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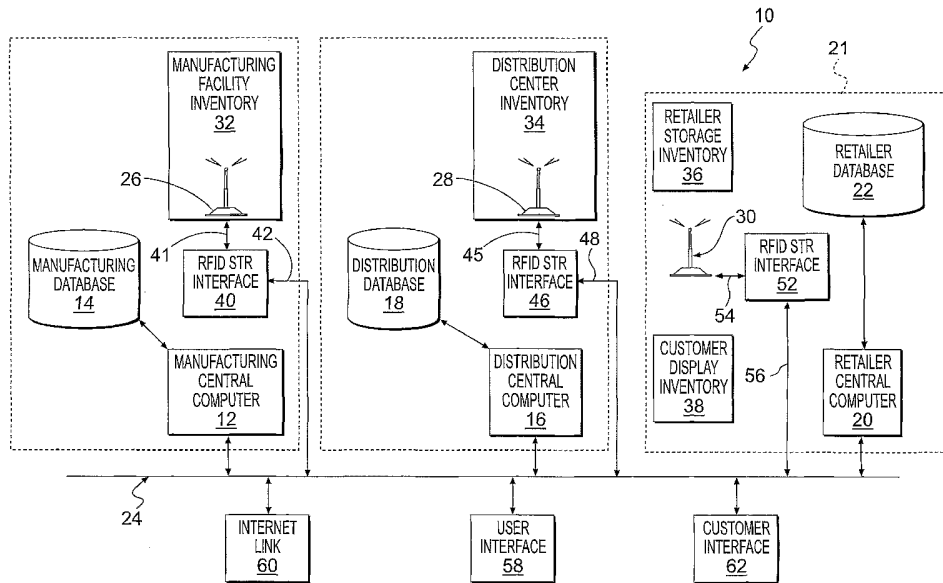
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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: RFID SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR MANAGING OUT-OF-STOCK ITEMS



(57) Abstract: An RFID method and system for preventing product out-of-stock conditions in a retailer supply chain is disclosed. RFID smart tags are associated with products in a place of purchase or a place of selection of such products. Each distinct product may be associated with at least one smart tag, the smart tags containing identification information regarding their respective product. RFID smart tag readers are used to obtain real time inventory data that may be used in a method for prevent product out-of-stock conditions thereby reducing the number of lost sales that may result from out-of-stock events. In addition, such real time inventory data is also be used in a process to reduce the number of lost sales resulting from out-of-stock events.

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For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US04/27622

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC: **G06Q 1/14**

USPC: 705/28

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

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
U.S. : 705/28

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

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

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 6,996,538 B (LUCAS) 07 February 2006 (07.02.2006), entire document.	1,2,7,19
X	US 6,901,304 B2 (Swan et al.) 31 May 2005 (31.05.2005), entire document.	1,2,7,19
X	US 6,884,821 B2 (Swartzel et al.) 18 January 2005 (18.01.2006), entire document.	1,2,7,19
X	US 6,681,990 B2 (Volger et al.) 27 January 2004 (27.01.2004), entire document.	1,2,7,19

Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

See patent family annex.

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

Date of the actual completion of the international search 01 September 2006 (01.09.2006)	Date of mailing of the international search report 27 SEP 2006
Name and mailing address of the ISA/US Mail Stop PCT, Attn: ISA/US Commissioner for Patents P.O. Box 1450 Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450 Facsimile No. (571) 273-3201	Authorized officer <i>D. Wildermuth jr</i> Andrew Joseph Rudy Telephone No. 571-272-6789

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US04/27622

Box No. II Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This international search report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. Claims Nos.:
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:

2. Claims Nos.:
because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out, specifically:

3. Claims Nos.: 3-6, 9-18
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box No. III Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 3 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:
Please See Continuation Sheet

1. As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims.
 2. As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying additional fees, this Authority did not invite payment of any additional fees.
 3. As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:

 4. No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:
- Remark on Protest**
- The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest and, where applicable, the payment of a protest fee.
 - The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest but the applicable protest fee was not paid within the time limit specified in the invitation.
 - No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

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BOX III. OBSERVATIONS WHERE UNITY OF INVENTION IS LACKING

This application contains the following inventions or groups of inventions which are not so linked as to form a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1. In order for all inventions to be examined, the appropriate additional examination fees must be paid.

The inventions listed as Group I (claims 1 and 2) and Group II (claim 7) do not relate to a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 because, under PCT Rule 13.2, they lack the same or corresponding special technical features for the following reasons: No customer request is required from Group I.