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(54) **Title**: SYSTEM, METHOD AND COMPUTER PROGRAM FOR E-GREETING AND E- GIFTING USING A MOBILE DEVICE

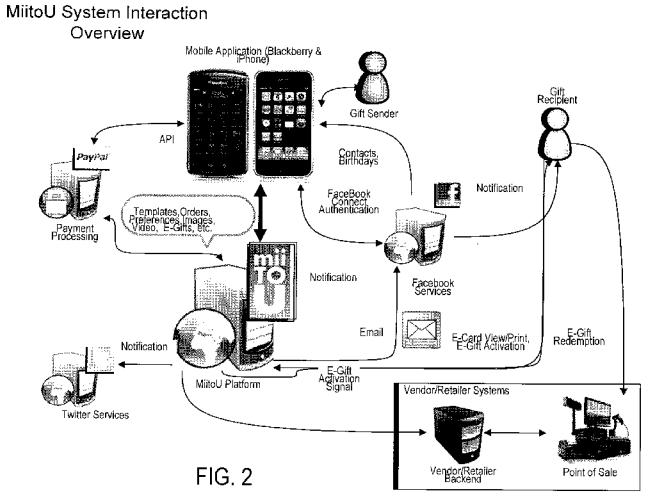

FIG. 2

(57) **Abstract**: The present invention relates generally to online gift giving. The present invention relates more particularly to mobile device accessible personalized gift giving of gifts from retailers of all sizes. The system of the present invention comprises a gift giving server accessible by a mobile device and a transaction server. The gift giving server is operable to present to a sender on the sender's mobile device, gifts to send to recipients. The sender can select which gifts to send to which recipients. Gifts are provided by one or more retailers. Once the sender has selected to send a gift, the transaction server applies payment data for the sender to pay for the selected gifts and disseminates payment to the retailers. Upon paying the retailers, the gift giving server is operable to initiate a notification to the recipients of the gifts. The recipients can then redeem the gifts with the retailers.

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SYSTEM, METHOD AND COMPUTER PROGRAM FOR E-GREETING AND E-GIFTING USING A MOBILE DEVICE

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/308,607 filed February 26, 2010, the entirety of which is incorporated herein by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to online gift giving and electronic greetings. The present invention relates more particularly to mobile device accessible personalized gift giving of gifts from retailers of all sizes.

BACKGROUND

With busy lifestyles finding the time to buy a gift for a family member or friend can be difficult. Gift cards are very popular, but they are normally associated with large retailers, whereas sometimes the intended recipient favours a smaller, local store. In other words, enabling users to select a gift from a wide array of stores helps the user provide the recipient with a gift that is consistent with the recipient's interest.

Online shopping makes this process easier, however, many end users are increasingly spending time on their mobile device. Several solutions have been presented for gift giving from a mobile device.

BlackHawk is an e-gift card integrator that sells gift cards through retail partners ("Gift Card Malls") and provides data integration services for activations and redemptions in the US and Canada. GiftClixx is an e-gift card integrator that provides gift card channels "at a lower price point" using a peer-to-peer model. InComm is an e-gift card integrator that sells gift cards through Gift Card Malls and provides data integration services for activations and redemptions in the US. Their Fastcard Technology is used on all gift cards in stores with Kiosks. Giiv lets users send e-gifts to mobile users from websites to mobile devices via SMS.

None of these solutions are designed to provide access to gifting from a sender using a mobile device. More importantly, none of these solutions encourage the participation of local or small retailers that typically would not be able to afford gift card programs.

There is a need for a method that addresses the shortcoming of mobile gift giving. There is a particular need for a system that enables mobile gift giving while encouraging participation of local or small retailers.

SUMMARY

The present invention provides a system, method and computer program for e-greeting and e-gifting using a mobile device.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 illustrates an example of a mobile device in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 2 illustrates a system in accordance with the present invention.

FIGS. 3 to 5 illustrate examples of gift giving transactions in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 6 illustrates a generic computer device which may provide an operating environment for one or more embodiments of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The present invention provides a system, method and computer program for e-greeting and e-gifting using a mobile device. The present invention may be referred to herein as "mobile gift giving", however it should be understood that the invention is not limited to gift giving but to greetings in general. Mobile gift giving is enabled by distributing personalized greetings and gifts via a mobile user interface. A user ("sender") of the present invention can disseminate one or more gifts linked to a personalized message to one or more recipients. The personalized message may include a personalized text greeting and/or a personalized visual greeting including, for example, one or more photos or videos created or selected by the sender by operation of the system of the present invention. The one or more gifts may, for example, include

gift cards, gift certificates, vouchers, coupons, etc., which include a code, token, bar code or other electronic means of identifying the recipient's eligibility to buy goods or services from a retailer or other business (collectively referred to herein as an "electronic gift card") associated with one or more retailers or other business (referred to as a "retailer" for sake of convenience, but it should be understood that for example a gift certificate to the favourite salon of a recipient for example could be the object of an electronic gift card in accordance with the present invention).. It is noted that the electronic gift card may relate to entitlement to spend a specific amount with a retailer or may relate to a specific gift which can be obtained through a retailer, in which case an image of the specific item can be presented and then redeemed by operation of the present invention.

If the sender and recipient are in different currency jurisdictions, then the sender may provide the recipient gift cards, gift certificates, vouchers, coupons, etc. that are in the recipients local currency, thereby eliminating any need for the recipient to worry about the currency exchange of the redemption of an out of jurisdiction gift code that may not work when redeeming the gift.

Mobile gift giving in accordance with the present invention enables the sender to assemble from their mobile device a personalized greeting for a recipient, optionally attach an electronic gift card associated with a selected retailer of interest to the recipient, and send the combined greeting to the recipient, which greeting is accessible from the mobile device or computer of the recipient. The recipient may access the greeting by means of email, SMS, MMS, instant messaging, etc. that is accessible from the mobile device.

The sender may prepare user-generated/personalized greetings accompanying the gift rather than be limited to the use of templates. The sender has access to a mobile device that may include or be linked to an image capture device, for example a camera that can capture still image and/or video image data for providing the personalized visual greeting. FIG. 1 illustrates an example of a mobile device in accordance with the present invention.

It should be understood that the mobile device of the present invention may consist of a hand-held two-way wireless paging computer, a wirelessly enabled palm-top computer, a mobile telephone with data messaging capabilities, a portable digital media player, or a wirelessly enabled laptop computer, but could be any type of mobile data communication device capable of sending and receiving messages via a network connection. The majority of current mobile

communication device users, however, use a mobile telephone with data messaging capabilities, such as server addressing capabilities such as Short Message Service ("SMS") or Multimedia Messaging Service ("MMS") or data including GPRS or 3G. The present invention therefore provides means for providing the functionality described herein, from mobile communication devices that are relatively common and inexpensive.

A system in accordance with the present invention is shown in Fig. 2. The system may comprise a mobile device accessible by the sender. The mobile device may include or be linked to an image capture device. The mobile device is also equipped with a mobile gift giving application or means to access a mobile gift giving service (collectively referred to as "mobile gift giving application" although a hosted/SaaS/cloud solution is also provided). The mobile device is operable to upload image data, greeting data and gift data by means of the mobile gift giving application to a mobile gift giving server. The mobile gift giving server is further linked to a transaction system. The transaction system could be hosted by or electronically linked to one or more retailers, such as by being linked to retailers' points of sale (POS), or one or more entities representing retailers. These entities may include a financial institution, clearinghouse, credit card company, etc. that processes transactions for one or more retailers. By enabling the retailers or their representatives to host the transaction system or by electronically linking to these entities, the gifting enabled by the present invention can be made near instantaneous by enabling rapid activation of electronic gift cards in accordance with the present invention. Alternatively, billing can be made through the mobile service provider, which then forwards funds to the retailers. Retailers receive funds quickly, which further enables the participation of small, local retailers.

Alternatively, the transaction server could direct payment to an administrator of the system or a financial institution representing the administrator. The administrator may retain a portion of the payment as an administrative fee and forward the remaining payment to the retailers. The administrator may alternatively hold money for payment to retailers at specific intervals, thresholds, etc. by for example electronic funds transfer. In either of these cases, the retailer would be assured that payment has been received and would be forthcoming, enabling the gift's recipient to be able to redeem the gift.

The mobile gift giving server includes or is linked to a gift database of accessible gifts. The gifts, for example, may include gift cards, gift certificates, vouchers, coupons, etc. associated with one or more retailers, or images of specific gifts as suggested above. One or more of these gift types, for example coupons, could be made available to recipients at a free, discounted or loyalty level based on a negotiation by an administrator of mobile gift giving and the one or more retailers or their representatives.

By leveraging the scale of the database, retailers small or large can provide access to gift cards. In particular, small retailers that would otherwise go unnoticed by consumers, are hard to locate or become known by consumers, and/or cannot afford to operate a gift card program of their own can provide access by means of the database, at a low or no overhead cost, to gifts they sell, or services they provide which can be provided as a gift, for example up to a certain amount.

It should also be understood that the present invention contemplates a sales campaign for adding to the database a broad range of retailers, including for example local retailers that have a high degree of interest to target demographics of the mobile gift giving service of the present invention. The present invention contemplates various techniques for defining "popular" local businesses including for example use of Internet rating services for identifying local businesses of interest through references through social media applications. By way of example, social media may include, but is not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, ITunes Ping, Myspace, Yahoo Profile, Gmail Profile and MSN Profile.

The mobile gift giving server may also include or be linked to a user database, which is operable to record profiles for users associated with the system (whether sender or recipient in a particular transaction). For example, users can provide their own profile information, such as demographic information, for recording in the user database. Additionally, the mobile gift giving server may create profiles for recipients that are not yet part of the system or augment existing profiles with further profile information provided by senders. In one example, a sender may send a greeting to a recipient that is not part of the system. The server could automatically store that recipient's profile information to assist future senders in sending greetings to that recipient without having to again specify the same profile information. The profile information could also be augmented with historical information such as past gifts sent to, or sent by, the recipient, which could be used for suggestion of gifts as discussed below. The profile information can also include

significant gifting days for the recipient, such as birthday, religious holidays (if the profile includes religion information), anniversaries, etc. that could be used with a calendar utility as provided below. The profile information may also include one or more payment data for enabling the sender to pay for sent greetings and associated electronic gift cards.

In practice, a sender can search through a list of available gifts (or sources of gift) using the mobile gift giving application and select one or more of the gifts to send to the recipient. The sender either before or after choosing the one or more gifts can create a personalized greeting, which could include text and a still or video image. The still or video image can be captured by the image capture device during creation of the greeting, or could be a stored image on the mobile device. The sender could also choose an image accessible by means of other functions of the mobile device, such as an image on the web from a mobile smart phone with Internet access. The sender can then specify one or more recipients to whom to send the mobile greeting and gift.

It should also be noted that the mobile gift giving service can provide access to specific media content. The operator of the mobile gift giving service obtains rights to create and distribute for example text, video, or audio content associates with one or more celebrities which can be used in assembling an e-greeting in accordance with the present invention. For example, the sender may assemble an e-greeting that includes content associated with a favourite singer, athlete, actress or other celebrity favoured by the recipient. It should be noted that in obtaining rights to use such content, the operator of the mobile gift giving service may also obtain information regarding the preferred retailers of the celebrity, which the operator links to the mobile gift giving service, which information is provided to the sender in selecting the electronic gift card for the recipient. The e-greeting may include for example a message indicating that the gift is from the recipient's preferred celebrity's favoured retailer.

In addition to other user information, the sender may have recorded in the database recipient's preferred celebrity or celebrities.

It should also be noted that the present invention contemplates harvesting information such as preferred retailers or celebrities from external websites where such information may stored for users such as social networking websites.

As previously mentioned, the gift selected by the sender may be chosen based on one or more of a preconfigured list created by the recipient, by a suggestion from an automated suggestion engine linked to the mobile gift giving server, and/or by the sender choosing a gift that is likely to be desired by the recipient. For example, a recipient that is a user of mobile gift giving may configure a list of one or more favourite gifts or sources of gifts (i.e. a virtual gift registry) based on the gifts included in the database. The gifts typically would be chosen by a recipient based on the recipient's location and retailer of choice. Typically, for example, a recipient would like to receive a gift card from a particular retailer that operates a store near to the recipient's home or place of work. When a sender initiates creation of a greeting, the sender may indicate the recipient to which the greeting will be sent. The mobile gift giving server may access the recipient's favourite gifts list and make one or more suggestions to the sender to send a listed gift.

The automated suggestion engine could also, or in addition, suggest one or more gifts based on a preconfigured profile made by the recipient and/or a profile of the recipient made by the sender. The recipient's profile can be used by the automated suggestion engine as a demographic profile to determine gifts that are likely to be desired by the recipient. The automated suggestion engine may be preconfigured to associate demographic information with particular gifts and gift categories and/or may develop over time the accuracy of its suggestions based on favourites lists of other recipients that are associated with a profile. The automated suggestion engine may also be configured to present featured retailer for promotional periods.

In other words, the invention is operable to present to the sender, based on the information for the recipient a number of gift suggestions based on the location of the recipient, and also one or more of his/her preferences based on historical gift giving involving the recipient, entries to the virtual gift registry, inferences based on demographic information for the recipient, or featured retailers in the community of the recipient. For example, the sender may browse through categories of retailers, such as restaurants, electronics stores, home furnishing stores, etc., in accordance with which the sender could filter the displayed retailers to those operating in the community of the recipient.

It should also be understood that the automated suggestion engine may include or be linked to a semantic engine for semantically generating data for identifying probable retailer preferences of a recipient based on such information as is available for the recipient.

The automated suggestion engine, for example, may suggest one or more gifts based on a recipient's demographic information that includes location. As previously mentioned, typically a recipient would like to receive a gift card from a particular retailer that operates a store near to the recipient's home or place of work or is simply favoured by recipient or others residents of the same community in the same demographic group as the recipient. When a sender initiates creation of a greeting, the sender may indicate the recipient to which the greeting will be sent. The mobile gift giving server may access the recipient's location and make one or more suggestions to the sender to send a listed gift from a retailer near that location. Any other profile information could also be used to generate automated suggestions including, but not limited to, age, gender, past gifts sent or received, etc.

It should be understood that the suggestions could be made based on any number of available demographic information and could also be combined with a favourites list using any of a number of ranking techniques. The automated suggestion engine could also be configured to more heavily or lightly weigh suggestions of local retailers versus national or multinational retailers, or could work on a sponsorship whereby retailers could pay one or more variable tiers of pricing for a higher rate of suggestion. Sponsorship could be tied for example to demographic information of the recipient.

It should be understood that the present invention contemplates providing specificity in terms of the recipients directed to retailers based on demographic information, while protecting the private information such as identity and certain demographic information from disclosure to the retailer, or inference by the retailer. This can be accomplished by operation of a number of technologies or platforms that create barriers to accessing or inferring such information, including for example the technologies of BERING MEDIA™.

Creation of a gift by a sender may, in one example, include: specifying the recipient, providing a recipient profile, indicating the occasion/reason for gifting. Providing the recipient profile may not be required, particularly if the recipient is a user of the system and has provided their own profile. In that case, the mobile gift giving server may associate the sender's indicated recipient

with an already existing profile. Once the recipient profile information is available to the server, the server may suggest one or more gifts based on the recipient's demographic information including, for example, location, age, gender, past gifts, etc. It should be understood that the order of the steps involved in the creation of a gift could be changed.

The gift giving server may also include or be linked to a calendar utility. For example, a calendar application may be used by a user of the system to track friends' and acquaintances' significant days. The calendar utility can generate alerts for the user prompting them to send a gift on or prior to the day. The prompt may be augmented by an integrated suggestion in accordance with the above. It should be understood that the calendar utility may be linked to a third party application or service, including a calendar application for a smart phone or a calendar service integrated with a social networking service. A social networking calendar, for example, may already provide birthday events, for example, that can be used by the calendar utility for generating gifting alerts.

The calendar utility may also enable future gifting. For example, a sender may configure the calendar utility to send a preconfigured gift at a particular date and/or time. This enables a sender to set up a gift in advance. An administrator of the mobile gift giving system may incentivise senders to send gifts in advance, so as to "lock in" a purchase, for example by providing discounts.

The gift giving server may also include or be linked to a contact utility. The contact utility may be used by a sender of the system to quickly select one or more recipients to send greetings to. The contact utility can automatically enable the calendar utility without a user setting up their calendar, for example by automatically associating the known birthdays of other users that are in the user's contact list with the calendar of the user. The prompt may be augmented by an integrated suggestion in accordance with the above. It should be understood that the calendar utility may be linked to a third party application or service, including a calendar application for a smart phone or a calendar service integrated with a social networking service. A social networking calendar, for example, may already provide birthday events, for example, that can be used by the calendar utility for generating gifting alerts.

The gift giving server may also include or be linked to a notification utility. The notification utility is used for notifying a recipient of a received gift. The notification utility may be linked to

one or more of: an email server, an SMS server, a MMS server, an instant messaging server, etc. or any hosted solution. For example, the notification utility may be linked to a social network to provide notification.

As suggested above, the gift giving server may also include or be linked to a social networking interface for other purposes including provide calendaring, contact lists, and notification. Additionally, a social networking interface may enable a user of the system to view other users' favourites list or received gifts, and configure their own favourites lists based on this information.

As well, if the recipient is using a "checked in" feature of a social networking interface to indicate where they are, the gift giving server may also identify and provide suggestions of local retailers or destinations that the recipient would purchase from or appreciate a gift from. For example, if the recipient has "checked in" to a book store, or a coffee shop, the suggested gifts may be a coupon or redeemable electronic token that may be immediately used by the recipient at the checked in location.

Examples of gift giving transactions are provided in FIGS. 3 to 5. In one example, a sender may log onto the gift giving server by means of the mobile gift giving application. The sender may specify a recipient, for example by choosing the recipient from a contact list or indicating the recipient's email address, SMS/MMS number, instant messaging PIN, etc. Alternatively, the calendar utility may alert the sender of one or more upcoming gift giving occasions and the sender may select one or more of the recipients associated with those occasions. The profile of the recipients, if known to the system, is optionally analysed by the automated suggestion engine that presents the sender with one or more suggested gifts. The sender selects one or more of the gifts associated with one or more retailers. The sender may proceed to provide a text greeting. The sender may also use the image capture device to provide a visual greeting. The text greeting, visual greeting and gift selection are then uploaded to the gift giving server. The gift giving server applies the sender's payment data and distributes payment to the one or more retailers in accordance with terms agreed to between the retailer and the administrator of the system. The notification utility then notifies the recipient of a received gift, which the recipient can receive using means indicated by the sender. The recipient can then visit the one or more retailers to redeem the gifts.

Wireless Implementation

It should be understood that the gift giving server, and other aspects of the present invention, may be implemented and configured such that interaction between various components of the system can occur via wireless devices. For example, the gift giving server may include one or more wireless modules that enable communications described herein to be pushed to wireless devices associated with retailers, social networks, etc. A wireless device client may be provided for loading on the wireless device to enhance the ability of users to interact with the system of the present invention via a wireless device such as a smart phone.

It should be understood that the present invention enables a sender, using a mobile device, to configure an e-greeting and associated gift, with a significant relevance to the recipient. The e-greeting and associated gift, based on the operation of the gift giving server, is delivered to the recipient, and accessible to the recipient either through his/her mobile device or another computer such as a desktop computer. In one aspect of the invention, the electronic gift card is made available to the recipient's mobile device, and redeemable using the mobile device alone, for example by presenting a token such as a bar code that may be displayed on a screen of the mobile device and scanned at a participating retailer's point of sale (POS).

With newer technology being developed, including NFC chips embedded in mobile devices, gift codes can also be received and debited for payment through the embedded NFC chip. For example, a phone ID NFC Chip can be linked to a platform profile where gift codes can be stored, and the sender can choose the gift code, select NFC as their payment method, and the database carrying the code balances would be debited once the NFC is scanned at a retailer's POS.

The gift giving server of the present invention can be integrated with the systems of the retailer, as explained above, such that the electronic gift card is honored by the retailer.

Proliferation of communication devices and other technologies has created a demand for near instantaneous transactions, and also the desire to conduct more transactions "on the go" using a mobile device. The present invention creates the means to enable electronic gift card giving, which is popular, but from (from the sender's perspective) and optionally to (from recipient's

perspective) from a mobile device. This addresses the need of enabling gift giving from a mobile device.

It should also be noted that there are individuals who have a significant interest in fostering personal relationships with their friends who live in other communities, including in many cases communities that the individuals are not familiar with. The individuals want to foster their friendships in part by sending thoughtful gifts, and such gifts often include a gift from a preferred local business. The selection of a gift from such a business, that resonates with the recipient, can have significant relevance to the recipient, and thus is desirable both to the recipient and the sender because of the special appreciation beyond the monetary amount that the recipient may attach to the gift. In effect, by selecting a relevant gift, the sender communicates that s/he understands him/her, which further bonds the sender and the recipient.

Many such businesses do not have the means of participating in an electronic gift card program. Even if they did, it is currently difficult to link the local business with a gift sender in another community. The present invention provides a highly efficient way for a sender to assemble a greeting and gift that is likely to be highly relevant to the recipient. For the retailer the present invention provides a highly effective means of reaching out to a new potential customer base, namely the friends and family of their customers. Additionally, the present invention enables a local business to translate their local popularity into gift giving that may bring new customers to their business, and if these customers enjoy the experience, the technology enables these new customers to transform their social network into possible customer base directed at that customer.

It should also be understood that the present invention provides a useful means for smaller bricks and mortar businesses that generally do not have a significant online presence, to leverage the online world, especially social media environments, to direct sales. In other words, the present invention helps bridge the online world into an offline retail environment, in an effective and cost efficient manner.

It should be understood that the present invention also contemplates integration of various loyalty program into the operation of the gift giving system, including loyalty programs as may be defined by a local retailer to optimize the sales that they realize that are facilitated by the present invention. The system of the present invention may therefore include a loyalty engine

that is provided as a service to retailers, enabling them to design and implement loyalty programs by operation of the present invention.

Thus, in an aspect of the invention, there is provided a system operable on a mobile device for mobile gift giving, comprising: (a) a gift giving server accessible by a mobile device, the gift giving server operable to present to a sender by means of the mobile device, one or more gifts to send to one or more recipients, and prompt the sender to select one or more of the gifts and one or more of the recipients, the one or more gifts being provided by one or more retailers; (b) a transaction server operable to apply payment data for the sender to pay for the selected gifts and disseminate payment to the one or more retailers; wherein upon paying the retailers, the gift giving server is operable to initiate a notification to the one or more recipients of the one or more selected gifts and enable the one or more recipients to redeem the one or more selected gifts with the one or more retailers.

In an embodiment, the gift giving server is operable to assemble a personalized e-greeting to accompany each selected gift, and link to the personalized e-greeting means to obtain the gift.

In another embodiment, the personalized e-greeting comprises one or more of a text greeting, an audio greeting, and a visual greeting.

In another embodiment, the means to obtain the gift comprises one or more of a gift card, a coupon, or a redeemable electronic token.

In another embodiment the gift giving server is configured to integrate geo-location for purchasing and sending the gift utilizing the mobile device, and the integrated geo-location enables real time offers to be sent to the sender about to send an e-greeting to the recipient.

In another embodiment, the integrated geo-location enables a business in the vicinity of the sender to offer specific discounts for one or more gifts presented to the sender for selection.

In another embodiment, the gift giving server is configured to integrate geo-location for redeeming the one or more gifts, and the gift giving server is configured to trigger an alert, via the recipient's mobile device, when the recipient's mobile device is in the vicinity of a retailer where the gift can be redeemed.

In another embodiment, the gift giving server is configured to access a calendar utility, such that the gift giving server can utilize the calendar utility to remind the sender of an anniversary or event, and to present to the sender the one or more gifts to send to one or more recipients.

In another embodiment, the gift giving server is configured to access a contact utility, such that the gift giving server can utilize the contact utility to identify one or more recipients to whom one or more gifts will be sent.

In another embodiment, the gift giving server is configured to access a social networking interface, such that the gift giving server can utilize the social networking interface to identify one or more gifts that correspond to the recipient's preferences, including a favorites list (e.g. Music, Movies, Athletics, Television, Movies, Books, etc.).

In another aspect, there is provide a method operable on a mobile device for mobile gift giving, comprising: (i) accessing via the mobile device a gift giving server operable to present to a sender by means of the mobile device one or more gifts to send to one or more recipients; (ii) prompting the sender to select one or more of the gifts and one or more of the recipients, the one or more gifts being provided by one or more retailers; (iii) accessing a transaction server operable to apply payment data for the sender to pay for the selected gifts and disseminate payment to the one or more retailers; and (iv) upon paying the retailers, initiating a notification to the one or more recipients of the one or more selected gifts and enabling the one or more recipients to redeem the one or more selected gifts with the one or more retailers.

In an embodiment, the method further comprises assembling a personalized e-greeting to accompany each selected gift, and linking to the personalized e-greeting means to obtain the gift.

In another embodiment, the personalized e-greeting comprises one or more of a text greeting, an audio greeting, and a visual greeting.

In another embodiment, the means to obtain the gift comprises one or more of a gift card, a coupon, or a redeemable electronic token.

In another embodiment, the method further comprises configuring the gift giving server to integrate geo-location for purchasing and sending the gift utilizing the mobile device, and the

integrated geo-location enables real time offers to be sent to the sender about to send an e-greeting to the recipient.

In another embodiment, the method further comprises utilizing the integrated geo-location to enable a business in the vicinity of the sender to offer specific discounts for one or more gifts presented to the sender for selection.

In another embodiment, the method further comprises configuring the gift giving server to integrate geo-location for redeeming the one or more gifts, wherein the gift giving server triggers an alert, via the recipient's mobile device, when the recipient's mobile device is in the vicinity of a retailer where the gift can be redeemed.

In another embodiment, the method further comprises configuring the gift giving server to access a calendar utility, such that the gift giving server can utilize the calendar utility to remind the sender of an anniversary or event, and to present to the sender the one or more gifts to send to one or more recipients.

In another embodiment, the method further comprises configuring the gift giving server to access a contact utility, such that the gift giving server can utilize the contact utility to identify one or more recipients to whom one or more gifts will be sent.

In another embodiment, the method further comprises configuring the gift giving server to access a social networking interface, such that the gift giving server can utilize the social network interface to identify one or more gifts that correspond to the recipient's preferences, including a favorites list.

The present invention may be practiced in various embodiments. A suitably configured computer device, and associated communications networks, devices, software and firmware may provide a platform for enabling one or more embodiments as described above. By way of example, FIG. 6 shows a generic computer device 100 that may include a central processing unit ("CPU") 102 connected to a storage unit 104 and to a random access memory 106. The CPU 102 may process an operating system 101, application program 103, and data 123. The operating system 101, application program 103, and data 123 may be stored in storage unit 104 and loaded into memory 106, as may be required. Computer device 100 may further include a graphics processing unit (GPU) 122 which is operatively connected to CPU 102 and to memory 106 to

offload intensive image processing calculations from CPU 102 and run these calculations in parallel with CPU 102. An operator 107 may interact with the computer device 100 using a video display 108 connected by a video interface 105, and various input/output devices such as a keyboard 110, mouse 112, and disk drive or solid state drive 114 connected by an I/O interface 109. In known manner, the mouse 112 may be configured to control movement of a cursor in the video display 108, and to operate various graphical user interface (GUI) controls appearing in the video display 108 with a mouse button. The disk drive or solid state drive 114 may be configured to accept computer readable media 116. The computer device 100 may form part of a network via a network interface 111, allowing the computer device 100 to communicate with other suitably configured data processing systems (not shown). One or more different types of sensors 130 may be used to receive input from various sources.

The present invention may be practiced on virtually any manner of computer device including a desktop computer, laptop computer, tablet computer or wireless handheld. The present system and method may also be implemented as a computer-readable/useable medium that includes computer program code to enable one or more computer devices to implement each of the various process steps in a method in accordance with the present invention. It is understood that the terms computer-readable medium or computer useable medium comprises one or more of any type of physical embodiment of the program code. In particular, the computer-readable/useable medium can comprise program code embodied on one or more portable storage articles of manufacture (e.g. an optical disc, a magnetic disk, a tape, etc.), on one or more data storage portioned of a computing device, such as memory associated with a computer and/or a storage system.

While the above description provides examples of one or more embodiments of the invention, it will be appreciated that numerous other embodiments may be within the scope of the present invention, as defined by the following claims.

CLAIMS

1. A system operable on a mobile device for mobile gift giving, comprising:

(a) a gift giving server accessible by a mobile device, the gift giving server operable to present to a sender by means of the mobile device, one or more gifts to send to one or more recipients, and prompt the sender to select one or more of the gifts and one or more of the recipients, the one or more gifts being provided by one or more retailers;

(b) a transaction server operable to apply payment data for the sender to pay for the selected gifts and disseminate payment to the one or more retailers;

wherein upon paying the retailers, the gift giving server is operable to initiate a notification to the one or more recipients of the one or more selected gifts and enable the one or more recipients to redeem the one or more selected gifts with the one or more retailers.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the gift giving server is operable to assemble a personalized e-greeting to accompany each selected gift, and link to the personalized e-greeting means to obtain the gift.

3. The system of claim 2, wherein the personalized e-greeting comprises one or more of a text greeting, an audio greeting, and a visual greeting.

4. The system of claim 2, wherein the means to obtain the gift comprises one or more of a gift card, a coupon, or a redeemable electronic token.

5. The system of claim 2, wherein the gift giving server is configured to integrate geo-location for purchasing and sending the gift utilizing the mobile device, and the integrated geo-location enables real time offers to be sent to the sender about to send an e-greeting to the recipient.

6. The system of claim 5, wherein the integrated geo-location enables a business in the vicinity of the sender to offer specific discounts for one or more gifts presented to the sender for selection.

7. The system of claim 1, wherein the gift giving server is configured to integrate geo-location for redeeming the one or more gifts, and the gift giving server is configured to

trigger an alert, via the recipient's mobile device, when the recipient's mobile device is in the vicinity of a retailer where the gift can be redeemed.

8. The system of claim 1, wherein the gift giving server is configured to access a calendar utility, such that the gift giving server can utilize the calendar utility to remind the sender of an anniversary or event, and to present to the sender the one or more gifts to send to one or more recipients.

9. The system of claim 1, wherein the gift giving server is configured to access a contact utility, such that the gift giving server can utilize the contact utility to identify one or more recipients to whom one or more gifts will be sent.

10. The system of claim 1, wherein the gift giving server is configured to access a social networking interface, such that the gift giving server can utilize the social networking interface to identify one or more gifts that correspond to the recipient's preferences, including a favorites list.

11. A method operable on a mobile device for mobile gift giving, comprising:

(i) accessing via the mobile device a gift giving server operable to present to a sender by means of the mobile device one or more gifts to send to one or more recipients;

(ii) prompting the sender to select one or more of the gifts and one or more of the recipients, the one or more gifts being provided by one or more retailers;

(iii) accessing a transaction server operable to apply payment data for the sender to pay for the selected gifts and disseminate payment to the one or more retailers; and

(iv) upon paying the retailers, initiating a notification to the one or more recipients of the one or more selected gifts and enabling the one or more recipients to redeem the one or more selected gifts with the one or more retailers.

12. The method of claim 11, further comprising assembling a personalized e-greeting to accompany each selected gift, and linking to the personalized e-greeting means to obtain the gift.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the personalized e-greeting comprises one or more of a text greeting, an audio greeting, a visual greeting, or a combination thereof.

14. The method of claim 12, wherein the means to obtain the gift comprises one or more of a gift card, a coupon, or a redeemable electronic token.

15. The method of claim 12, further comprising configuring the gift giving server to integrate geo-location for purchasing and sending the gift utilizing the mobile device, and the integrated geo-location enables real time offers to be sent to the sender about to send an e-greeting to the recipient.

16. The method of claim 15, further comprising utilizing the integrated geo-location to enable a business in the vicinity of the sender to offer specific discounts for one or more gifts presented to the sender for selection.

17. The method of claim 11, further comprising configuring the gift giving server to integrate geo-location for redeeming the one or more gifts, wherein the gift giving server triggers an alert, via the recipient's mobile device, when the recipient's mobile device is in the vicinity of a retailer where the gift can be redeemed.

18. The method of claim 11, further comprising configuring the gift giving server to access a calendar utility, such that the gift giving server can utilize the calendar utility to remind the sender of an anniversary or event, and to present to the sender the one or more gifts to send to one or more recipients.

19. The method of claim 11, further comprising configuring the gift giving server to access a contact utility, such that the gift giving server can utilize the contact utility to identify one or more recipients to whom one or more gifts will be sent.

20. The method of claim 11, further comprising configuring the gift giving server to access a social networking interface, such that the gift giving server can utilize the social networking interface to identify one or more gifts that correspond to the recipient's preferences, including a favorites list.

FIG. 1

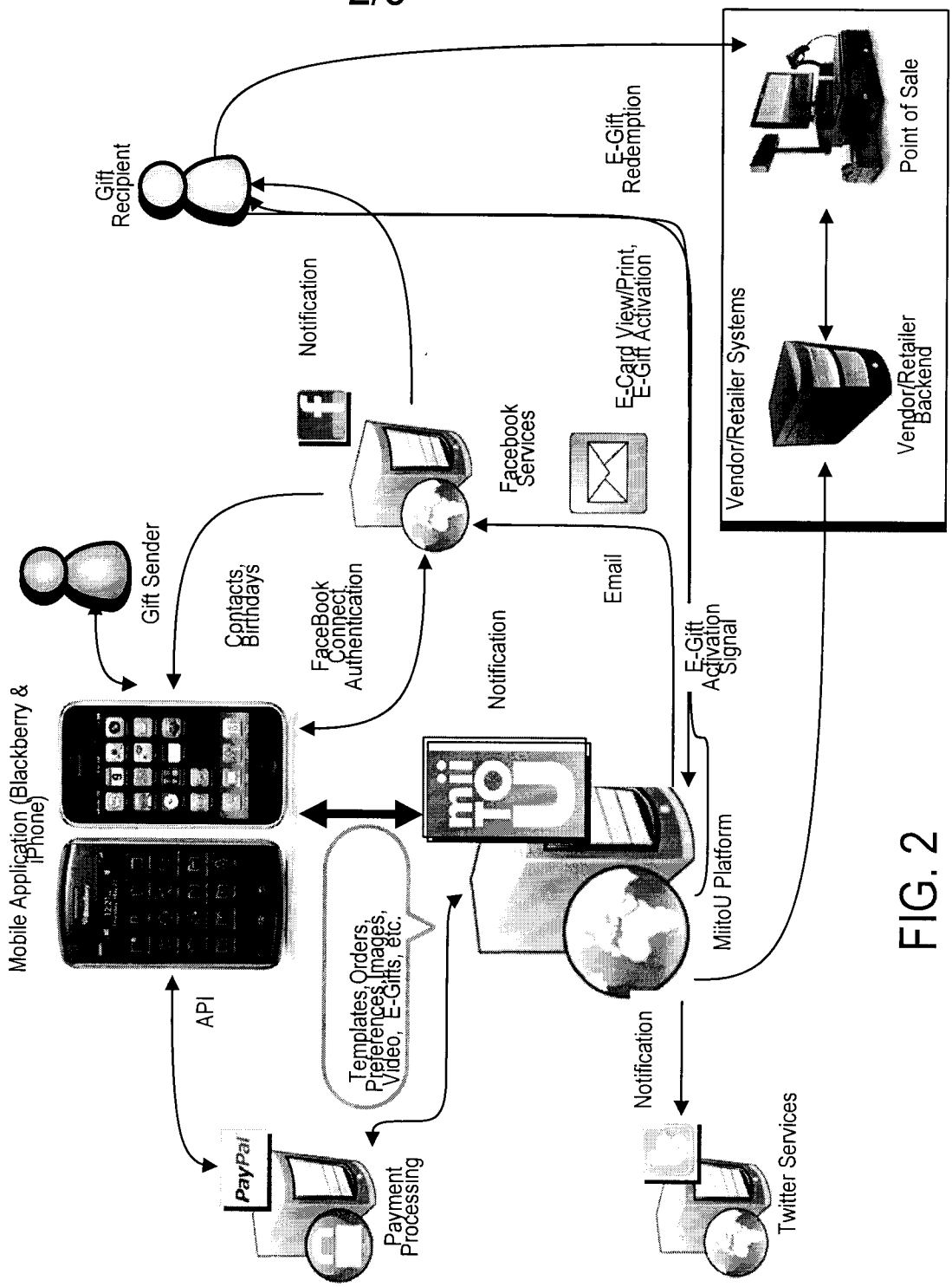

MiitoU System Interaction Overview
Gift Recipient
Gift Sender
Mobile Application (Blackberry & iPhone)
API
PayPal
Payment Processing
Templates, Orders, Preferences, Images, Video, E-Gifts, etc.
Contacts, Birthdays
FaceBook Connect Authentication
Notification
Facebook Services
Notification
Email
E-Card View/Print, E-Gift Activation
E-Gift Redemption
E-Gift Activation Signal
MiitoU Platform
Notification
Twitter Services
Vendor/Retailer Systems
Point of Sale
Vendor/Retailer Backend

FIG. 2

FIG. 3A

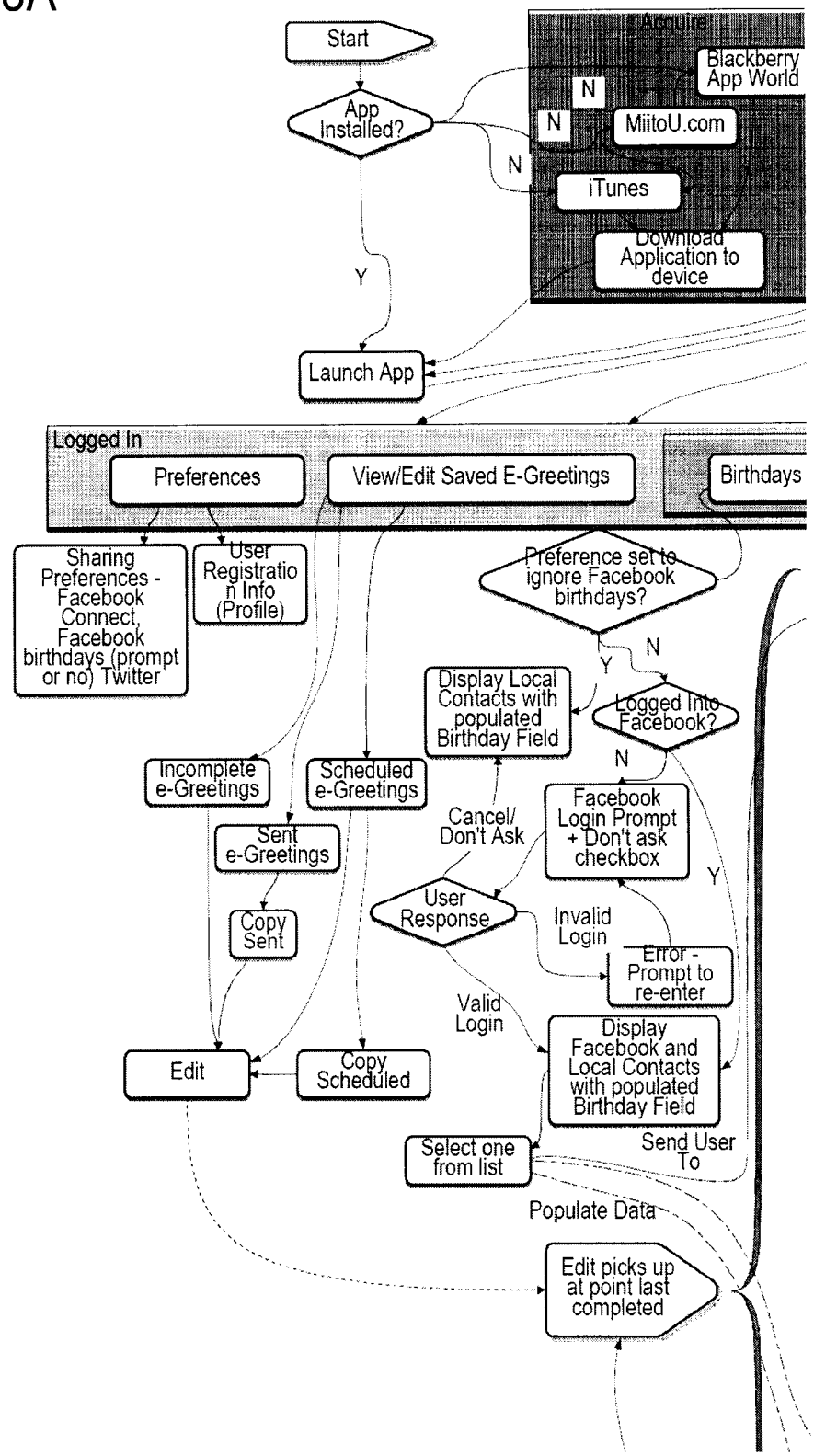
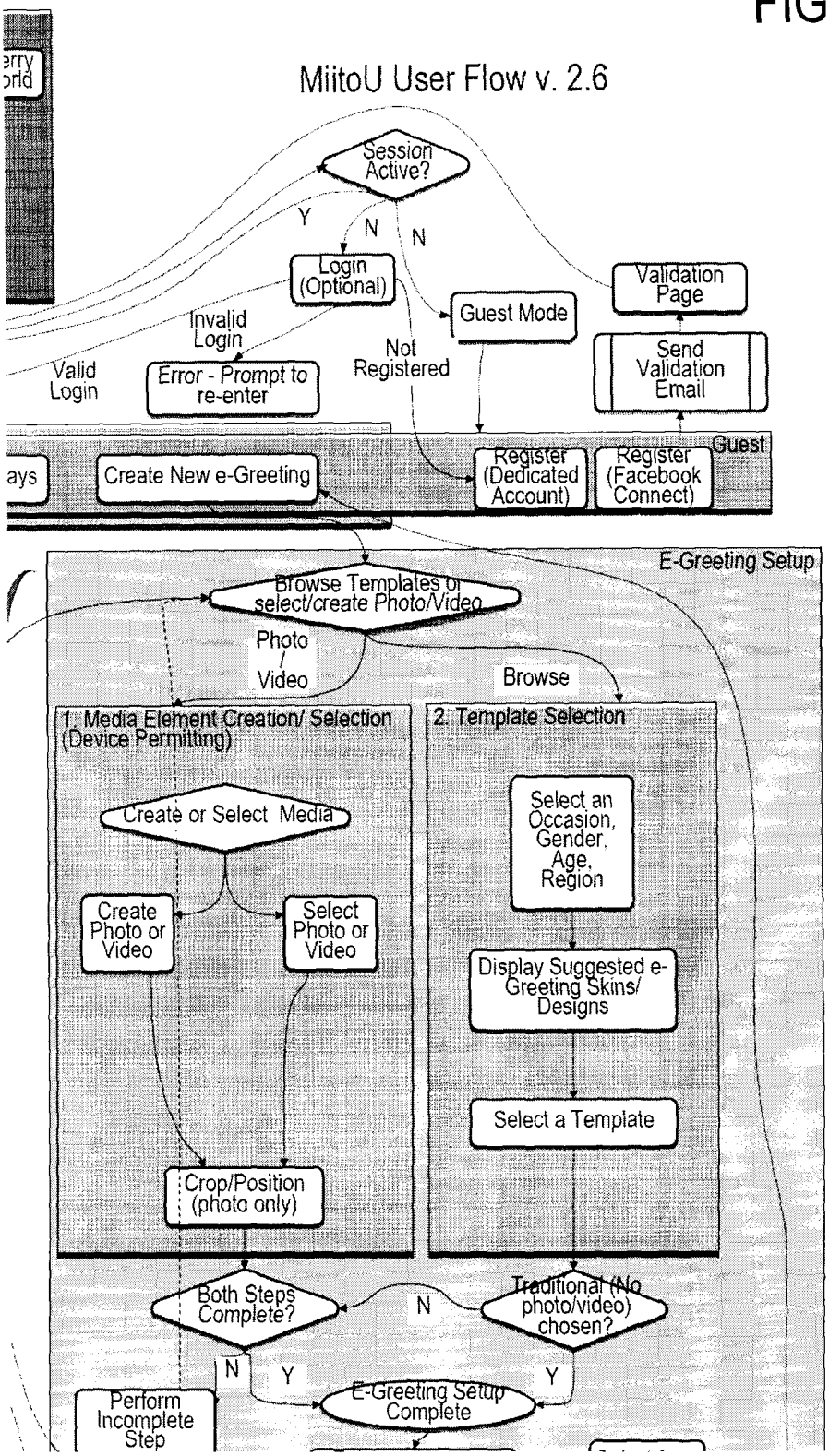

Start
App Installed?
N
Y
Acquire
Blackberry App World
N
MiitoU.com
N
iTunes
Download Application to device
Launch App
Logged In
Preferences
View/Edit Saved E-Greetings
Birthdays
Sharing Preferences - Facebook Connect, Facebook birthdays (prompt or no) Twitter
User Registration Info (Profile)
Preference set to ignore Facebook birthdays?
Y
N
Display Local Contacts with populated Birthday Field
Logged Into Facebook?
N
Y
Incomplete e-Greetings
Scheduled e-Greetings
Cancel/ Don't Ask
Facebook Login Prompt + Don't ask checkbox
Sent e-Greetings
Copy Sent
User Response
Invalid Login
Error - Prompt to re-enter
Valid Login
Display Facebook and Local Contacts with populated Birthday Field
Edit
Copy Scheduled
Select one from list
Send User To
Populate Data
Edit picks up at point last completed

FIG. 3B


MiitoU User Flow v. 2.6
Session Active?
Y
N
N
Login (Optional)
Guest Mode
Validation Page
Invalid Login
Valid Login
Error - Prompt to re-enter
Not Registered
Send Validation Email
Guest
Create New e-Greeting
Register (Dedicated Account)
Register (Facebook Connect)
E-Greeting Setup
Browse Templates or select/create Photo/Video
Photo / Video
Browse
1. Media Element Creation/ Selection (Device Permitting)
2. Template Selection
Create or Select Media
Create Photo or Video
Select Photo or Video
Select an Occasion, Gender, Age, Region
Display Suggested e-Greeting Skins/ Designs
Select a Template
Crop/Position (photo only)
Both Steps Complete?
N
Traditional (No photo/video) chosen?
N
Y
Y
Perform Incomplete Step
E-Greeting Setup Complete

5/8

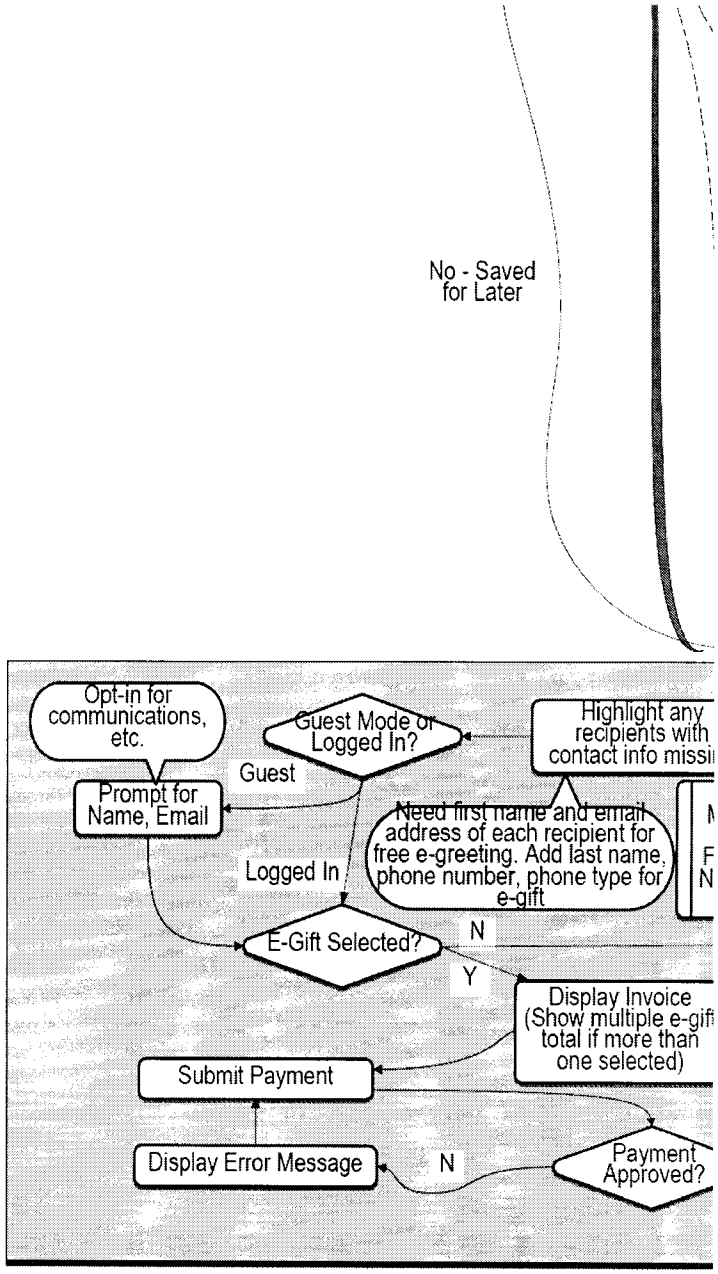

No - Saved for Later
Opt-in for communications, etc.
Guest Mode or Logged In?
Highlight any recipients with contact info missi
Guest
Prompt for Name, Email
Need first name and email address of each recipient for free e-greeting. Add last name, phone number, phone type for e-gift
Logged In
E-Gift Selected?
N
Y
Display Invoice (Show multiple e-gift total if more than one selected)
Submit Payment
Display Error Message
N
Payment Approved?

FIG. 3C

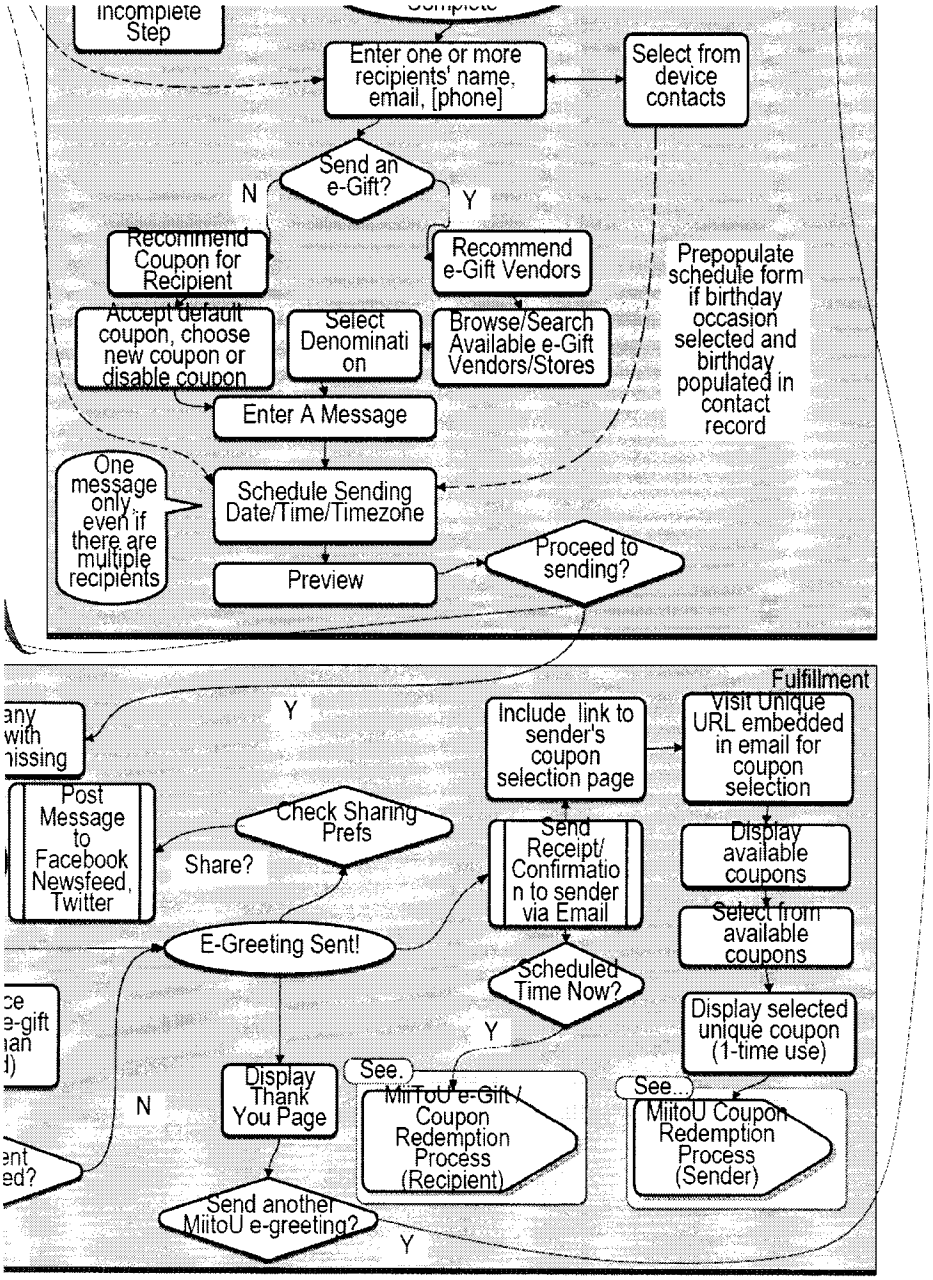

Incomplete Step
Enter one or more recipients' name, email, [phone]
Select from device contacts
Send an e-Gift?
N
Y
Recommend Coupon for Recipient
Recommend e-Gift Vendors
Prepopulate schedule form if birthday occasion selected and birthday populated in contact record
Accept default coupon, choose new coupon or disable coupon
Select Denominati on
Browse/Search Available e-Gift Vendors/Stores
Enter A Message
One message only even if there are multiple recipients
Schedule Sending Date/Time/Timezone
Preview
Proceed to sending?
Fulfillment
Y
Include link to sender's coupon selection page
Visit Unique URL embedded in email for coupon selection
Post Message to Facebook Newsfeed, Twitter
Check Sharing Prefs
Share?
Send Receipt/ Confirmatio n to sender via Email
Display available coupons
Select from available coupons
E-Greeting Sent!
Scheduled Time Now?
Display selected unique coupon (1-time use)
Y
N
Display Thank You Page
See...
MiitoU e-Gift / Coupon Redemption Process (Recipient)
See...
MiitoU Coupon Redemption Process (Sender)
Send another MiitoU e-greeting?
Y

FIG. 3D

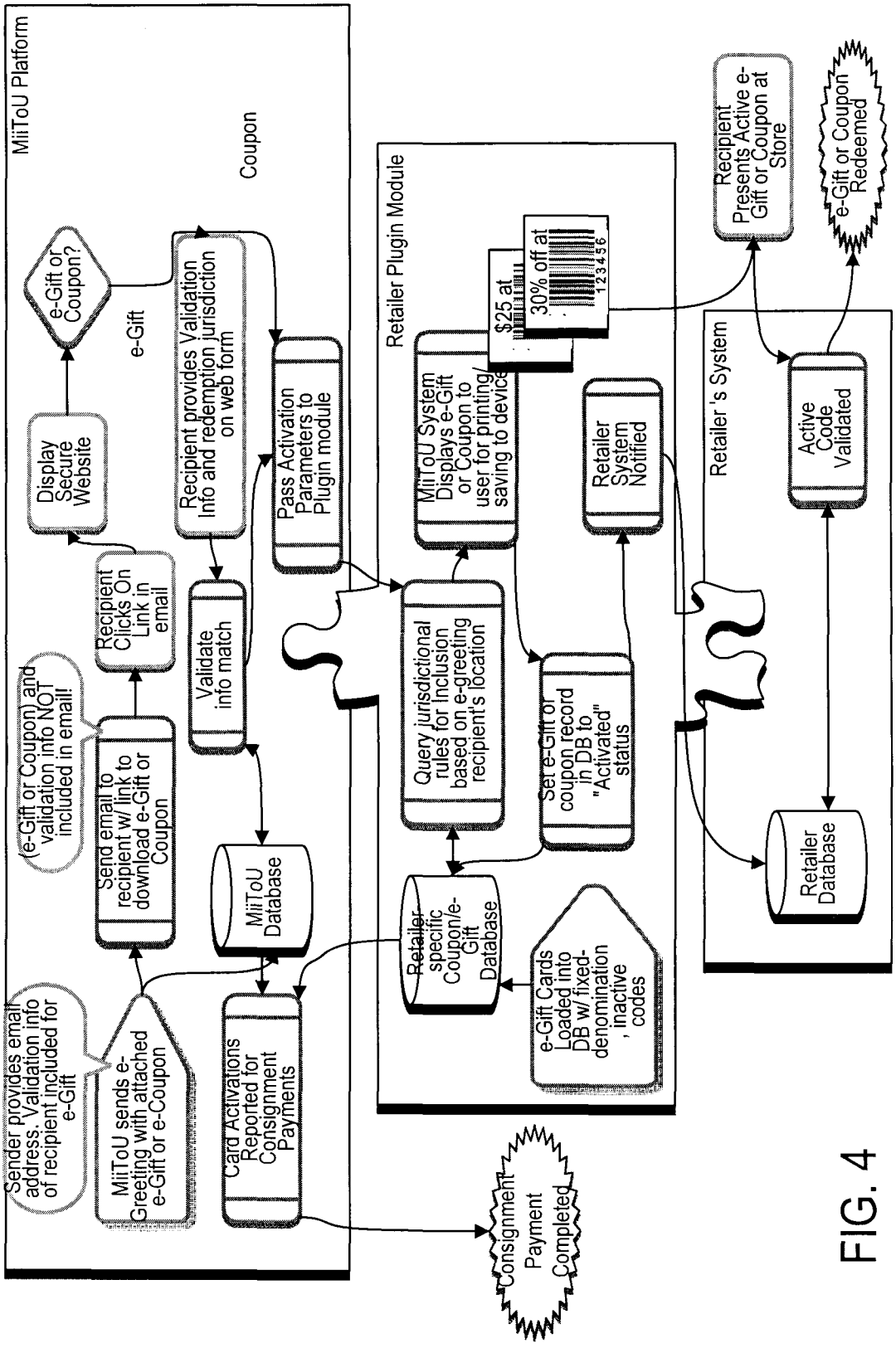

MiitoU e-Gift or Coupon Redemption Process (Recipient) v2.3
MiiToU Platform
Sender provides email address. Validation info of recipient included for e-Gift
MiiToU sends e-Greeting with attached e-Gift or e-Coupon
Send email to recipient w/ link to download e-Gift or Coupon
(e-Gift or Coupon) and validation info NOT included in email!
Recipient Clicks On Link in email
Display Secure Website
e-Gift or Coupon?
e-Gift
Coupon
Recipient provides Validation Info and redemption jurisdiction on web form
Validate info match
Pass Activation Parameters to Plugin module
MiiToU Database
Card Activations Reported for Consignment Payments
Consignment Payment Completed
Retailer Plugin Module
Query jurisdictional rules for inclusion based on e-greeting recipient's location
MiiToU System Displays e-Gift or Coupon to user for printing/ saving to device
$25 at
30% off at
123456
Set e-Gift or coupon record in DB to "Activated" status
Retailer System Notified
Retailer specific Coupon/e-Gift Database
e-Gift Cards Loaded into DB w/ fixed-denomination inactive codes
Retailer's System
Active Code Validated
Retailer Database
Recipient Presents Active e-Gift or Coupon at Store
e-Gift or Coupon Redeemed

FIG. 4

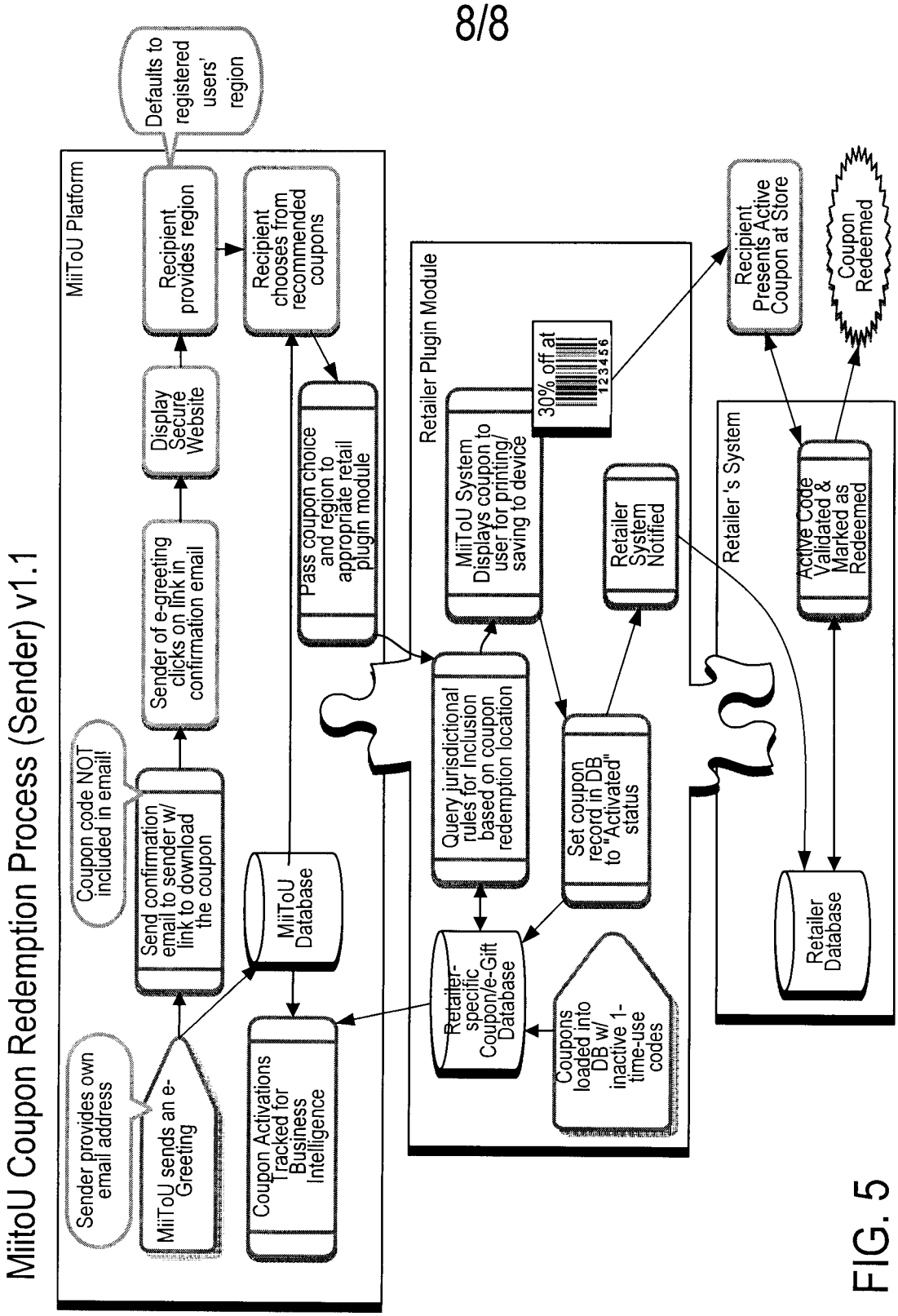

MiitoU Coupon Redemption Process (Sender) v1.1
MiiToU Platform
Sender provides own email address
MiiToU sends an e-Greeting
Coupon code NOT included in email!
Send confirmation email to sender w/ link to download the coupon
Sender of e-greeting clicks on link in confirmation email
Display Secure Website
Recipient provides region
Defaults to registered users' region
Recipient chooses from recommended coupons
Pass coupon choice and region to appropriate retail plugin module
MiiToU Database
Coupon Activations Tracked for Business Intelligence
Retailer Plugin Module
Query jurisdictional rules for inclusion based on coupon redemption location
Retailer-specific Coupon/e-Gift Database
Coupons loaded into DB w/ inactive 1-time-use codes
Set coupon record in DB to "Activated" status
MiiToU System Displays coupon to user for printing/ saving to device
30% off at
Retailer System Notified
Retailer 's System
Recipient Presents Active Coupon at Store
Coupon Redeemed
Active Code Validated & Marked as Redeemed
Retailer Database

FIG. 5

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/CA2011/000200

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC: ***G06Q 30/00*** (2006.01) , ***G06Q 20/00*** (2006.01) , ***H04W 4/02*** (2009.01) , ***H04W 4/12*** (2009.01)

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

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

G06Q 30/00 (2006.01) , ***G06Q 20/00*** (2006.01) , ***H04W 4/02*** (2009.01) , ***H04W 4/12*** (2009.01)

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic database(s) consulted during the international search (name of database(s) and, where practicable, search terms used)

Total Patent: All databases, Canadian Patent Database

Keywords: electronic, virtual, coupon, voucher, gift, mobile, bar code, transaction server, send, coupon

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	CA 2505030 (Silverstein et al) 21 May 2004 (21-05-2004) abstract, page 4 lines 1 and 2, page 26 lines 7-26, Fig 1, Fig 2a, 2b	1-20
X	US 6 240 397 (Sachs) 29 May 2001 (29-05-2001) abstract, col 3 line s 57-63, col 4 lines 13-21	1-20
A	US 2009/0271253 (Arazy et al) 29 Oct. 2009 (29-10-2009) abstract, Fig 2, paragraph 5, 12	1-20
A	WO 0167364 (Mccullough et al) 13 Sep 2001 (13-09-2001) abstract	1-20
A	US 7502749 (Ganesan et al) 10 Mar 2009 (10-03-2009) abstract	1-20
A	US 20020091569 (Kitaura et al) 11 Jul 2002 (11-07-2002) abstract	1-20

[ ] Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

[X] See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents :

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

"E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date

"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)

"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search	Date of mailing of the international search report
13 June 2011 (13-06-2011)	23 June 2011 (23-06-2011)
Name and mailing address of the ISA/CA Canadian Intellectual Property Office Place du Portage I, C114 - 1st Floor, Box PCT 50 Victoria Street Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0C9 Facsimile No.: 001-819-953-2476	Authorized officer Charles Mougeot (819) 994-7424

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/CA2011/000200

C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	WO 2008008037 (Lavilles) 27 Jan 2008 (27-01-2008) whole document	1-20

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT
Information on patent family members

International application No.
PCT/CA2011/000200

Patent Document Cited in Search Report	Publication Date	Patent Family Member(s)	Publication Date
CA2505030A1	21 May 2004 (21-05-2004)	AU2003296927A1	07 June 2004 (07-06-2004)
		EP1579298A2	28 September 2005 (28-09-2005)
		EP1579298A4	09 August 2006 (09-08-2006)
		US2004093281A1	13 May 2004 (13-05-2004)
		US7496527B2	24 February 2009 (24-02-2009)
		US2009070230A1	12 March 2009 (12-03-2009)
		WO2004042536A2	21 May 2004 (21-05-2004)
		WO2004042536A3	26 January 2006 (26-01-2006)
		ZA200504446A	27 September 2006 (27-09-2006)
US6240397B1	29 May 2001 (29-05-2001)	AU3234400A	04 September 2000 (04-09-2000)
		WO0049556A1	24 August 2000 (24-08-2000)
US2009271253A1	29 October 2009 (29-10-2009)	None	
WO0167364A1	13 September 2001 (13-09-2001)	AU4736201A	17 September 2001 (17-09-2001)
		CA2402353A1	13 September 2001 (13-09-2001)
		EP1410273A1	21 April 2004 (21-04-2004)
US7502749B2	10 March 2009 (10-03-2009)	US2002087427A1	04 July 2002 (04-07-2002)
		US2002087461A1	04 July 2002 (04-07-2002)
		US2002087465A1	04 July 2002 (04-07-2002)
US2002091569A1	11 July 2002 (11-07-2002)	CA2354230A1	01 February 2002 (01-02-2002)
		EP1178421A2	06 February 2002 (06-02-2002)
		EP1178421A3	28 January 2004 (28-01-2004)
		JP2002117313A	19 April 2002 (19-04-2002)
		JP3527211B2	17 May 2004 (17-05-2004)
		JP2002189963A	05 July 2002 (05-07-2002)
		KR20020011324A	08 February 2002 (08-02-2002)
WO2008008037A1	17 January 2008 (17-01-2008)	None	