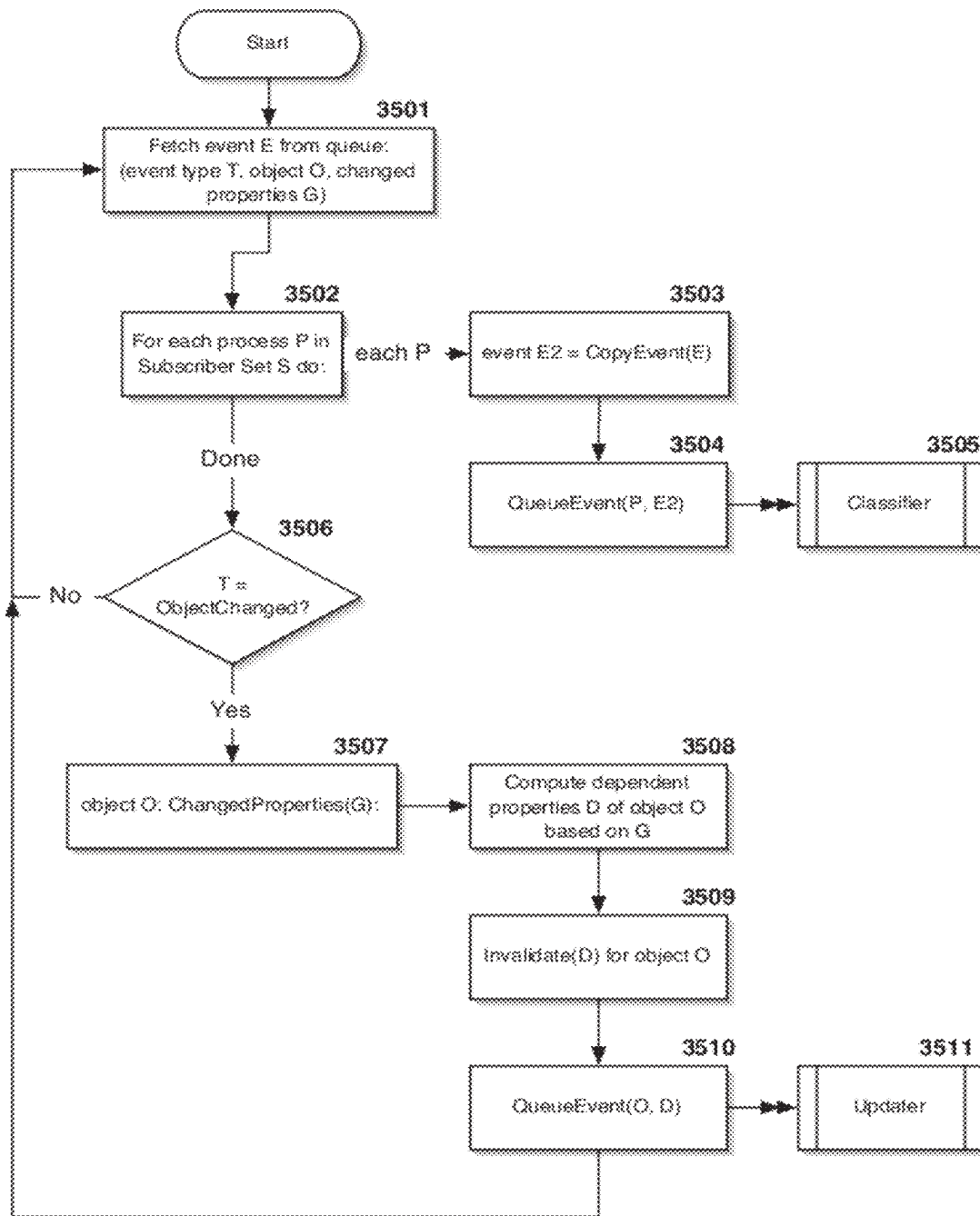


Figure 35

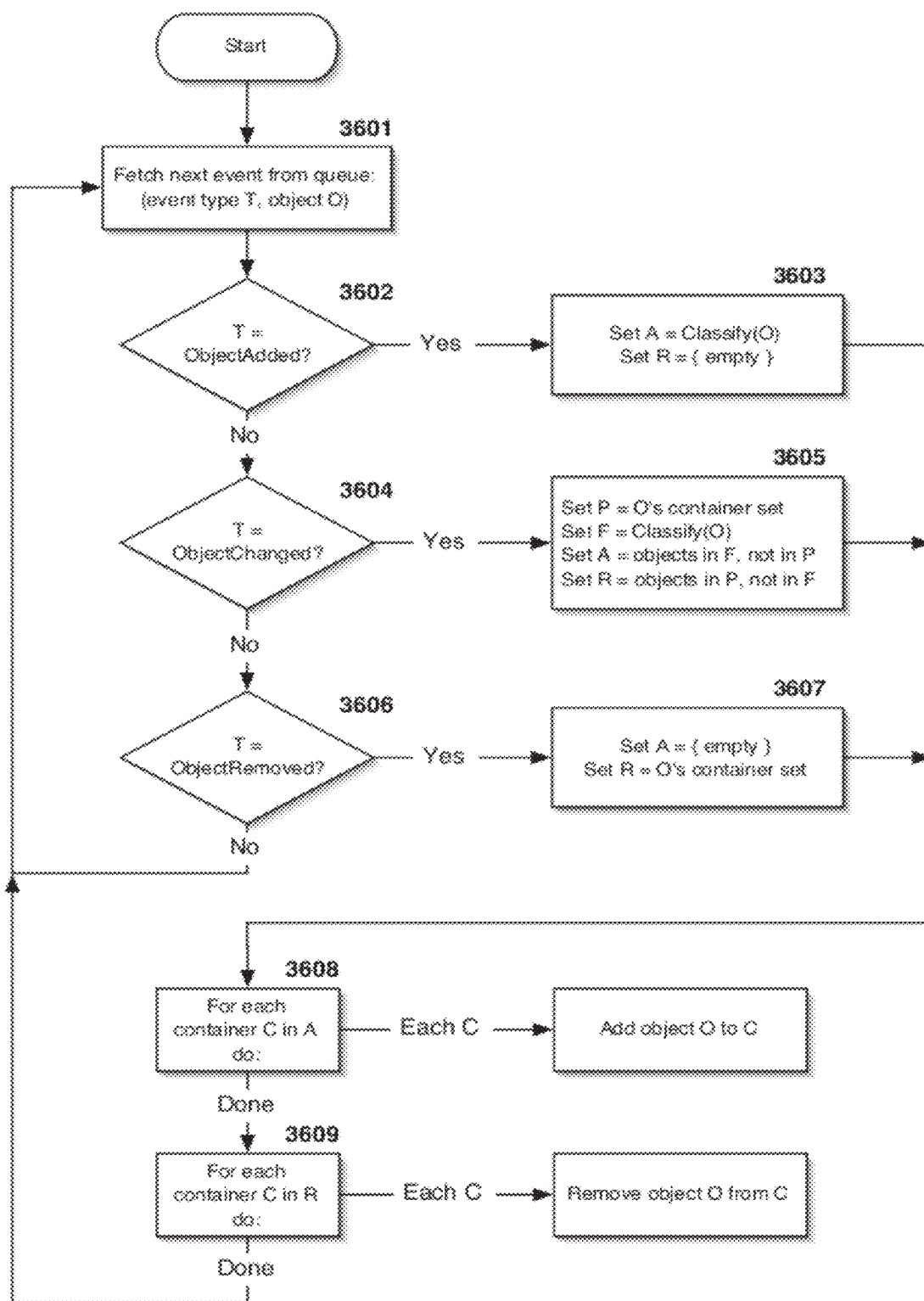


Figure 36

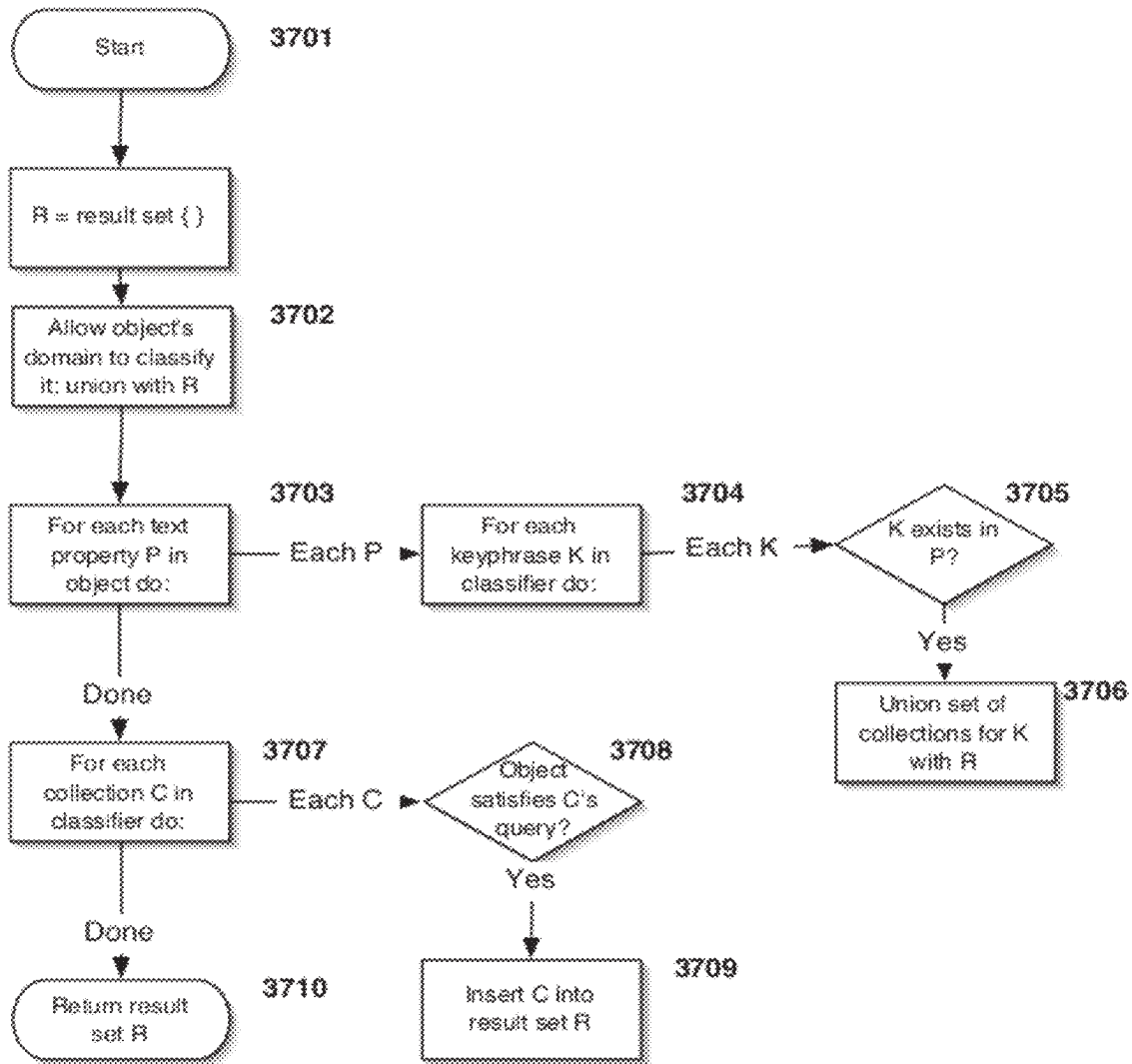


Figure 37

1

**COMPUTER SYSTEM FOR AUTOMATIC  
ORGANIZATION, INDEXING AND VIEWING  
MULTIPLE OBJECTS FROM MULTIPLE  
SOURCES**

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED  
APPLICATIONS

This application is a Continuation of U.S. application Ser. No. 12/856,428 filed Aug. 13, 2010 by the same inventor under the same titled, now U.S. Pat. No. 8,055,692, Issued Month, Day, 2011, which in turn is a Continuation application of U.S. Ser. No. 11/903,304 filed Jul. 21, 2007 by the same inventor under the same title, now U.S. Pat. No. 7,840,619, issued Nov. 12, 2010, which in turn was a Divisional (RCE) of Regular U.S. application Ser. No. 10/621,689 filed Jul. 16, 2003 by the same inventor under the same title, now U.S. Pat. No. 7,725,063, issued Oct. 5, 2007, which RCE/Regular Application was the regular application of Provisional U.S. Application Ser. No. 60/396,439, filed Jul. 16, 2002 by the same inventor under the title: System, Method and Software for Dynamic, Automatic Organization, Archiving, Retrieval, Indexing and Viewing of Information Objects from Multiple Sources. The benefit of the filing date of those Regular and Provisional Applications are claimed under 35 US Code §§119 and 120, and the international treaties and conventions to which the United States is a signatory.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The invention relates to computer data processing systems that include central processing units configured with novel software-based information management systems, including but not limited to: file system browsers; personal information management systems; database storage, organization, accessing and retrieval systems; digital asset management systems; email client and server operation; integrated software development environments; internet- or intranet-based search engines; and similar information services and systems.

BACKGROUND OF THE ART

A primary use of computer information systems is the creation, organization, transmission and storage of information of a variety of types in the form of content data, including but not limited to: word processing documents; spreadsheets; images; drawings; photographs; sounds; music; email; software source code; web pages, both local and remote; application programs; name and address lists; appointments; notes; calendar schedules; task lists; personal finance management data; corporate customer, department, employee, stocking and accounting data; and so on.

Generally, this information data is stored in either individual file system entities (files) of proprietary formats stored on a local or LAN or WAN network disk drive or accessed via the Internet, such as a word processing document or databases with specialized access software. For example, email messages are often stored bundled together in a single file, and new messages are retrieved from a remote server via an Internet protocol; access requires a specific email client to manage these messages. Similarly, accessing information in a database requires specialized programs that are compatible with the database format or network access protocol to communicate with a server to store or retrieve the information and display it in a useful format.

Although file data strings (the string of digital bits that comprise the content data or object) are generally accompa-

2

nied by a small, rudimentary amount of metadata about the file, i.e., data that represents properties describing the file contents (such as one or more of: the file's name, the creation date, the last modification date, access privileges, and possibly a comment), there is typically very little or no metadata conveying information as to the internal structure or meaning of the file's contents, that is, no metadata about the content data. Some files do have internal descriptions of the contents, but this data is often difficult to access, requiring special applications to read and not otherwise generally available to the user. Similarly, records in a database lack information that is needed for use in file systems. In general, database records cannot be manipulated in the same way as files in a file system.

Thus, the differences in the nature and manner in which content data is stored in individual files and in proprietary databases, and the lack of useful metadata about the files or the database content data, makes them closed and partitioned. This closed and partitioned nature of files and databases poses numerous, significant organizational, archival and retrieval problems.

File system browsers, due to their bounded (strictly limited) knowledge of file contents created by various and possibly unknown software applications, are limited to organizing files by the basic metadata properties provided by the file system itself: by name, various dates, and by directory or folder.

Finally, there is no general software mechanism (program) in contemporary operating systems to link or group information from diverse independent sources when they are managed by separate applications. This problem with presently available operating systems and application programs was succinctly set forth by Mr. Mundie of Microsoft as follows (referring to Bill Gates):

The scenario is the dream, not something defined in super-category detail," says Mundie. "It's what Bill and I focus on more than the business plans or P&Ls. For a project as big as Longhorn, there could have been 100 scenarios, but Bill does this thing with his mind where he distills the list down to a manageable set of factors that we can organize developer groups around." Gates' scenarios usually take the form of surprisingly simple questions that customers might have. Here's a sampling from our interviews: "Why are my document files stored one way, my contacts another way, and my e-mail and instant-messaging buddy list still another, and why aren't they related to my calendar or to one another and easy to search en masse? . . . ."

(Quote from Fortune Magazine, available on the Internet at: <http://www.fortune.com/fortune/ceo/articles/0,15114,371336-3,00.html>)

In addition, data stored in computer systems does not have, as a fundamental aspect, relationship information other than the most trivial of forms. For example, files may be grouped together within folders or directories, or they may be labeled with a color, but otherwise there is very little functionality to allow the grouping or linking of disparate pieces of information within the system.

In particular, when a file or other piece of information is logically involved in multiple groupings, linking, cross-referencing or relating the groupings is cumbersome at best with current systems. For example, where a given file "myCarFinances.doc" logically should be grouped in both a "Finances" group and an "Autos" group, there are no truly easy choices for accomplishing such multiple grouping. Either a copy of the file must be made in two separate "Finances" and "Autos" folders, in which case the user must be careful to update both

files when changes are made; or a shortcut or alias file must be created and placed in these folders. Both currently available approaches involve tedious, repetitive manual effort to create and manage that becomes exponentially more difficult as the number of groupings or cross-references increases.

Because of this, cross-referencing and filing objects in multiple locations is difficult, error-prone, and time-consuming. If copies are made for each location, valuable disk space is wasted, and the user is left with having to manage changes by making new copies whenever the original is modified and remembering every location of every copy. Many cross-references require many copies, further complicating the task. And even if the user decides to create alias files instead of making actual copies, the alias files still take up space, and the management issue is equally complex and time-consuming.

Accordingly, there is a long felt need in the art to provide a truly open computer system having data structures, input interfaces, displays and operational systems that permits the organization of information, as data objects, in a wide variety of files and databases, which computer system is independent of the source of the information objects, is dynamic and automatic, permitting faster archiving, retrieval and viewing of the information and providing more meaningful and useful links for better organization and indexing of the information. What is needed is a simple-to-use data structure and operating mechanism to link information together in a dynamic, memory-and-space-efficient manner, without modifying the original information or propagating numerous, storage-space-robbing duplicates, each of which individually must be updated as new versions arise.

## THE INVENTION

### Definition of Terms

It is to be understood that references to the following terms in this application shall have the corresponding meaning provided (even when used in lower case and not in bold):

**Metadata Filing System**, abbreviated herein **MFS**: means the inventive integrated software system for the management of informational objects on a computer system through the comprehensive use of metadata as defined herein, for recognizing, organizing, creating and viewing relationships between such objects which comprises one or more software applications that provide both a user-interface and an underlying component architecture for the management and display of the user's information.

**Annotation or annotation metadata**: means metadata that was not originally associated with an object, but which is defined or specified by either the user or the system for organizational purposes.

**B-Tree**: means a data structure by which information may be stored efficiently on disk, with a minimum of disk accesses to fetch a particular piece of information using an ordered key such as a numeric identifier or a sortable string of text.

**Cache**: means a special storage location in memory or on disk where objects and their associated metadata properties may be very quickly retrieved.

**Catalog**: means a special database built upon the object store that stores and retrieves reference objects addressed by **UUID** and their special metadata properties of this invention; performs queries on objects by specified metadata property selection or designation; notifies other processes of the metadata property changes; and maintains a dependency graph of objects.

**Classifier**: means a process by which objects are examined and assigned to one or more containers or collections for the

purpose of gathering together objects with similar or the same properties specified in a Boolean-type metadata expression and/or key phrase match.

**Collection**: means a grouping of objects based on a metadata specification describing properties that all objects in the group have in common, or objects that were grouped together specifically by the user as having some shared meaning or logical grouping.

**Container**: means an object in which other objects may be grouped together for the purpose of organization. A collection is a special type of container, and containers may contain other containers.

**Domain**: means an object that includes processes for creating and managing reference objects of specific types, including new classes of objects, in a consistent manner. Domains permits grouping objects by nature, class of information in them, or processes of dealing with them. For example, a domain designated "EMail" may define reference objects for email messages; a mailbox object; a mailbox signature; and so on. The EMail domain also provides a location and retrieval process by which messages are retrieved from a central server and stored locally in the system. A domain designated "File" may define reference objects, explained below, for files, directories, and volumes, as well as a scanning and matching process that creates a mirrored representation within MFS of a directory subtree specified in a Working Set.

**Event**: means an occurrence of note that may be acted upon by a thread (defined below) to perform a task.

**Link or link metadata**: means metadata that is specifically defined, updated, and accessed for the purpose of linking together and organizing reference objects logically in collections and other containers.

**Metadata**: means data representing a set of properties of a given type and meaning, that is user-definable and selectable data about the contents of an object, possibly including but having more data than conventional, ordinary, presently used "metadata". Examples of metadata properties in the inventive application software system include, but are not limited to, names; dates and times; comments; locations; descriptions; markers; icons; sizes; dimensions, exposure data, and copyright of images; keywords and phrases; colors; annotations; links; groups; containment; ownership; access restrictions; and so on. Metadata as referred to herein is to be distinguished from currently used "ordinary metadata", which is rudimentary data that identifies or names an object, such as a file (e.g. "miscellaneous" or "photos"), but that does not include data about the contents of an object (about the content data of the object). Metadata as used herein more particularly includes specially formulated and used "annotation metadata" and "link metadata", defined in detail in the description below, including by context and example.

**Object**: means any piece of information stored in a digital format, including but not limited to file system entities such as files and folders; specific entities such as documents, applications, images, sounds, music files, and the like; contact or name/address records, which may be stored as individual files or multiple records within a single file; received and sent email messages; and objects that act as containers to hold other objects.

**Object Store**: means a special database that stores and retrieves object data by unique identifier (**UID**).

**Property**: means a user definable or selected descriptor of a certain kind for the purpose of attributing characteristics or values to an object in the form of content information metadata that can be used to classify objects into collections. A group of properties set, created or selected by the user or a

Domain for a particular object is considered the object's metadata. In the inventive system, specific link metadata is a special property of all reference objects in the MFS, provided to organize reference objects logically in collections and other containers.

Reference Object: means an object internally created and stored in the catalog and object store, which represents data originating externally (such as files or email messages) that are managed within MFS, the inventive metadata filing system.

Thread: means a software entity that performs a particular task simultaneously, and asynchronously, with other threads.

Unique Identifier, UID: means an identifier that is unique within the scope of an object store.

Universally Unique Identifier, UUID: means an identifier which is used to uniquely specify reference objects within the inventive metadata filing system, as well as provide a one-to-one mapping between external data (for example, files in the file system) and reference objects.

Value: means a Boolean, float, integer, date, time, text string, image, or other measure or metric of a property of an object.

Working Set: means the set of sources of information, either created internally or imported from or received from external originators, that the inventive MFS, metadata filing system, manages. This includes data from file systems, either local or remote on a network; web addresses; email servers; and the like.

#### SUMMARY, INCLUDING OBJECTS AND ADVANTAGES OF THE INVENTION

The invention comprises a computer data processing system, described in more detail below, that includes a central processing unit configured with operating system and applications software, the latter which includes a novel integrated computer control software system for the management of informational objects including recognizing, organizing, creating and viewing relationships between multiple objects. The overall inventive computer control system, given the shorthand term "MFS" for metadata filing system, includes one or more novel software applications that provide both a user-interface and underlying component architecture, including an object-oriented database structure, or object store, and a metadata database structure, or catalog, for the management and rendering of these objects to a display viewable by a user in response to user input, regardless of the source or nature of the object.

The inventive MFS computer data processing system for automatic organization, indexing and viewing of information objects from multiple sources is characterized by: at least one central processing unit configured with client operating system and applications software; (and/or in the case of Internet operations the MFS system is configured with server software to host a site on the Internet including the serving of both static, generally informational Web pages, and dynamic Web pages, of information to individuals including information that may be generated on the fly in response to individual requests, routers and interfaces including at least one client and/or network interface to at least one network data communication device for exchange of data among computers, routers and input devices); and peripheral input and output devices linked to said client/server central processing unit in an architecture so as to provide client and/or site operation and functionality; said central processor unit includes at least one memory coupled to a bus; said memory including selected program structures stored therein, including an oper-

ating system program structure, at least one client and/or server system management program structure, at least one hierarchical data storage management system program structure, and selected application program code structures including the novel MFS code structure described herein; said central processing unit reading data input so as to implement system functionality selected from operational, computational, archival, sorting, screening, classification, formatting, rendering, printing and communication functions and processes; and data record structures selectably configurable in object, metadata, relational or hierarchical databases and which data records are selectably associatable, correlatable and callable; said central processing unit reading from user, network or Internet server input devices data relating to objects received by, created by or selected by individual users, and processing such data in said central processing unit so as to generate and manage informational objects by special metadata linking to reference objects created, received or selected and/or input by users, and so as to provide information management tools that facilitate communication to generate, transmit and receive, archive, search, order, retrieve and render objects, including information organization personalized for each individual user based on preferences selected by the user.

The inventive MFS computer data processing system apparatus for automatic organization, indexing and viewing of information objects from multiple sources includes a computer-readable memory structured to store object information in an object oriented database and metadata in a catalog database, a computer display connected to said memory means for displaying said objects, a computer-operator (user) interface device for inputting information to specify objects or properties of objects, sources of external objects for management by the inventive MFS system, a computer processor connected to said memory for transferring said specifying information to storage in said memory, link metadata in a second catalog database in said memory linking said specifying information to said objects to provide rendering thereof on a display for viewing by the computer system users.

The computer(s) of the invention can be configured in a system architecture, for example, as one or more client or server computer(s), database computer(s), routers, interfaces and peripheral input and output devices, that together implement the system and network(s) to which a client computer system may be connected. A computer used in the inventive system typically includes at least one processor and memory coupled to a bus. The bus may be any one or more of any suitable bus structures, including a memory bus or memory controller, peripheral bus, and a processor or local bus using any of a variety of bus architectures and protocols. The memory typically includes volatile memory (e.g., RAM) and fixed and/or removable non-volatile memory (e.g., ROM, Flash, hard disk including in RAID arrays, floppy disc, mini-drive, Zip, Memory stick, PCMCIA card, tape, optical (CD-ROM, etc.), DVD, magneto-optical, and the like), to provide for storage of information, including computer-readable instructions, data structures, program modules, operating systems, and other data used by the computer(s). A network interface is coupled to the bus to provide an interface to the data communication network (LAN, WAN, and/or Internet) for exchange of data among the various local network users, site computers, routers, and other computing devices. The system also includes at least one peripheral interface coupled to the bus to provide communication with individual peripheral devices, such as keyboards, keypads, touch pads, mouse devices, trackballs, scanners, printers, speakers, micro-

phones, memory media readers, writing tablets, cameras, modems, network cards, RF, fiber-optic and IR transceivers, and the like.

A variety of program modules can be stored in the memory, including OS, server system programs, HSM (Hierarchical Storage Management) system programs, application programs including the MFS control system program(s), other programs modules and data. In a networked environment, the program modules may be distributed among several computing devices coupled to the network, and used as needed. When a program is executed, the program is at least partially loaded into the computer memory, and contains instructions for implementing the operational, computational, archival, sorting, screening, classification, formatting, rendering, printing and communication functions and processes described herein for the inventive MFS operation of automatic organization, indexing and viewing of information objects from multiple sources.

The inventive information object management system manages these objects, in the applications control program CPU-configured aspect, by scanning the created, selected or incoming objects' source data, whether files on disk or data provided by remote servers. When individual objects are recognized as contained in the source data, reference objects within the MFS system are created and tagged with UUIDs to provide a one-to-one mapping between external data and MFS reference objects. Specific knowledge of the data formats is used to extract any relevant information from the objects (e.g. ID3 tags for artist, genre, and so on for music files) to be used as metadata. This metadata is attached to the reference objects, which are stored in the catalog for fast access. As reference objects are created or are updated by MFS, they are collected into system and user-defined collections, which provide a logical grouping of objects based on one or more of three criteria: 1) user-defined categorization; 2) user or system-defined metadata query specification(s); and 3) user or system-defined key phrase matching.

The inventive MFS-configured CPU(s) streamline information management by providing a view of information objects of all domain natures (varieties) from different sources, with a simple, direct, shared and unified storage and linkage system that comprises the salient functionality of storage of only one object, the MFS reference object, and linking it to one or more collection groups by special user-created or selected MFS link metadata, including a UUID, which is in turn stored in a special MFS catalog database. The link metadata, including the UID and UUID, are aliased to the various MFS collections selected, set or created by the user in order to create the retrieval links from the various relevant collections to the reference object. The inventive MFS-configured system automatically updates stored reference objects' metadata (names, sizes, and the like) and links (collection and container membership), classifying incoming and changed objects by their content data and metadata, thereby automatically updating and creating new links to the growing number of objects in the various collections.

The inventive MFS-configured system provides an organizational structure and methodology for information management, including archival storage, retrieval, indexing, cross-referencing, logically grouping, and display of informational objects of all kinds. Objects may be created within MFS directly by the user, or within MFS through software components that create representations of information not stored directly within MFS, such as files and folders on a storage medium.

From the perspective of process, or method of operation of the MFS-configured computer system the CPU is caused to

process as follows (by reference to an "external object" is meant an object outside MFS, although it can be one created by the client computer system or could be an incoming foreign object, that is, one sent from a distant server). When an external object is to be managed by MFS (whether incoming or locally created), MFS creates an internal representation of the object and stores the representation in the MFS object oriented database (OODB), called the object store, which assigns an internal unique identifier (UID), upon which it is termed the "reference object" (RO). The RO is simultaneously scanned and metadata is created (including a desktop icon) and/or extracted, and this metadata is associated (bit strings added to the object data) with the reference object. Only this metadata (including unique reference information for finding the external object, called the universally-unique ID, or UUID) is stored in the catalog database, not the entire external object itself. This process is "mirroring", with the reference object identified within the system by internal UID, and the association properties metadata being the "image" (or "virtual image") in the catalog. The system, as metadata are created upon selection or creation of collections or containers, "reflects" the reference object in them through tagging additional "path" and "hierarchy" link metadata to the properties metadata that is automatically associated with the reference object and stored in the catalog. Updates and changes to the reference objects also update the metadata in the catalog with the changes rippling throughout all the images in all collections instantly and simultaneously. User identification, selection, or creation of a collection writes the metadata for the selected object; dragging and dropping an object into a collection or container also auto-writes to the metadata, adding the relevant link. Searching the metadata, via automatic or user selected or created queries recalls the single reference object from the OODB, and if selected, the external object is retrieved from the external source (hard drive or other data storage), permitting a comprehensive desktop interface.

The inventive MFS-configured computer system application programs may be written in a wide range of computer languages, a suitable exemplary language being the C++ language. A number of equivalent versions of the inventive MFS program(s) can be written by a person skilled in the art of software development upon an understanding of the architecture, methodology and functional features disclosed herein. The inventive MFS applications can be run on a standard computer system architecture including a standard industry computer processor, input/output devices, a bitmapped display, and at least one primary defined physical data storage area for temporary and permanent storage of data objects.

The following summary of the features of the inventive MFS-configured computer system(s) and how these features are functionally realized will enable one skilled in the art to write suitable code for applications that realize the MFS functionality.

**Collections:** The inventive MFS-configured CPU control program simultaneously classifies objects into multiple containers using link metadata rather than duplication, thereby allowing users to categorize objects in ways that most clearly reflect different approaches and ways of viewing the same information. Users can select predetermined collections provided in a basic menu, such as Family, Friends, Work, To Do, Activities, and Vacation when running the MFS program for the first time, and can create and set up user-defined collections as well.

**Drag-And-Drop Categorization:** Another feature of the inventive MFS-configured computer system enables the user to organize all kinds of information, not merely simple files, through a drag-and-drop windows-and-icons software func-



tionality, making it easy to organize objects and cross-reference them from place to place using a desktop-style interface. That is, clicking on the icon or list reference to an object in one collection window and dragging it into another collection window establishes a new link; the object is now accessible from both collections. And, rather than being duplicated in an object database, only the link metadata is placed in the catalog, with that catalog being updated for retrieval of the reference object from either collection. This drag-and-drop linkage creation without duplication is an extremely powerful function of the inventive application program.

**Dynamic Queries:** Another function of the inventive MFS-configured computer system provides novel ways to show relationships between information objects based on shared properties by querying the MFS metadata and creating links dynamically, including but not limited to matching key phrases in an object's textual properties; matching dates and times, including date and time ranges or exact matches; filtering on sizes, ordering, or type; and so forth.

**Partitioned Storage:** Another function of the inventive MFS applications program structure provides a unique and efficient mechanism for storage of objects and their properties, for fast and dynamic updating and retrieval, a partitioned storage organization comprising a catalog (a metadata database) and object store (an object database for storing object data, including B-Tree nodes, foundation and reference objects).

**View By Reference:** Another function of the inventive MFS program provides a novel mechanism for presenting non-apparent or unexpected relationships between objects by leveraging both the system's and the user's categorization mechanisms to show only relevant information through filtering and cross-referencing.

**Sticky Paths** Another function of the inventive MFS program provides a variety of hierarchical views of objects and their containment relationships and/or location paths within the user's computer system, including but not limited to list views whereby the visible objects' containment hierarchies are continuously made visible in a dynamically-updating portion of the window.

**People, Activities, Time Orientation:** Another function of the inventive MFS-configured computer system provides a basic set of organizational principles so users can intuitively manage their information in a way that reflects the information's relationships as they occur in the real world, including organizations based on people, projects, activities, time, places, etc.

**Consistency Maintenance** Another function of the inventive MFS-configured system keeps all object relationships up to date automatically, so that any changes in the user's information space (e.g., desktop) results in timely and appropriate changes to any object views.

**Automatic Hypertext Linking:** Another function of the inventive MFS-configured system utilizes the existing organizational structures and data to automatically create links between objects, including but not limited to hypertext inks in textual properties of objects such as the bodies of email messages or the contents of a document.

**Extensible Domains:** Another function of the inventive MFS-configured system provides a plug-in mechanism for other applications to take advantage of the features of the invention: MFS provides interfaces to permit one or more client applications to actively create new objects for, apply properties to, store, link, and classify the client application's information such that it may be viewed and collected in the same way as any other objects in the system. MFS provides the software functionality to dynamically restructure and link

preexisting file systems, files, and databases in a way that is modular, scalable, and extensible.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES AND DRAWINGS

The invention is described in more detail by reference to the figures and drawings in which:

FIG. 1 is an overview of the inventive system's major features;

FIG. 2 is a depiction of the Mirrored Object System;

FIG. 3 describes the Property-Based Information Access;

FIG. 4 is a display depicting the MFS inventive system desktop interface;

FIG. 5 is a display showing the preview viewing mode for images;

FIG. 6 is a display of the list viewing mode;

FIGS. 7a, 7b and 7c show several displays of the small and large icon views, with added property tags;

FIG. 8 includes two displays depicting the view scaling mechanism;

FIGS. 9a and 9b include two displays of the image and text window views;

FIGS. 10a and 10b show two displays of the Information windows for image and music files;

FIGS. 11a and 11b show two displays of the content view mode, for images and email;

FIGS. 12a and 12b describe the sticky path mechanism for viewing hierarchies in a list format;

FIG. 13 depicts link metadata between objects and collections;

FIG. 14 shows two displays of creating a collection of PEG image files;

FIG. 15 shows two displays of creating a collection of objects related to Scandinavia by key phrase;

FIGS. 16a and 16b depict the hyperlinking mechanism for objects with textual properties;

FIG. 17 shows an information window displaying the multiple classification of an image;

FIG. 18 shows a contact object and its corresponding collection;

FIG. 19 depicts creation of a new object, and dynamic updating of a collection classifying same;

FIG. 20 is a display depicting the Today collection, showing all objects that had activity today;

FIG. 21 is a display of Today, cross-referenced by collection;

FIG. 22 is a refinement of FIG. 21, Today cross-referenced by Received email;

FIG. 23 is a depiction of the domain mechanism for extending MFS;

FIG. 24 shows adding folders to the MFS working set;

FIGS. 25a and 25b show the workspace during and after folders have been added;

FIG. 26 shows the workspace view;

FIG. 27 shows the standard container and content views;

FIG. 28 shows a sticky path view;

FIG. 29 shows creation of a collection;

FIG. 30 shows manually adding objects to a collection;

FIG. 31 shows a metadata query specification for a collection;

FIG. 32 is a schematic describing an overview of consistency maintenance: how objects are processed within the inventive system to update properties, classified into collections, and notified of changes by other objects;

## 11

FIG. 33 is a schematic describing in detail the updater process: how objects' properties are updated and their values stored into the metadata catalog;

FIG. 34 is a schematic describing in detail the synchronizer process: how changed metadata is written back to the object store;

FIG. 35 is a schematic describing in detail the notifier: how objects are notified of changes in metadata, and when the classifier and updater are notified of changes;

FIG. 36 is a schematic describing the classifier process: how objects are processed for classification into collections; and

FIG. 37 is a schematic describing in detail the classification of a single object.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTIONS, INCLUDING THE BEST MODE

The following detailed description illustrates the invention by way of example, not by way of limitation of the principles of the invention. This description will clearly enable one skilled in the art of computer programming and software design to make and use the invention, and describes several embodiments, adaptations, variations, alternatives, and uses of the inventions, including what we presently believe is the best mode of carrying out the invention.

In this regard, the invention is illustrated in the several figures, and is of sufficient complexity that the many parts, interrelationships, and sub-combinations thereof simply cannot be fully illustrated in a single patent-type drawing. For clarity and conciseness, several of the drawings show in schematic, or omit, parts that are not essential in that drawing to a description of a particular feature, functionality, aspect or principle of the invention being disclosed. Thus, the best mode embodiment of one feature may be shown in one drawing, and the best mode of another feature will be called out in another drawing.

All publications, patents and applications cited in this specification are herein incorporated by reference as if each individual publication, patent or application had been expressly stated to be incorporated by reference.

#### The Inventive System Implementation

The operation of the inventive MFS-configured computer system is enabled, and by way of example, embodied in one or more software program(s) that configure the CPU to provide(s) the functionalities described above. The overview of the system architecture is shown in FIG. 1 as implementing a Mirrored Object System providing Property-Based Information Access, through a Comprehensive Desktop Interface, with Collections Providing Logical Groupings, with a unique method of Viewing By Reference, as an Extensible Platform. Each of these functionalities is described below, with reference to corresponding figures and discussion.

FIG. 1 illustrates a computer system comprising a computer 101 with an output display screen, an input keyboard and a memory unit, such as a hard drive, 110, and one or more network link(s) via an e-mail server 114. MFS, 1 comprises code modules, described in detail below, that interact as shown by the arrows, including: classifier 102, notifier 103, updater 104, synchronizer 105, a display, layout and input/output manager 106, the catalog metadata database 107, and the object store reference object database 108. Representative domains viewable on the desktop include a file domain 109, a music domain 111, images domain 112 an e-mail domain 113 and a personal information domain 115. The e-mail domain is

## 12

linked through a network for the communication of files, music and images to and from a network link, e.g. the Internet.

Mirrored Object System. MFS, by which is meant the inventive system disclosed herein, comprises one or more application(s) for organizing all types of text and image information—from word processing documents and spreadsheets; to web pages and multimedia; to illustrations, images, movies, and photographs; to contacts, notes, and appointments; to sounds and music; or anything else that is stored and retrieved on a computer—using the concept of extensible properties and link information stored as unified metadata (annotation and link metadata) associated with a reference object.

Many of the different instances of information that a user may want to organize are already stored as different types of files in the file system, or otherwise external to the user's client computer or the user's MFS, such as web pages on the World Wide Web or records in an online database. Some information is stored one-for-one: that is, a single file represents a single piece of information (say, a text file). Other information is aggregated into a single file, or is spread across multiple files: for example, email messages are typically stored many to a file due to their small size, and records in a database may be stored across multiple files as well. MFS provides the software-enabled computer system functionality so that the user can manage all of these different sizes and types of information through portable and replicatable links to reference objects without repetitive duplication and with automatic updating. Only one of each reference object is stored in the object store, and the reference objects mirror one-for-one the pieces of information found externally (external to MFS as described above).

MFS may be used concurrently with other software or applications that operationally configure the computer system to modify the external data sources; these sources do not notify MFS of any changes, nor do the other applications that make changes in the system. MFS provides an internal client computer mechanism for noticing external changes in data sources such as individual files that may contain objects of interest, and for creating, deleting, or updating the appropriate reference objects within MFS as necessary, by comparing external data sources with the reference objects and making the appropriate additions, deletions and changes in the reference objects and metadata. (See FIG. 2).

Property-based Information Access. A property is information about an object. Currently properties are used in conventional metadata format in a primitive form on computers: filenames, modification dates, folders, and possibly comments. The MFS inventive system, through the use of unified metadata (locally-stored, having been extracted from the original object, as well as links and annotations created by MFS) makes possible the attachment of system-defined as well as user-selected or created extensible properties about the content data of, or in, the object for different types of objects, thereby organizing information, regardless of the nature of the object, based on the unified metadata values stored in the catalog by the MFS inventive system.

MFS maintains for each kind of object the conventional, ordinary types of properties that common operating systems support—name and modification date, and the folder in which the file is stored—as well as links and annotations in the form of corresponding metadata defined by the MFS itself. In addition, for images, MFS stores and maintains up to date in the catalog metadata representing the image dimensions in pixels and the pixel size, as well as resolution, size, and quality. For music files, MFS stores as metadata the album, artist, song title, genre and length of song in the

catalog. For contacts, the metadata information stored is the typical contact record: first and last name, phone numbers, and so on in the catalog. For Adobe documents, special Adobe-specific properties called XMP (Extended Metadata Protocol) is read from each document and stored in the metadata database catalog as well. These properties may be available by examining the images, music files, Adobe files, and so on, but are not available in a way that makes it easy to organize these pieces of information due to the data being embedded in the files in proprietary and changeable formats. MFS extracts the selected properties and stores them in the catalog in the form of metadata, where they may be viewed, modified, and used for classification into collections. These are only a few of the different types of objects managed by MFS, and the types of objects managed is unlimited by the system architecture.

Because of the use of a special metadata data storage structure in the MFS, the catalog, it is very easy and fast to find the information needed. Objects may be quickly retrieved by any expression denoting desired property values stored in the MFS metadata. Since MFS provides a separate location to store this metadata and relationships, MFS may be used with any operating system regardless of the metadata supported by the operating system directly. (See FIG. 3)

Comprehensive Desktop Interface. MFS presents information in a familiar desktop-style interface, with windows that show objects as icons or list views, among others. Window and icon sizes and locations are maintained persistently, to preserve the user's spatial arrangements. FIG. 4 shows a list of folders (401), an icon view of Photoshop files (402), a list of user-defined collections and the counts of objects within (403), a list of domains (404), a partially-hidden text view (405), a contact record (406), a note (407), and an appointment (408).

MFS goes much farther than other desktop interfaces, however, in providing new and innovative viewing mechanisms that leverage the ability of MFS to store and retrieve arbitrary metadata.

For example, preview images are created and stored by MFS as annotations, and can be very quickly displayed in a slide view. FIG. 5 shows a typical MFS window with the object name (501), a type identifier showing that it is a collection (502), a count of the objects displayed (503), a get info button (504), and a content region in which the objects are shown (505).

In a list view, FIG. 6, appropriate properties are shown for the types of objects being viewed; no longer is the user limited to viewing only the basic name-size-and-date list view. For example, music properties are shown when appropriate, since they are stored as metadata in the catalog and can be quickly retrieved. FIG. 6 shows the Music collection (601), with columns for filename (602), song title (603), artist (604), and genre (605). List views may be sorted ascending or descending; the control (606) determines this, while clicking on the column headers determine the property on which to sort.

In the icon views of FIGS. 7a, 7b and 7c, arbitrary layouts of icons and their related properties are possible; this can be done programmatically, or laid out by user preference. The standard view adornments (701 through 704) are available, and the content may be viewed either as large icon (705), large icon with additional properties available (706), or small icon (707).

As shown in FIG. 8, all views may be scaled within the window, regardless of view type (icon or list). Window (801) is scaled at 100%, while window (802) is scaled at 150%. Views may also be sorted by a variety of properties that are shared by most objects: by name, by date, by size, by count

(for folders and other containers); and by kind. This is also extensible by MFS to new property types.

As illustrated in FIGS. 9a and 9b, objects may also be viewed directly in their own windows. Images and text files in particular are easily examined within MFS, allowing the user direct access to the data. The image window has the typical adornments (901-904; note that 903 displays the image size and percentage zoom) and the content region (905) displays the image itself. Resizing the window also resizes the image to fit the window. A text window has the standard adornments (906-909; note that 908 displays the text file size) and the content region (910) displays the file's text.

Because each object type may have different MFS-usable metadata that can be extracted or synthesized from the original content data, the information window changes depending on the type of object being viewed. For example, FIGS. 10a and 10b show that image files present their metadata properties (resolution, dimensions, and so on) differently than music files (artist, song title, genre). An image file information window displays the file name (1001), tabs for file and photo data (1002 and 1003), and image-file-specific information such as width, height, resolution, and depth (1004). All information windows have a tab to show comments (1005) as well as a view of containers in which the object resides (1006), and relevant contacts and projects. A Music file information window displays the filename (1007), common file information (1008), and custom properties for music files including title, artist, album, and genre (1009).

Sometimes it is convenient to view objects in a single window without opening new windows for each. MFS provides this through the content view, illustrated in FIGS. 11a and 11b. For example, when viewing images, the content view is divided into a view of the objects in the container (1101) and the content of the selected object (1102). Of course, this is not limited to showing individual objects. Folder contents, contacts, email, and so on may also be viewed in this way. A list of email messages (1103) may be examined one at a time by selecting them; the contents are shown in the right hand pane (1104).

Finally, MFS provides a unique list view feature. List views can have arbitrary columns for property values, depending on the type of objects being displayed; these can be determined programmatically or by user preference. As is common in list-type views of data, objects in the view that are containers for other objects may be expanded, showing their contents in-line with the other objects in the list, and generally indented to indicate depth in the hierarchy.

One of the problems with a list view is that it is easy to lose one's place when scrolling through a hierarchical list of containers. When the user is looking at an item in the list, how does the user know what that item's container is if it has scrolled off the top? The hierarchical path is easily forgotten. The unique sticky path view functionality of MFS, shown in FIGS. 12a and 12b, displays hierarchies in list format, while also maintaining a current-path view at the top of the window (1201) that keeps the user oriented as to location in the hierarchy (on the path) as scrolling occurs. In this way the user always knows what the path is to the items and where the items (or, conversely, the user) are in the hierarchy. As the user scrolls through the list, MFS maintains a Sticky Path Pane at the top of the window that always displays the path to the topmost item in the list (1202, 1204, 1206), updating dynamically. When the path changes (branches) due to scrolling, the sticky path redraws to correctly identify the new current path. Only the bottom part of the window (1203, 1205, 1207)

scrolls while the path is updated as required. Each branch successively “sticks” in a multi-line window at the top of the scroll window.

Collections Providing Logical Groupings. The MFS system tags objects of various kinds with the special attributes, links, and general descriptive metadata described above. Users may leverage this MFS metadata information to logically group related objects through special containers called collections. Collections permit selection of objects and contain objects that are logically-grouped by 1) user-defined categorization; 2) user or system-defined metadata query; and 3) user or system-defined key phrase matching.

User-defined categorization is enabled by a user directly specifying that a given object belongs to a given collection; this is generally achieved through dragging the object to the collection’s icon in a window, though there are additional ways to provide user-defined categorization. This updates specific link metadata in both the object and the collection to indicate the relationship between the objects. (FIG. 13)

User-defined metadata queries, as shown in FIG. 14, provide automatic grouping of objects that share certain property values. These are Boolean metadata expressions used by MFS to define which objects should belong to the collection (in addition to those that were categorized by the user). For example, a collection of all JPEG files may be created by the user selecting (via a MFS-provided popup menus, and/or a type-in query line) all objects in the system that have names that end in .jpg or .jpeg, or have a file type of JPEG. The objects are immediately retrieved and displayed in the collection window. The collection’s metadata query is specified in an information window, which consists of the collection name (1401) and a pane of terms (1402) which must be satisfied for objects to be collected. When the information window is closed, the collection window is shown with the collected objects (1403). Time-based collections, such as “Today”, dynamically modify their metadata queries to reflect the meaning of the collection. For example, Today will update the metadata query each day to correctly specify only those objects whose modification date is during the current day. Time-based collections are particularly applicable to viewing by reference.

User- or system-defined Key Phrase Matching shown in FIG. 15 provides for automatic grouping of objects whose textual contents contain certain key phrases. For example, to group all emails, text files, etc. that mention cities and countries in Scandinavia, a collection may be created for that purpose with a query based on key words or phrases that are related to Scandinavia, and MFS will collect them together. As before, the collection’s Information window specifies the collection definition; its name (1501) and a list of key phrases (1502), at least one of which must exist in an object for it to be collected. The result collection is displayed in a standard MFS icon window (1503).

As shown in FIGS. 16a and 16b, because collections can group objects based on key phrases as well as by metadata properties, examining the objects can provide automatic cross-indexing and hypertext linking based on the collections defined. Text windows (1601) are annotated by underlining and coloring hypertext-linked phrases (1602). Clicking on a link will provide a popup of the collections that specify that key phrase (1603); choosing one will open that collection. If more than one collection specifies the same key phrases, all appropriate collection will be listed.

An important aspect of the inventive MFS-enabled computer system control program is shown in FIG. 17. Since it simply modifies the metadata links to indicate collection and container membership, and does not move or copy the origi-

nal objects at all, objects may be classified into several different collections at once. For example, this image is in the Images collection; it is taken from the air and so was categorized in the Flying collection; it is a JPEG file so it is in the JPEG collection; it’s a photo of children, so it is in the Kids collection; it was taken during a trip to Mono Lake, so it is in the Mono Lake (Blake) folder; and finally, the children in the photo are in the Ward family. All the containers that contain the object are listed (1701) and can be opened directly. In this way the user is spared from having to decide what single folder the file or object should be stored; collections can have MFS metadata links to many objects, and object links may be stored in many different collections. For example, an automobile repair bill can be filed in Auto, Repairs, and Bills simultaneously.

By way of further enabling example, a typical logical grouping involves People, Places and Activities. As part of the Personal Information Management Domain, MFS provides the ability to create named collections for places, as well as contacts and projects, around which objects may be grouped. A collection is defined for each contact, and for every project currently being worked on.

As shown in FIG. 18, MFS automatically creates such collections and organizes your email and files by examining them for the contact or project name. Automatic collections may be extended as desired; for example, if contacts have nicknames it would be appropriate for their collections to search for their nicknames as well. In a Contact window (1801) a Collection button (1802) opens the Collection that is automatically linked (1803). Note how the Bruce Horn collection has collected together all emails that reference “Bruce Horn” as well as all of the source files that were written by Bruce Horn in the development of MFS.

While metadata-query specification and key phrase matching can be viewed as database queries, collections are also dynamic: when new objects appear, or objects are edited by the user that then satisfy the metadata query, the collections are updated immediately. The collections need not be visible for this to occur, as MFS operates in the background. All collections are kept up to date at all times.

For example, as shown in FIG. 19, creating a new note regarding a trip to Norway this summer is automatically added to the Scandinavia collection. The original collection (1901) does not include the note (1902) until it is created and the word Norway is noted by MFS; then it is added (1903) and hyper-linked automatically (1904).

One easy way to leverage MFS’s metadata capability is to write meaningful descriptions in the comment field for files that can be searched by collections. While some operating systems, such as Mac OS9, provide direct support for storage of comments, MFS supports comments for all objects whether or not the operating system does. All metadata created for objects within MFS is available, whether or not the host operating system provides such a feature.

Viewing by Reference. Because a collection specifies what objects should appear in the collection, objects may be in many different collections simultaneously if they satisfy each of the collections’ specifications. This is a great benefit in that it allows the user to view data in a variety of ways. For example, a car repair bill can appear in the Car collection, the Repairs collection, and Bills simultaneously.

The more collections there are, the more different ways there are to examine and navigate through information. Each collection is defined by the user as a meaningful way to view objects in the user’s information space. The unique MFS cross-reference display, combined with a dynamic, time-

based collection set, provides the user insight into the relationships between various objects.

This display is called view by reference. For example, the user might want to view what has happened today: what new email has been received, and what documents have been created or modified. The Today collection shows this in FIG. 20. The collection window (2001) is the same as any other Collection with the exception that the query is automatically maintained by MFS, changing as necessary.

As shown in FIG. 21, now, by switching to the reference view, the user sees all the collections that contain objects that were created or modified today. This is extremely useful in that it filters for only those collections that are relevant to Today, with no refinement (2101). Instead of showing all of the collections for all of the people that may have sent email in the past, the reference view shows only the collections that have had activity today. For example, by clicking on the Received collection (2102), the view shows the all received email (2103).

Further, as shown in FIG. 22, if the user is only interested in the Received email today, the reference view can be further refined by double-clicking on the Received collection in the left pane. This moves the Received collection to the shelf above (2201), and now only those collections relevant to Received email Today are visible. Clicking on each collection in turn shows the collection's objects that fit the specification. Selecting the Financial collection (2202) shows all the email received today that is related to financial news (2203).

Because MFS remembers settings and views, the user can set up collections and preferred ways of viewing them and keep them available at all times, constantly updated. A user may prefer to always view email through the Received collection, filtered by Today; if the user ever chooses to view previous days' email she can always view by other time collections such as Last Week, Last Month, or all received email.

Extensible Platform. Although many of the types of objects that people use in their daily work with computers are already provided by MFS, there are many scenarios where third-parties might want to leverage the power of MFS's desktop metaphor, single reference object storage, metadata linking functionality, and collection capabilities.

MFS provides an extension mechanism by which new object types, new views, and new capabilities are easily added to MFS such that their functionality is presented as seamlessly as built-in MFS features. Extensions of this sort are provided in MFS through Domains. While the MFS email and personal information domains provide much of what the standard user may want and are built in as basic application functionalities, other email and PIM domains can be developed that function within MFS following the principles of the invention disclosed herein.

Examples of other significant domains that may be developed include, but are not limited to: a music jukebox, a domain that allows the user to organize his/her music in the same way as every other piece of information in MFS; an extended Image cataloger domain; WebDAV support domain; personal finance domain; and many more. These can be easily supported and implemented within the MFS architecture as disclosed herein. (FIG. 23)

Description Summary. The extensible architecture of the inventive system enables disparate applications to share and merge information: email, contacts, notes, and so on are stored in the same data space, and can refer and cross-index each other as needed. Separate email databases, personal information management systems, and file browsers cannot perform this task. All-in-one solutions, such as Microsoft

Outlook, or application suites such as Microsoft Office, are limited to the functionality provided by the original developer, and cannot be extended by third parties. The inventive MFS-enabled computer system's catalog mechanism provides unlimited support for new types of objects and new metadata, regardless of the underlying file system or operating system's features or lack thereof.

Being able to organize all of these disparate types of information using the same mechanism provides unique benefits. For example, a user can maintain a collection of all correspondence to and from a given person or related to a particular project easily, whether the correspondence was via email, documents, voice mail, fax, or image files. Similarly, a user may organize his information on a project-by-project basis; because a given item may appear in many different collections simultaneously, a person may work on several projects and their contact information will therefore appear in all of the relevant projects.

The system architecture and methodology in providing dynamic collection functionality (such as time-based collections: Today, Yesterday, Last Year, and so on), combined with real-time updating and referencing (Viewing by Reference), provides a unique and valuable mechanism for examining a user's changing information environment.

Finally, the benefits and advantages of the inventive data organization and archival system includes real-time updating of collections, which allows the software to notify the user in a variety of ways as objects enter and leave collections. For example, the user may want to attach a notification to a given person's collection, so that when the user receives email from that person a particular musical piece is played, or a voice speaks a phrase.

By way of further description of the inventive system, the following is a specific example of the use of an application program, having the functionalities outlined above which one skilled in the art will recognize is enabled in the following description, including where pertinent, pseudocode outlines.

Exemplary Methods of Use of the Inventive MFS-Enabled System

The following is a step-by-step description of a typical use of the inventive system, embodied in a computer program running on a client (user) computer with a standard operating system and file system to store documents and other data. The use described below is of organizing and retrieving images created with a digital camera and stored on the computer in individual image files.

Adding Sources to the Working Set

In order to inform MFS of sources of information to track, the user must give MFS the appropriate directions and specifications so that MFS may find and cross-index the information. In the case of an email source, the user creates a mailbox within MFS and lists the internet addresses of the servers needed (e.g. POP/SMTP or IMAP servers). In the case of tracking information stored in files and directories in a file system, the user clicks on a folder in the computer's desktop application (the Finder in the Macintosh OS, or Explorer in Microsoft Windows) and drags it to the workspace window to add it to MFS's working set. Other sources will require different mechanisms.

The following describes use of MFS to manage and organize files in a file system; in particular, image files. For example, assume that, over a period of time, a particular computer user has taken thousands of digital images with his/her digital camera, in various places, including images of various friends and family. Assume further that he/she has already grouped these images in folders with descriptive names such as "Crest Hike 6/01" and "Cycle Oregon 9/02".

These images may, in general, have embedded information in the form of metadata properties, such as image size, bit depth, date on which the photo was taken, etc.

The user starts the MFS program, and, by dragging the desired folders of images to the MFS workspace, begins the organization process. (FIG. 24)

MFS brings up a window showing the progress of the importing process, while MFS scans each file and folder, recursively, in the working set (FIG. 25a). At the end of this process, the window is removed, and the folders appear in the Workspace. (FIG. 25b)

#### Viewing User Data

The user may now navigate this folder using the standard and traditional methods of disk navigation in graphical user interfaces: double-clicking to open the folder into a new window; clicking on the disclosure triangle to show the folder's contents in the same view; and so on. The windows display the images in a variety of ways, including well-known icon and list views showing icons representing either the type of the file (such as a Photoshop JPEG file) or a miniature "slide" view (thumbnail) of the image itself. Displayed with the icon, typically, are properties of the object such as the object's physical size, its image dimensions, the last modified date, and so on. MFS provides additional features for viewing the images; viewing the image properties (width, height, bit depth, and so on), and basic editing features (rotation, for example).

MFS also provides a Workspace view (FIG. 26) in which the following information is visible in four separate panes:

- 1) the original folders from which the images were examined (the working set); (2601)
- 2) a list of all collections defined by MFS and the user; (2602)
- 3) a content pane, which dynamically displays the contents of whatever item is selected in the first two views (2603). In the case of a folder or collection, the contents of the folder or collection is shown in an icon or list view; in the case of an individual item, the item itself is shown in detail (such as the full image, or contact information)
- 4) and a metadata pane, which describes the currently-selected item's metadata, including the set of containers to which the item belongs. (2604)

The user may double-click on any of the folders in the top-left pane, collections in the bottom-left pane, or any item in the metadata collection set to open them in a new window.

Two other views are available (FIG. 27): a standard window, which displays the content of a folder, collection or item (2701); and a content window (2702), which displays a list of the objects within a folder or collection on the left and the details of the selected object on the right.

Double-clicking on any item opens a window on that item, at which point the user may choose how to view the item's contents. Other data, typically considered to be the object's metadata properties (e.g. name, modification date, and so on) may be displayed by selecting the item and choosing the Get Info command, which will bring up a custom information window for each type of object that displays that object's particular properties. For example, a music file would be able to show the music genre, album name, and so on, while an image file would show image width and height, along with other image-specific metadata.

Folders and collections may be viewed in a list format with the sticky path view, described above. This provides dynamic path information to the items you are viewing as you scroll through a hierarchical (folders within folders) list. (FIG. 28)

#### Creating a Collection

By selecting the New Collection command, the user creates a new collection for organizing the images. (FIG. 29) Two windows are then opened: the first showing the contents of the untitled empty collection, and the second, above, showing the information about the collection including the collection's title (2901). The user then types in a name for the collection—for example, "Western Travel"—and closes the window. The main collection window remains (2902), and an icon for the collection is created in the Workspace collection pane (2903).

#### Manually Categorizing Objects into Collections

The user may now view images from any of the source folders, and by dragging their icon representations to either the collection window or the icon representation in the Workspace, add those images to the collection. This does not move the images, nor modify them in any way; it simply updates the links in the catalog indicating that they belong to the collection. Items from any source may be dragged in this way to any collection, and items may belong to more than one collection at a time. (FIG. 30)

The user may also quickly create a collection of images by selecting the images and choosing the Collect command; this gathers together the images into a collection, which then may be renamed by the user.

Items may be re-categorized into different collections by dragging them to the new collections directly. Also, items may be removed from a collection by choosing the Remove command, which removes the items from the collection but does not otherwise delete the item from the source (e.g. the file system) or any other collections.

#### Creating a Collection with a Metadata Specification Query

Once the user has told MFS which information on the disk should be tracked, independent collections based on the metadata of images, say the width or height properties, may be made of the items imported as well. These collections are the same collections as described before, with the additional specification of a metadata query.

For example, say that the user would like to collect all images that have a width of 1600 pixels and a height of 1200 pixels. The user would then do the following:

Choose New Collection from the File menu. A window opens, showing the contents of the untitled empty collection, and a Get-Info sub-window opens above that with information about the collection.

The user selects the "untitled" text and changes it to "1600x1200 Images". Then the user clicks on the Query tab. An empty query appears. The user clicks on the popup menu and chooses Image.

The user clicks on the (+) button, creating a term in the query. The user clicks on the first popup, choosing the "Width" property. The user clicks on the second popup, choosing the "Equals" property. The user types **1600** into the text field.

Then, then user clicks on the (+) button again, creating a second term, and clicks on the OR popup menu. The user then performs similar operations to choose "Height Equals", and types **1200** into the text box.

Finally, the user closes the Get Info subwindow, and the appropriate images appear in the collection window. (FIG. 31)

#### Creating a Collection with a Key Phrase List

Another variant of the collection is one that collects items that include in their textual properties specific key phrases. For example, a Scandinavia collection may be quickly created by specifying a collection that includes the key phrases "Oslo", "Norway", "Bergen", "Copenhagen", "the little mer-