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Spector

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(54) **NETWORK FOR TARGETING INDIVIDUAL OPERATING A MICROCOMPUTER REGARDLESS OF HIS LOCATION**

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See application file for complete search history.

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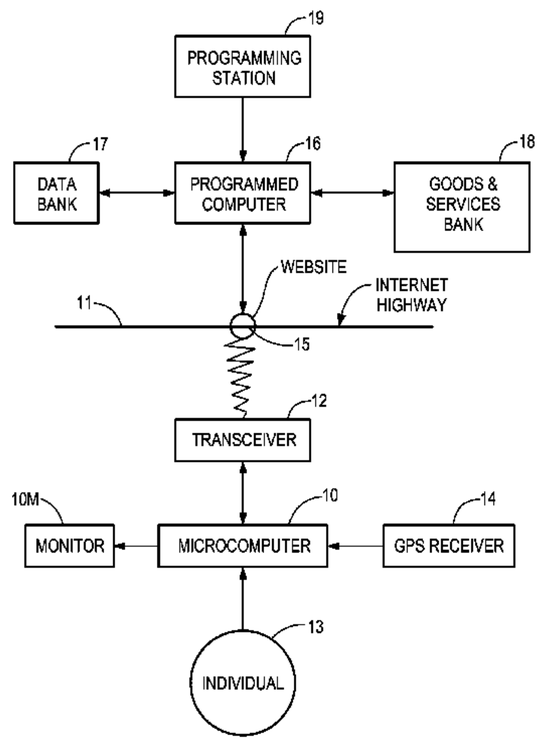
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A network targets an individual operating a microcomputer that is linked to an Internet to offer this individual goods or services appropriate to his needs that are available at a place within reach of the individual's present location. The microcomputer is provided with a GPS receiver that indicates the present location of the individual, this location and the identity of the individual being transmitted from the microcomputer to a web site. At the web site, a computer associated with a data bank storing the profiles of a multitude of consumers is programmed to find out whether the identified individual is included in the data bank, and to determine from his profile whether there are available at a place reachable from his present location appropriate goods or services. If a match is found, an offer to supply such goods or services is conveyed from the web site to the microcomputer.

17 Claims, 3 Drawing Sheets



Related U.S. Application Data

continuation of application No. 11/199,433, filed on Aug. 8, 2005, now Pat. No. 7,539,742, which is a continuation-in-part of application No. 09/384,154, filed on Aug. 27, 1999, now Pat. No. 6,970,922.

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H04W 4/02	(2009.01)
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(52) **U.S. Cl.**

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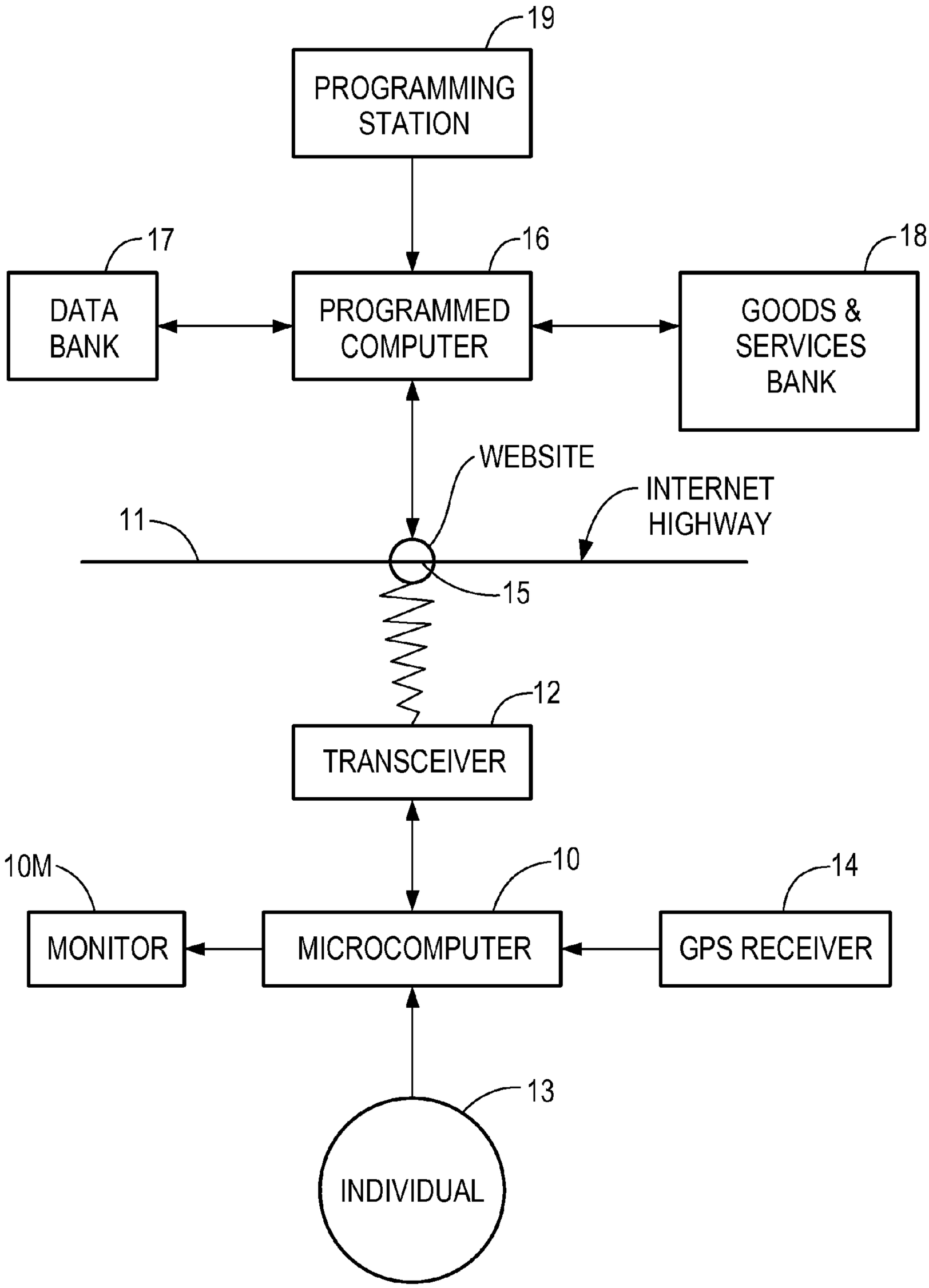
19
PROGRAMMING STATION
17
16
18
DATA BANK
PROGRAMMED COMPUTER
GOODS & SERVICES BANK
WEBSITE
INTERNET HIGHWAY
11
15
12
TRANSCEIVER
10M
10
14
MONITOR
MICROCOMPUTER
GPS RECEIVER
13
INDIVIDUAL

FIG. 1

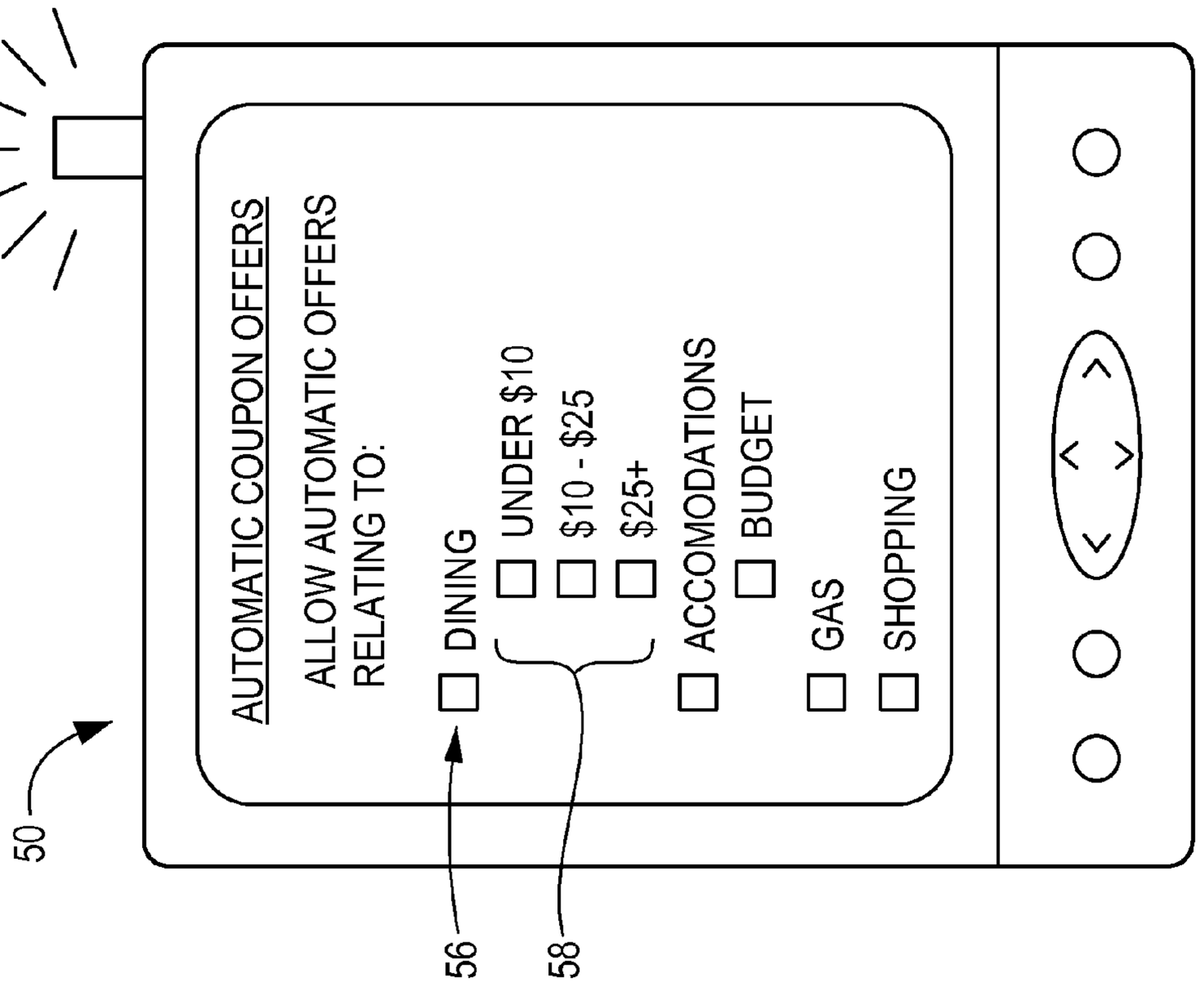
50
AUTOMATIC COUPON OFFERS
ALLOW AUTOMATIC OFFERS RELATING TO:
DINING
UNDER $10
$10 - $25
$25+
ACCOMODATIONS
BUDGET
GAS
SHOPPING
56
58

FIG. 3

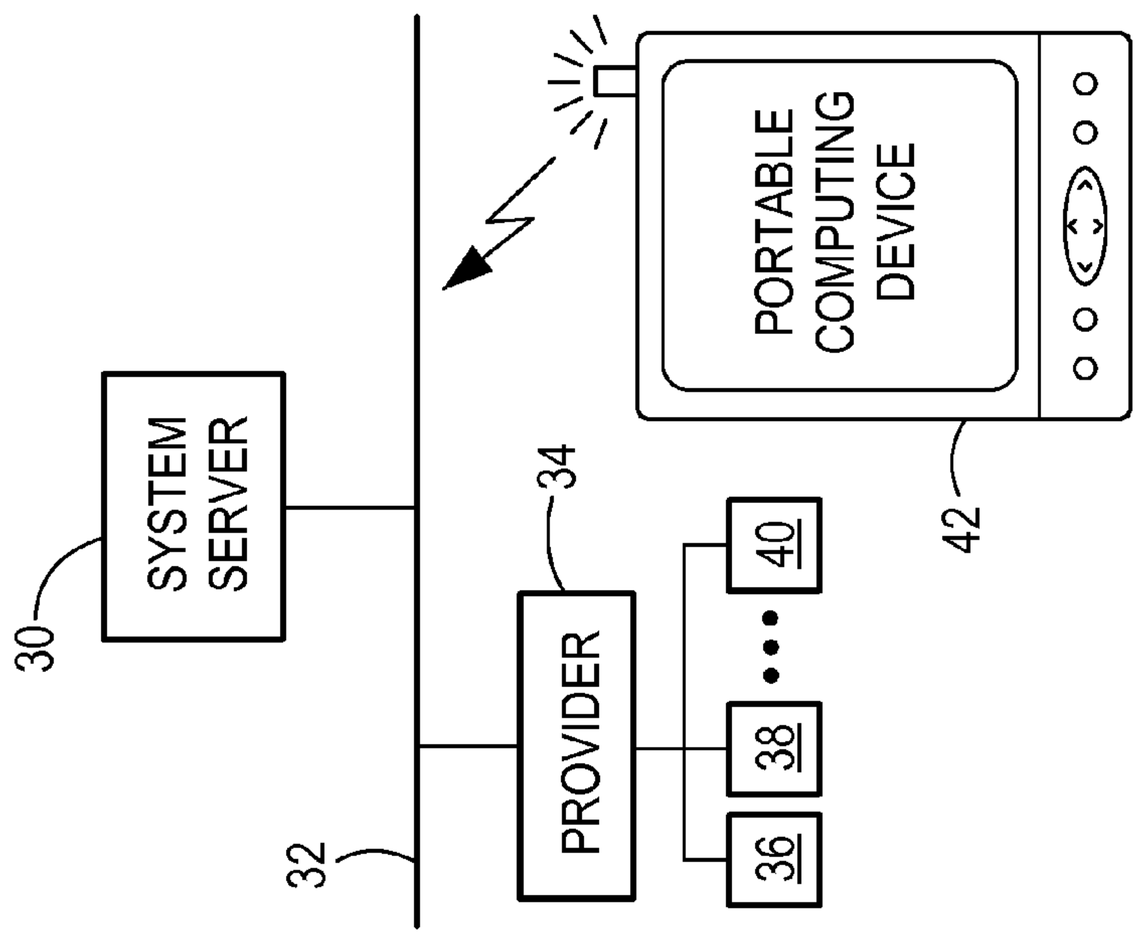
SYSTEM SERVER
30
32
PROVIDER
34
36
38
40
PORTABLE COMPUTING DEVICE
42

FIG. 2

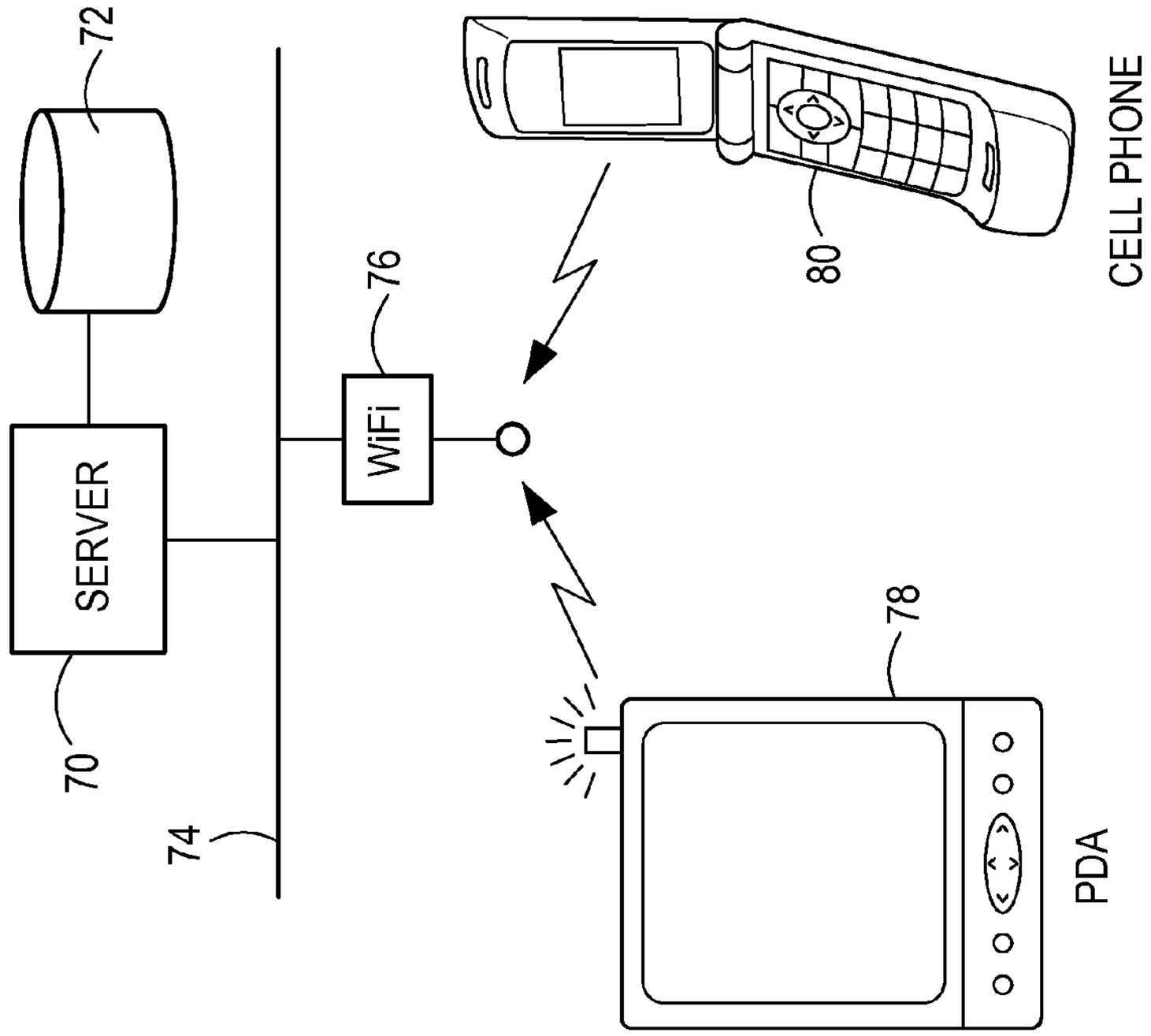
72
SERVER
70
74
76
WiFi
80
CELL PHONE
78
PDA

FIG. 5

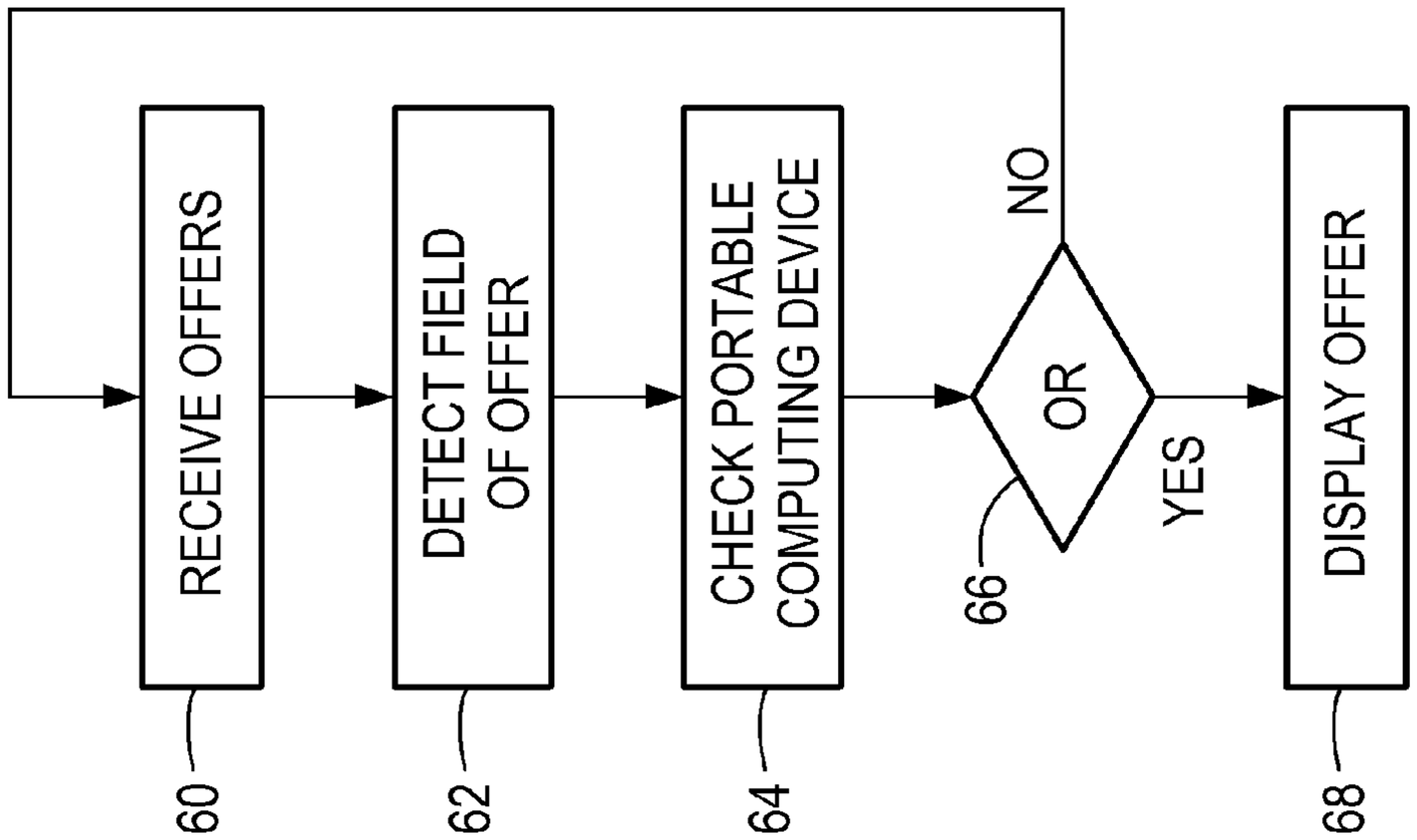
RECEIVE OFFERS
60
DETECT FIELD OF OFFER
62
CHECK PORTABLE COMPUTING DEVICE
64
OR
66
NO
YES
DISPLAY OFFER
68

FIG. 4

NETWORK FOR TARGETING INDIVIDUAL OPERATING A MICROCOMPUTER REGARDLESS OF HIS LOCATION

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/941,425, titled "Network for Targeting Individual Operating a Microcomputer Regardless of His Location," filed Nov. 8, 2010, which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/470,700, titled "Network for Targeting Individual Operating a Microcomputer Regardless of His Location," filed on May 22, 2009, now U.S. Pat. No. 7,870,229, which in turn is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/199,433, titled "Network for Targeting Individual Operating a Microcomputer Regardless of His Location," filed on Aug. 8, 2005, now U.S. Pat. No. 7,539,742, which in turn is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/384,154, titled "Network for Targeting Individual Operating a Microcomputer Regardless of His Location," filed Aug. 27, 1999, now U.S. Pat. No. 6,970,922, the entire contents of each of which are hereby incorporated herein by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates generally to a network in which a microcomputer is microwave linked to an Internet highway, and more particularly to a network of this type adapted to target the individual operating the microcomputer in order to offer to supply him with goods or services that are available at a place within range of the individual's present location.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The Internet is a world-wide information highway interlinking millions of computer terminals, each having many users. Associated with Internet are various commercially-operated on-line services, such as Prodigy, CompuServe and Online One important use to which internet is put is the retrieval of information from electronic libraries and other data bases, thereby giving each terminal access to a vast treasury of information.

The term lap-top computer originally referred to a microcomputer small enough to be used on a person's lap. But this term is currently applicable to any self sufficient, portable computer that can be carried to any desired site and operated at that site.

It is now known to microwave-link a lap-top computer to an Internet highway in a manner similar to that by which a cellular radiotelephone is coupled to a telephone system. When, therefore, a lap-top computer is linked by a microwave transceiver to an Internet highway it then has access to the same data bases that are accessible to standard computer terminals that are effectively wired into this highway.

In a network in accordance with the invention, a laptop or portable computer that is microwave-linked to an Internet highway is provided with a GPS receiver that determines the exact present location of the individual operating the microcomputer. Thus if the individual is operating the microcomputer at Niagara Falls in Buffalo, N.Y., or at the corner of 5th Avenue and 42nd Street, in New York City, the GPS receiver will so indicate.

GPS refers to a global positioning system formed by a constellation of 24 satellites which orbit the Earth twice a day and continuously broadcast high-frequency radio signals.

These signals contain position and time data enabling a GPS ground receiver to determine the location of the receiver anywhere on Earth.

Each point on Earth can be identified by a specific address which represents the exact spot where a horizontal line (latitude) intersects a vertical line (longitude). The basis for GPS technology is precise timing and position information, each satellite broadcasting its time and particular position.

Data bases are now available that have been developed and are maintained by market research agencies. These bases contain the profiles of a multitude of consumers for various types of goods and services. Each profile usually affords a dossier of the individual, giving his age, marital status, credit rating, preferences in food, music and art, taste in clothing and whatever other information is gained in the course of market research.

Thus by scanning a data base containing the profiles of consumers in a certain age bracket living in a given region, one can extract from this data base those consumers in that region who are potential customers for, say an expensive high-fidelity radio, or for a medium-priced automobile. Armed with this information, an advertiser can focus his mailings to those individuals who are the most likely prospects for the advertised products or services.

SUMMARY OF EMBODIMENTS

In view of the foregoing, the main object of this invention is to provide a network adapted to target an individual operating a lap-top computer that is microwave-linked to an Internet highway.

More particularly, the object of this invention is to provide a network of the above type that serves to offer the targeted individual goods or services that are appropriate to his needs and are available at a place within easy reach of his present location.

Also an object of this invention is to provide a lap-top computer with a radio transceiver to microwave-link the computer to an Internet highway, and with a GPS receiver to indicate the present location of the individual operating the computer, whereby the location of the individual to be targeted and his identity can be transmitted to a web site on the highway.

Briefly stated, these objects are attained by a network adapted to target an individual operating a microcomputer that is microwave-linked to an Internet highway to offer this individual goods or services appropriate to his needs available at a place within range of the individual's present location. The microcomputer is provided with a GPS receiver that indicates the present location of the individual, this location and the identity of the individual being transmitted from the microcomputer to a web site on the highway.

At the web site, a computer associated with a data bank storing the profiles of a multitude of consumers is programmed to find out whether the identified individual is included in the data bank, and to determine from his profile whether there are available at a place reachable from his present location appropriate goods or services. If a match is found, an offer to supply such goods or services is conveyed from the web site to the microcomputer. In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, the profiles can be stored in a computer integration center instead of a full web site.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

For a better understanding of the invention as well as other objects and further features thereof, reference is made to the following detailed description to be read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

FIG. **1** illustrates in block diagram form a network in accordance with one aspect of the invention.

FIG. **2** illustrates a system in accordance with another aspect of the present invention.

FIG. **3** illustrates a personal computing device, in this case, a personal digital assistant (PDA) operating an interface software module.

FIG. **4** illustrates the steps performed by the portable computing device in accordance with one aspect of the present invention.

FIG. **5** illustrates a first portable communication device communicating with a second portable communication device via a web site in accordance with one aspect of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF SPECIFIC EMBODIMENTS

Referring now to the drawing illustrating a network in accordance with the invention, included in this network is a lap-top computer or other self-sufficient, portable microcomputer **10** provided with a visual monitor **10**M having a screen. The computer may be operated by an individual **13** at whatever site to which he takes the computer, such as at an office, at a hotel or motel room or at a public park. But wherever the individual happens to be, the network is informed of his whereabouts. Further, the computer need not be in the possession of an individual. By way of example only, the data can be provided by an individual's phone number and GPS information from the individual's cell phone.

Lap-top computer **10** is microwave-linked to an Internet highway **11** by a radio-transceiver **12** so that the computer and the highway can communicate with each other. Thus lap-top computer **10** which is provided with an E-mail address has access to the same services and sources of information provided by Internet to a standard computer terminal. Thus if the individual is named John Smith, his E-mail address might be WWW.JOHNSMITH.COM. But this Email address is a true address, for it shows not only the name of the address but also his location. The E-mail address can be accessed through a cell number instead of directly. Thus, the computer need not be carried by an individual for the system of the present invention to work.

Associated with lap-top computer is a GPS receiver **14** that picks up radio signals providing positional and time information from satellites, the receiver acting to fix the exact location of the individual operating the computer. In practice, the present location of the individual may be shown on the screen of the computer monitor **10**M. Thus if computer **10** equipped with a GPS receiver **14** is carried on board a vehicle or a ship, it then becomes a navigational aid, for one is then given with the exact geographic location of the vehicle or ship. Of course, as mentioned previously, the lap-top computer can be any computing device, including lower power computing devices such as a cell phone.

The exact present location of the individual and his identification are conveyed by microwave transceiver **12** to a web site **15** on the Internet highway. Installed at the web site in a programmed computer **16** associated with a data bank **17**. Data bank **17** has stored therein the names of millions of consumers and their respective profiles, including such personal data as bank and credit card information, spending habits, personal interests and whatever other information is collected on each individual by market research activity. The present nature of these data banks is such as to in many cases provide a dossier on each listed individual. The web site **15** does not need to be a full web site that permits access to everyone. For example, the web site **15** can be a site on the Internet that provides communications with a variety of portable computing devices. Thus, the site **15** might be a processing site connected to a network. Similarly, the portable computing devices can be any type of communication device, but is preferably portable and has some computing capabilities.

Programmed computer **16** scans the data bank to find and select for analysis the name of the individual **13** operating the lap-top computer. From the profile of the selected individual the computer determines in connection with a data bank **18** of goods and services available at different locations, whether these goods or services are appropriate to this individual and whether they are at a place easily reachable from the present location of the individual. How computer **16** is to be programmed is controlled by a programming station **19**.

For example, if the profile indicates that the individual is a middle aged, well-to-do business man and his present location is in midtown New York City, then programmed computer **16** will transmit from web site **15** to microcomputer **10** an invitation to this individual to have lunch at a nearby restaurant at a substantial discount which will be given by presenting the restaurant with a code number. Or the offer may take the form of an invitation to purchase designer clothing at a discount at a nearby boutique.

In the well-known Zagat guide to New York City restaurants, there is included a breakdown of restaurants by districts, such as midtown, upper east side, downtown, etc.

Hence with respect to restaurants there is no difficulty when the present location of an individual operating the computer is within an established district, for the network will then invite the individual to that restaurant that is compatible with his profile. Thus it would be appropriate to invite a wealthy individual to an expensive five-star French restaurant, not to a Bistro.

Essential to one aspect of the invention is a computer program capable of analyzing an individual's profile to determine which appropriate goods or services are compatible with his consumer habits and his financial ability to pay for these goods or services.

In accordance with one aspect of the present invention, offers are made proactively or automatically. The fact that the system of the present invention extends offers to an individual may or may not be visible to the individual. FIG. **2** illustrates a system in accordance with a further aspect of the present invention. The server **30** includes the web site and data banks of user dossiers as well as goods and services available through many providers. The system **30** communicates via the internet **32** or other communication means. The server can be a full web site, but need not be. Instead, it could be an Internet site that provides the necessary communications with a portable computing device **42**. A provider **34** can connect to the system **30** through the internet **32** and can update the data banks in the system **30** to indicate goods or services that are available, for example, at a discount. The providers **34** can thereby control sales in a more efficient manner according to supply and demand. So, if sales are slow in a particular time, a provider **34** can update the data banks in the system **30** with offers of discounted goods and services to help drive sales.

The provider **34** can provide access to departments **36**, **38** and **40** in the provider's organization. Thus, the departments can provide or receive information relating to the present invention. A portable computing device **42** communicates with the system **30** via any wireless communication technique, although the communication can also be via a wired internet connection. As previously mentioned, the portable computing device need not be a computer such as a laptop.

The portable computing device **42** can be a cell phone or a Blackberry. Thus, the device **42** can be a communication device. Further, the device **42** is preferably portable.

In one example, a car is driving down I 95 in Florida with a driver from New York, the system could identify a driver and the driver's location, access its data banks **17** and **18** to determine what offers are available and extend an offer for a hotel. Thus, if a Ramada Inn on I95 in Florida had excess capacity for that night, it could update the data banks **17** and **18** to indicate that there were rooms available for a 50% discount, or alternatively, that there are rooms available at a certain price representing a certain percentage discount. The system would then cause that offer to be broadcast so that any portable computing device **10** would receive the offer.

The offer from the hotel could also include a number that the individual receiving the offer could use to accept the offer. In accordance with one aspect of the present invention, that number is provided to the provider **34**. When the individual comes to the hotel, the individual would present the number and the provider **34** could verify the number at his terminal.

Of course, the provider **34** can have many terminals that are in communication with the system **30**. For example, the provider **34** could be a chain of Ramada Inns with a headquarters that updates the data banks in the system **30** and a local hotel on I95 that receives the verification numbers.

As another example, a sporting arena that is not filled for an event could similarly update the data banks **17** and **18** so that offers for tickets having a reduced price could be offered. As before, the offer could extend a certain price representing a certain percentage discount so that the person using the portable computing device **10** could put the offer into perspective. The offer could also include offers for associated goods, such as a coupon for concessions such as a hot dog and a beer. In this case, the verification number transmitted with the offer would be transmitted to multiple departments in the arena, including the ticketing department and the concessions department for their use.

The applications of the present invention extend to many goods and services. For example, Broadway producers use the term "papering the house" to describe the situation where tickets are deeply discounted to draw an audience so that the act stays inspired and doesn't feel like nobody showed up. On slow nights, the playhouse **34** could access the system **30** to update the data banks to offer discounted tickets.

There are many different types of portable computing devices that may be employed in accordance with the present invention. By way of example only, a portable computing device may be a personal digital assistant (PDA), such as a Palm Pilot or a Windows-based PDA, a Blackberry, a cell phone, a laptop computer, an automobile navigational system and other devices having a GPS capability and a wireless communication capability can also be used. Further, the portable computing devices **50** can communicate with the system via any wireless connection, including for example, Bluetooth and other wireless technologies.

Another example of the use of the present invention is to offer competitive sales offers. For example, a person in a GM showroom can now be identified with his cell phone through geopositioning, and that person can be offered a great deal at Ford, perhaps a deal not being offered to anyone else.

There are many more examples of the application of the inventions. A message therapist could advertise messages for $20.00 as people drive by the therapist's location. A store in a poor location.

A store in a poor location, whether in a shopping mall or otherwise off the main path could target potential buyers and send them a map on their cell phone to the store's location. The potential customer would then become aware of the store even if the store is not be visible from their particular position. This would help businesses on the second or third floors of a store.

FIG. **3** illustrates a portable computing device **50**. In accordance with one aspect of the present invention, the portable computing device **50** has a application program that is loaded onto the device. When activated, the application programs displays a plurality of categories and, if desired, sub-categories. Referring to FIG. **3**, for example, the category DINING **56** is displayed. Under that category, sub-categories **58** relating to price are also displayed. The sub-categories can be based on any desired categorization of the DINING category. Other categories displayed in FIG. **2** include ACCOMMODATIONS, GAS and SHOPPING. The user of the portable computing device can select one or more of the categories or sub-categories at any time. The portable computing device **50** has its user's name or other identifying information stored in it. The portable computing device also has a GPS server **16** is receiving the identity and location of the user of the portable computing device **50** through a GPS system located in the portable computing device **50**.

The operation of the portable computing device **50** running the application program is illustrated in FIG. **4**. In step **60**, the portable computing device **50** receives offers from the system **30** automatically. The message from the system has a field of offer, including categories and sub-categories. The categories and sub-categories correspond to the categories and sub-categories in the application program being run on the portable computing device **50**. In step **62**, the portable computing device **50** detects the field from the offer.

In step **64**, the portable computing device **50** checks the categories and subcategories selected by the user from the application program. In step **66**, the portable computing device **50** determines whether the field of the offer automatically received matches any of the fields selected by the individual on the portable computing device **50**. If the fields match, then in step **68**, the portable computing device displays the offer on its screen. If the fields do not match, then processing starts again.

In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, the service can be provided on a pay basis.

Referring to FIG. **5**, another aspect of the present invention is illustrated. A server **70** having a database **72** is provided. The database **72** includes dossiers on a large number of people and the server **70** can access other databases stored on various servers on the interne **74**. A wireless connection **76**, such as a Wi-Fi connection, allows a first portable communication device **78** and a second portable communication device **80** to communicate with the server **70**.

Each of the portable communication devices **78** and **80** include a GPS device, and they transmit the identity of the owner of the device and the present location of the devices **78** and **80** to the server **70**. Thus, the server **70** knows that portable communication devices **78** and **80** are co-located at a particular time, say at a party. The server **70** can therefore provide information about the other people at the party to one of the individuals. For example, if the individual owning portable communication device **80** wants to find out information about the other people at the party, the server **70** could provide that information. For example, the server **70** could provide information about the a person's net worth, line of credit, what kind of car they chive, etc. Also, a person could find out what drugs (and diseases) a potential date may have by accessing their recent purchases of prescriptions (which unlike medical treatment is not privatized).

It is also possible to transmit the offers for goods and services previously described, as well as other offers, to navigational devices in cars. This can be done by a wireless communication channel in the navigational system. It can also be done by jamming the communication receiver on the navigational system.

While there has been shown a preferred embodiment of network for targeting individual operating a microcomputer regardless of his location in accordance with the invention, it will be appreciated that many changes and modifications may be made therein without, however, departing from the essential spirit thereof.

What is claimed is:

1. A method for supplying offers for goods or services, the method comprising:

receiving information about a geographic location of an individual, together with a user identifier associated with the individual;

then selecting an individual user profile associated with the user identifier from a plurality of individual user profiles;

identifying at least one of the offers for goods or services available in a location near the individual based upon the selected individual user profile; and

automatically communicating the at least one of the offers for goods or services to a microcomputer associated with the individual, including sending the at least one of the offers in an email message directed to an email address associated with the individual.

2. A method for supplying offers for goods or services in accordance with claim **1**, wherein the selected-user identifier comprises an email address.

3. A method for supplying offers for goods or services in accordance with claim **1**, wherein the identifying the at least one of the offers further comprises using a programmed computer in communication with a data bank of a plurality of offers for goods or services.

4. A method for supplying offers for goods or services in accordance with claim **3**, wherein the programmed computer further comprises a server.

5. A method for supplying offers for goods or services in accordance with claim **1**, wherein the selecting the individual user profile further comprises using a programmed computer in communication with a data bank of a plurality of individual user profiles.

6. A method for supplying offers for goods or services in accordance with claim **5**, wherein the programmed computer further comprises a server.

7. A method for supplying offers for goods or services in accordance with claim **1**, wherein the automatically communicating further comprises sending the at least one of the offers in the form of a web site on the Internet highway.

8. A method for supplying offers for goods or services in accordance with claim **1**, wherein the automatically communicating further comprises sending the at least one of the offers over a telecommunications link.

9. A method for supplying offers for goods or services in accordance with claim **1**, wherein the microcomputer is portable.

10. A method for supplying offers for goods or services in accordance with claim **1**, wherein the at least one of the offers includes a discounted price.

11. A method for supplying offers for goods or services in accordance with claim **1**, wherein the microcomputer associated with an individual further comprises a global positioning satellite system.

12. A method for supplying offers for goods or services in accordance with claim **11**, wherein the receiving the location information further comprises using physical location information provided by the global positioning satellite system.

13. A method for supplying offers for goods or services in accordance with claim **1**, wherein the individual user profile further comprises an email address.

14. A server system for facilitating the communicating of offers for goods or services to a device, the server system comprising:

a server;

a first data bank of offers for goods and services from providers in communication with the server; and

a second data bank of individual user profiles associated with individuals in communication with the server,

the server system configured to:

receive present location information and an identification identifying an individual associated with the device;

then select at least one of the offers for a good or a service from the first data bank of offers for goods and services from the providers based on the present geographic location and based on an individual user profile in the second data bank of individual user profiles associated with the individual; and

automatically communicate the at least one of the offers to the device, including sending the at least one of the offers in an email message directed to an email address associated with the individual.

15. A server system for facilitating the communicating of offers for goods or services to a device in accordance with claim **14**, wherein the automatically communicate the at least one of the offers further comprises sending the at least one of the offers over a telecommunications link.

16. A server system for facilitating the communicating of offers for goods or services to a device in accordance with claim **14**, wherein the individual user profile further comprises an email address.

17. A server system for facilitating the communicating of offers for goods or services to a device in accordance with claim **14**, wherein the at least one of the offers includes a discounted price.

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