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(54) Title: E-MAIL INTEGRATED INSTANT MESSAGING AND PRESENCE DETECTION WITH UNIVERSALLY UNIQUE SCREEN NAMES VIA HTTP

(57) Abstract: A system and method supporting instant messaging which removes many of the problems and barriers to the use of instant messaging through the use of universally unique identifiers to web pages for instant messaging sessions, with recipients invited to the instant messaging session via email.

**EMAIL-INTEGRATED INSTANT MESSAGING AND PRESENCE
DETECTION WITH UNIVERSALLY UNIQUE SCREEN NAMES
VIA HTTP**

Technical field

5 This invention relates to initiation of an Instant Messaging (IM) session between two or more parties and communication using a "standard/standalone" Instant Messaging paradigm with or without email integration.

Background Art

10 There are at least four major problems that are common in today's Instant Messaging (IM) systems including: "screen name" namespace problems, privacy problems, lack of acceptable and automated Instant Messaging message archiving, and service provider compatibility/software deliverability problems.

15 The namespace problem can be broken down into three sub-problems, as follows:

"Screen names" are not unique across IM providers. In today's Instant Messaging software, each Instant Messaging service provider maintains a separate and proprietary "screen name" namespace. This leads to users of
20 one Instant Messaging service not being able to freely communicate with the users of a different Instant Messaging service provider because names in each namespace are not universal, so, for example, the user "Johril" in AOL's

Instant Messenger (AIM) might refer to John Smith, while "John P in Yahoo's Messenger might refer to John Jones.

Obtaining a desired name is difficult, and will only get more difficult. The namespaces available within each Instant Messaging provider are extremely crowded. For example, when signing up with the largest of the Instant Messaging providers, AOL's Instant Messenger (AIM) service, a typical user would rarely succeed with their first choice for a screen name because there are over 90 million names already in use. In the case of AOL, this problem will only get worse as over 3 million new users sign up for AIM each month.

"Screen names" frequently have little or no connection to a person's "real" name. Most Instant Messaging screen names are names like "doglover3", "corvette33", etc., since, as described above, names like "John Smith" have all been taken. Therefore users end up with screen names which are hard for others to remember. This problem is of particular concern in the business world where universal and recognizable user names are essential for conducting business.

The privacy problem can be seen as follows. In the Instant Messaging environments available by current Instant Messaging providers a particular user's presence online can easily, or even automatically, be detected by others. When a user begins an Instant Messaging session using one of these Instant Messaging providers, all other users who are interested in this user are notified that the he just went "online". Some Instant Messaging providers do provide some protection against this "presence detection". They may allow users to set an option to either let "no one" know that they are online, or to block certain people from knowing they are online. Unfortunately, these type

of features are cumbersome to use since they are not automatic and force users to constantly manage who can "see" them and who can't.

The Instant Messaging messaging archiving problem can be seen as follows.

Some currently available Instant Messaging client software allows users to
5 save transcripts of an Instant Messaging session as a file on their computer
disk. But the client software does not allow them to file these sessions away,
title them, etc., as they would with email, and the feature is cumbersome
enough that most users either don't know it exists, or simply don't use it. This
gives Instant Messaging a disadvantage when compared to email because it
10 does not allow the user to maintain an automatic archive of what was
discussed in the Instant Messaging session.

There are several problems associated with Instant Messaging service
provider compatibility and software delivery. Today, Instant Messaging service
providers require users download a particular piece of software to execute on
15 their computer. This type of Instant Messaging software causes at least three
major problems.

Lack of interoperability causes a significant problem. Each Instant Messaging
service provider only supports its own Instant Messaging protocol and client
software. Clients from one Instant Messaging service provider, using that
20 service provider's Instant Messaging software can typically only communicate
with other people who use the same service provider and software. A person
cannot arbitrarily send an Instant Message to another person, unless that
other person uses the same Instant Messaging service provider and software
that they do. For example, "Joe" uses AOL's Instant Messenger, and "Jane"
25 uses Yahoo's Messenger. Even if Joe and Jane know each other's screen

names, they cannot communicate with each other since they are using different Instant Messaging service providers.

Lack of platform independence is another problem. Today's Instant Messaging service providers and software typically will only execute on a limited number of hardware platforms, so users on non-supported platforms will not be able to communicate with users on supported platforms.

The inability to work through network "firewalls " causes additional problems. The current Instant Messaging service providers and software offerings will typically not work through "firewalls". Since most business enterprises have firewalls in place, these programs preclude users inside the organization from communicating with users outside of the organization. Additionally, as home networks become more prevalent, the use of firewalls will become more common and the significance of this problem will increase.

Summary of the invention

Certain embodiments of the present invention are directed to a system supporting the initiation of an Instant Messaging (IM) session between two or more parties through the use of email programs and standard web browsers. Additionally, it allows users to communicate using a "standard/standalone" Instant Messaging paradigm (i.e. without email integration) which affords users the features of today's popular Instant Messaging services, but also provides at least the additional benefits listed in the summary.

Regarding the namespace problem, users are not required to use proprietary "screen names". Instead, the inventive system allows the parties to use their email address as their "screen name". Email addresses have the advantages

that they are much more pervasive and established than typical Instant Messaging "screen names", and valid email addresses are guaranteed to be universally unique names.

The present invention details a process whereby a computer user may send
5 an "IM Enhanced" or "Live" email to another person, using a standard email program, by knowing only the recipient's email address.

Regarding the privacy problem, when an Instant Messaging session is initiated via email, strict privacy rules are enforced in a non-intrusive manner; one user cannot "blindly" initiate a messaging session with another user,
10 unless the second user accepts the Instant Messaging invitation. Furthermore, the initial chat request is not delivered via an Instant Message, rather, it is delivered in an email. Upon receipt of the email invitation, the recipient initiates an Instant Messaging conversation with the sender (who's acceptance is implicit since the sender initiated the Instant Messaging
15 request). When an Instant Messaging session is initiated via the "standalone" Instant Messaging web page, the user is able to control presence detection in the same sorts of ways as most commonly available Instant Messaging software allows.

The present invention also details the process whereby users may indicate
20 that presence detection is allowed only to certain individuals simply by sending those individuals an email/IM invitation. This email becomes the implicit "permission" for the recipient to converse with the sender, so no other action is required on the part of the sender. This provides a very dynamic and powerful means of granting "permission" to message, and the permissions
25 may even be email message specific. This means that if Joe sends Jane an

IM-enhanced email, Jane would be able to communicate to Joe through that email, but if Jane used the standalone Instant Messaging service, she may not be able to detect Joe's presence, assuming Joe has "total privacy" selected.

The sender is not able to initiate the Instant Messaging conversation in any way other than through an email. This prevents users from getting Instant Messaging "spam". If the recipient accepts the Instant Messaging invitation included in the email, they can begin a conversation with the sender (who is assumed to have implicitly accepted IMs from the recipient). Since these Instant Messaging conversations are initiated via email, the spam problem is also addressed by leveraging all of the protections already in place for protecting users against email spam, this includes existing legislation, filtering software, etc.

Regarding the problem of Instant Messaging message archiving, users may choose to permanently save Instant Messaging sessions in much the same way that they save email. The Instant Messaging session might even be saved as part of the email. This allows Instant Messaging archives to be referred back to in the future. Additionally, if there was an Instant Messaging session as a result of an email, that Instant Messaging session will be automatically saved in conjunction with the email, so that anytime in the future the user chooses to read that particular piece of email, they will also see the associated messaging.

Upon receiving such an email, the recipient will be able to read the email "body" as they always have, and below the email body will be an area in which to participate in an Instant Messaging conversation with the sender.

As the Instant Messaging session proceeds, it is constantly being saved on the server computer, which provides the Instant Messaging support. This allows users to file away emails as always, and at any future time, when they view the email, the full transcript of the Instant Messaging session will also
5 appear. This allows users to both maintain conversations about the email together with the email, as well as to maintain an automatic archive of their Instant Messaging session (users would, of course, be able to disable this feature).

Regarding Instant Messaging service provider compatibility and software
10 delivery problems, no explicit signup or software is needed. Sender and recipient need not be signed up with a common Instant Messaging service provider, or any service provider at all in order to message each other. Users may "message" each other without the need for explicit client software downloads. Messaging is performed with standard DHTML within an email
15 window [though the Instant Messaging part of this invention can also be utilized in an "IM only" mode, without the use of email].

This "IM area" is rendered within the email message, using only generally available browser technologies, such as DHTML. No other software is required for the user to download, and no "plugins" are required. This allows
20 any user with a popular browser to immediately, and seamlessly, participate in an Instant Messaging session.

The whole Instant Messaging session takes place using only the publicly-defined internet protocol known as HTTP allowing Instant Messaging conversations to take place across firewalls. The present invention also
25 details the process whereby a computer user may send or receive "standard"

Instant Messages, from a web-based Instant Messaging web page/application. The implementation of this "standalone" web page uses the same software "engine" as the software described above, which allows users to Instant Messaging each other within their emails. Though there are many
5 benefits to the email/Im solution, a standalone solution is required as well, since the sender needs a way to communicate with the recipient once the recipient chooses to initiate an Instant Messaging session. Additionally, users often choose to communicate only via Instant Messages, and not use email. It is in the standalone incarnation of this software where the privacy and
10 presence-hiding and http presence-detection features of this software shine.

These and other advantages of the present invention will become apparent upon reading the following detailed descriptions and studying the various figures of the drawings.

Brief Description of the Drawings

15 Figure **1** depicts a system comprising a server **100** communicatively coupled to associated client computers used by users supporting email communications and web browser compliant communications to provide instant messaging between at least two of the users;

Figure **2A** depicts a detail flowchart of server program system **1000** of Figure
20 **1** for supporting instant messaging between at least two of the users;

Figure **2B** depicts a detail flowchart of operation **1012** of Figure **2A** for creating the instant messaging session;

Figure **3** depicts a detail flowchart of operation **1022** of Figure **1** for providing the instant messaging session;

Figure **4A** depicts a detail flowchart of operation **1122** of Figure **3** for transferring the at least one received communication from the first member;

- 5 Figure **4B** depicts a detail flowchart of server program system **1000** of Figure **1** for supporting instant messaging between at least two users;

Figure **5A** depicts a detail flowchart of operation **1192** of Figure **4B** for maintaining the database referencing the history;

- 10 Figure **5B** depicts a detail flowchart of operation **1172** of Figure **4A** for sending the at least one processed communication from the first member;

Figure **5C** depicts a detail flowchart of operation **1212** of Figure **5A** for maintaining the history;

Figure **6** is a refinement of Figure **1** showing server **100** coupled **102** to instant messaging session **130** and further coupled **104** to database **150**;

- 15 Figure **7A** depicts a detail flowchart of operation **1262** of Figure **5C** for maintaining the communication history;

Figure **7B** depicts a detail flowchart of operation **1272** of Figure **7A** for creating the instant messaging session with the universally unique identifier;

- 20 Figure **7C** depicts a detail flowchart of operation **1192** of Figure **4B** for maintaining the database;

Figure **8B** depicts a detail flowchart of operation **1342** of Figure **8A** for creating the history;

Figure **9** depicts a detail flowchart of operation **1172** of Figure **4A** for sending the instant messaging invitation email message to the associated email address designated for each of the recipients;

Figure **10A** depicts a detail flowchart of client program system **2000** of Figure **1** and **6** for controlling the associated client computer based upon the use by the user and the communicatively coupled server **100**;

Figure **10B** depicts a detail flowchart of operation **2012** of Figure **10A** for support of email and web browser compliant communication;

Figure **10C** depicts a detail flowchart of operation **2012** of Figure **10A** for providing support for email communication and for web browser compliant communication;

Figure **11A** depicts a detail flowchart of operation **2042** of Figure **10B** for receiving the instant messaging invitation email message;

Figure **11B** depicts a detail flowchart of operation **2052** of Figure **10C** for receiving the transferred communication;

Figure **12A** depicts a detail flowchart of operation **2072** of Figure **11A** for using the received instant messaging invitation email message by the recipient;

Figure **12B** shows a refinement of the relationships involved with database **150** of Figure **6** regarding references involved with it and its components; and

Figure **13** depicts an application of the instant messaging system in a situation where different users prefer multiple languages.

Detailed Description of the Invention

Figure 1 depicts a system comprising a server **100** communicatively coupled to associated client computers used by users supporting email communications and web browser compliant communications to provide
5 instant messaging between at least two of the users.

The server computer **110** delivers formatted web pages to the client computer providing an area for the user of the client computer to participate in an Instant Messaging session. Each Instant Messaging session has a universally unique identifier, which the server computer uses to identify and store
10 individual Instant Messages.

Server **100** communicatively couples **224** to client computer **210** used by user **200** supporting email communications and web browser compliant communications. Similarly, server **100** communicatively couples **324** and **424** to client computers **310** and **410** user by users **300** and **400**, respectively.

15 Server **100** includes server computer **110** accessibly coupled **122** to server memory **120**. Server program system **1000** operates server **100** and is comprised of program steps residing in server memory **120**.

Each client computer **210**, **310**, and **410**, is accessibly coupled **222**, **322** and **422** to a respective memory **220**, **320**, and **420**. In certain embodiments of the
20 invention, program system **2000** operates the associated client computer based upon the interaction of the user and communications with server **100**.

Each user may employ at least one of acoustic and tactile input to the associated client computer in its use. The usage may vary. By way of

example, user **200** may use **212** tactile input such as a keyboard and pointing device. User **300** may use **312** acoustic input exclusively. User **400** may use **412** a combination of acoustic and tactile input.

User presentation of instant messaging communication as well as alerts
5 regarding instant messaging invitations may be presented in at least one of the following ways: visually, acoustically, and tactilely.

By way of example, the visual alert may include an icon presented on a view screen, or by turning on a light. The acoustic alert may emit at least one of the following: an alert sound or an alert audio message. A tactile alert may
10 include raising or lowering a tactile output member, such as found on a Braille keyboard. Any of these alerts may include a representation of the first user, the time of receipt of the invitation, as well as other information which may be part of the invitation, such as the intended topic or agenda of the instant messaging session.

15 By way of example, the areas of a web page may be associated with distinct voices by which content presented in an area may be acoustically presented to the user. The acoustic presentation may follow the order of receipt of the transferred communication, or the user may specify that a priority scheme by which various transferring communications received within
20 a period of time are ordered for presentation. The user may further specify that differing voices may be presented louder or softer. The user may silence a voice.

Note that the server **100** communicatively coupled to the associated client computer used by the user may further support a version of TCP-IP compliant protocols in communication with the user, for at least one of the users.

Server **100** communicatively coupled to the associated client computer used
5 by the user may further support at least one of the following:

- a version of Wireless Application Protocol (WAP) compliant protocols in communication with the user;
- a version of Bluetooth compliant protocols in communication with the user;
- a version of HTTP compliant protocols in communication with the user;

10 and

- a version of XML compliant protocols in communication with the user.

Instant messaging session **130** involves a universally unique identifier **132** and web page **140** based upon that universally unique identifier, initiated by a first user **134** involving at least one recipient **136** contacted by email through
15 their email address. Each recipient **136** is sent an instant messaging invitation email message.

The first user **134** is a member of the audience collection **138**. When and if a recipient **136** responds to the instant messaging invitation email message, it becomes a member of the audience collection **138**.

20 When a communication **142** is received from a first member of the audience collection **138**, a transferred communication **144** from the first member is sent to all audience collection members.

Upon receipt of communication **142**, it may be processed to create the processed communication **142** from the first member, which is then sent to all audience collection members as the transferred communication **144**.

Figure **2A** depicts a detail flowchart of server program system **1000** of Figure 5 **1** for supporting instant messaging between at least two of the users.

Arrow **1010** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **1000** to operation **1012**. Operation **1012** performs creating an instant messaging session with a universally unique identifier initiated by a first of the users for recipients designated as at least one of the remaining of the users. Arrow 10 **1014** directs execution from operation **1012** to operation **1016**. Operation **1016** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

Arrow **101010** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **1000** to operation **101012**. Operation **101012** performs providing the instant messaging session identified by the universally unique identifier as a 15 formatted web page to each of the designated recipients and to the first user. Arrow **101014** directs execution from operation **101012** to operation **1016**. Operation **1016** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

Figure **2B** depicts a detail flowchart of operation **1012** of Figure **2A** for creating the instant messaging session.

20 Arrow **1050** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **1012** to operation **1052**. Operation **1052** performs receiving an instant messaging session request from the first user for recipients each designated by an associated email address for the at least one of the remaining users. Arrow

1054 directs execution from operation **1052** to operation **1056**. Operation **1056** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

Arrow **1060** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **1012** to operation **1062**. Operation **1062** performs assigning the universally unique
5 identifier based upon the instant messaging session request. Arrow **1064** directs execution from operation **1062** to operation **1056**. Operation **1056** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

Arrow **1070** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **1012** to operation **1072**. Operation **1072** performs sending an instant messaging
10 invitation email message to the associated email address designated for each of the recipients. Arrow **1074** directs execution from operation **1072** to operation **1056**. Operation **1056** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

Figure **3** depicts a detail flowchart of operation **1022** of Figure **1** for providing the instant messaging session.

15 Arrow **1090** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **1022** to operation **1092**. Operation **1092** performs creating the web page referenced based upon the universally unique identifier. Arrow **1094** directs execution from operation **1092** to operation **1096**. Operation **1096** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

20 Arrow **1100** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **1022** to operation **1102**. Operation **1102** performs providing the web page with an area associated with the first user for participation. Arrow **1104** directs execution from operation **1102** to operation **1096**. Operation **1096** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

Arrow **1110** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **1022** to operation **1112**. Operation **1112** performs providing the web page with another area associated with the recipient for participation upon response to the instant messaging invitation email message, for each of the recipients.

5 Arrow **1114** directs execution from operation **1112** to operation **1096**. Operation **1096** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

As used herein, an audience collection will include the first user and each of the recipients responding to the instant messaging invitation email message.

Arrow **1120** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **1022** to
10 operation **1122**. Operation **1122** performs transferring at least one received communication from the associated client computer operated by a first of the members of the audience collection to all of the members of the audience collection to create a transferred communication as content in the area associated with the first member. Arrow **1124** directs execution from
15 operation **1122** to operation **1096**. Operation **1096** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

Figure **4A** depicts a detail flowchart of operation **1122** of Figure **3** for transferring the at least one received communication from the first member.

Arrow **1150** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **1122** to
20 operation **1152**. Operation **1152** performs receiving at least one communication from the first member of the audience collection to create at least one received communication. Arrow **1154** directs execution from operation **1152** to operation **1156**. Operation **1156** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

Arrow **1160** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **1122** to operation **1162**. Operation **1162** performs processing at least one received communication from the first member to create at least one processed communication from the first member. Arrow **1164** directs execution from operation **1162** to operation **1156**. Operation **1156** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

Arrow **1170** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **1122** to operation **1172**. Operation **1172** performs sending at least one processed communication from the first member to create the transferred communication as content in the area associated with the first member to all audience collection members. Arrow **1174** directs execution from operation **1172** to operation **1156**. Operation **1156** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

Figure **4B** depicts a detail flowchart of server program system **1000** of Figure **1** for supporting instant messaging between at least two users.

Arrow **1190** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **1000** to operation **1192**. Operation **1192** performs maintaining a database referencing a history of the instant messaging session with the universally unique identifier. Arrow **1194** directs execution from operation **1192** to operation **1196**. Operation **1196** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

Figure **5A** depicts a detail flowchart of operation **1192** of Figure **4B** for maintaining the database referencing the history.

Arrow **1210** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **1192** to operation **1212**. Operation **1212** performs maintaining the history of the instant messaging session with the universally unique identifier for the

audience collection. Arrow **1214** directs execution from operation **1212** to operation **1216**. Operation **1216** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

Figure **5B** depicts a detail flowchart of operation **1172** of Figure **4A** for sending at least one processed communication from the first member.

5 Arrow **1230** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **1172** to operation **1232**. Operation **1232** performs sending the processed communication from the first member as content in the area associated with the first member to the history of the instant messaging session with the universally unique identifier. Arrow **1234** directs execution from operation
10 **1232** to operation **1236**. Operation **1236** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

Figure **5C** depicts a detail flowchart of operation **1212** of Figure **5A** for maintaining the history.

Arrow **1250** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **1212** to
15 operation **1252**. Operation **1252** performs receiving the transferred communication from the first member at the history to create a history-received communication from the first member. Arrow **1254** directs execution from operation **1252** to operation **1256**. Operation **1256** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

20 Figure **6** is a refinement of Figure **1** showing server **100** coupled **102** to instant messaging session **130** and further coupled **104** to database **150**.

Note that in certain embodiments of the invention, there is no database **150**, when it is required that no lasting record of the instant messaging session is

kept. Such embodiments enforce the instant messaging session confidentiality cannot be broken at a later time.

When there is a database **150**, it references **152** history **154** of the instant messaging session **130**. History **154** may reference **156** universally unique
5 identifier **158**, which is based upon universally unique identifier **132** of instant messaging session **130**. Note that history **154** may persist after instant messaging session **130** has ended. In some circumstances, history **154** may be built from instant messaging session **130**. Such a build process may occur when the session was initiated or later, possibly when the session ends.

10 History **154** may also reference **160** audience list **162** based upon audience collection **138**.

History **154** may also reference **164** a communication history **166**, which further references communications records **168**, each of which may be based upon at least one of the received communication **142**, processed
15 communication **144**, and transferred communication **146**.

Depending upon the options the initial sender **134** setup when Instant Messaging session **130** was initiated, the server **100** may retain the complete transcript **166** of the Instant Messaging session.

This is a simple matter for server **100** to do, since each and every Instant
20 Messaging **130** has a unique ID **132**. Communication **142** between users **200**, **300**, and **400** must pass through the server **100** prior to delivery and is uniquely bound to its Instant Messaging session **130** via a unique ID **132**.

This is a powerful feature, in that the URL contained in the email initiating the whole Instant Messaging session **130** always contains that unique ID **132**.

The user whenever looking at that email at any time in the future, will trigger the server **100** to attempt fetching all the Instant Messaging messages **168** has stored for that email. The email will then continue to display to the user the complete Instant Messaging transcript associated with the email.

Figure **7A** depicts a detail flowchart of operation **1262** of Figure **5C** for maintaining the communication history.

Arrow **1270** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **1262** to operation **1272**. Operation **1272** performs creating a new communication record containing the first member history-received communication as the communication from the first member. Arrow **1274** directs execution from operation **1272** to operation **1276**. Operation **1276** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

Arrow **1280** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **1262** to operation **1282**. Operation **1282** performs adding the new communication record to the communication history. Arrow **1284** directs execution from operation **1282** to operation **1276**. Operation **1276** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

Figure **7B** depicts a detail flowchart of operation **1272** of Figure **7A** for creating the instant messaging session with the universally unique identifier.

Arrow **1310** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **1272** to operation **1312**. Operation **1312** performs sending the database an initiating request for the instant messaging session with the universally unique identifier

by the first user for the recipients. Arrow **1314** directs execution from operation **1312** to operation **1316**. Operation **1316** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

Figure **7C** depicts a detail flowchart of operation **1192** of Figure **4B** for
5 maintaining the database.

Arrow **1330** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **1192** to operation **1332**. Operation **1332** performs receiving the initiating request for the instant messaging session with the universally unique identifier by the first user for the recipients at the database. Arrow **1334** directs execution from
10 operation **1332** to operation **1336**. Operation **1336** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

Arrow **1340** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **1192** to operation **1342**. Operation **1342** performs creating the history of the instant messaging session with the universally unique identifier from the initiating
15 request for the instant messaging session with the universally unique identifier by the first user for the recipients. Arrow **1344** directs execution from operation **1342** to operation **1346**. Operation **1346** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

Figure **8B** depicts a detail flowchart of operation **1342** of Figure **8A** for
20 creating the history.

Arrow **1370** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **1342** to operation **1372**. Operation **1372** performs creating an audience list containing references to each member of the audience collection. Arrow **1374** directs

execution from operation **1372** to operation **1376**. Operation **1376** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

Arrow **1380** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **1342** to operation **1382**. Operation **1382** performs creating a first of the
5 communication records in the communication history based upon the initiating request. Arrow **1384** directs execution from operation **1382** to operation **1376**. Operation **1376** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

Note that various embodiments of the invention may implement one or both of the operations of Figure **8B**.

10 Figure **9** depicts a detail flowchart of operation **1172** of Figure **4A** for sending the instant messaging invitation email message to the associated email address designated for each of the recipients.

Arrow **1410** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **1172** to operation **1412**. Operation **1412** performs sending the instant messaging
15 invitation email message containing a body further including the web page referenced by the universally unique identifier actively embedded in the body to the associated email address designated for at least one of the recipients. Arrow **1414** directs execution from operation **1412** to operation **1416**. Operation **1416** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

20 Arrow **1420** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **1172** to operation **1422**. Operation **1422** performs sending the instant messaging invitation email message containing a body further including a link to the web page referenced by a URL based upon the universally unique identifier to the associated email address designated for at least one of the recipients. Arrow

1424 directs execution from operation **1422** to operation **1416**. Operation **1416** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

Arrow **1430** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **1172** to operation **1432**. Operation **1432** performs sending the instant messaging invitation email message containing a body further including an icon
5 referenced by the universally unique identifier to the associated email address designated for at least one of the recipients. Arrow **1434** directs execution from operation **1432** to operation **1416**. Operation **1416** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

10 Note that in various situations, a combination of the operations of Figure 9 may be performed to send instant messaging invitations to a collection of recipients.

An email with an integrated Instant Message may be created in one of two methods:

15 The first method uses a web based email program including a typical email "body", an area for users to Instant Message each other, and a unique identifier (ID) **132** appended to the URL of the email, and serves to differentiate this email (and potential Instant Messaging session) from all others.

20 The second method uses a supported 3rd-party client email program, such as Microsoft Outlook, Eudora and Netscape Communicator. Under this scenario an "Embeddable IM" icon may added to the email program's toolbar, allowing users to drag the icon down and "drop" it into their email.

This invokes software embedding a URL to the Instant Messaging facility in the client's email. This URL is based upon unique identifier **132**.

In either case, the URL which is generated, either for the web based email, or as an Instant Messaging URL inserted into a "standard" email, will be tagged with an ID **132** for the sender and with a flag indicating that it is an "email IM".
5 In this way the recipient is supported in Instant Messaging with the sender regardless of which users the sender has given "presence detection" permission to.

In any case, the sender's email address must also be included as part of the email (or server form submission). This is so that when the recipient responds
10 the response can be correctly routed to the sender. This can be viewed as a return address. The very first time that a user sends an IM-enriched email they may have to type in their email address, but after that the email address may preferably be stored in a cookie on their computer so that all subsequent
15 Instant Messaging emails can automatically contain it.

When responding to IM-enriched emails, the recipient's email address must be included with the IM, either in the URL or the Instant Messaging itself. This is the recipient's return address and is required for the same reasons above. The return address will be obtained from the recipient as described above.

20 If an email is sent in the first method, the email body is sent by the client browser code up to the server computer **110**. Server computer **110** then may preferably store this email message in the server-side database **150**, allowing for future retrieval via URL.

When the recipient receives an email via either of the methods described above, it contains a standard email subject line and body, but may preferably contains a text area allowing the recipient to communicate with the sender.

If the recipient chooses not to communicate with the sender, no further action
5 is taken, and the email may be handled/disposed of as the client user wishes.

If the recipient does choose to utilize the preferably built-in instant messaging feature, they simply input their message into the text area, and activate a Send button near the text area. This preferably causes client-side DHTML (HTML and JavaScript) to be invoked sending the message, via HTTP, back
10 to the server computer **110**.

Upon receiving this client request **1152**, the server preferably checks the database **150** to see if it recognizes any Instant Messaging sessions **130** with that particular ID **132**.

If it does, it preferably associates this message **142** with that unique ID, and
15 stores it in the server-side database in some form **168**. This approach allows the system to operate on virtually any hardware platform, operate through firewalls, etc.

Normally, when an Instant Messaging is received **1152** by the server computer **110**, it compares the source of the email against the target user's
20 the Instant Messaging list of acceptable senders, and only delivers the Instant Messaging if the target user is willing to accept it.

The exception to occurs when an Instant Messaging comes in from an email source. The server computer **110** knows that the message is coming from an

email source, because when the Instant Messaging URL **140** was first generated for insertion into the email, the URL was tagged with an ID **132** for the sender and with a flag indicating that it is an "email IM". In this case, the server **100** knows that the recipient is allowed to Instant Messaging with the sender regardless of which users the sender has given "presence detection" permission to. If the recipient does not have permission to detect the sender's presence using standalone software, they would still not be able to do that. They would only be able to participate in Instant Messaging with the sender within the context of this particular email message.

The ability to temporarily disable presence detection restrictions allows individuals like the sender to maintain a high degree of overall privacy without making it cumbersome to disable the privacy feature when having specific conversations with specific individuals. The procedure is not cumbersome because the act of sending the email automatically and implicitly grants the recipient Instant Messaging permissions in this particular case.

From the sender's side, if the sender of the email is using the standalone web page version of the Instant Messaging software, that standalone client software is constantly (every few seconds) making HTTP requests to the server asking if any new data has arrived for it. The server makes a note of the last time the client made such a request of it. On one of these requests, after the server has received an Instant Messaging from the recipient and stored it in the database, the server computer responds to the sending client's request with any newly received IMs. The server then marks those IMs in the database as "delivered".

If the sender of the email does not have the standalone web page version of the Instant Messaging software running, then when the server gets the Instant Messaging from the email recipient, it notices that the email sender's client software has not asked it for any messages in too long of a period of time (i.e. 5 it has not been making requests every few seconds).

The server knows this since it keeps track of client data requests. In such a case, the server automatically composes an email and sends it to the Instant Messaging target user. The email contains the IM, as well as the standard Instant Messaging text area so that when the email is received, the Instant 10 Messaging session may commence directly from the received email. Under this scenario, both client users are utilizing the software via email.

Following all of the above, the sender can Instant Messaging a response back to the recipient, and the same process takes place again, in reverse.

Figure **10A** depicts a detail flowchart of client program system **2000** of Figure 15 **1** and **6** for controlling the associated client computer based upon the use by the user and the communicatively coupled server **100**.

Arrow **2010** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **2000** to operation **2012**. Operation **2012** performs providing support for email communication and for web browser compliant communication used by the 20 user with the communicatively coupled server based upon at least one of tactile input from the user and acoustic input from the user. Arrow **2014** directs execution from operation **2012** to operation **2016**. Operation **2016** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

Figure **10B** depicts a detail flowchart of operation **2012** of Figure **10A** for support of email and web browser compliant communication.

Arrow **2030** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **2012** to operation **2032**. Operation **2032** performs sending the instant messaging session request initiated by the first user for the designated recipients to the communicatively coupled server. Arrow **2034** directs execution from operation **2032** to operation **2036**. Operation **2036** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

Arrow **2040** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **2012** to operation **2042**. Operation **2042** performs receiving the instant messaging invitation email message for the user as the recipient from the communicatively coupled server to create a received instant messaging invitation email message. Arrow **2044** directs execution from operation **2042** to operation **2036**. Operation **2036** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

Various embodiments of the invention may support one or both of the operations **2032** and **2042** operating the associated client computer used one of the users.

Figure **10C** depicts a detail flowchart of operation **2012** of Figure **10A** for providing support for email communication and for web browser compliant communication.

Arrow **2050** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **2012** to operation **2052**. Operation **2052** performs receiving the transferred communication from the first member to create a received-transferred communication from the first member. Arrow **2054** directs execution from

operation **2052** to operation **2056**. Operation **2056** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

Figure **11A** depicts a detail flowchart of operation **2042** of Figure **10B** for receiving the instant messaging invitation email message.

5 Arrow **2070** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **2042** to operation **2072**. Operation **2072** performs using the received instant messaging invitation email message by the recipient to create an instant messaging response sent to the communicatively coupled server. Arrow **2074** directs execution from operation **2072** to operation **2076**. Operation
10 **2076** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

Arrow **2080** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **2042** to operation **2082**. Operation **2082** performs alerting the recipient of the received instant messaging invitation email message employing at least one member of a user output collection including visual output, acoustic output
15 and tactile output. Arrow **2084** directs execution from operation **2082** to operation **2086**. Operation **2086** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

Figure **11B** depicts a detail flowchart of operation **2052** of Figure **10C** for receiving the transferred communication.

Arrow **2090** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **2052** to
20 operation **2092**. Operation **2092** performs presenting the received-transferred communication from the first member as content in the area associated with the first member. Arrow **2094** directs execution from operation **2092** to operation **2096**. Operation **2096** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

Figure **12A** depicts a detail flowchart of operation **2072** of Figure **11A** for using the received instant messaging invitation email message by the recipient.

Arrow **2110** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **2072** to
5 operation **2112**. Operation **2112** performs activating the embedded web page
referenced by the universally unique identifier contained in the received
instant messaging invitation email message by the recipient to create an
instant messaging response sent to the communicatively coupled server.
Arrow **2114** directs execution from operation **2112** to operation **2116**.
10 Operation **2116** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

Arrow **2120** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **2072** to
operation **2122**. Operation **2122** performs activating the link to the web page
referenced by the URL based upon the universally unique identifier contained
in the received instant messaging invitation email message by the recipient to
15 create an instant messaging response sent to the communicatively coupled
server. Arrow **2124** directs execution from operation **2122** to operation **2116**.
Operation **2116** terminates the operations of this flowchart.

Arrow **2130** directs the flow of execution from starting operation **2072** to
operation **2132**. Operation **2132** performs activating the icon referenced by
20 the universally unique identifier contained in the received instant messaging
invitation email message by the recipient to create an instant messaging
response sent to the communicatively coupled server. Arrow **2134** directs
execution from operation **2132** to operation **2116**. Operation **2116** terminates
the operations of this flowchart.

Figure **12B** shows a refinement of the relationships involved with database **150** of Figure **6** regarding references involved with it and its components.

In certain embodiments of the invention, database **150** may contain history **154** of the instant messaging session **130**.

5 History **154** may contain the referenced universally unique identifier **158** based upon universally unique identifier **132** of instant messaging session **130**.

History **154** may contain referenced audience list **162** based upon audience collection **138**.

10 History **154** may also contain the referenced communication history **166**, which further contain the referenced communications records **168**, each of which may be based upon at least one of the received communication **142**, processed communication **144**, and transferred communication **144**.

Note that for the sake of simplicity of discourse, these references are all
15 shown individually as container relationships, though in practice any combination of them may be container relationships. Note that in other embodiments, these referenced relationships may be part of an inferential database **150**, where the relationships are of an implicative rather than container basis.

20 Figure **13** depicts an application of the instant messaging system in a situation where different users prefer multiple languages.

Note that in certain embodiments of the invention, at least two members of the audience collection may have at least one associated language. Collectively,

the communications between members of the audience collection may require more than one language.

As an example, assume that user1 **200** prefers language **230**, user2 **300** prefers language **330** and user3 **400** prefers language **430**, which are
5 different. These distinct languages may be differing versions of the same basic human language, or may differ in terms of the basic human languages. Note that as used herein, a basic language such as English may have several versions, such as US, UK and Australian English.

Note that the received communication **142** may be in first language **230**, and
10 that the processed communication **144** may be in at least a second language **330**. The processed communication may be more than one language, by way of example, a third language **430**.

Note that the transferred communication **146** would involve all the languages preferred by the audience collection members.

15 The preceding embodiments have been provided by way of example and are not meant to constrain the scope of the following claims.

Claims

1. A system supporting instant messaging between at least two users comprising:

5 a server communicatively coupled to an associated client computer used by said user supporting email communications and supporting web browser compliant communications, for each of said users;

wherein said server is comprised of at least one server computer accessibly coupled with a memory;

10 wherein said server is operated by a server program system comprised of program steps residing in said memory and executed by said server computer;

wherein said server program system is further comprised of the program steps of:

15 creating an instant messaging session with a universally unique identifier initiated by a first of said users for recipients designated as at least one of the remaining of said users; and

20 providing said instant messaging session identified by said universally unique identifier as a formatted web page to each of said designated recipients and to said first user;

wherein the program step creating said instant messaging session further comprising the program steps of:

25 receiving an instant messaging session request from said first user for recipients each designated by an associated email address for said at least one of said remaining users;

assigning said universally unique identifier based upon said instant messaging session request; and

sending an instant messaging invitation email message to said associated email address designated for each of said recipients;

5 wherein the program step providing said instant messaging session is further comprised of the program steps of:

creating said web page referenced based upon said universally unique identifier;

10 providing said web page with an area associated with said first user for participation;

providing said web page with another area associated with said recipient for participation upon response to said instant messaging invitation email message, for each of said recipients; wherein an audience collection is comprised of said first user and each of said recipients responding to said
15 instant messaging invitation email message; and

transferring at least one received communication from said associated client computer operated by a first of said members of said audience collection to all of said members of said audience collection to create a transferred communication as content in said area associated with said first
20 member;

wherein the program step transferring said at least one received communication from said first member is further comprised of the program steps of:

receiving at least one communication from said first member of said
25 audience collection to create said at least one received communication;

processing said at least one received communication from said first member to create at least one processed communication from said first member; and

5 sending said at least one processed communication from said first member to create said transferred communication as content in said area associated with said first member to all members of said audience collection;

wherein said server program system is further comprised of the program step of:

10 maintaining a database referencing a history of said instant messaging session with said universally unique identifier further comprising the program step of

maintaining said history of said instant messaging session with said universally unique identifier for said audience collection;

15 wherein the program step sending said at least one processed communication from said first member is further comprised of the program step of:

sending said processed communication from said first member as content in said area associated with said first member to said history of said instant messaging session with said universally unique identifier;

20 wherein the program step maintaining said history is further comprised of the program steps of:

receiving said transferred communication from said first member at said history to create a history-received communication from said first member; and

25 maintaining a communication history comprising a collection of at least one communication record;

wherein each of said communication records is based upon at least one member of the collection comprising said received communication, said processed communication, and said transferred communication;

wherein the program step maintaining said communication history is further comprised of the program steps of:

creating a new communication record containing said first member history-received communication as said communication from said first member; and

adding said new communication record to said communication history.

10

2. The system of Claim 1,

wherein the program step creating said instant messaging session with said universally unique identifier is further comprised of the program step of:

sending said database an initiating request for said instant messaging session with said universally unique identifier by said first user for said recipients;

wherein the program step maintaining said database is further comprised of the program step of:

receiving said initiating request for said instant messaging session with said universally unique identifier by said first user for said recipients at said database; and

creating said history of said instant messaging session with said universally unique identifier from said initiating request for said instant messaging session with said universally unique identifier by said first user for said recipients.

25

3. The system of Claim 2,
wherein the program step creating said history is further comprised of
at least one member of the collection comprising the program steps of:

5 creating an audience list containing references to each member of said
audience collection; and

creating a first of said communication records in said communication
history based upon said initiating request.

4. The system of Claim 1,

10 wherein the program step sending said instant messaging invitation
email message to said associated email address designated for each of said
recipients is further comprised of at least one member of the collection
comprising the program steps of:

15 sending said instant messaging invitation email message containing a
body further including said web page referenced by said universally unique
identifier actively embedded in said body to said associated email address
designated for at least one of said recipients;

20 sending said instant messaging invitation email message containing a
body further including a link to said web page referenced by a URL based
upon said universally unique identifier to said associated email address
designated for at least one of said recipients; and

25 sending said instant messaging invitation email message containing a
body further including an icon referenced by said universally unique identifier
to said associated email address designated for at least one of said
recipients.

5. The system of Claim 4,
wherein said associated client computer used by said user, for at least one of said users, comprised of:

5 a client memory accessibly coupled with said associated client computer; and

a client program system comprised of program steps residing in said accessibly coupled client memory;

10 wherein said associated client computer is controlled by said client program system based upon use by said user and based upon said communicatively coupled said server;

wherein the program step providing support for email communication and for web browser compliant communication is further comprised of the program steps of:

15 providing support for email communication and for web browser compliant communication used by said user with said communicatively coupled server based upon at least one member of the collection comprising tactile input from said user and acoustic input from said user further comprised of at least one member of the collection comprising the program steps of:

20 sending said instant messaging session request initiated by said first user for said designated recipients to said communicatively coupled server; and

25 receiving said instant messaging invitation email message for said user as said recipient from said communicatively coupled server to create a received instant messaging invitation email message;

wherein said client program system is further comprised of the program step of:

receiving said transferred communication from said first member to create a received-transferred communication from said first member;

5 wherein the program step receiving said instant messaging invitation email message further comprising at least one member of the collection comprising the program steps of:

alerting said recipient of said received instant messaging invitation email message employing at least one member of a user output collection
10 including visual output, acoustic output and tactile output; and

using said received instant messaging invitation email message by said recipient to create an instant messaging response sent to said communicatively coupled server;

wherein the program step receiving said transferred communication is
15 further comprised of the program step of:

presenting said received-transferred communication from said first member as content in said area associated with said first member.

6. The system of Claim 5,

20 wherein the program step using said received instant messaging invitation email message by said recipient is further comprised of at least one member of the collection comprising the program steps of:

activating said embedded web page referenced by said universally unique identifier contained in said received instant messaging invitation email
25 message by said recipient to create an instant messaging response sent to said communicatively coupled server;

activating said link to said web page referenced by said URL based upon said universally unique identifier contained in said received instant messaging invitation email message by said recipient to create an instant messaging response sent to said communicatively coupled server; and

5 activating said icon referenced by said universally unique identifier contained in said received instant messaging invitation email message by said recipient to create an instant messaging response sent to said communicatively coupled server.

10 7. The system of Claim 3,
wherein said history contains said audience list.

8. The system of Claim 1,
wherein said history contains said communication history.

15 9. The system of Claim 1,
wherein said database contains said history.

10. The system of Claim 1,
20 wherein said at least one received communication is in a first language;
and
wherein said at least one processed communication is in at least a
second language.

25 11. The system of Claim 10,

wherein said at least one processed communication is in at least said second language and a third language.

12. The system of Claim 11,

5 wherein a language collection includes at least a version of English, a version of French, a version of German, a version of Spanish, a version of Swahili, a version of Arabic, a version of Japanese, a version of a Chinese language, a version of Korean, and a version of Hindi;

10 wherein a user language collection includes said first language and said second language and said third language;

wherein at least one member of said user language collection is a member of said language collection.

13. The system of Claim 1,

15 wherein said associated client computer used by said user, for at least one of said users, comprised of:

a client memory accessibly coupled with said associated client computer; and

20 a client program system comprised of program steps residing in said accessibly coupled client memory;

wherein said associated client computer is controlled by said client program system based upon use by said user and based upon said communicatively coupled said server;

25 wherein said client program system is further comprised of the program step of:

providing support for email communication and for web browser compliant communication used by said user with said communicatively coupled server based upon at least one member of the collection comprising tactile input from said user and acoustic input from said user further
5 comprised of at least one member of the collection comprising the program steps of:

sending said instant messaging session request initiated by said first user for said recipients designated as at least one of said remaining users to said communicatively coupled server; and

10 receiving said instant messaging invitation email message for said user as said recipient from said communicatively coupled server to create a received instant messaging invitation email message;

wherein the program step providing support for email communication and for web browser compliant communication is further comprised of the
15 program step of:

receiving said transferred communication from said first member to create a received-transferred communication from said first member;

wherein the program step receiving said instant messaging invitation email message further comprising at least one member of the collection
20 comprising the program steps of:

alerting said recipient of said received instant messaging invitation email message employing at least one member of a user output collection including visual output, acoustic output and tactile output; and

using said received instant messaging invitation email message by said
25 recipient to create an instant messaging response sent to said communicatively coupled server;

wherein the program step receiving said transferred communication is further comprised of the program step of:

presenting said received-transferred communication from said first member as content in said area associated with said first member.

5

14. The system of Claim 1,

wherein said server communicatively coupled to said associated client computer used by said user further supports a version of TCP-IP compliant protocols in communication with said user, for at least one of said users.

10

15. The system of Claim 14,

wherein said server communicatively coupled to said associated client computer used by said user further supports at least one member of the collection comprising:

15 a version of Wireless Application Protocol (WAP) compliant protocols in communication with said user;

a version of Bluetooth compliant protocols in communication with said user;

20 a version of HTTP compliant protocols in communication with said user; and

a version of XML compliant protocols in communication with said user.

16. A method supporting instant messaging between at least two users and a server communicatively coupled to said user supporting email
25 communications and supporting web browser compliant communications, for each of said users comprising the steps of:

creating an instant messaging session with a universally unique identifier initiated by a first of said users for recipients designated as at least one of the remaining of said users; and

5 providing said instant messaging session identified by said universally unique identifier as a formatted web page to each of said designated recipients and to said first user;

wherein the step creating said instant messaging session further comprising the steps of:

10 receiving an instant messaging session request from said first user for recipients each designated by an associated email address for said at least one of said remaining users;

assigning said universally unique identifier based upon said instant messaging session request; and

15 sending an instant messaging invitation email message to said associated email address designated for each of said recipients;

wherein the step providing said instant messaging session is further comprised of the steps of:

creating said web page referenced based upon said universally unique identifier;

20 providing said web page with an area associated with said first user for participation;

providing said web page with another area associated with said recipient for participation upon response to said instant messaging invitation email message, for each of said recipients; wherein an audience collection is
25 comprised of said first user and each of said recipients responding to said instant messaging invitation email message; and

transferring at least one received communication from said associated client computer operated by a first of said members of said audience collection to all of said members of said audience collection to create a transferred communication as content in said area associated with said first member;

wherein the step transferring said at least one received communication from said first member is further comprised of the steps of:

receiving at least one communication from said first member of said audience collection to create said at least one received communication;

processing said at least one received communication from said first member to create at least one processed communication from said first member; and

sending said at least one processed communication from said first member to create said transferred communication as content in said area associated with said first member to all members of said audience collection;

maintaining a database referencing a history of said instant messaging session with said universally unique identifier further comprising the step of

maintaining said history of said instant messaging session with said universally unique identifier for said audience collection;

wherein the step sending said at least one processed communication from said first member is further comprised of the step of:

sending said processed communication from said first member as content in said area associated with said first member to said history of said instant messaging session with said universally unique identifier;

wherein the step maintaining said history is further comprised of the steps of:

receiving said transferred communication from said first member at said history to create a history-received communication from said first member; and

maintaining a communication history comprising a collection of at least one communication record;

wherein each of said communication records is based upon at least one member of the collection comprising said received communication, said processed communication, and said transferred communication;

wherein the step maintaining said communication history is further comprised of the steps of:

creating a new communication record containing said first member history-received communication as said communication from said first member; and

adding said new communication record to said communication history.

17. The method of Claim 16,

wherein the step creating said instant messaging session with said universally unique identifier is further comprised of the step of:

sending said database an initiating request for said instant messaging session with said universally unique identifier by said first user for said recipients;

wherein the step maintaining said database is further comprised of the step of:

receiving said initiating request for said instant messaging session with said universally unique identifier by said first user for said recipients at said database; and

5 creating said history of said instant messaging session with said universally unique identifier from said initiating request for said instant messaging session with said universally unique identifier by said first user for said recipients.

18. The method of Claim 17,

10 wherein the step creating said history is further comprised of at least one member of the collection comprising the steps of:

creating an audience list containing references to each member of said audience collection; and

15 creating a first of said communication records in said communication history based upon said initiating request.

19. The method of Claim 16,

20 wherein the step sending said instant messaging invitation email message to said associated email address designated for each of said recipients is further comprised of at least one member of the collection comprising the steps of:

25 sending said instant messaging invitation email message containing a body further including said web page referenced by said universally unique identifier actively embedded in said body to said associated email address designated for at least one of said recipients;

sending said instant messaging invitation email message containing a body further including a link to said web page referenced by a URL based upon said universally unique identifier to said associated email address designated for at least one of said recipients; and

5 sending said instant messaging invitation email message containing a body further including an icon referenced by said universally unique identifier to said associated email address designated for at least one of said recipients.

10 20. The method of Claim 19, for at least one of said users, further comprising the step of:

providing support for email communication and for web browser compliant communication used by said user with said communicatively coupled server based upon at least one member of the collection comprising
15 tactile input from said user and acoustic input from said user further comprised of at least one member of the collection comprising the steps of:

sending said instant messaging session request initiated by said first user for said designated recipients to said communicatively coupled server;
and

20 receiving said instant messaging invitation email message for said user as said recipient from said communicatively coupled server to create a received instant messaging invitation email message;

wherein the step providing support for email communication and for web browser compliant communication is further comprised of the step of:

25 receiving said transferred communication from said first member to create a received-transferred communication from said first member;

wherein the step receiving said instant messaging invitation email message further comprising at least one member of the collection comprising the steps of:

5 alerting said recipient of said received instant messaging invitation email message employing at least one member of a user output collection including visual output, acoustic output and tactile output; and

using said received instant messaging invitation email message by said recipient to create an instant messaging response sent to said communicatively coupled server;

10 wherein the step receiving said transferred communication is further comprised of the step of:

presenting said received-transferred communication from said first member as content in said area associated with said first member.

15 21. The method of Claim 20,

wherein the step using said received instant messaging invitation email message by said recipient is further comprised of at least one member of the collection comprising the steps of:

20 activating said embedded web page referenced by said universally unique identifier contained in said received instant messaging invitation email message by said recipient to create an instant messaging response sent to said communicatively coupled server;

25 activating said link to said web page referenced by said URL based upon said universally unique identifier contained in said received instant messaging invitation email message by said recipient to create an instant messaging response sent to said communicatively coupled server; and

activating said icon referenced by said universally unique identifier contained in said received instant messaging invitation email message by said recipient to create an instant messaging response sent to said communicatively coupled server.

5

22. The method of Claim 18,
wherein said history contains said audience list.

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23. The method of Claim 16,
wherein said history contains said communication history.

24. The method of Claim 16,
wherein said database contains said history.

15

25. The method of Claim 16,
wherein said at least one received communication is in a first language;
and
wherein said at least one processed communication is in at least a
second language.

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26. The method of Claim 25,
wherein said at least one processed communication is in at least said
second language and a third language.

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27. The method of Claim 26,

wherein a language collection includes at least a version of English, a version of French, a version of German, a version of Spanish, a version of Swahili, a version of Arabic, a version of Japanese, a version of a Chinese language, a version of Korean, and a version of Hindi;

5 wherein a user language collection includes said first language and said second language and said third language;

wherein at least one member of said user language collection is a member of said language collection.

10 28. The method of Claim 16, for at least one of said users, further comprising the step of:

 providing support for email communication and for web browser compliant communication used by said user with said communicatively coupled server based upon at least one member of the collection comprising
15 tactile input from said user and acoustic input from said user further comprised of at least one member of the collection comprising the steps of:

 sending said instant messaging session request initiated by said first user for said recipients designated as at least one of said remaining users to said communicatively coupled server; and

20 receiving said instant messaging invitation email message for said user as said recipient from said communicatively coupled server to create a received instant messaging invitation email message;

 wherein the step providing support for email communication and for web browser compliant communication is further comprised of the step of:

25 receiving said transferred communication from said first member to create a received-transferred communication from said first member;

wherein the step receiving said instant messaging invitation email message further comprising at least one member of the collection comprising the steps of:

5 alerting said recipient of said received instant messaging invitation email message employing at least one member of a user output collection including visual output, acoustic output and tactile output; and

using said received instant messaging invitation email message by said recipient to create an instant messaging response sent to said communicatively coupled server;

10 wherein the step receiving said transferred communication is further comprised of the step of:

presenting said received-transferred communication from said first member as content in said area associated with said first member.

15 29. The method of Claim 16,

wherein said server communicatively coupled to said associated client computer used by said user further supports a version of TCP-IP compliant protocols in communication with said user, for at least one of said users.

20 30. The method of Claim 29,

wherein said server communicatively coupled to said associated client computer used by said user further supports at least one member of the collection comprising:

25 a version of Wireless Application Protocol (WAP) compliant protocols in communication with said user;

a version of Bluetooth compliant protocols in communication with said user;

a version of HTTP compliant protocols in communication with said user; and

5 a version of XML compliant protocols in communication with said user.

31. A program system comprised of program steps residing in a memory accessibly coupled to at least one member of the collection comprising said server computer of Claim 16, said associated client computer used by at least
10 one user of Claim 16, wherein said program steps implement at least the steps of the method of Claim 16.

32. A method supporting instant messaging between at least two users and a server communicatively coupled to said user supporting email
15 communications and supporting web browser compliant communications, for each of said users comprising the steps of:

creating an instant messaging session with a universally unique identifier initiated by a first of said users for recipients designated as at least one of the remaining of said users; and

20 providing said instant messaging session identified by said universally unique identifier as a formatted web page to each of said designated recipients and to said first user;

wherein the step creating said instant messaging session further comprising the steps of:

receiving an instant messaging session request from said first user for recipients each designated by an associated email address for said at least one of said remaining users;

5 assigning said universally unique identifier based upon said instant messaging session request; and

sending an instant messaging invitation email message to said associated email address designated for each of said recipients;

wherein the step providing said instant messaging session is further comprised of the steps of:

10 creating said web page referenced based upon said universally unique identifier;

providing said web page with an area associated with said first user for participation;

15 providing said web page with another area associated with said recipient for participation upon response to said instant messaging invitation email message, for each of said recipients; wherein an audience collection is comprised of said first user and each of said recipients responding to said instant messaging invitation email message; and

20 transferring at least one received communication from said associated client computer operated by a first of said members of said audience collection to all of said members of said audience collection to create a transferred communication as content in said area associated with said first member.

25 33. The method of Claim 32,

wherein the step transferring said at least one received communication from said first member is further comprised of the steps of:

receiving at least one communication from said first member of said audience collection to create said at least one received communication;

5 processing said at least one received communication from said first member to create at least one processed communication from said first member; and

10 sending said at least one processed communication from said first member to create said transferred communication as content in said area associated with said first member to all members of said audience collection.

34. The method of Claim 33, further comprised of the step of:

maintaining a database referencing a history of said instant messaging session with said universally unique identifier further comprising the step of

15 maintaining said history of said instant messaging session with said universally unique identifier for said audience collection.

35. The method of Claim 34,

20 wherein the step sending said at least one processed communication from said first member is further comprised of the step of:

sending said processed communication from said first member as content in said area associated with said first member to said history of said instant messaging session with said universally unique identifier;

25 wherein the step maintaining said history is further comprised of the steps of:

receiving said transferred communication from said first member at said history to create a history-received communication from said first member; and

maintaining a communication history comprising a collection of at least one communication record;

wherein each of said communication records is based upon at least one member of the collection comprising said received communication, said processed communication, and said transferred communication.

36. The system of Claim 35,

wherein the program step maintaining said communication history is further comprised of the program steps of:

creating a new communication record containing said first member history-received communication as said communication from said first member; and

adding said new communication record to said communication history.

37. The method of Claim 36,

wherein the step creating said instant messaging session with said universally unique identifier is further comprised of the step of:

sending said database an initiating request for said instant messaging session with said universally unique identifier by said first user for said recipients;

wherein the step maintaining said database is further comprised of the step of:

receiving said initiating request for said instant messaging session with said universally unique identifier by said first user for said recipients at said database; and

5 creating said history of said instant messaging session with said universally unique identifier from said initiating request for said instant messaging session with said universally unique identifier by said first user for said recipients.

38. The method of Claim 37,

10 wherein the step creating said history is further comprised of at least one member of the collection comprising the steps of:

creating an audience list containing references to each member of said audience collection; and

15 creating a first of said communication records in said communication history based upon said initiating request.

39. The method of Claim 32,

20 wherein the step sending said instant messaging invitation email message to said associated email address designated for each of said recipients is further comprised of at least one member of the collection comprising the steps of:

25 sending said instant messaging invitation email message containing a body further including said web page referenced by said universally unique identifier actively embedded in said body to said associated email address designated for at least one of said recipients;

sending said instant messaging invitation email message containing a body further including a link to said web page referenced by a URL based upon said *universally unique identifier* to said associated email address designated for at least one of said recipients; and

5 sending said instant messaging invitation email message containing a body further including an icon referenced by said *universally unique identifier* to said associated email address designated for at least one of said recipients.

10 40. The method of Claim 39, for at least one of said users, further comprising the step of:

 providing support for email communication and for web browser compliant communication used by said user with said communicatively coupled server based upon at least one member of the collection comprising
15 tactile input from said user and acoustic input from said user further comprised of at least one member of the collection comprising the steps of:

 sending said instant messaging session request initiated by said first user for said designated recipients to said communicatively coupled server;
and

20 receiving said instant messaging invitation email message for said user as said recipient from said communicatively coupled server to create a received instant messaging invitation email message;

 wherein the step providing support for email communication and for web browser compliant communication is further comprised of the step of:

25 receiving said transferred communication from said first member to create a received-transferred communication from said first member;

wherein the step receiving said instant messaging invitation email message further comprising at least one member of the collection comprising the steps of:

5 alerting said recipient of said received instant messaging invitation email message employing at least one member of a user output collection including visual output, acoustic output and tactile output; and

using said received instant messaging invitation email message by said recipient to create an instant messaging response sent to said communicatively coupled server;

10 wherein the step receiving said transferred communication is further comprised of the step of:

presenting said received-transferred communication from said first member as content in said area associated with said first member.

15 41. The method of Claim 40,

wherein the step using said received instant messaging invitation email message by said recipient is further comprised of at least one member of the collection comprising the steps of:

20 activating said embedded web page referenced by said universally unique identifier contained in said received instant messaging invitation email message by said recipient to create an instant messaging response sent to said communicatively coupled server;

25 activating said link to said web page referenced by said URL based upon said universally unique identifier contained in said received instant messaging invitation email message by said recipient to create an instant messaging response sent to said communicatively coupled server; and

activating said icon referenced by said universally unique identifier contained in said received instant messaging invitation email message by said recipient to create an instant messaging response sent to said communicatively coupled server.

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42. The method of Claim 38,
wherein said history contains said audience list.

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43. The method of Claim 35,
wherein said history contains said communication history.

44. The method of Claim 34,
wherein said database contains said history.

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45. The method of Claim 33,
wherein said at least one received communication is in a first language;
and
wherein said at least one processed communication is in at least a
second language.

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46. The method of Claim 45,
wherein said at least one processed communication is in at least said
second language and a third language.

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47. The method of Claim 46,

wherein a language collection includes at least a version of English, a version of French, a version of German, a version of Spanish, a version of Swahili, a version of Arabic, a version of Japanese, a version of a Chinese language, a version of Korean, and a version of Hindi;

5 wherein a user language collection includes said first language and said second language and said third language;

 wherein at least one member of said user language collection is a member of said language collection.

10 48. The method of Claim 32, for at least one of said users, further comprising the step of:

 providing support for email communication and for web browser compliant communication used by said user with said communicatively coupled server based upon at least one member of the collection comprising
15 tactile input from said user and acoustic input from said user further comprised of at least one member of the collection comprising the steps of:

 sending said instant messaging session request initiated by said first user for said recipients designated as at least one of said remaining users to said communicatively coupled server; and

20 receiving said instant messaging invitation email message for said user as said recipient from said communicatively coupled server to create a received instant messaging invitation email message;

 wherein the step providing support for email communication and for web browser compliant communication is further comprised of the step of:

25 receiving said transferred communication from said first member to create a received-transferred communication from said first member;

wherein the step receiving said instant messaging invitation email message further comprising at least one member of the collection comprising the steps of:

5 alerting said recipient of said received instant messaging invitation email message employing at least one member of a user output collection including visual output, acoustic output and tactile output; and

using said received instant messaging invitation email message by said recipient to create an instant messaging response sent to said communicatively coupled server;

10 wherein the step receiving said transferred communication is further comprised of the step of:

presenting said received-transferred communication from said first member as content in said area associated with said first member.

15 49. The method of Claim 32,

wherein said server communicatively coupled to said associated client computer used by said user further supports a version of TCP-IP compliant protocols in communication with said user, for at least one of said users.

20 50. The method of Claim 49,

wherein said server communicatively coupled to said associated client computer used by said user further supports at least one member of the collection comprising:

25 a version of Wireless Application Protocol (WAP) compliant protocols in communication with said user;

a version of Bluetooth compliant protocols in communication with said user;

a version of HTTP compliant protocols in communication with said user; and

5 a version of XML compliant protocols in communication with said user.

51. A program system comprised of program steps residing in a memory accessibly coupled to at least one member of the collection comprising said server computer of Claim 32, said associated client computer used by at least
10 one user of Claim 32, wherein said program steps implement at least the steps of the method of Claim 32.

52. A system supporting instant messaging between at least two users comprising:

15 a server communicatively coupled to an associated client computer used by said user supporting email communications and supporting web browser compliant communications, for each of said users;

wherein said server is comprised of at least one server computer accessibly coupled with a memory;

20 wherein said server is operated by a server program system comprised of program steps residing in said memory and executed by said server computer;

wherein said server program system is further comprised of the program steps of:

creating an instant messaging session with a universally unique identifier initiated by a first of said users for recipients designated as at least one of the remaining of said users; and

5 providing said instant messaging session identified by said universally unique identifier as a formatted web page to each of said designated recipients and to said first user;

wherein the program step creating said instant messaging session further comprising the program steps of:

10 receiving an instant messaging session request from said first user for recipients each designated by an associated email address for said at least one of said remaining users;

assigning said universally unique identifier based upon said instant messaging session request; and

15 sending an instant messaging invitation email message to said associated email address designated for each of said recipients;

wherein the program step providing said instant messaging session is further comprised of the program steps of:

creating said web page referenced based upon said universally unique identifier;

20 providing said web page with an area associated with said first user for participation;

25 providing said web page with another area associated with said recipient for participation upon response to said instant messaging invitation email message, for each of said recipients; wherein an audience collection is comprised of said first user and each of said recipients responding to said instant messaging invitation email message; and

transferring at least one received communication from said associated client computer operated by a first of said members of said audience collection to all of said members of said audience collection to create a transferred communication as content in said area associated with said first member.

53. The system of Claim 52,

wherein the program step transferring said at least one received communication from said first member is further comprised of the program steps of:

receiving at least one communication from said first member of said audience collection to create said at least one received communication;

processing said at least one received communication from said first member to create at least one processed communication from said first member; and

sending said at least one processed communication from said first member to create said transferred communication as content in said area associated with said first member to all members of said audience collection.

54. The system of Claim 53,

wherein said server program system is further comprised of the program step of:

maintaining a database referencing a history of said instant messaging session with said universally unique identifier further comprising the program step of

maintaining said history of said instant messaging session with said universally unique identifier for said audience collection.

55. The system of Claim 54,

5 wherein the program step sending said at least one processed communication from said first member is further comprised of the program step of:

10 sending said processed communication from said first member as content in said area associated with said first member to said history of said instant messaging session with said universally unique identifier;

wherein the program step maintaining said history is further comprised of the program steps of:

15 receiving said transferred communication from said first member at said history to create a history-received communication from said first member; and

maintaining a communication history comprising a collection of at least one communication record;

20 wherein each of said communication records is based upon at least one member of the collection comprising said received communication, said processed communication, and said transferred communication.

56. The system of Claim 55,

wherein the program step maintaining said communication history is further comprised of the program steps of:

creating a new communication record containing said first member history-received communication as said communication from said first member; and

adding said new communication record to said communication history.

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57. The system of Claim 56,

wherein the program step creating said instant messaging session with said universally unique identifier is further comprised of the program step of:

10 sending said database an initiating request for said instant messaging session with said universally unique identifier by said first user for said recipients;

wherein the program step maintaining said database is further comprised of the program step of:

15 receiving said initiating request for said instant messaging session with said universally unique identifier by said first user for said recipients at said database; and

20 creating said history of said instant messaging session with said universally unique identifier from said initiating request for said instant messaging session with said universally unique identifier by said first user for said recipients.

58. The system of Claim 57,

wherein the program step creating said history is further comprised of at least one member of the collection comprising the program steps of:

25 creating an audience list containing references to each member of said audience collection; and

creating a first of said communication records in said communication history based upon said initiating request.

59. The system of Claim 52,

5 wherein the program step sending said instant messaging invitation email message to said associated email address designated for each of said recipients is further comprised of at least one member of the collection comprising the program steps of:

10 sending said instant messaging invitation email message containing a body further including said web page referenced by said universally unique identifier actively embedded in said body to said associated email address designated for at least one of said recipients;

15 sending said instant messaging invitation email message containing a body further including a link to said web page referenced by a URL based upon said universally unique identifier to said associated email address designated for at least one of said recipients; and

20 sending said instant messaging invitation email message containing a body further including an icon referenced by said universally unique identifier to said associated email address designated for at least one of said recipients.

60. The system of Claim 59,

wherein said associated client computer used by said user, for at least one of said users, comprised of:

25 a client memory accessibly coupled with said associated client computer; and

a client program system comprised of program steps residing in said accessibly coupled client memory;

wherein said associated client computer is controlled by said client program system based upon use by said user and based upon said
5 communicatively coupled said server;

wherein said client program system is further comprised of the program step of:

providing support for email communication and for web browser compliant communication used by said user with said communicatively
10 coupled server based upon at least one member of the collection comprising tactile input from said user and acoustic input from said user further comprised of at least one member of the collection comprising the program steps of:

sending said instant messaging session request initiated by said first
15 user for said designated recipients to said communicatively coupled server;
and

receiving said instant messaging invitation email message for said user as said recipient from said communicatively coupled server to create a received instant messaging invitation email message;

20 wherein the program step providing support for email communication and for web browser compliant communication is further comprised of the program step of:

receiving said transferred communication from said first member to create a received-transferred communication from said first member;

wherein the program step receiving said instant messaging invitation email message further comprising at least one member of the collection comprising the program steps of:

5 alerting said recipient of said received instant messaging invitation email message employing at least one member of a user output collection including visual output, acoustic output and tactile output; and

using said received instant messaging invitation email message by said recipient to create an instant messaging response sent to said communicatively coupled server;

10 wherein the program step receiving said transferred communication is further comprised of the program step of:

presenting said received-transferred communication from said first member as content in said area associated with said first member.

15 61. The system of Claim 60,

wherein the program step using said received instant messaging invitation email message by said recipient is further comprised of at least one member of the collection comprising the program steps of:

20 activating said embedded web page referenced by said universally unique identifier contained in said received instant messaging invitation email message by said recipient to create an instant messaging response sent to said communicatively coupled server;

25 activating said link to said web page referenced by said URL based upon said universally unique identifier contained in said received instant messaging invitation email message by said recipient to create an instant messaging response sent to said communicatively coupled server; and

activating said icon referenced by said universally unique identifier contained in said received instant messaging invitation email message by said recipient to create an instant messaging response sent to said communicatively coupled server.

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62. The system of Claim 58,
wherein said history contains said audience list.

63. The system of Claim 55,
10 wherein said history contains said communication history.

64. The system of Claim 54,
wherein said database contains said history.

15 65. The system of Claim 53,
wherein said at least one received communication is in a first language;
and
wherein said at least one processed communication is in at least a
second language.

20

66. The system of Claim 65,
wherein said at least one processed communication is in at least said
second language and a third language.

25 67. The system of Claim 66,

wherein a language collection includes at least a version of English, a version of French, a version of German, a version of Spanish, a version of Swahili, a version of Arabic, a version of Japanese, a version of a Chinese language, a version of Korean, and a version of Hindi;

5 wherein a user language collection includes said first language and said second language and said third language;

 wherein at least one member of said user language collection is a member of said language collection.

10 68. The system of Claim 52,

 wherein said associated client computer used by said user, for at least one of said users, comprised of:

 a client memory accessibly coupled with said associated client computer; and

15 a client program system comprised of program steps residing in said accessibly coupled client memory;

 wherein said associated client computer is controlled by said client program system based upon use by said user and based upon said communicatively coupled said server;

20 wherein said client program system is further comprised of the program step of:

 providing support for email communication and for web browser compliant communication used by said user with said communicatively coupled server based upon at least one member of the collection comprising

25 tactile input from said user and acoustic input from said user further

comprised of at least one member of the collection comprising the program steps of:

5 sending said instant messaging session request initiated by said first user for said recipients designated as at least one of said remaining users to said communicatively coupled server; and

receiving said instant messaging invitation email message for said user as said recipient from said communicatively coupled server to create a received instant messaging invitation email message;

10 wherein the program step providing support for email communication and for web browser compliant communication is further comprised of the program step of:

receiving said transferred communication from said first member to create a received-transferred communication from said first member;

15 wherein the program step receiving said instant messaging invitation email message further comprising at least one member of the collection comprising the program steps of:

alerting said recipient of said received instant messaging invitation email message employing at least one member of a user output collection including visual output, acoustic output and tactile output; and

20 using said received instant messaging invitation email message by said recipient to create an instant messaging response sent to said communicatively coupled server;

wherein the program step receiving said transferred communication is further comprised of the program step of:

25 presenting said received-transferred communication from said first member as content in said area associated with said first member.

69. The system of Claim 52,
wherein said server communicatively coupled to said associated client
computer used by said user further supports a version of TCP-IP compliant
5 protocols in communication with said user, for at least one of said users.

70. The system of Claim 69,
wherein said server communicatively coupled to said associated client
computer used by said user further supports at least one member of the
10 collection comprising:

a version of Wireless Application Protocol (WAP) compliant protocols in
communication with said user;

a version of Bluetooth compliant protocols in communication with said
user;

15 a version of HTTP compliant protocols in communication with said
user; and

a version of XML compliant protocols in communication with said user.

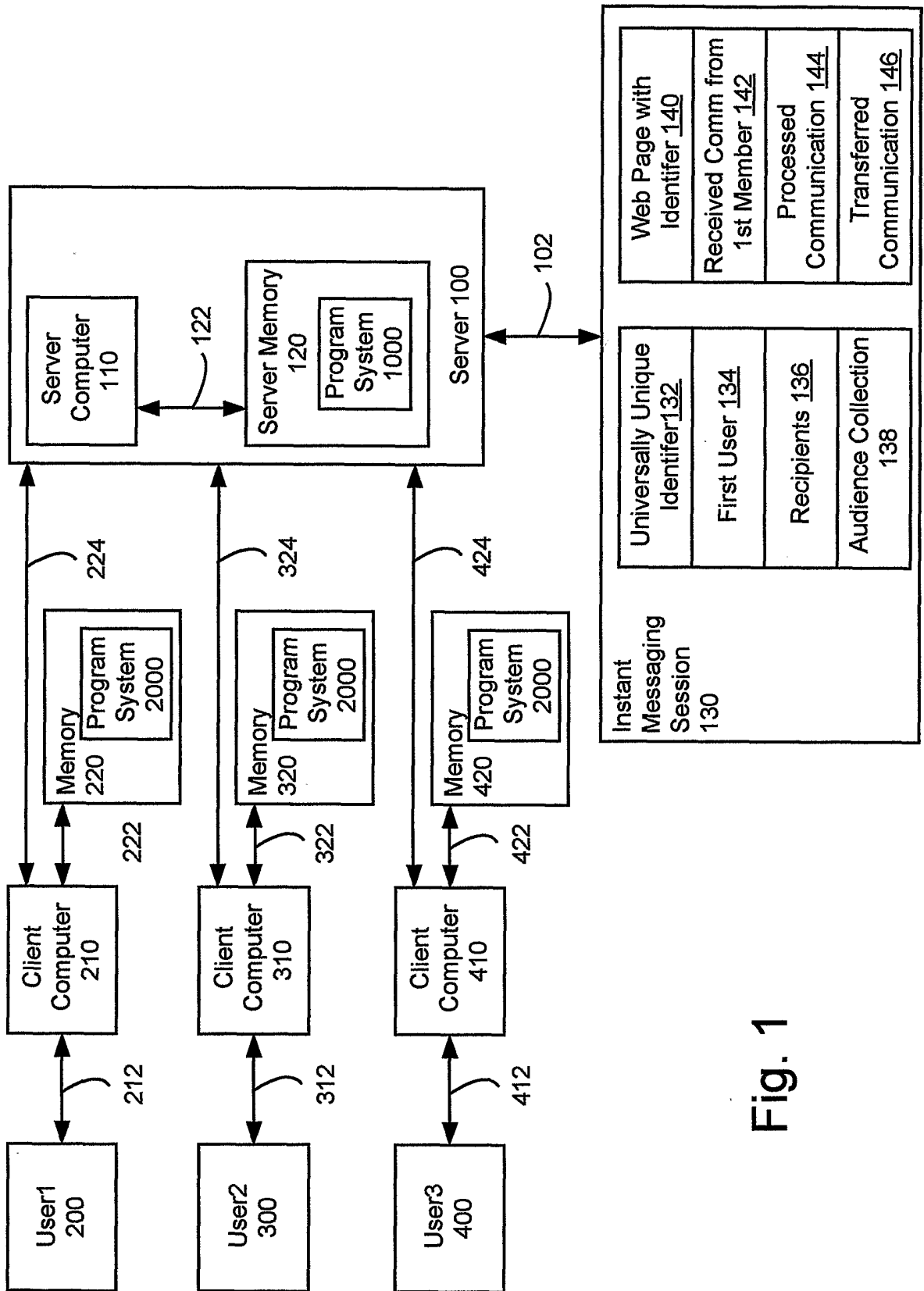


Fig. 1

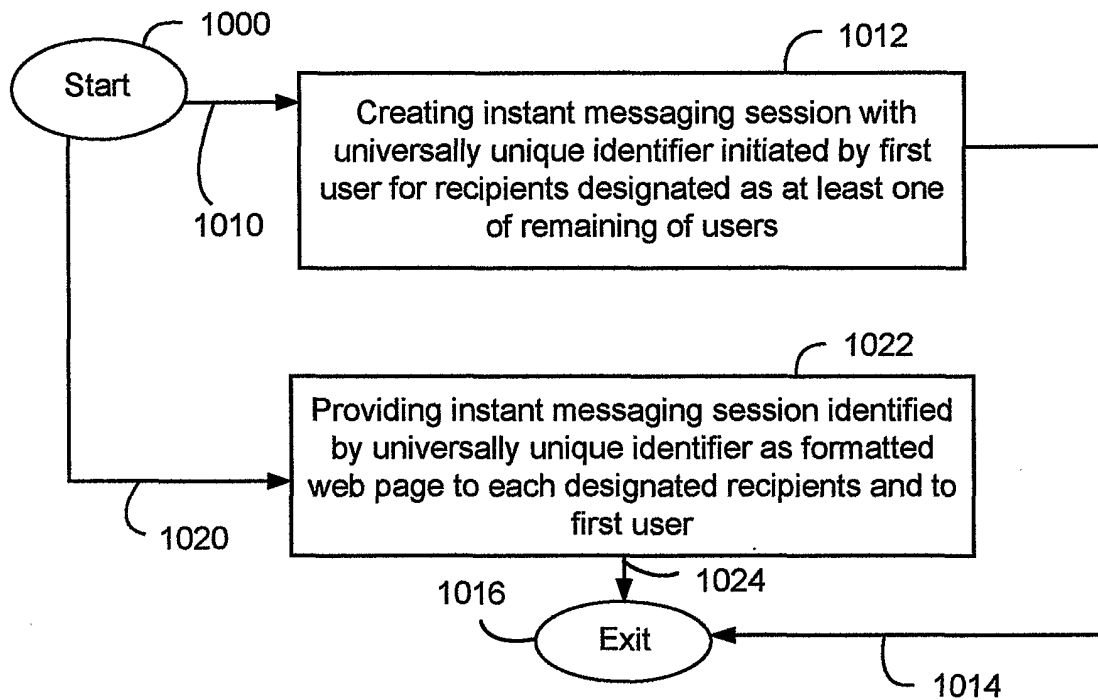


Fig. 2A

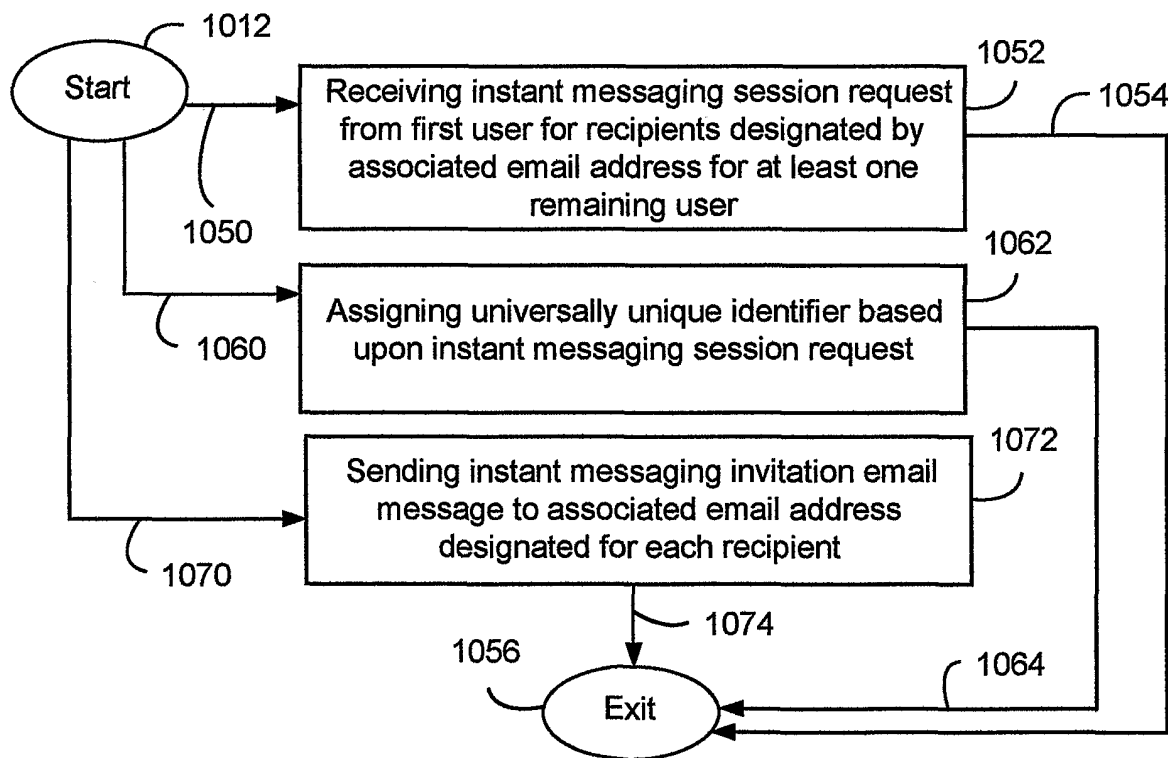


Fig. 2B

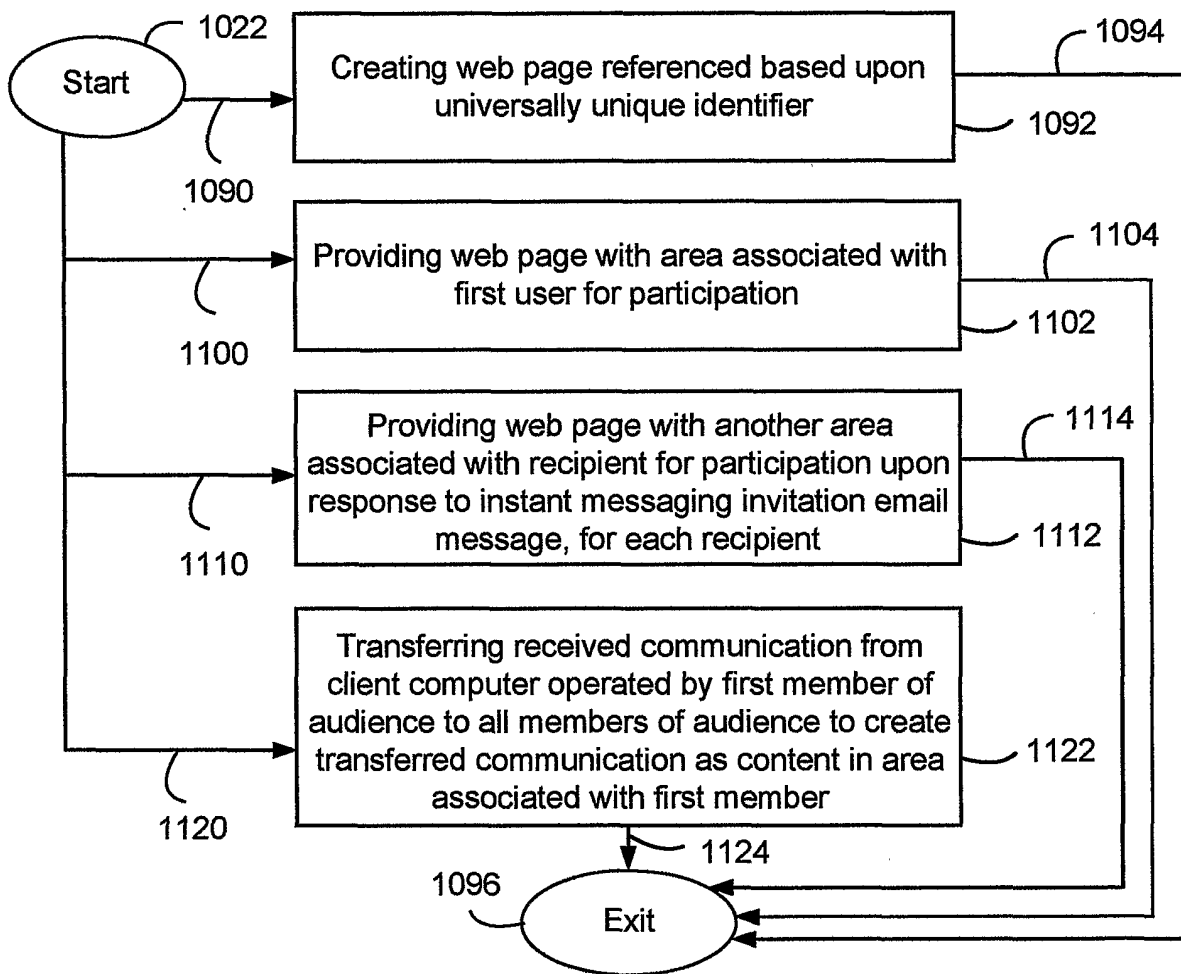


Fig. 3

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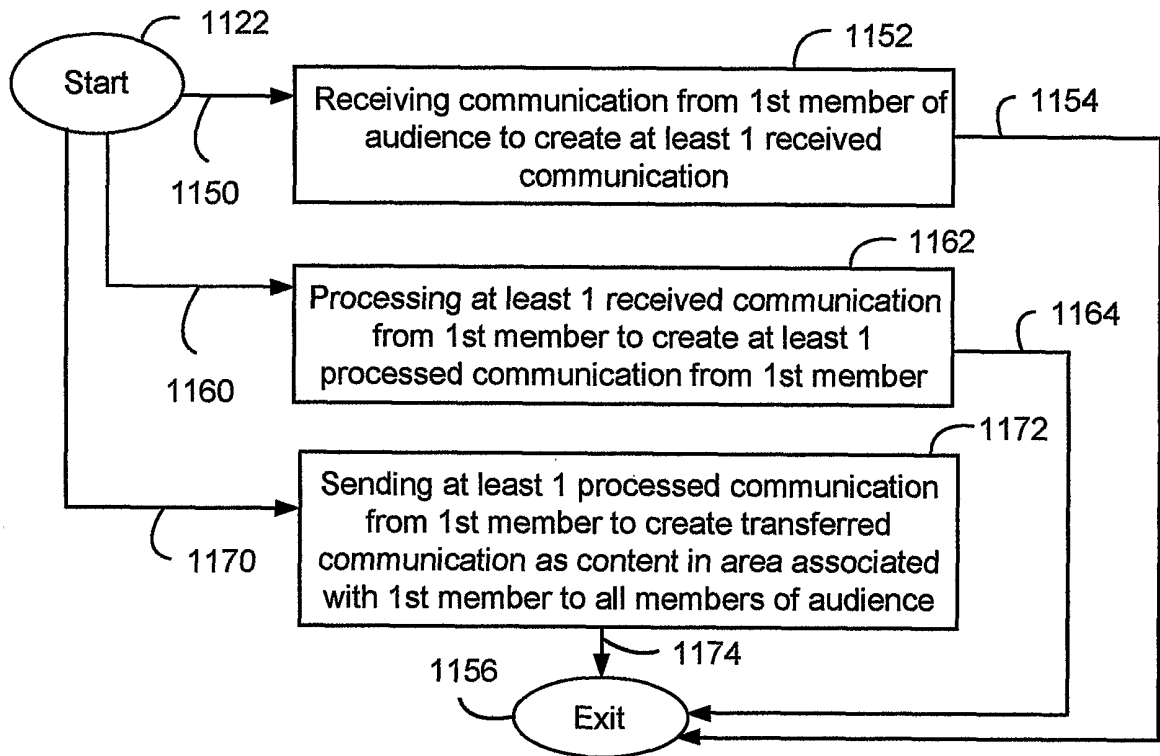


Fig. 4A

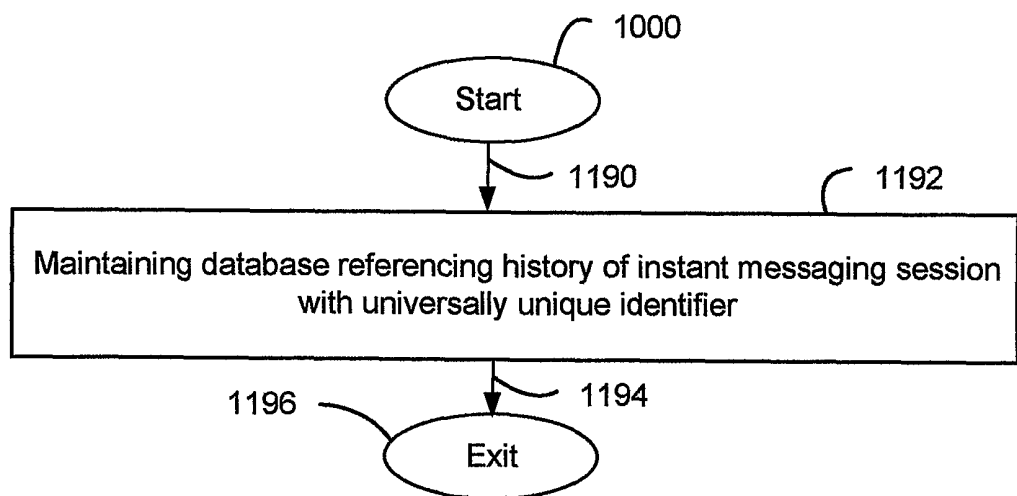


Fig. 4B

5/13

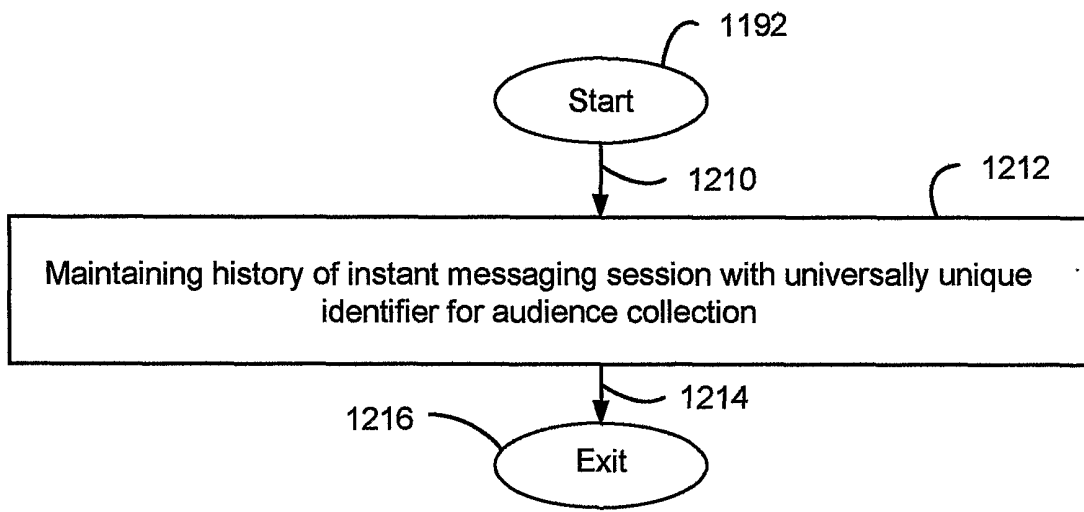


Fig. 5A

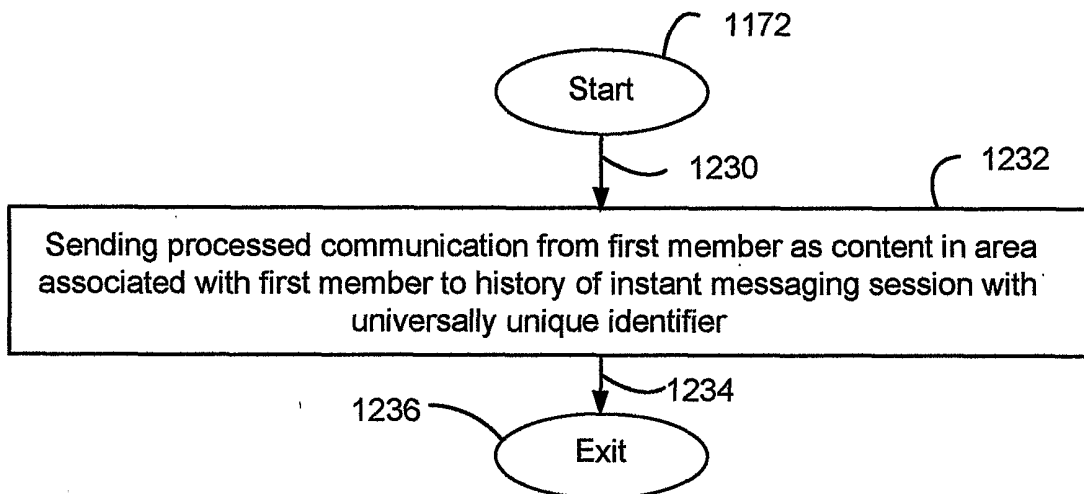


Fig. 5B

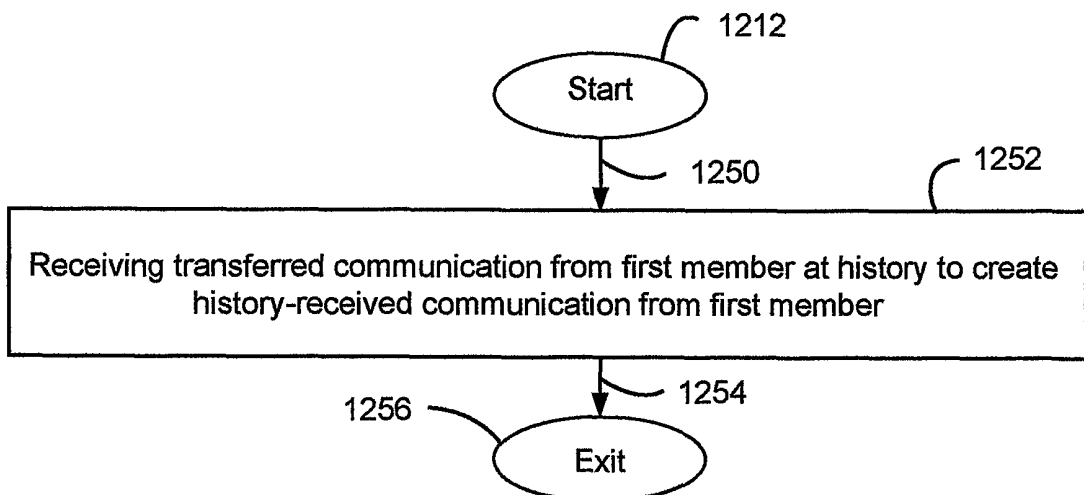


Fig. 5C

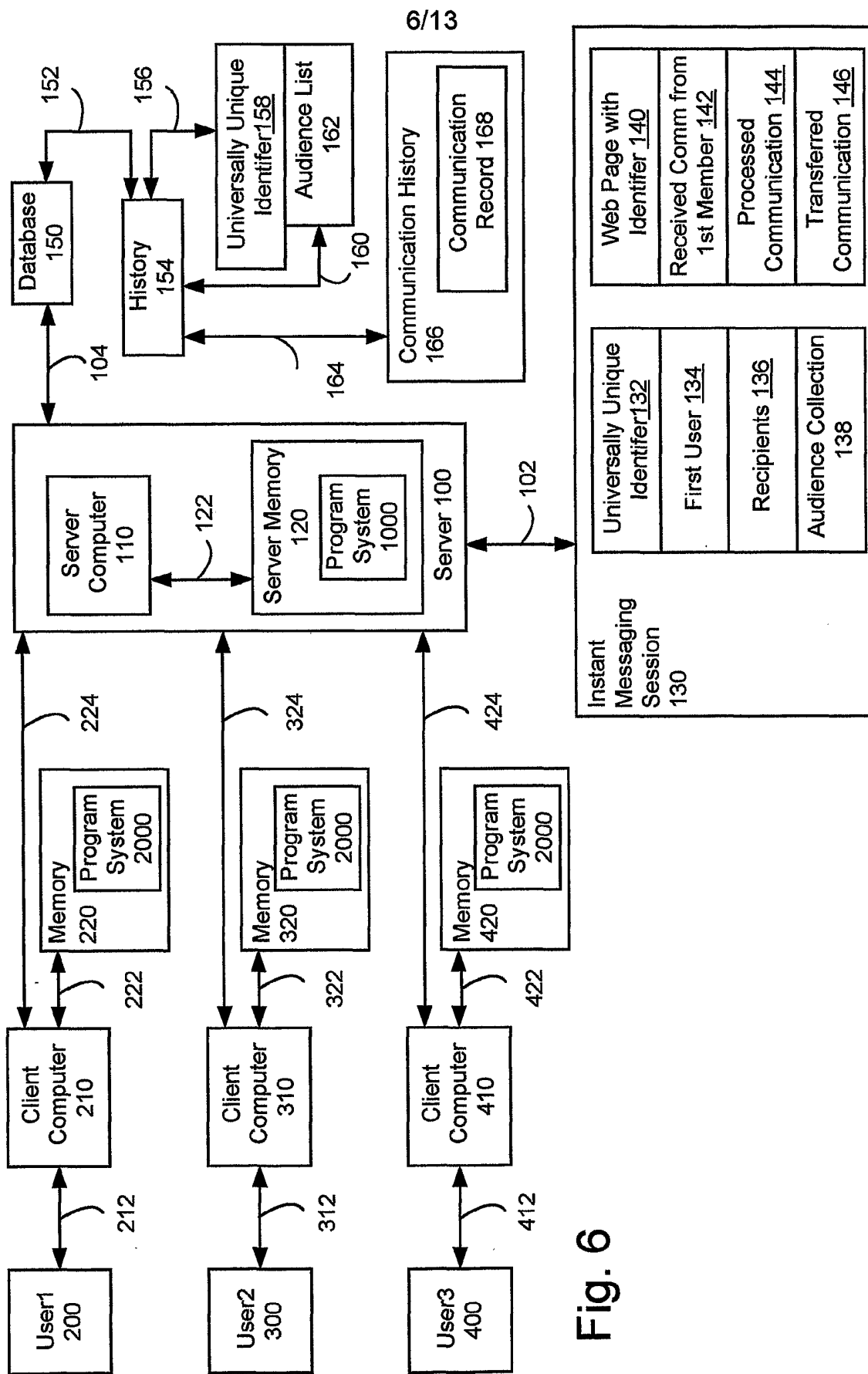


Fig. 6

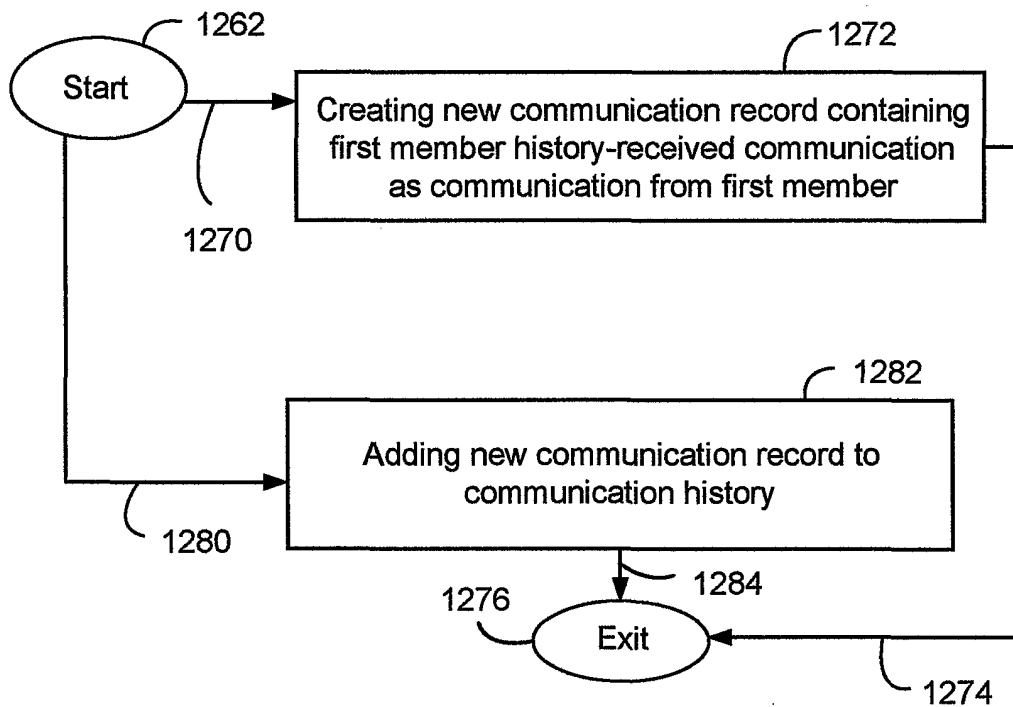


Fig. 7A

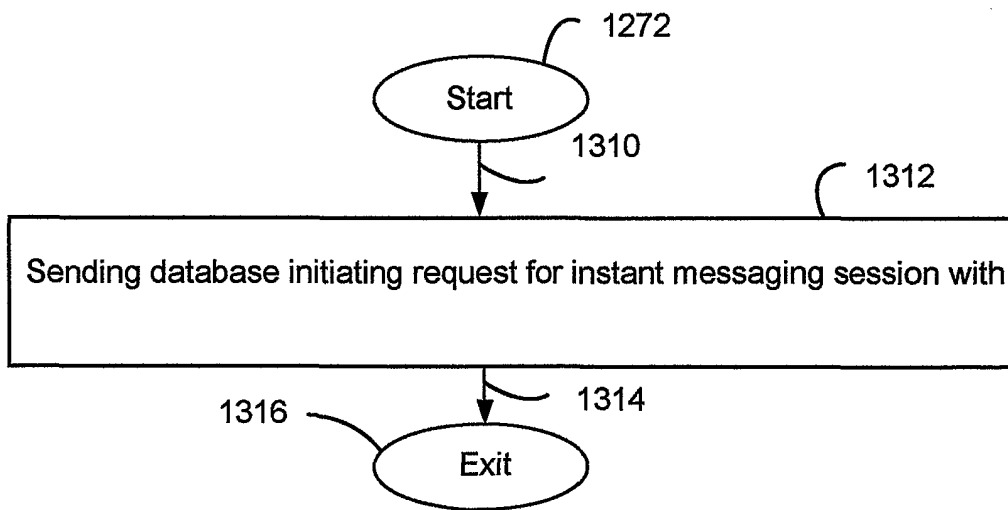


Fig. 7B

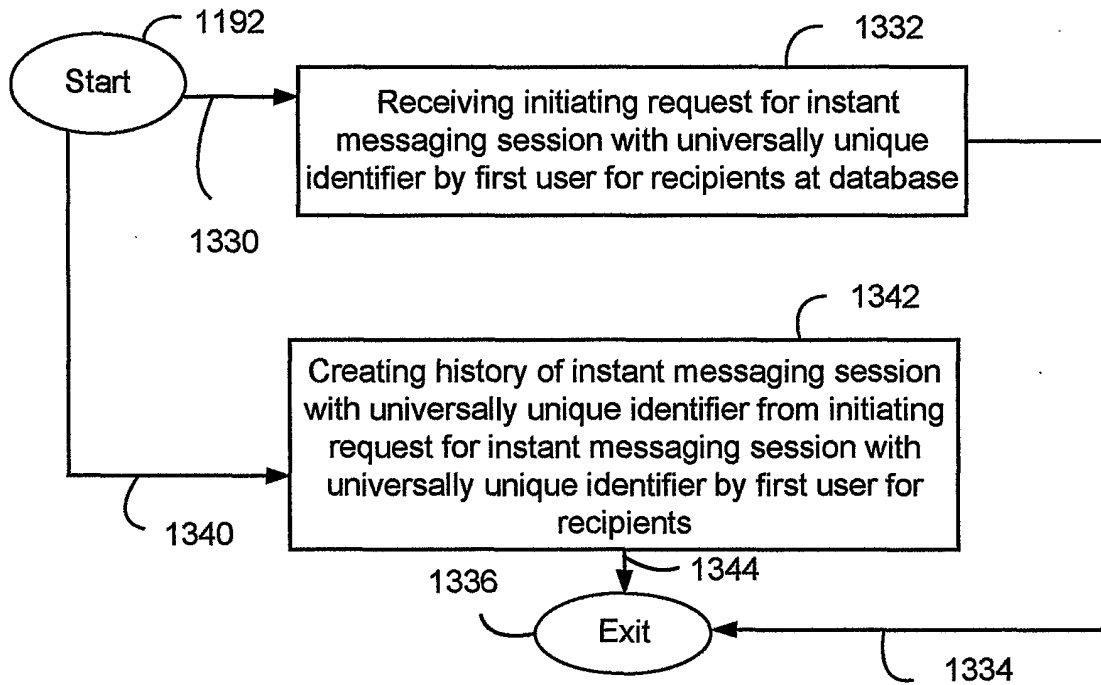


Fig. 8A

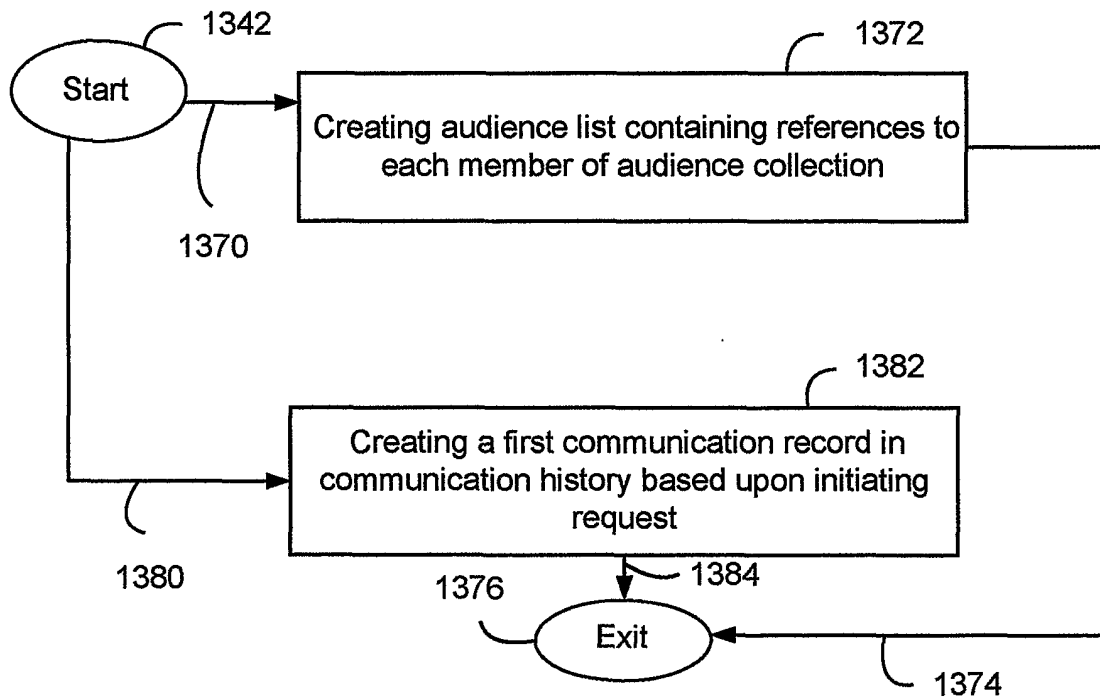


Fig. 8B

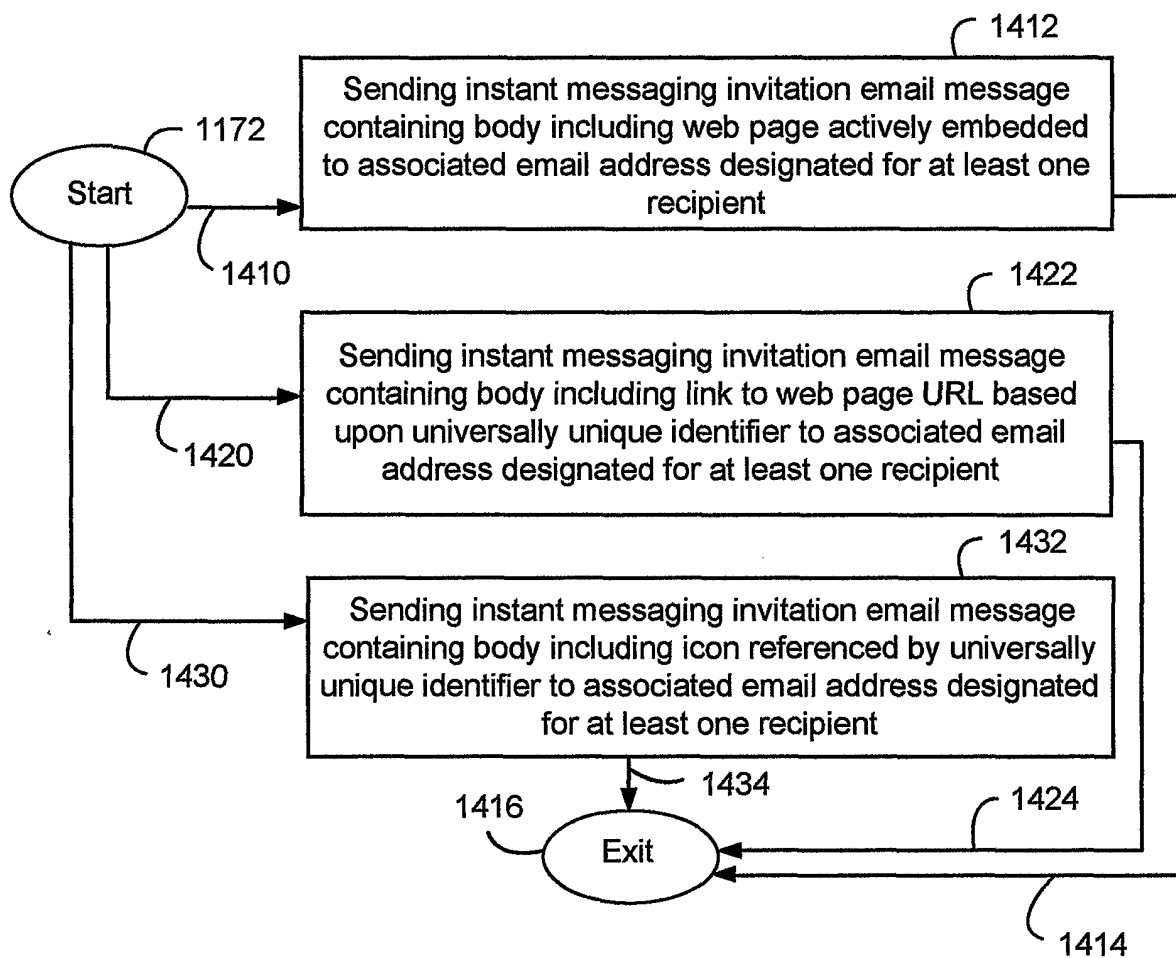
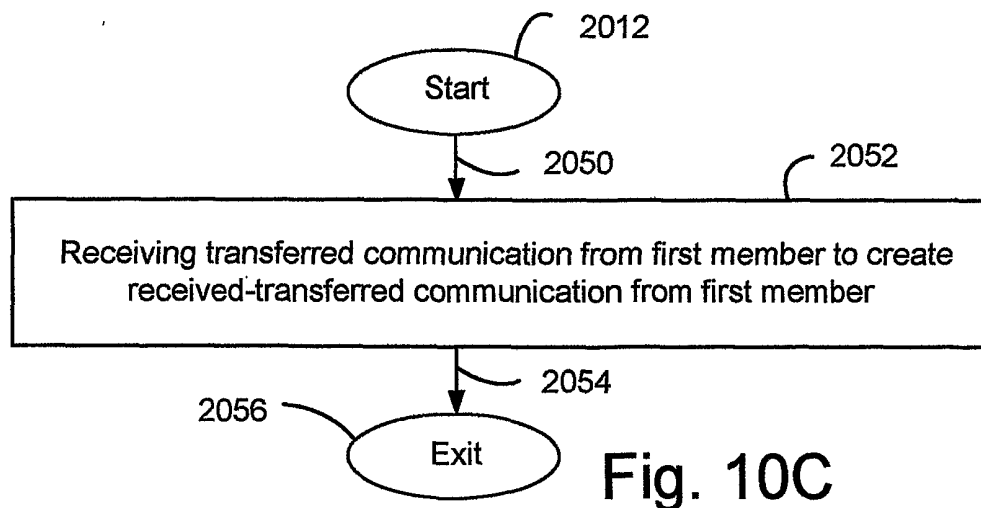
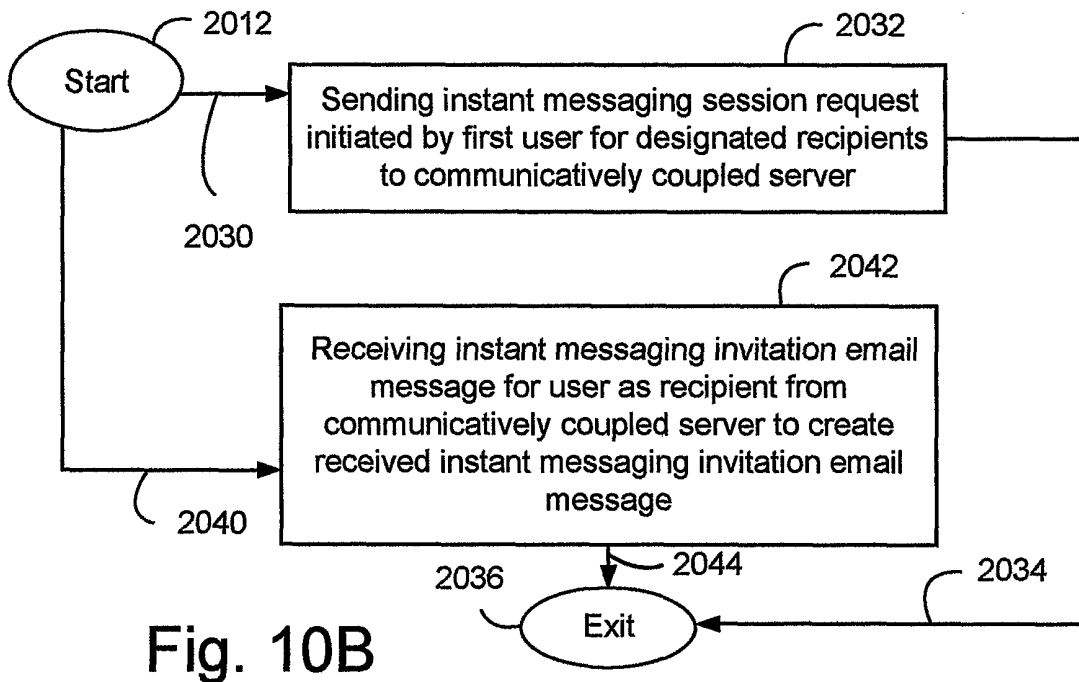
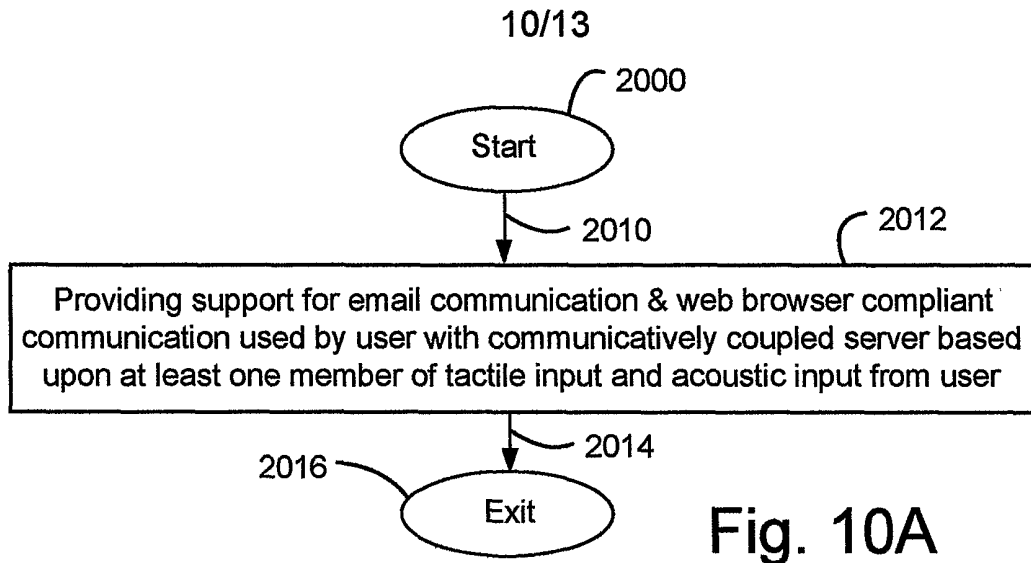


Fig. 9



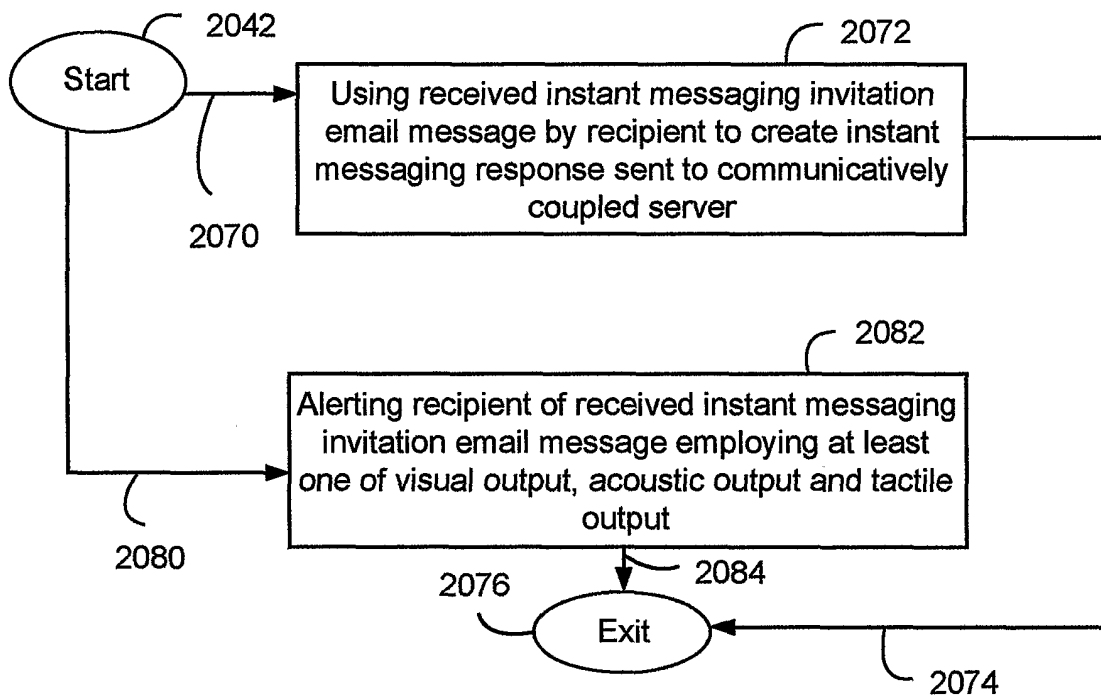


Fig. 11A

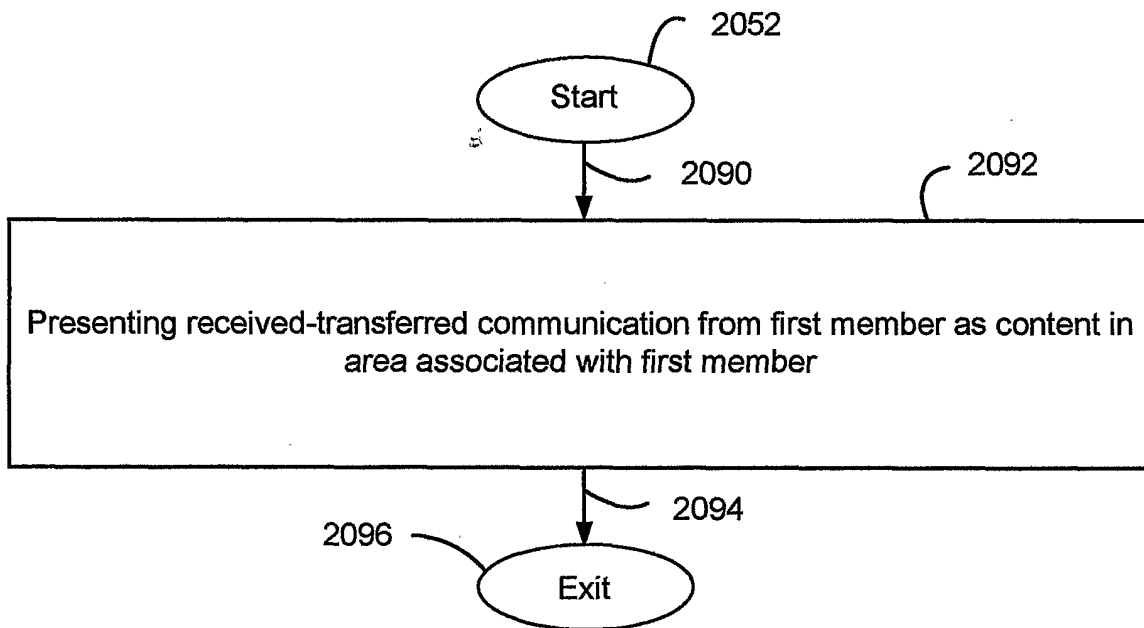


Fig. 11B

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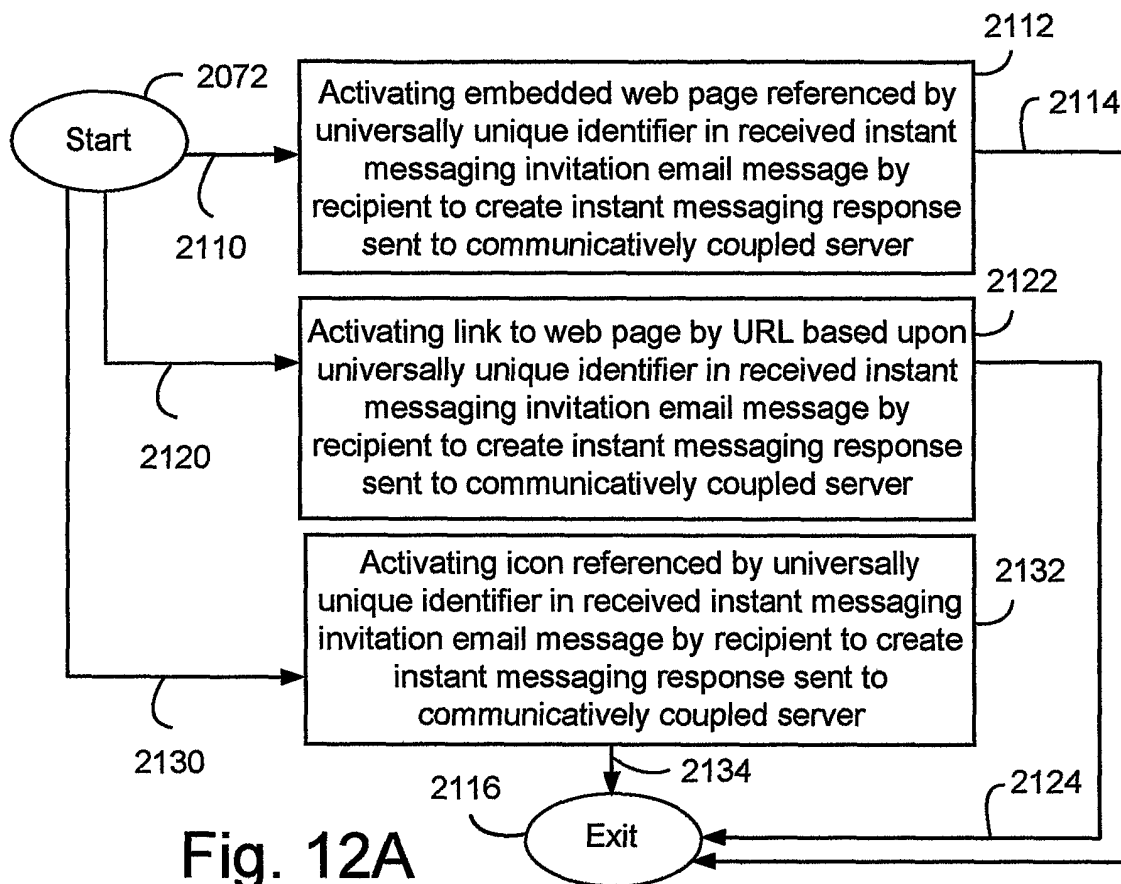


Fig. 12A

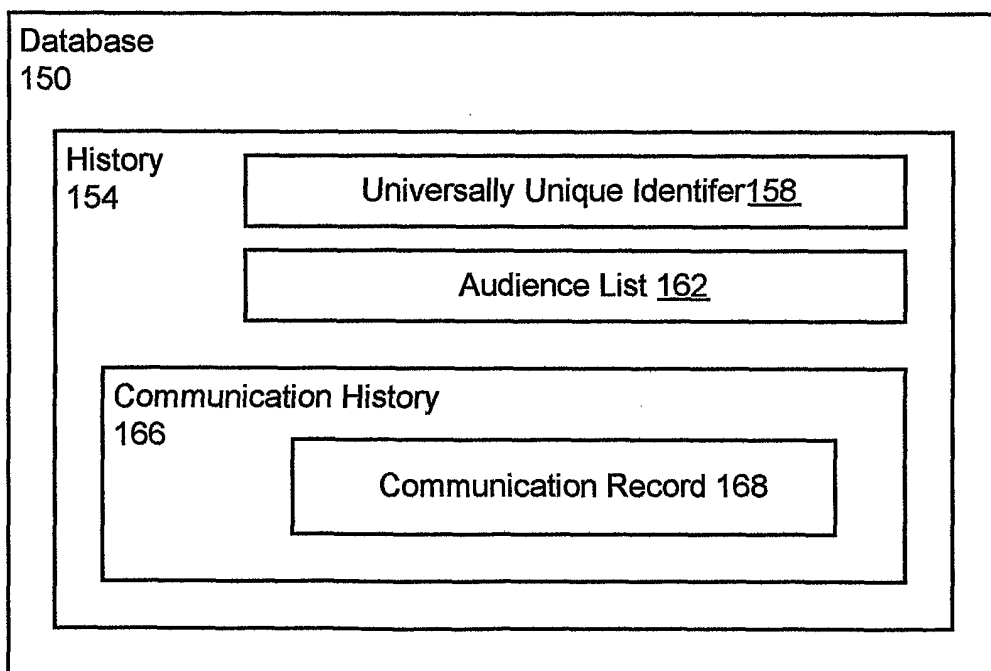


Fig. 12B

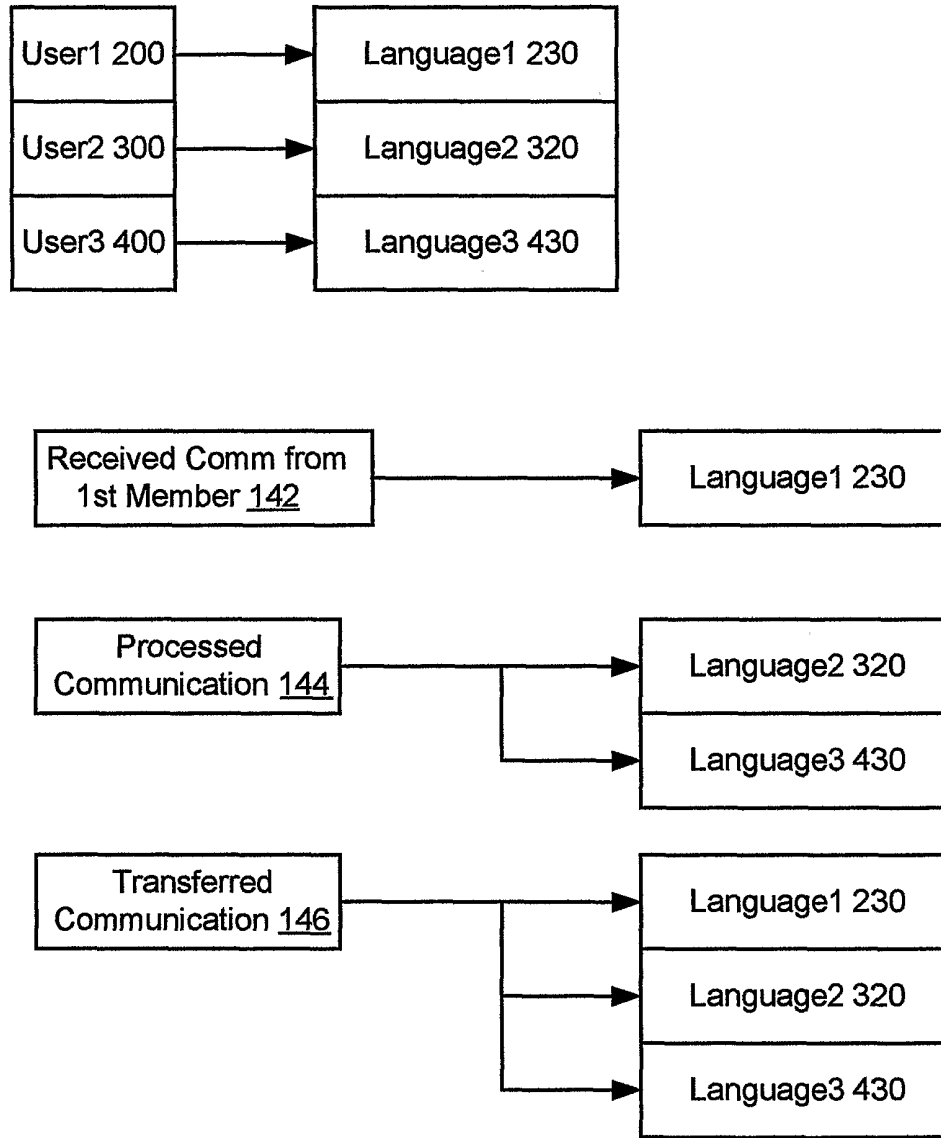


Fig. 13