



(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Angorn et al.

(10) **Pub. No.: US 2020/0258184 A1**

(43) **Pub. Date: Aug. 13, 2020**

(54) **SYSTEMS, METHODS AND APPARATUSES FOR CREATING, EDITING, DISTRIBUTING AND VIEWING ELECTRONIC GREETING CARDS**

G06F 40/166 (2006.01)
G06F 40/106 (2006.01)
G06F 40/103 (2006.01)
H04W 4/50 (2006.01)
H04W 4/12 (2006.01)

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Cleveland, OH (US)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC *G06Q 50/32* (2013.01); *G06Q 30/0621*
(2013.01); *G06Q 30/0641* (2013.01); *G06F*
3/0482 (2013.01); *G06Q 30/0601* (2013.01);
H04W 4/12 (2013.01); *G06F 40/166*
(2020.01); *G06F 40/106* (2020.01); *G06F*
40/103 (2020.01); *H04W 4/50* (2018.02);
G06F 40/186 (2020.01)

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Reiss, Los Angeles, CA (US); **Robert**
Matousek, Lakewood, OH (US)

(21) Appl. No.: **16/789,818**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

(22) Filed: **Feb. 13, 2020**

A system is provided for downloading an electronic greeting card application to a portable computing device. The system comprising a server, a paper greeting card, and a code printed on the paper greeting card. The electronic greeting card application is downloaded to the portable computing device from the server in response to the portable computing device scanning the code on the paper greeting card. Further herein, a system is provided where a category of greeting cards are contained within the electronic greeting card application, and at least a greeting card within the category of greeting cards. The greeting card comprises a plurality pages, with at least one of the a plurality pages having an option to customize, and each of the a plurality pages being movable by a touch of a finger. The customized greeting card can be previewed and has an area for selecting a medium to be used to send the greeting card.

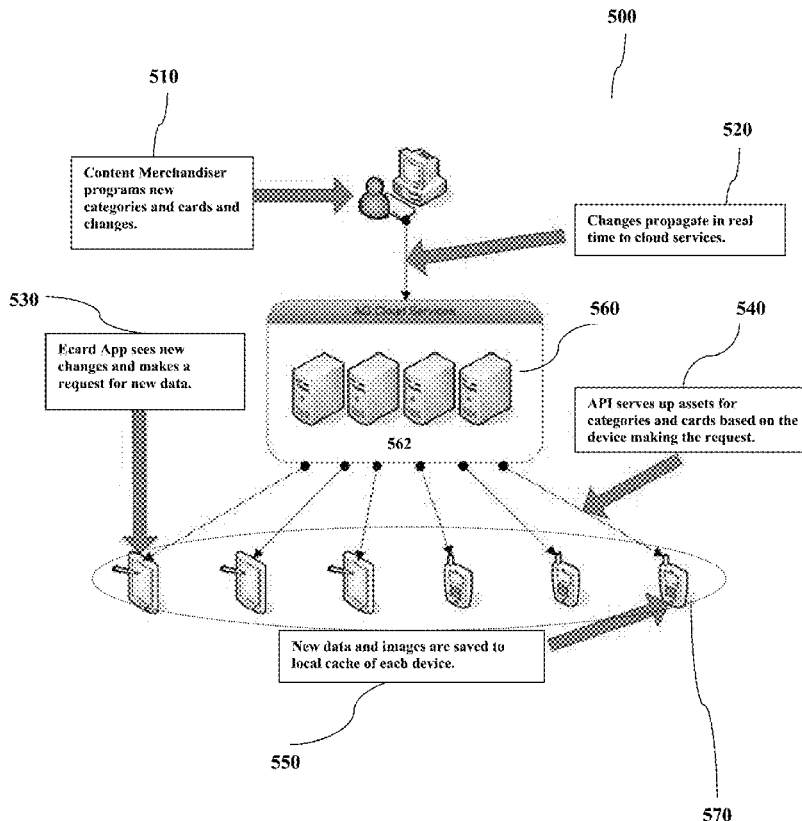
Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation of application No. 13/460,045, filed on
Apr. 30, 2012, now Pat. No. 10,600,139.

(60) Provisional application No. 61/486,050, filed on May
13, 2011.

Publication Classification

(51) **Int. Cl.**
G06Q 50/32 (2006.01)
G06Q 30/06 (2006.01)
G06F 3/0482 (2006.01)
G06F 40/186 (2006.01)



APP ACQUISITION AND DOWNLOAD

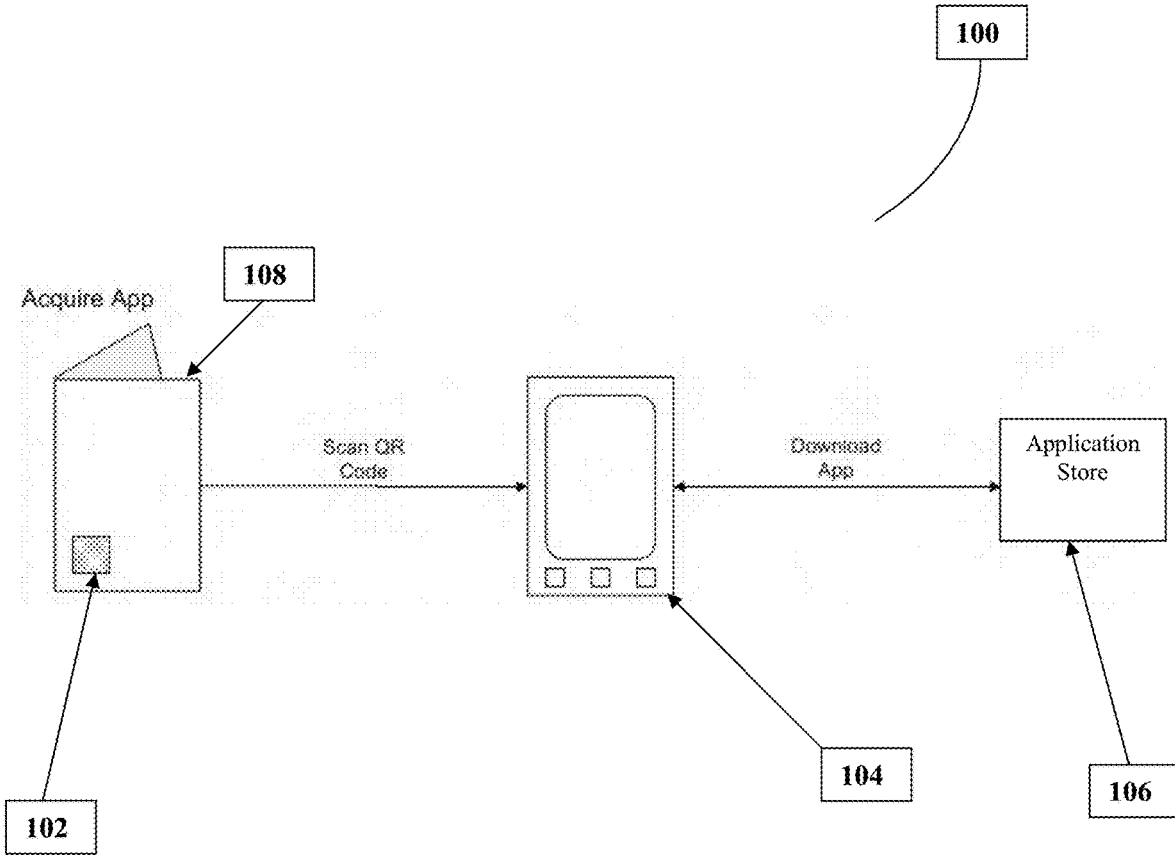


FIGURE 1

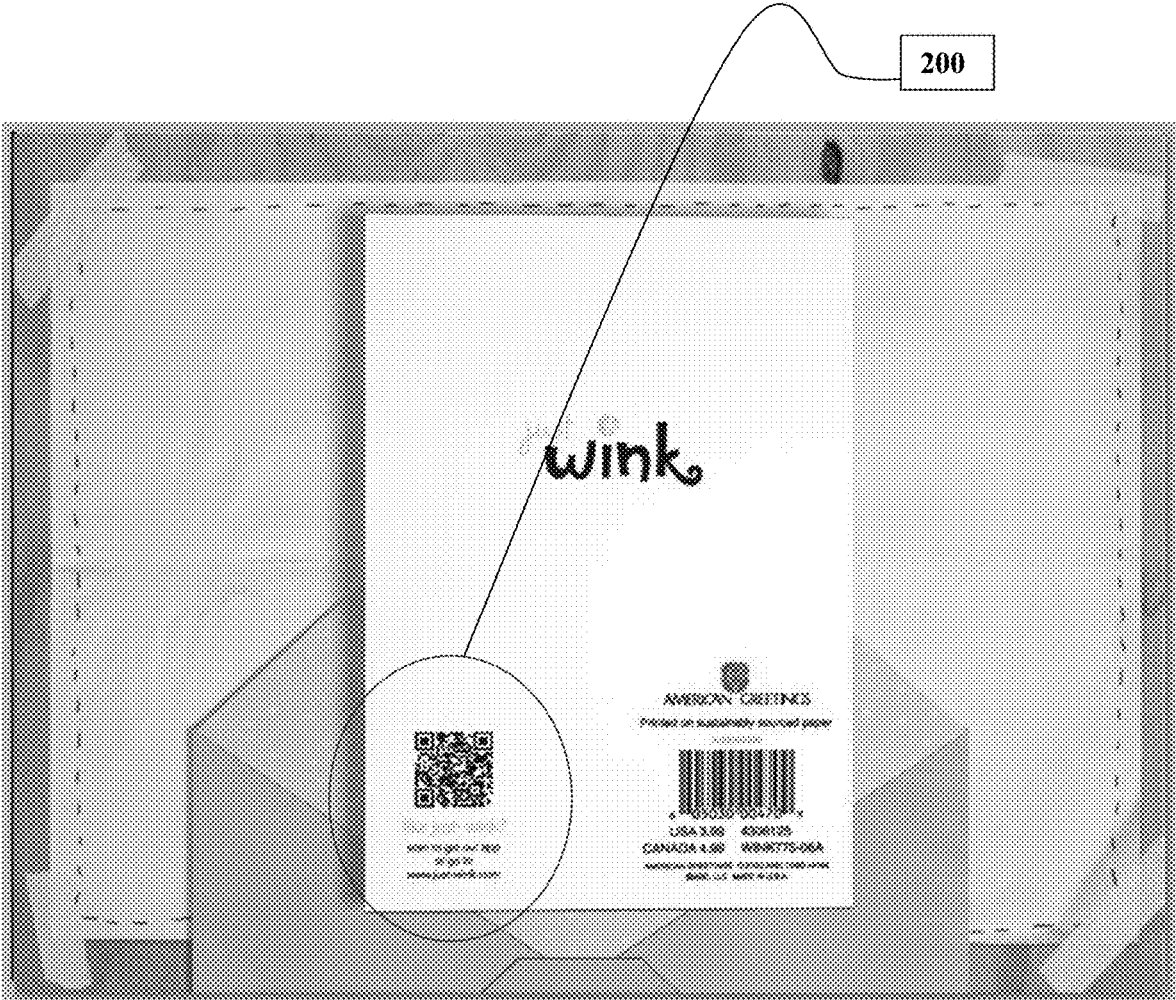


FIGURE 2



FIGURE 3

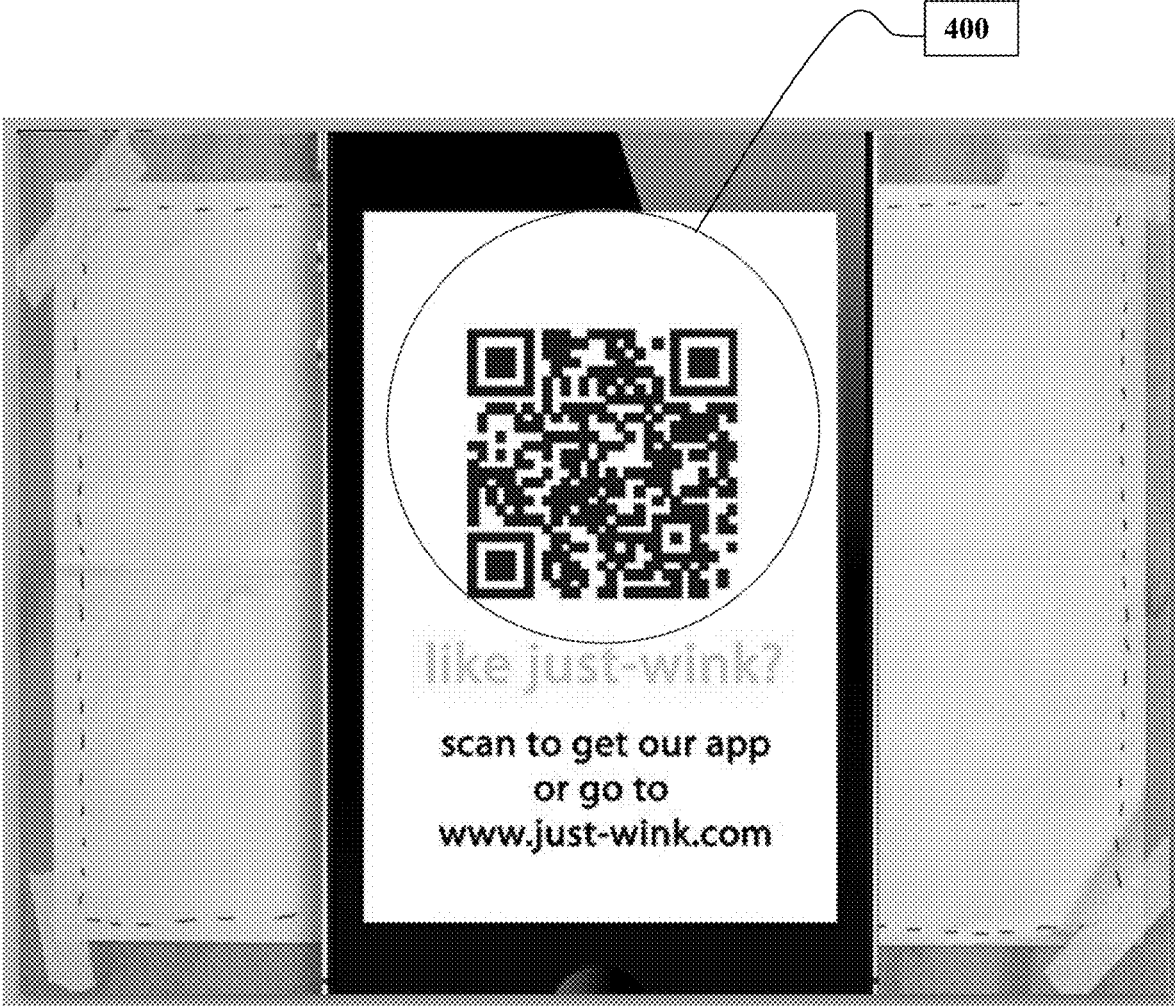
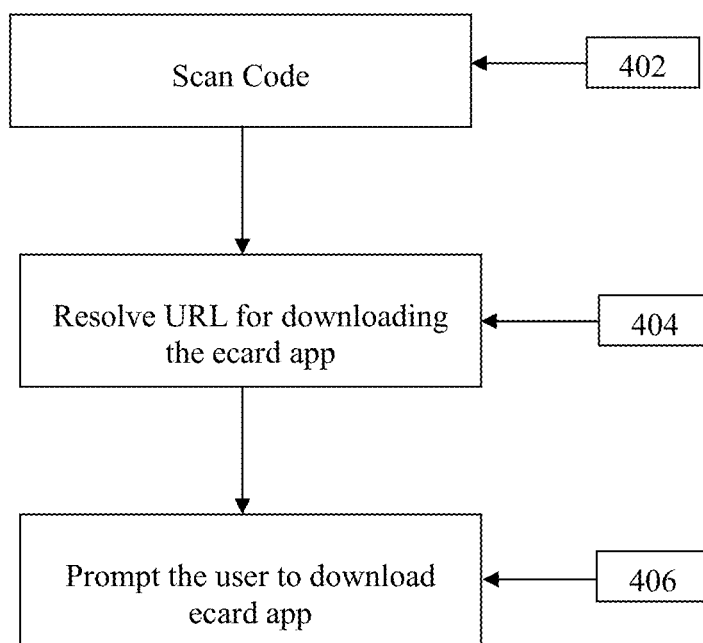
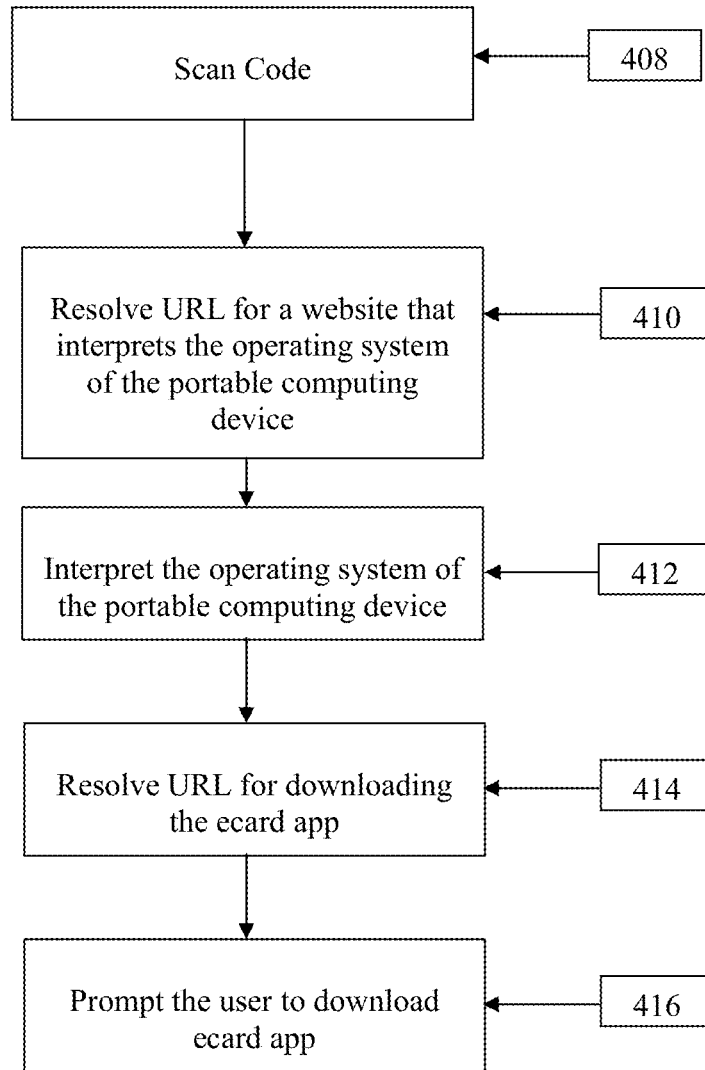


FIGURE 4



Flow chart for ecard app download - Separate Codes for separate Operating Systems

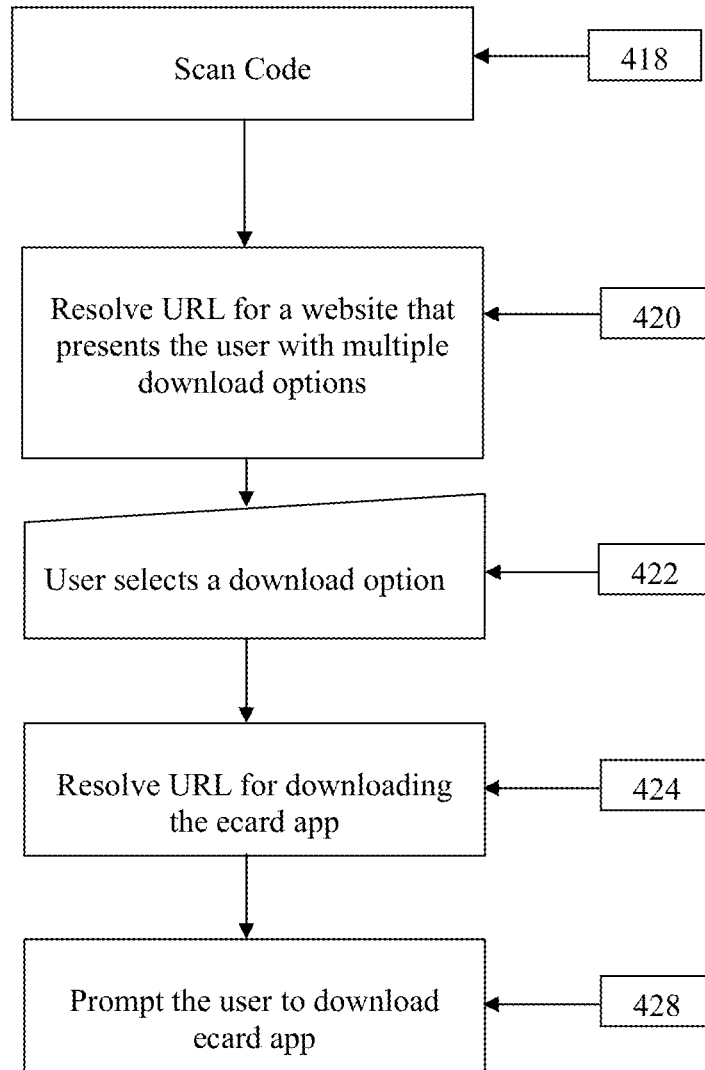
FIGURE 4A



Flow chart for ecard app download - Operating System Neutral

Resolve Operating System

FIGURE 4B



Flow chart for ecard app download - Operating System Neutral

User Selects Appropriate Download Site

FIGURE 4C

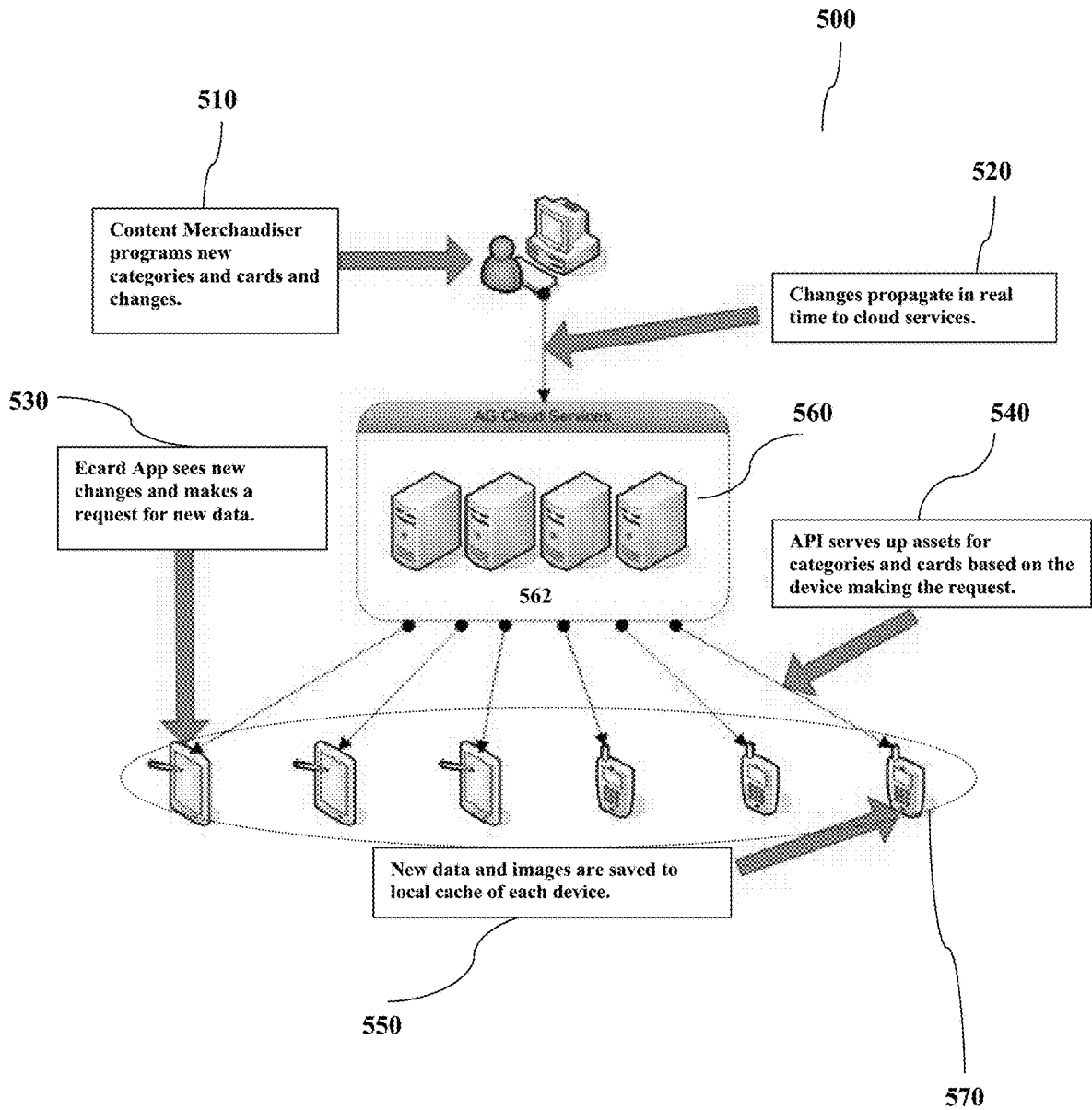
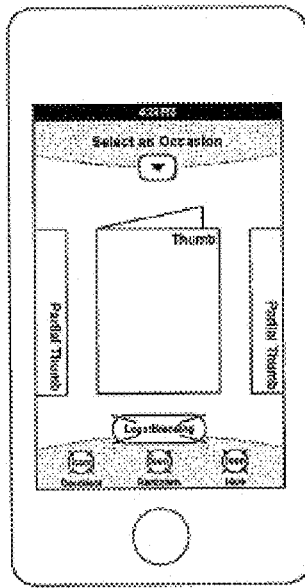
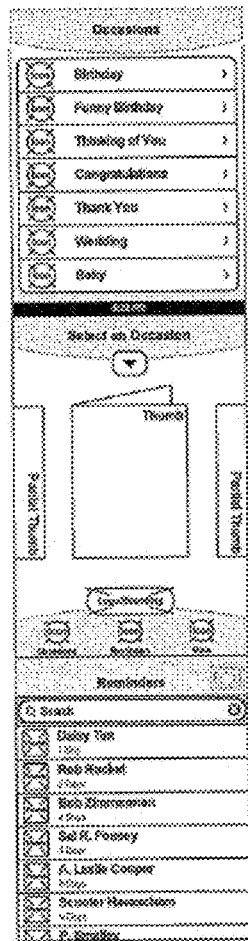


FIGURE 5



Home Screen



Home Screen w/ Slide Outs
(Assumes connection to Facebook)

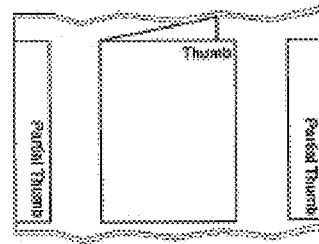
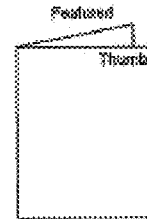
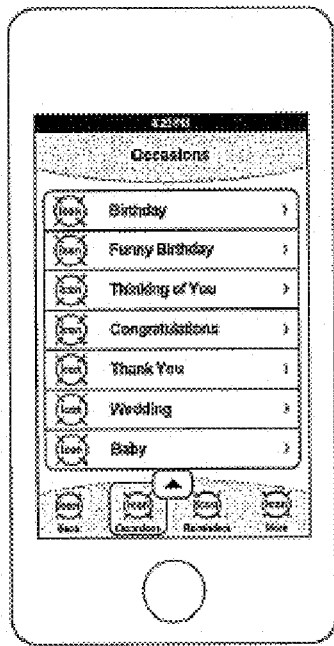
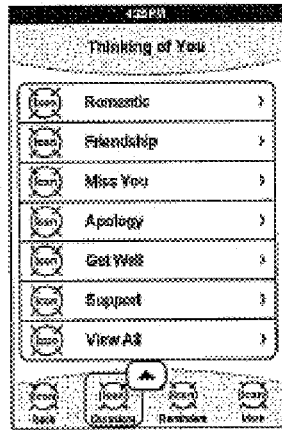
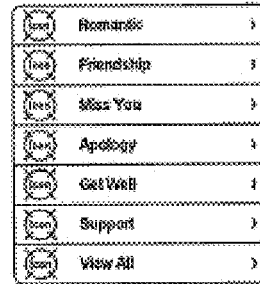


FIGURE 6



Main Category



Sub Category



FIGURE 7

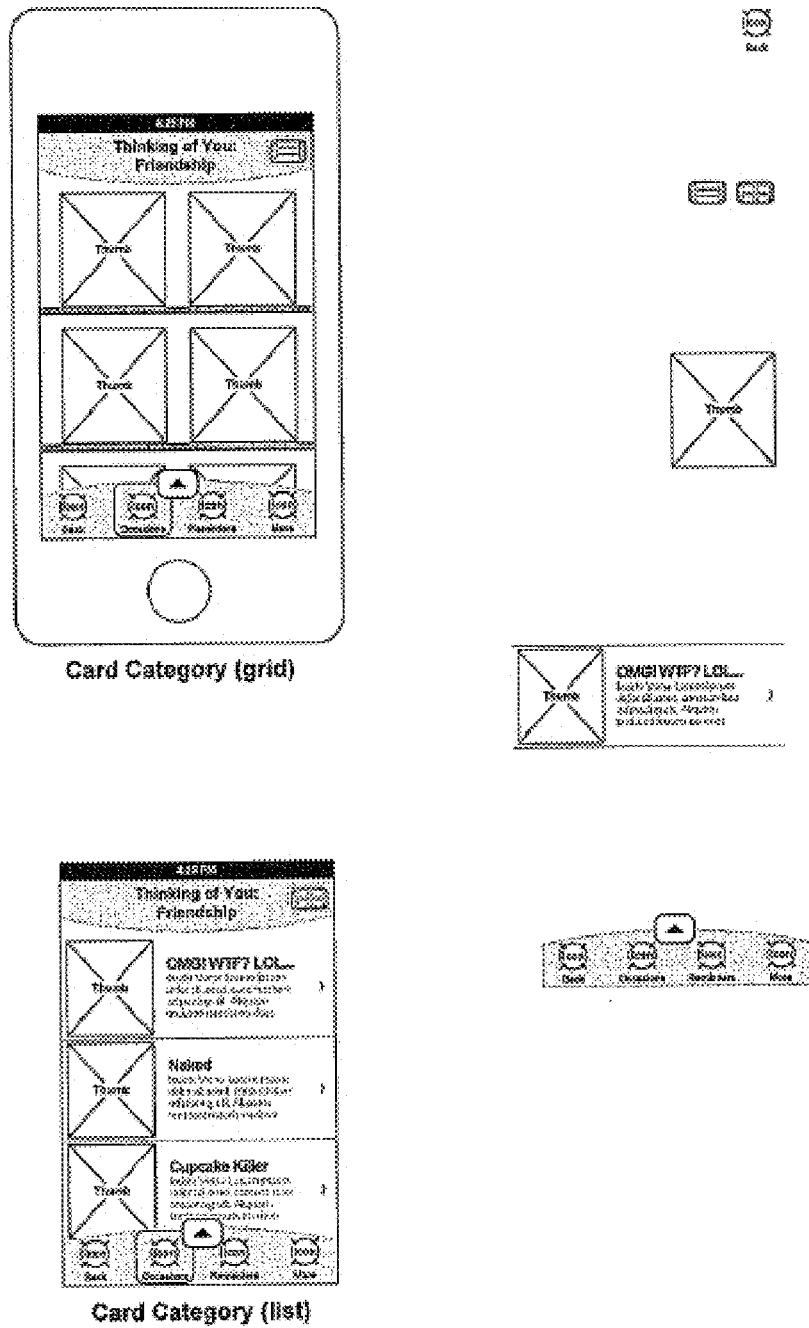


FIGURE 8

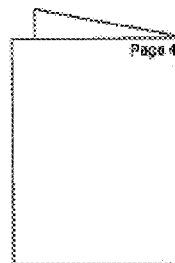
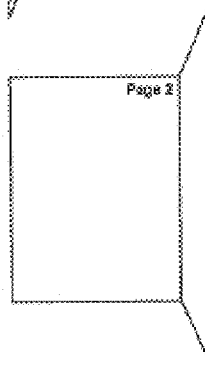
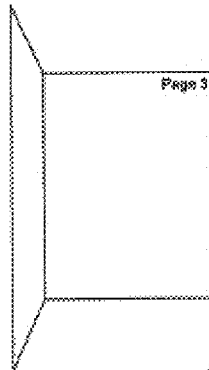


Interactive Preview



Interactive Preview

Send Personalize Card



For the Personalized Card Preview...

Edit

Send

FIGURE 9

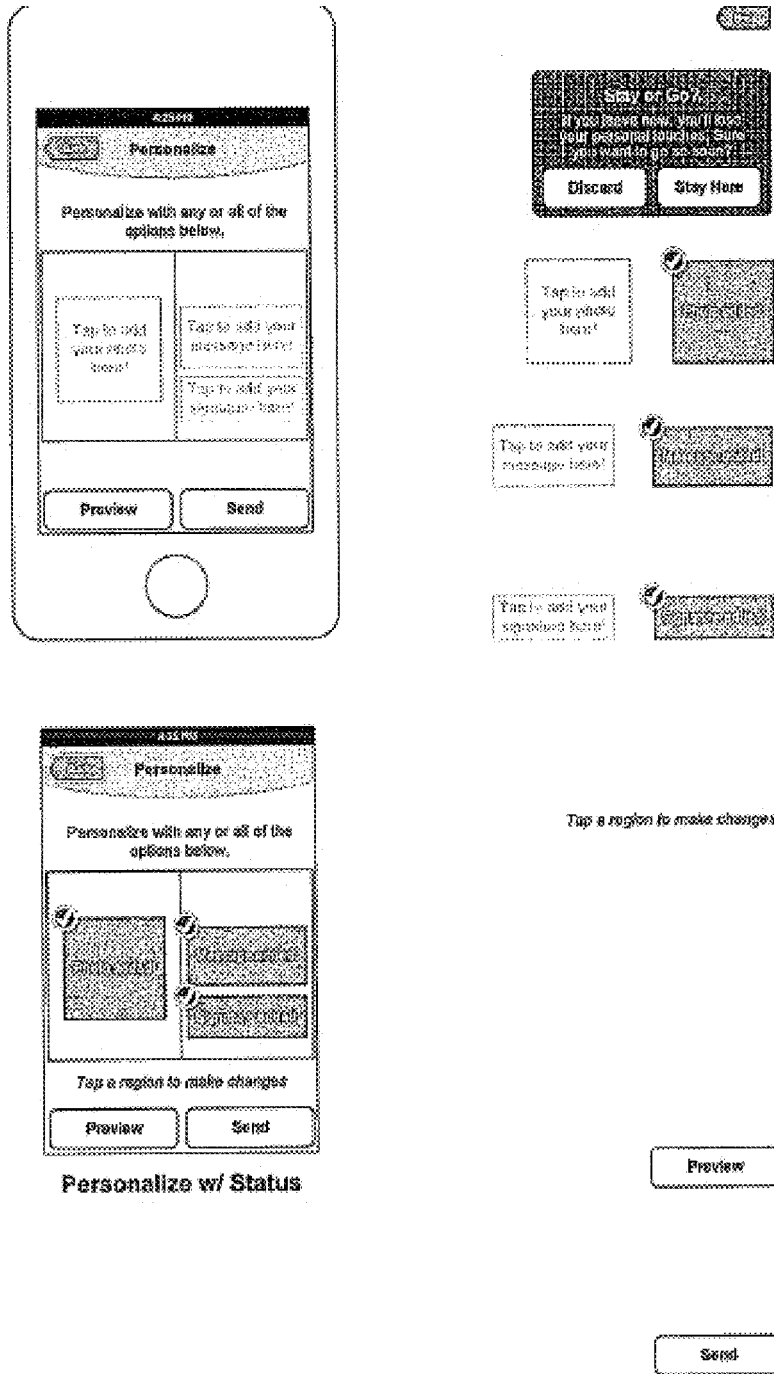
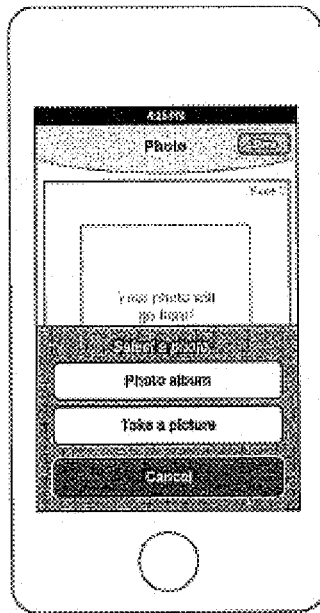


FIGURE 10



**Photo Module on Load
(from Personalization Hub)**

On page load ...

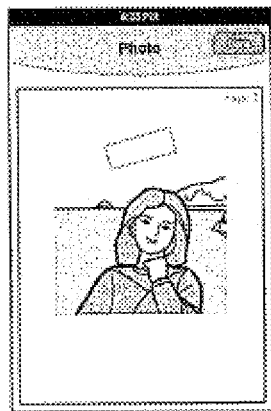
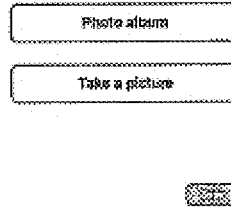
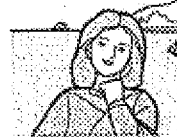
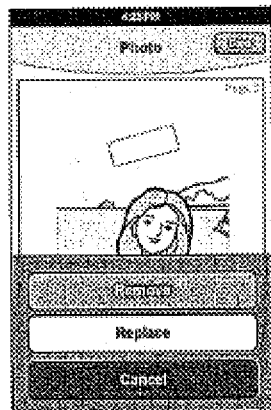
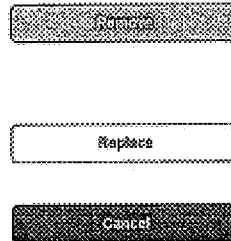


Photo Added

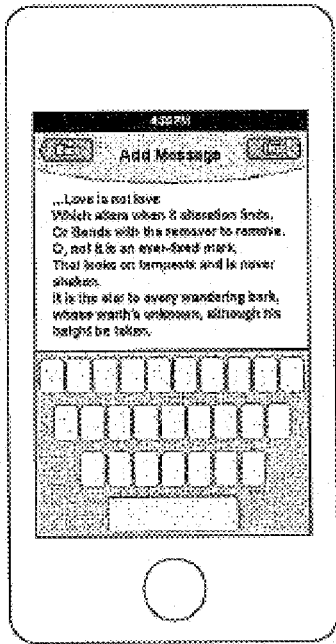


On return to Add Photo ...

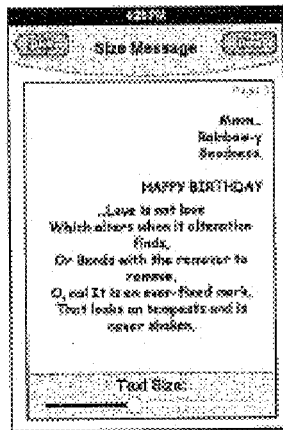


**Photo Revision
(Either from Personalization
Hub or Tap to Photo)**

FIGURE 11



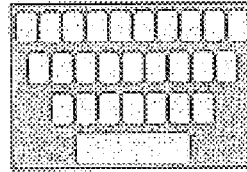
Message Entry



Message Sizing



On Message Entry...



On Message Sizing...



On return to Message...

FIGURE 12

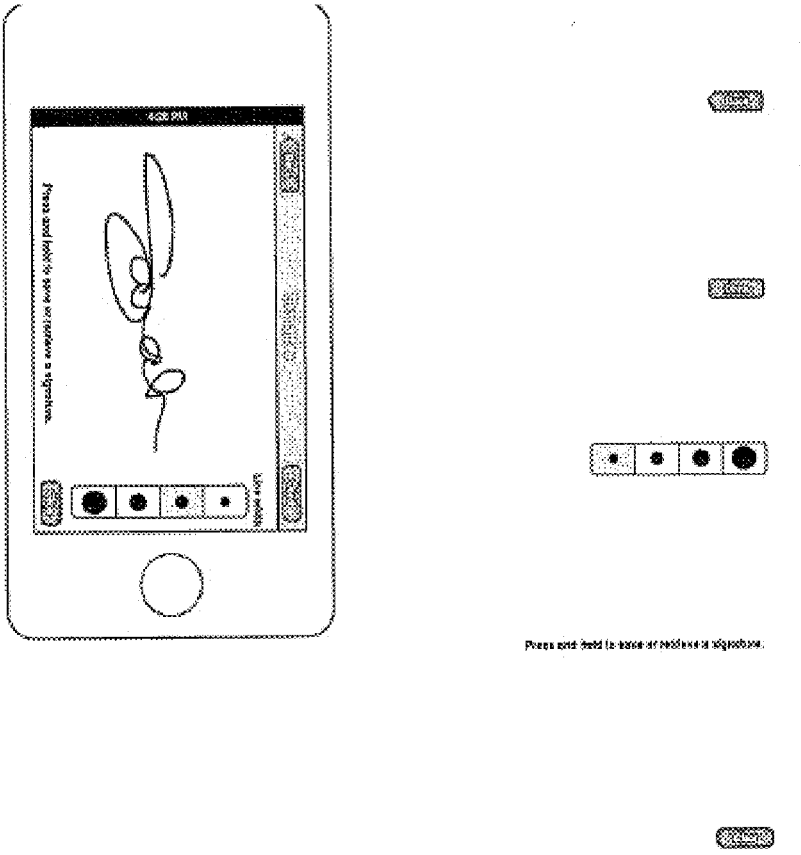


FIGURE 13

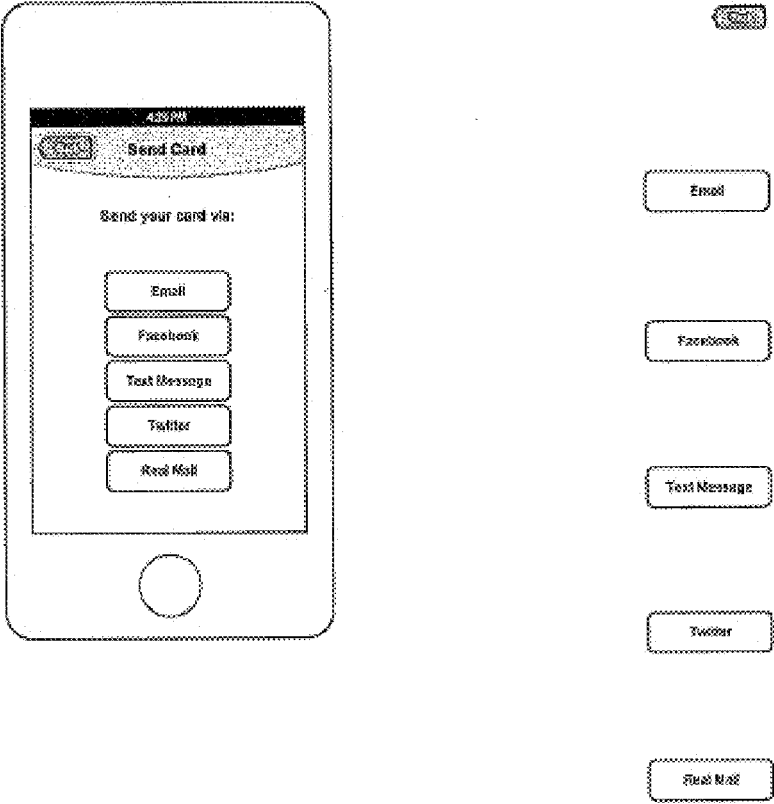


FIGURE 14

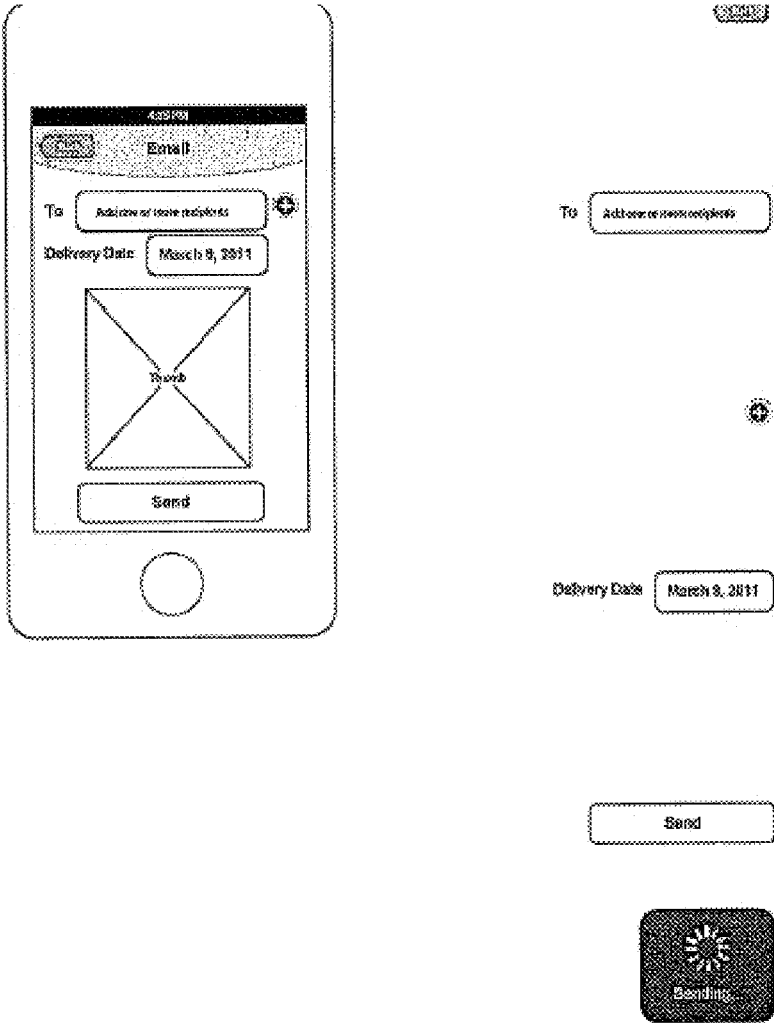
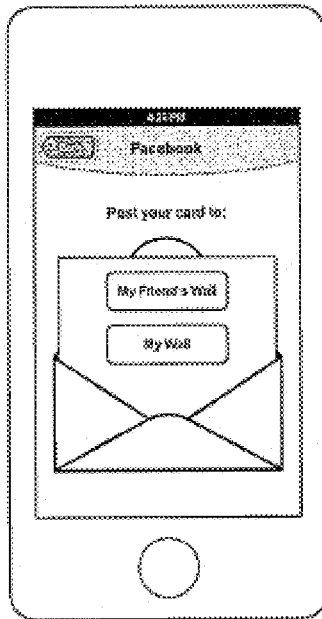


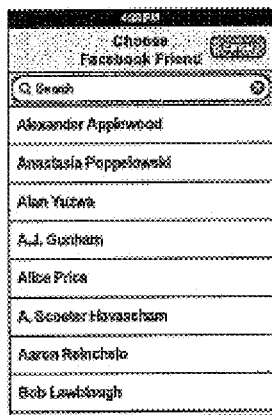
FIGURE 15



Facebook Post Selection

My Friend's Wall

My Wall

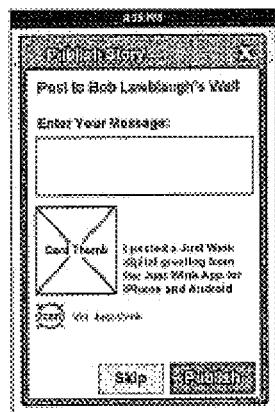


Facebook Friend List

Cancel

Search

Bob Lawblough

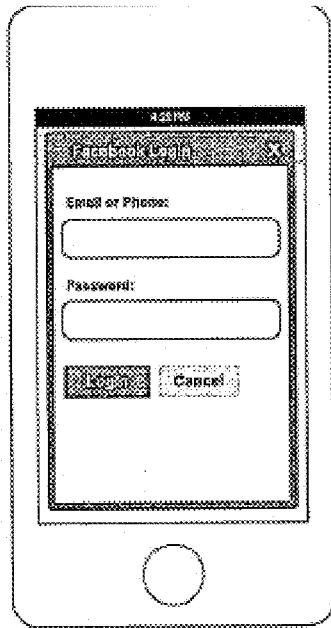


Facebook Wall Message

Enter Your Message:

Skip Post

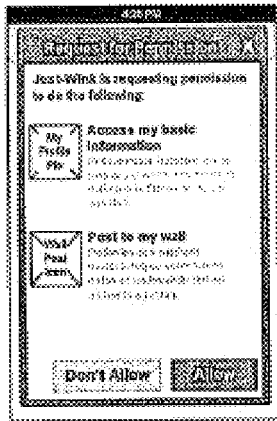
FIGURE 16



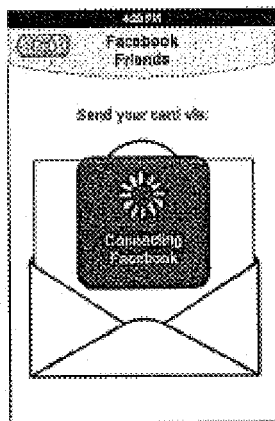
Facebook Post Modal

Email or Phone:

Password:



Allow Facebook Connect



Facebook Connect Spinner

FIGURE 17

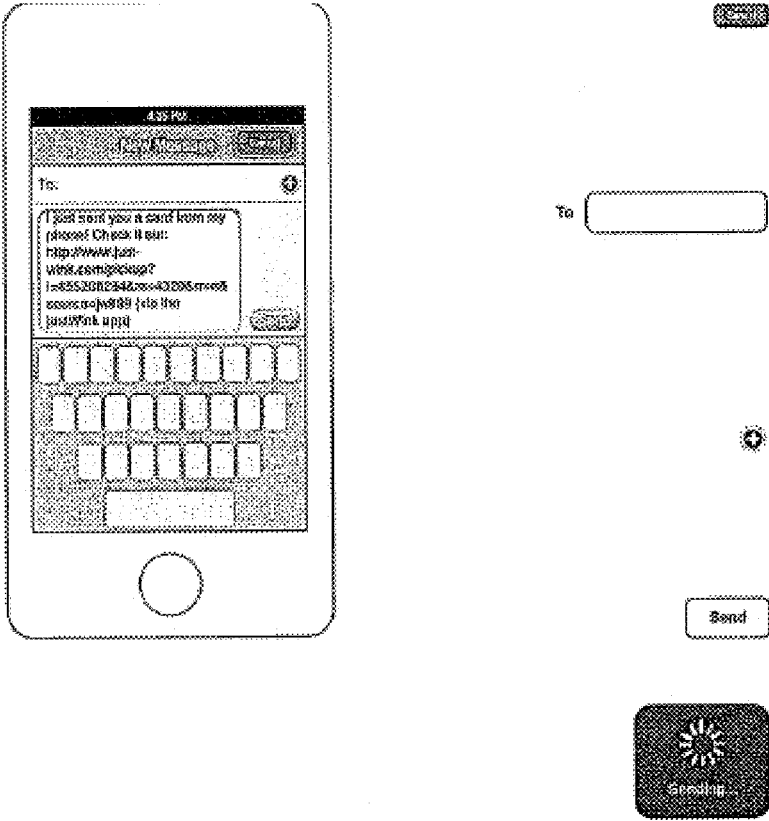


FIGURE 18

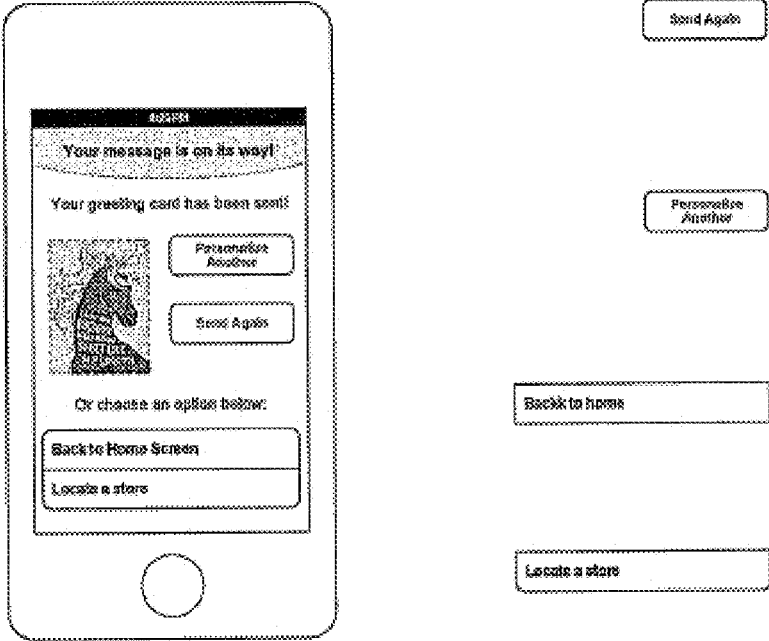


FIGURE 20

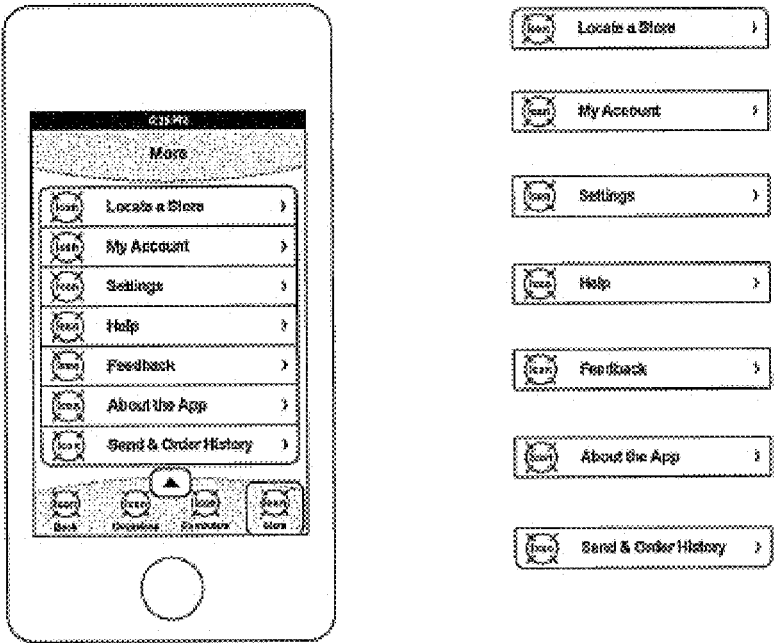
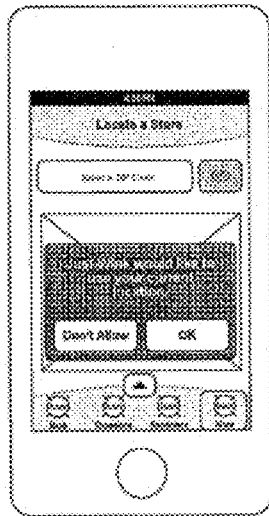
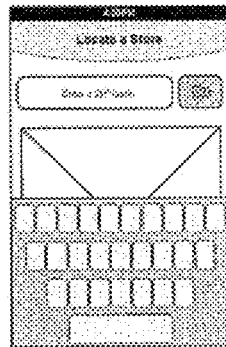
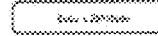
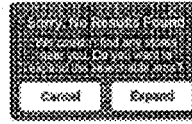
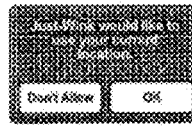


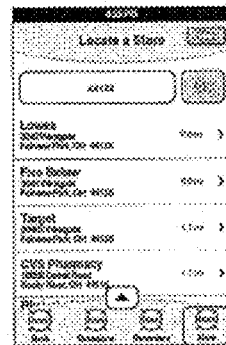
FIGURE 21



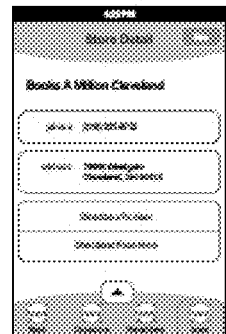
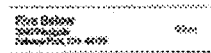
Store Locator (on Load)



Store Locator
(Do not allow geolocation)



Locator Results List



Locator Detailed Results

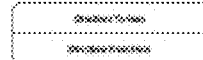
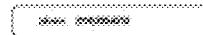
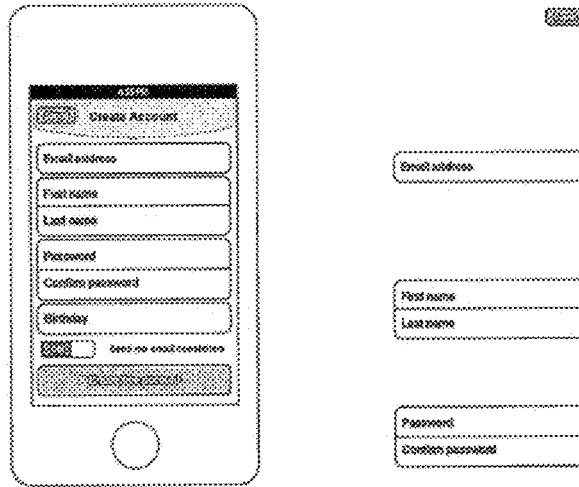
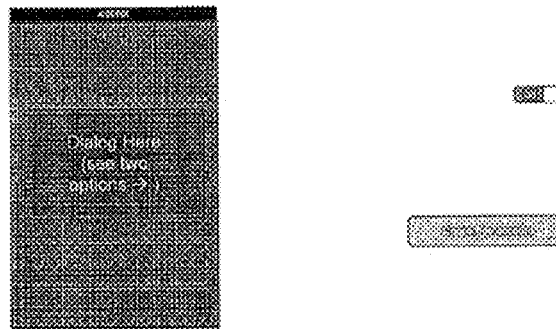


FIGURE 22



Account Creation



Account Creation Confirmation

Error Messaging

One or more fields isn't filled:
All fields are required.

Email password or email address:
Can't see some fields are invalid. Please try again.

Password and confirm password don't match:
Passwords do not match.

Email address already in use:
Email already in use. Please either a different address or go back and sign in.

Age restriction:
Sorry, you are not eligible to see this app.

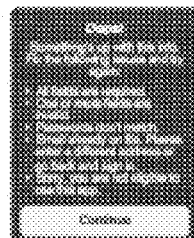
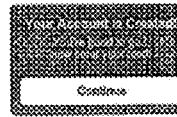
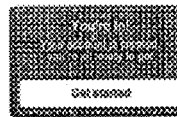


FIGURE 23

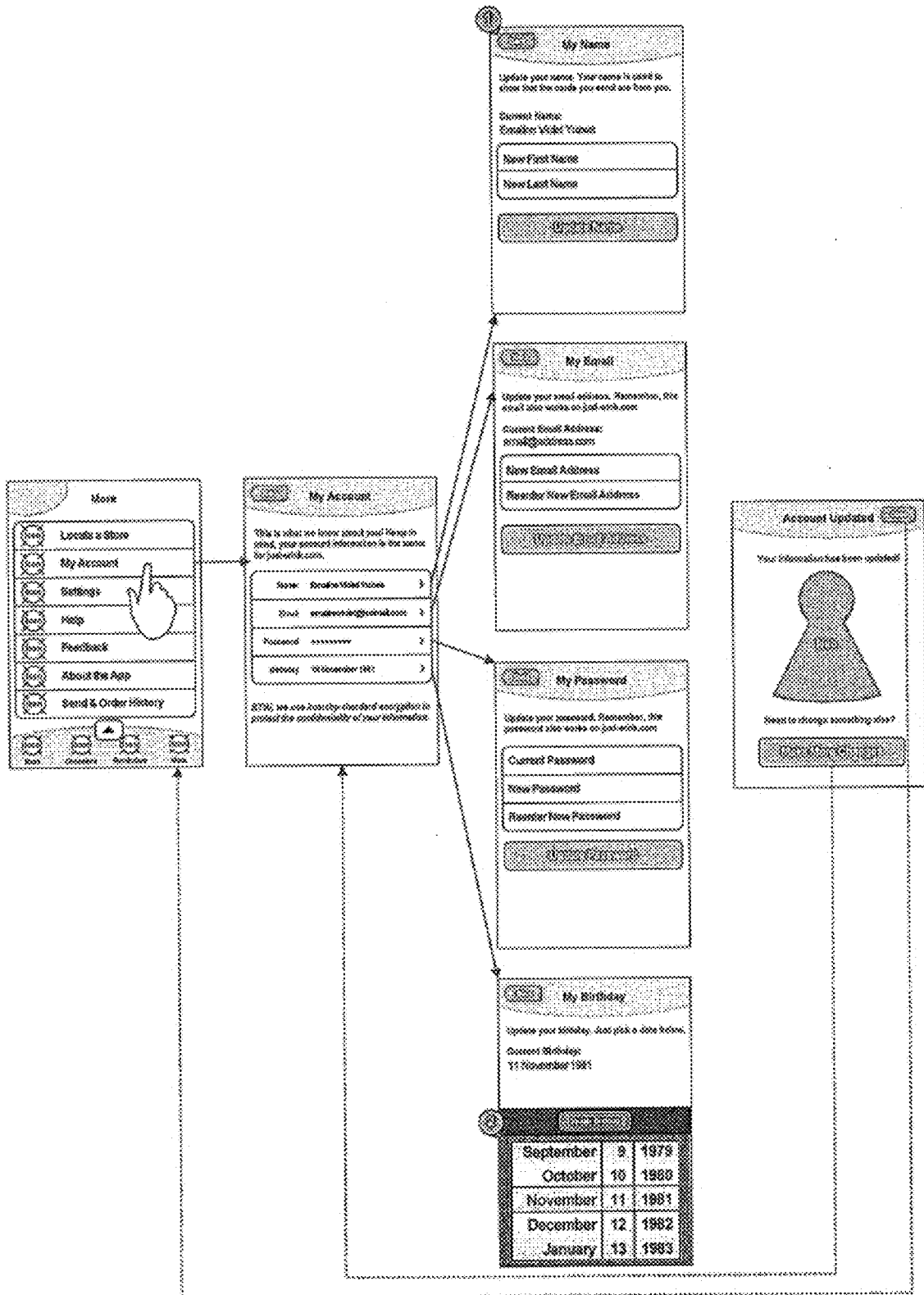
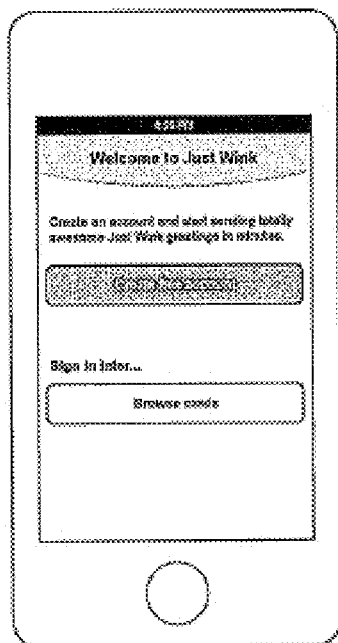
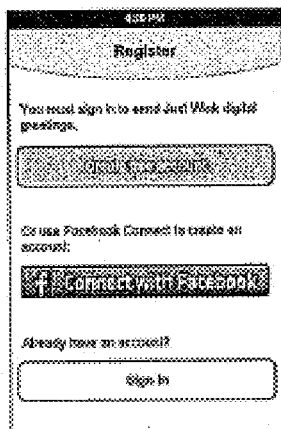
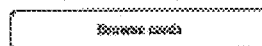
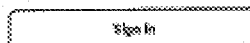


FIGURE 24

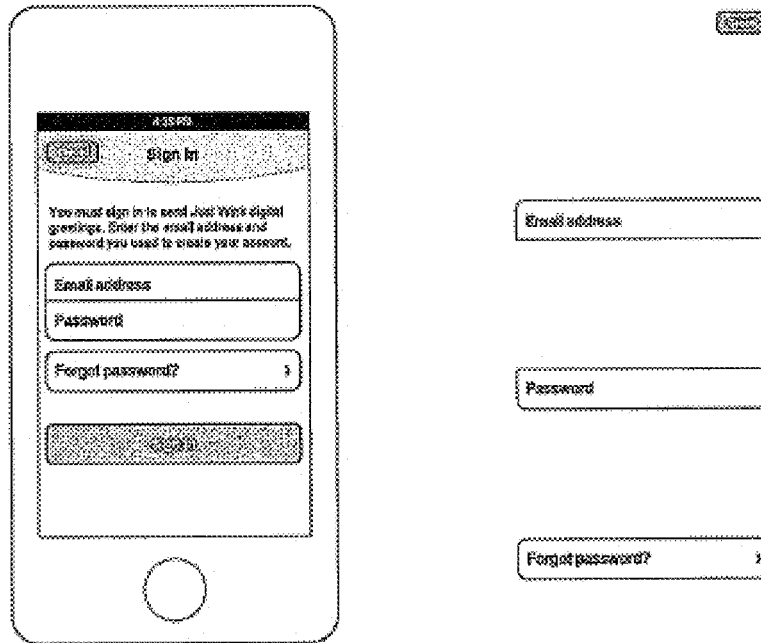


First Run
(After Splash Screen)



First Run
(After Personalization)

FIGURE 25



Sign In

Error Messaging

Password or email address isn't entered.
Email address and password are required to sign in.

Invalid password or email address:
Incorrect email or password.
Please try again.

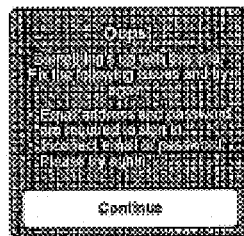
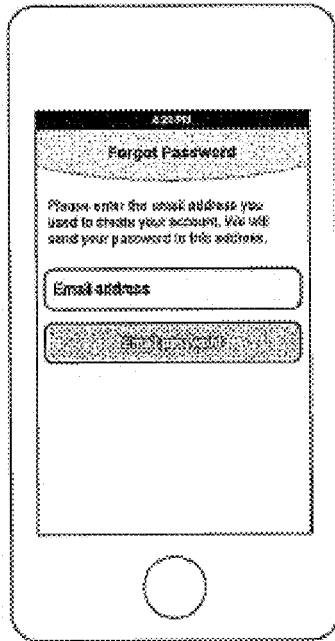
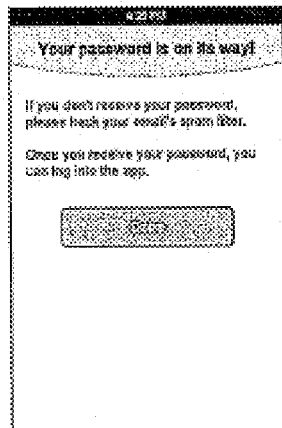
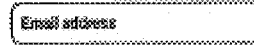


FIGURE 26



Forgot Password



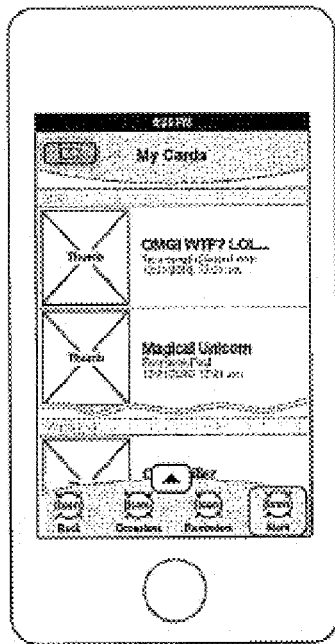
Forgot Password Confirmation

Error Messaging

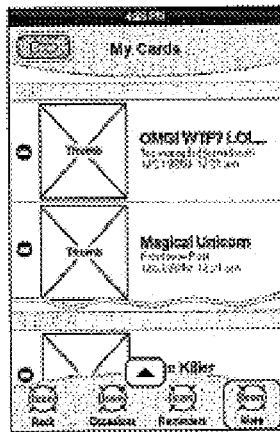
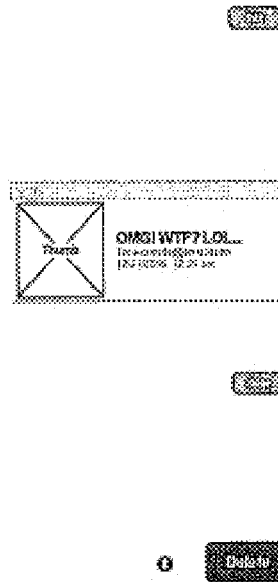
Email address isn't entered.
A valid email address is required.

Invalid email address.
Incorrect email. Please try again.

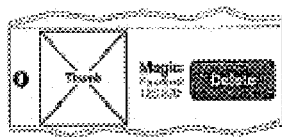
FIGURE 27



My Cards Main

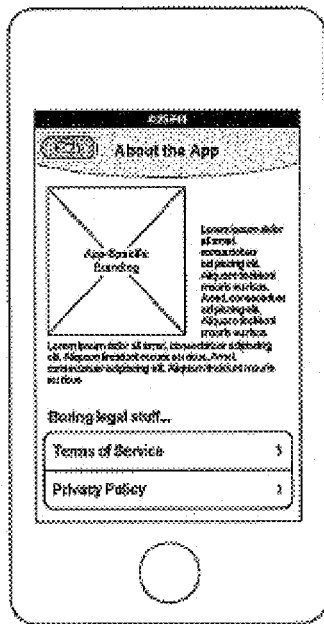


My Cards
(Edit Mode)



My Cards
(Canceling Future Send)

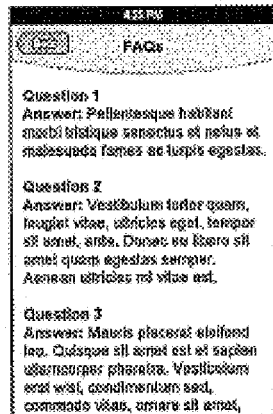
FIGURE 28



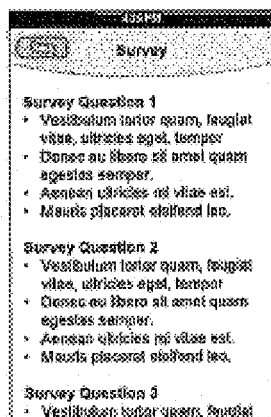
About

Terms of Service

Privacy Policy

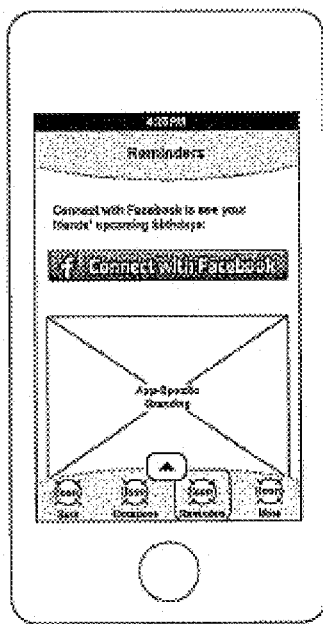


FAQs

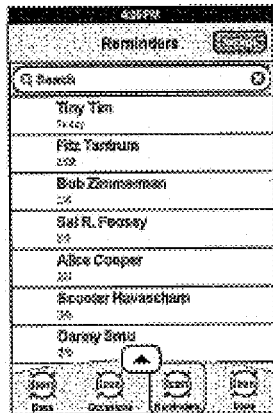


Survey

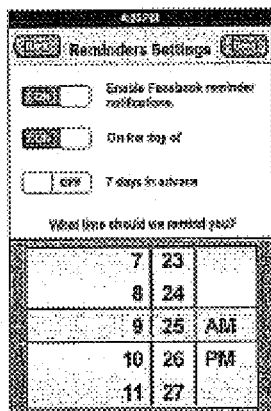
FIGURE 29



Reminders Dashboard
(Not Connected to Facebook)

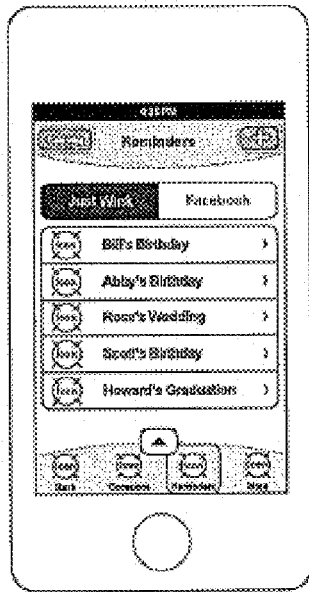


Reminders Dashboard
(Connected to Facebook)

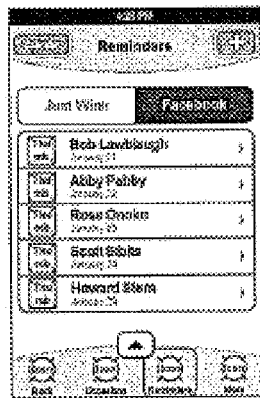


Reminders Settings

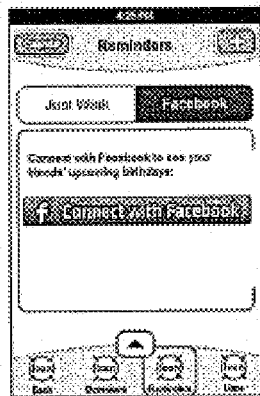
FIGURE 30



Reminders Dashboard

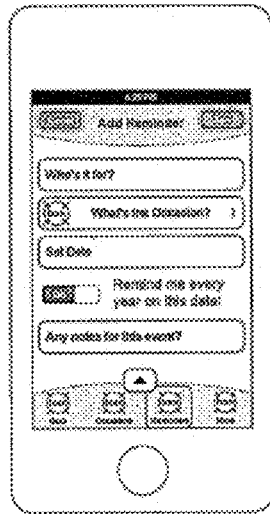


Facebook Reminders (Logged In)

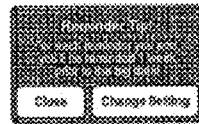


Facebook Reminders (Not Logged In)

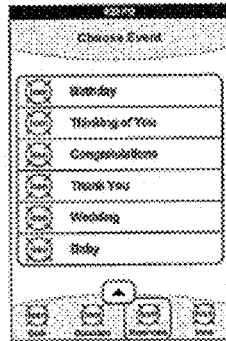
FIGURE 31



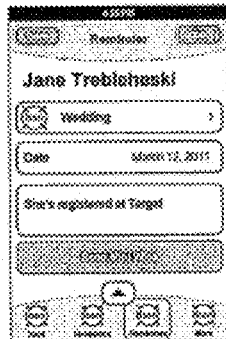
Add Reminder



Add Reminder
(First Run)



Choose Event
(from What's the Occasion?)

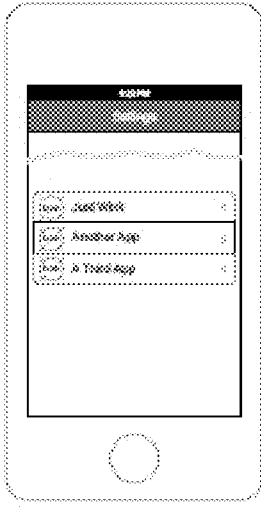


View Reminder

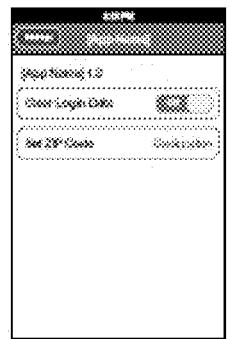


View Reminder
(Edit Mode)

FIGURE 32



iPhone Device Settings



App Settings

FIGURE 33

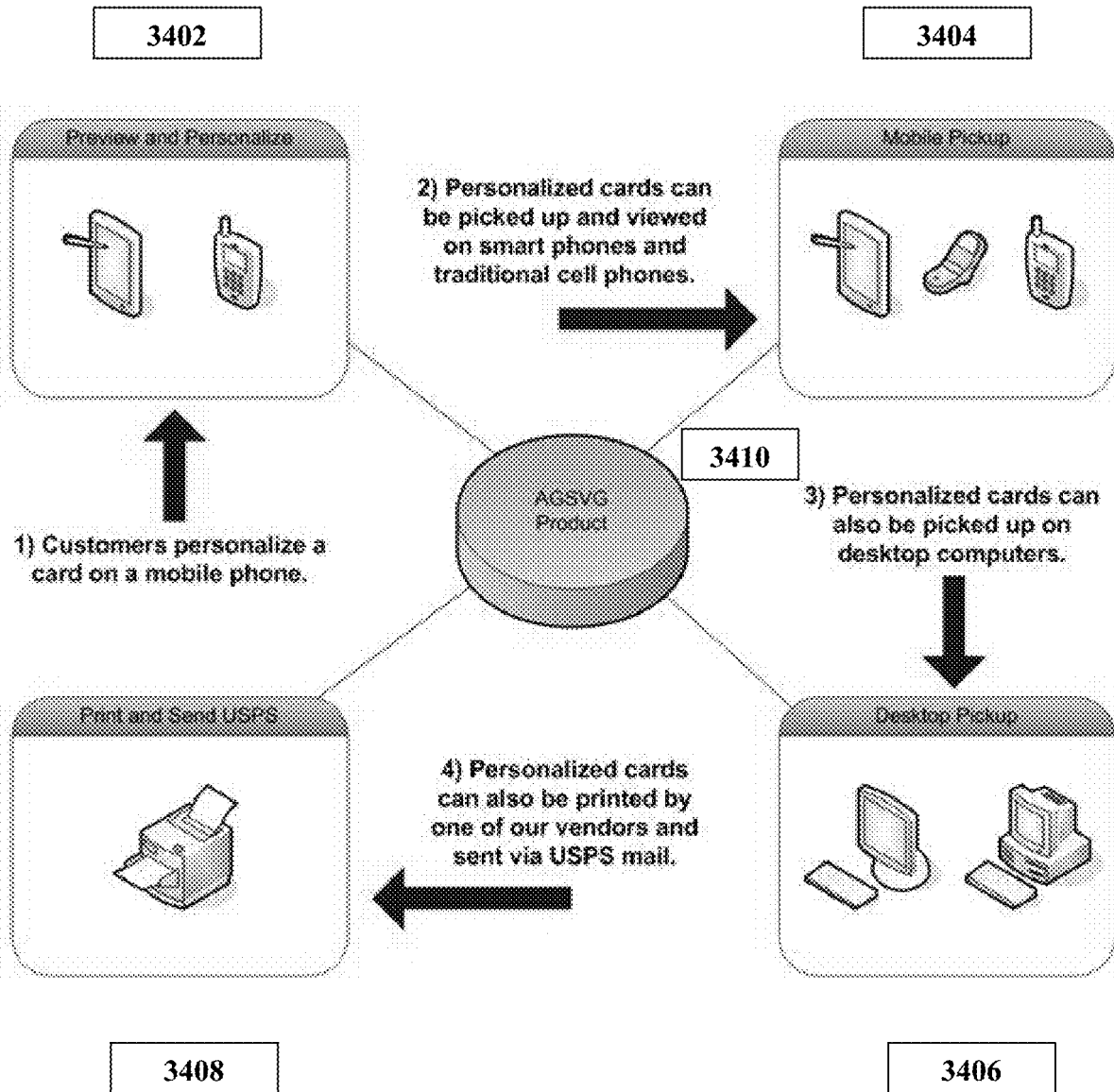


FIGURE 34

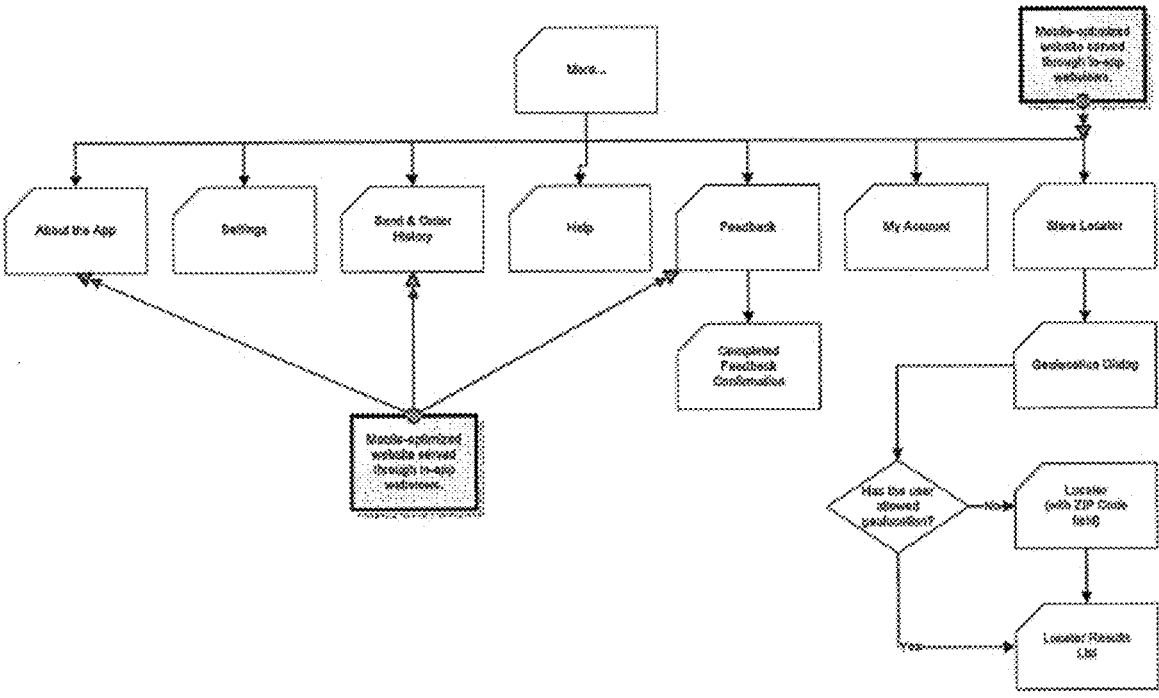


FIGURE 36

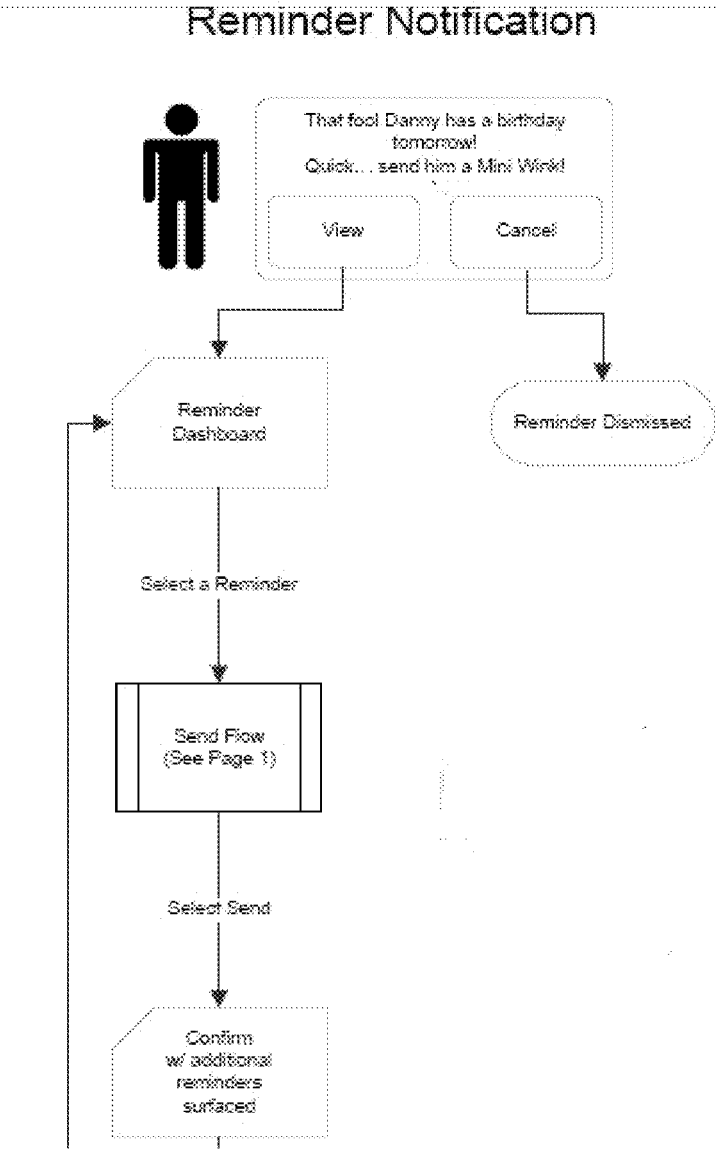


FIGURE 37

View Reminders (w/ one-time connect to Facebook)

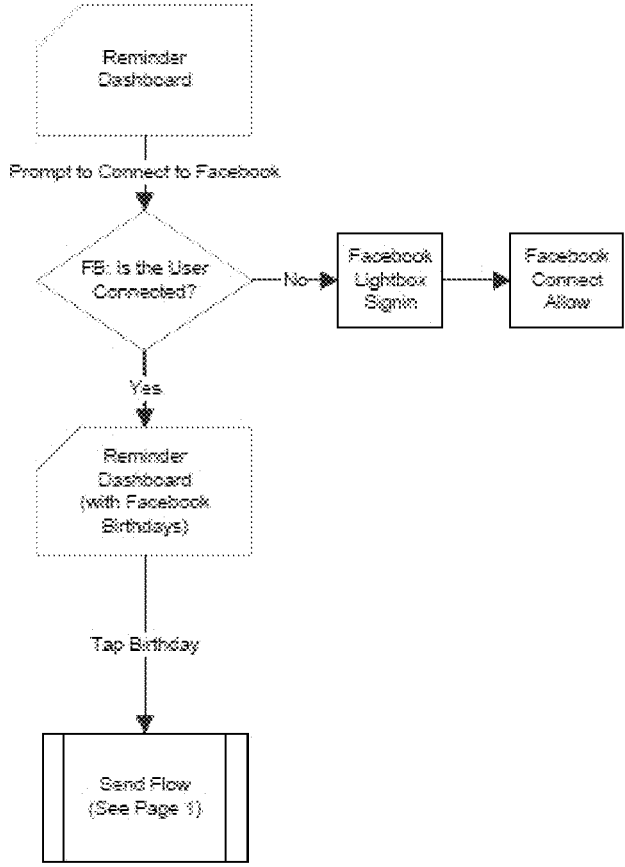


FIGURE 38

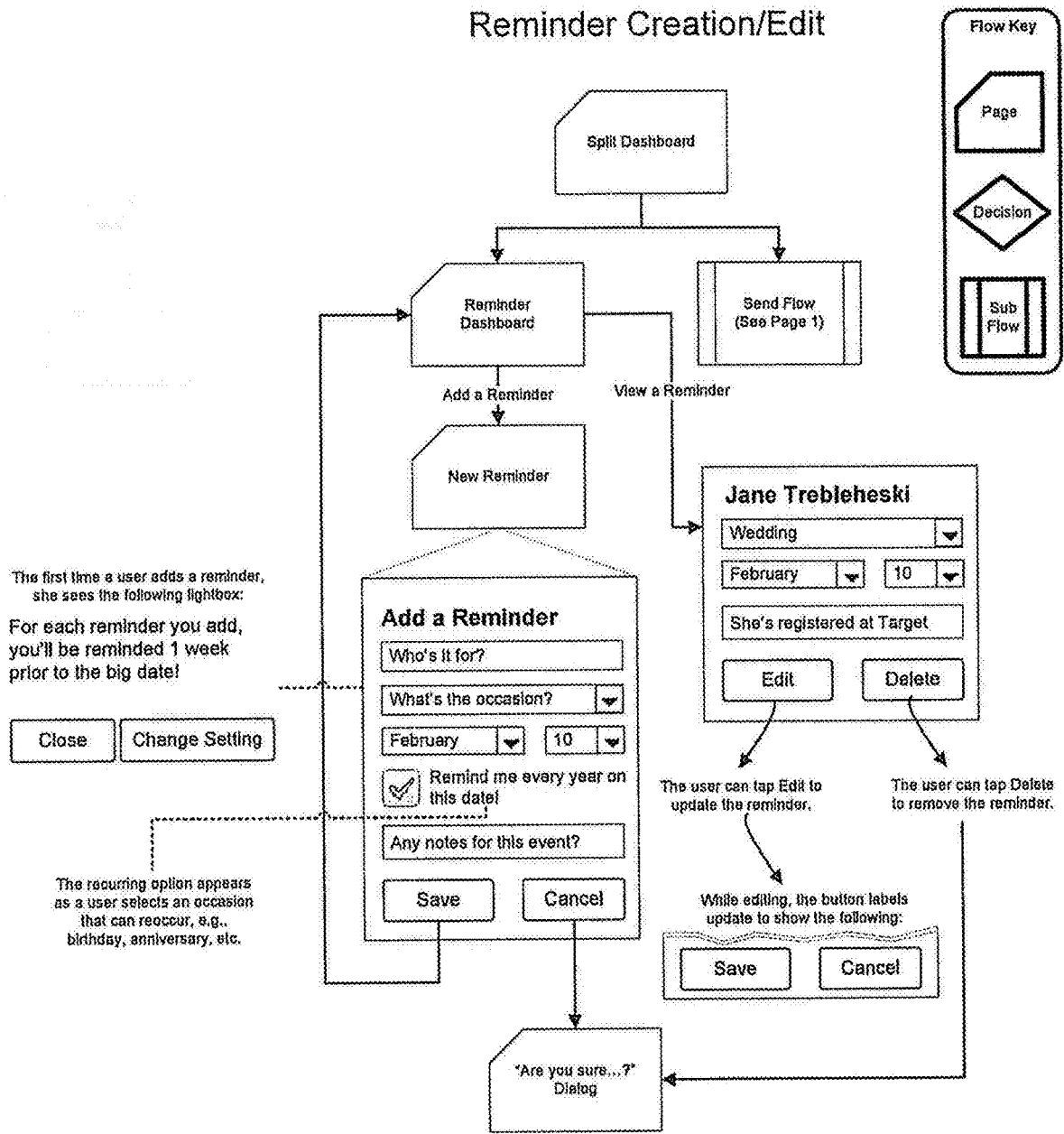


FIGURE 39

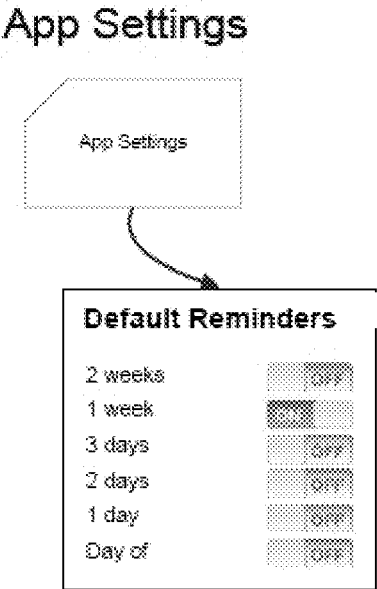


FIGURE 40

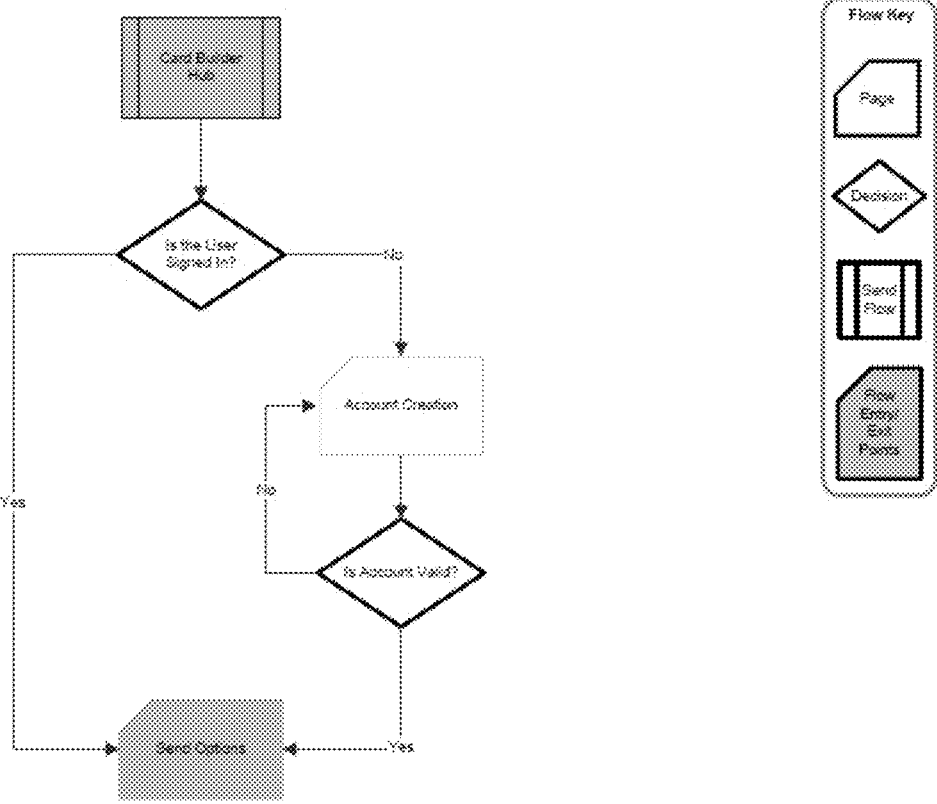


FIGURE 41

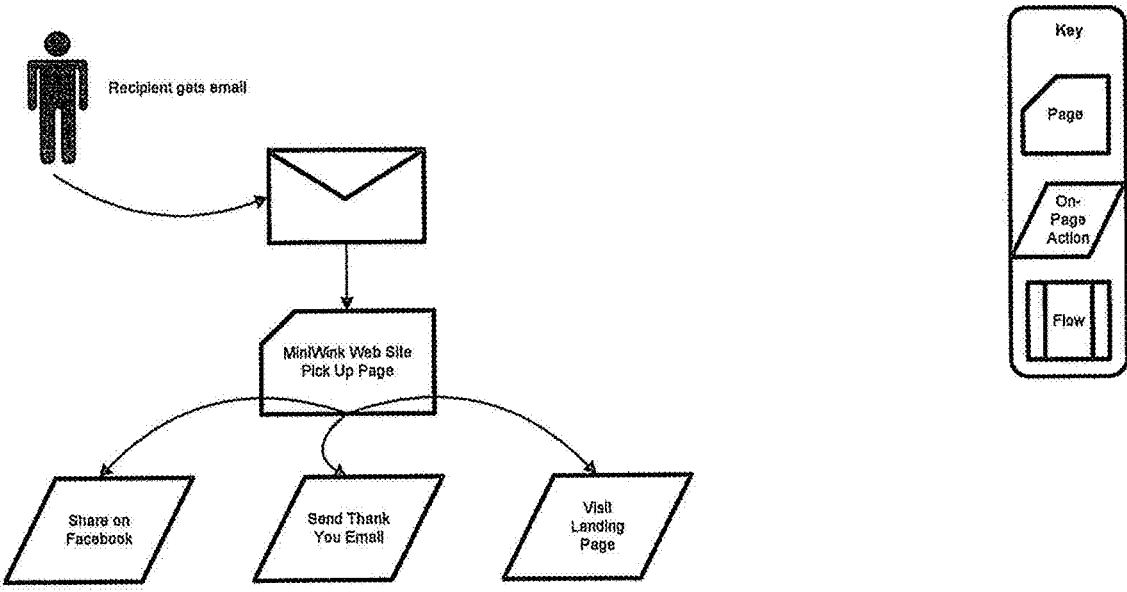


FIGURE 42

Mobile Email

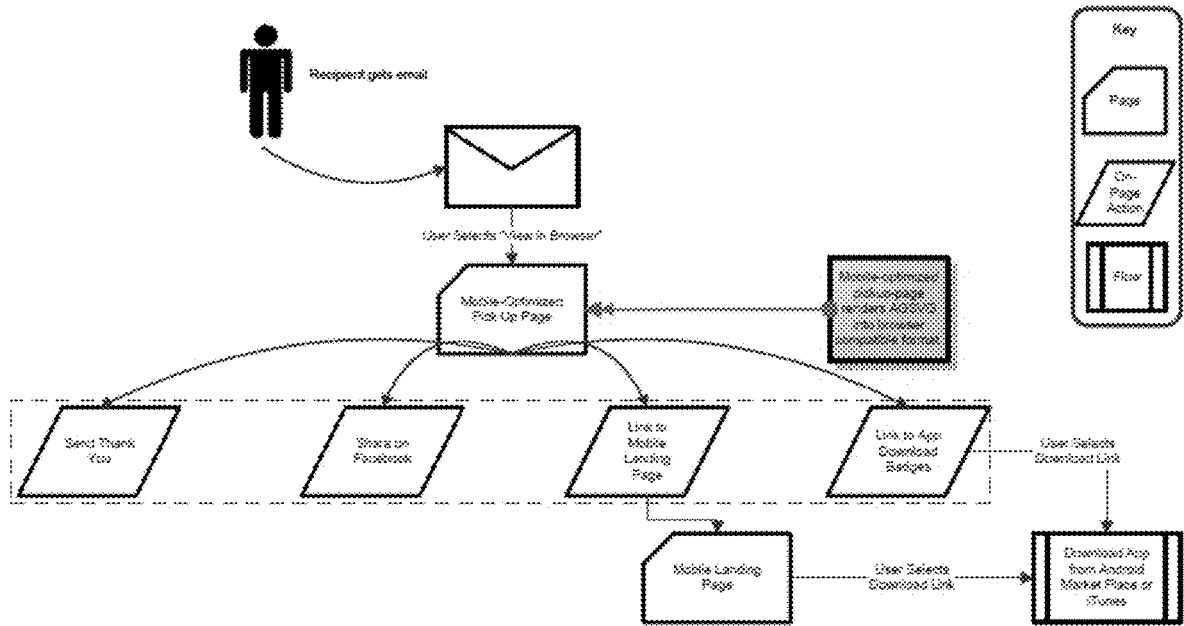
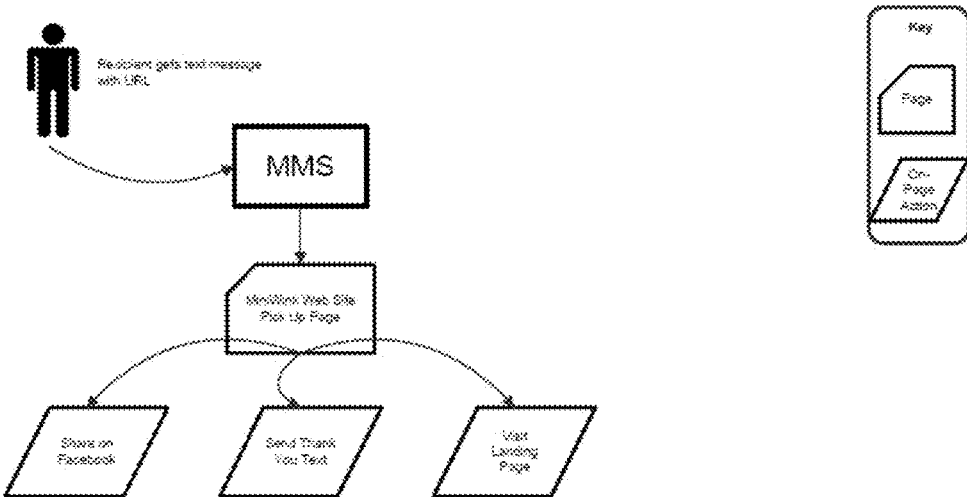
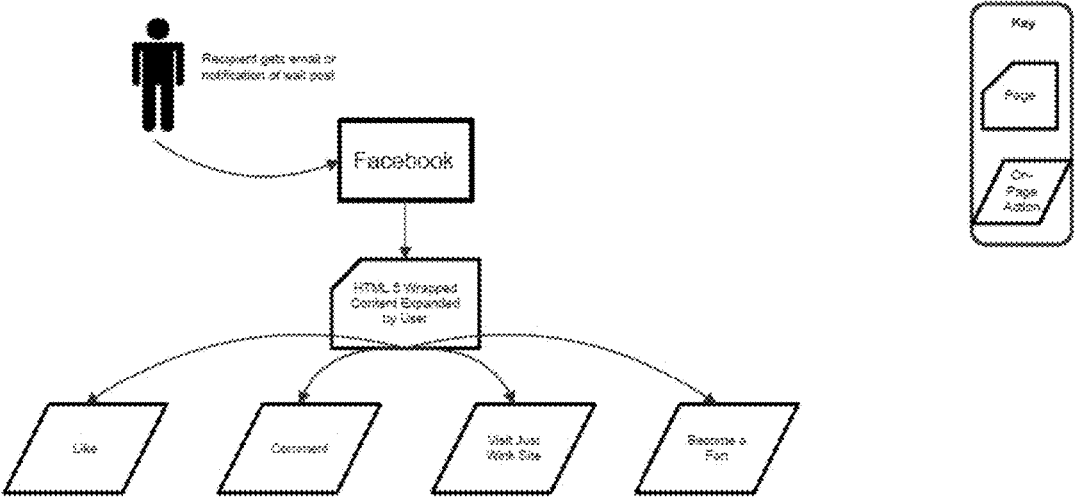


FIGURE 43



Project	Page Name	Version	Author	Last Update
MiniWeb App	Pick Up Flow - Facebook (Mobile Web)	1.0	T. Ekanik	08/28/12 : 4:20:44 PM

FIGURE 44



Project	Page Name	Version	Author	Last Update
MissPlink App	Pick Up Flow - Facebook App	1.0	T. Bui	05/29/12 : 4:07:44 PM

FIGURE 45

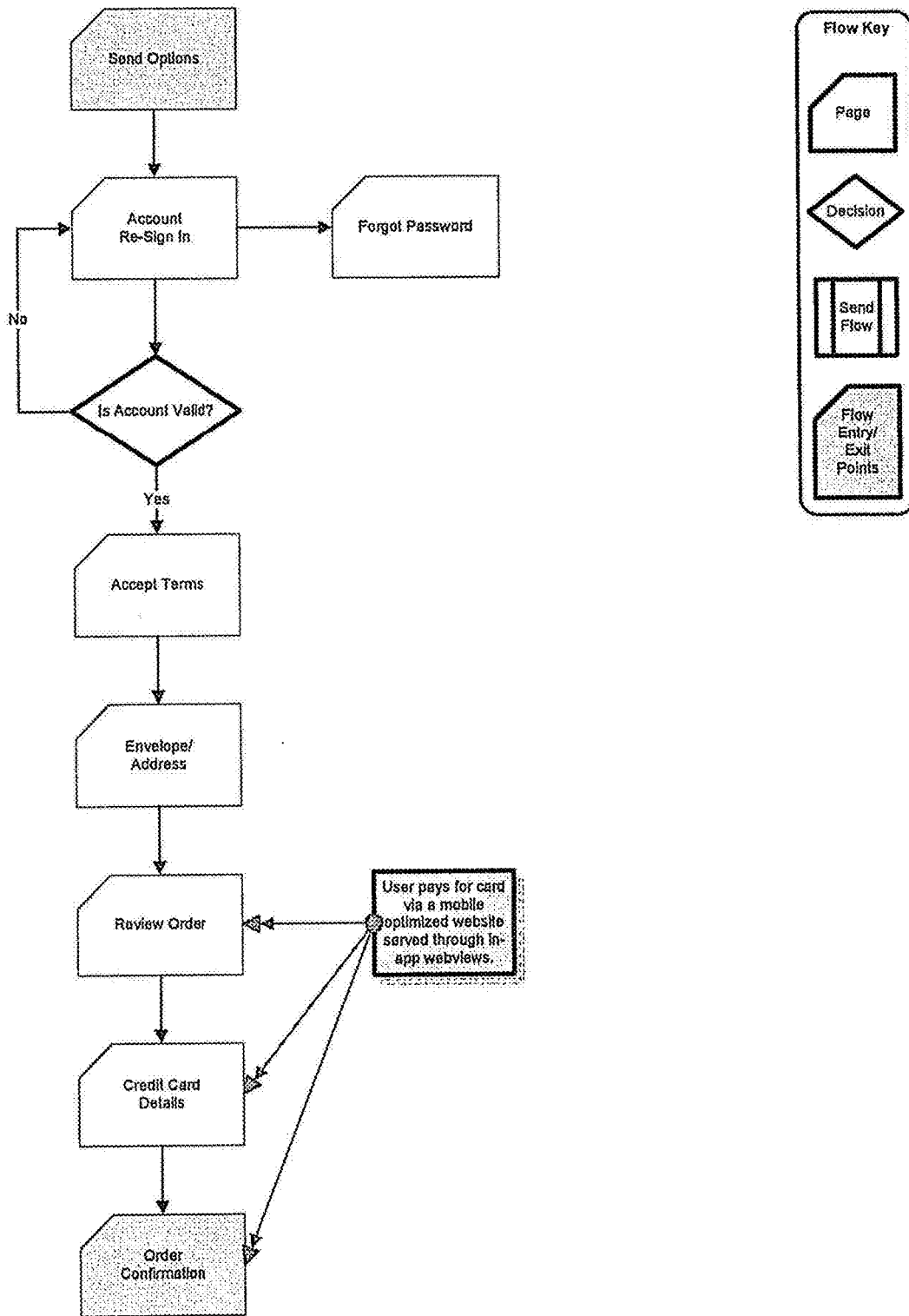


FIGURE 46

**SYSTEMS, METHODS AND APPARATUSES
FOR CREATING, EDITING, DISTRIBUTING
AND VIEWING ELECTRONIC GREETING
CARDS**

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This continuation application claims priority to U.S. Non-Provisional application Ser. No. 13/460,045, entitled "SYSTEMS, METHODS AND APPARATUSES FOR CREATING, EDITING, DISTRIBUTING AND VIEWING ELECTRONIC GREETING CARDS," filed on Apr. 30, 2012 (allowed), which claims the benefit of and priority to U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/481,028, entitled "ELECTRONIC GREETING SERVICE," filed on Apr. 29, 2011 and U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/486,050, entitled "ELECTRONIC GREETING SERVICE," filed on May 13, 2011, the disclosures of which are incorporated herein by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The general inventive concepts relate to electronic greeting service and, more particularly, to systems, methods, and apparatuses for creating, displaying, editing, distributing and viewing of high-resolution electronic greeting cards or "ecards".

BACKGROUND

[0003] Portable computing devices have become widely adopted in the technology-driven modern world. "Smart" phones (e.g., Apple's iPhone®, Google's Droid®, Research in Motion's Blackberry®) and "Tablet Computers" (e.g. Apple's iPad®) are two types of portable computing devices. While portable computing devices combine the functionality of Personal Digital Assistants ("PDAs") with the functionality of cellular or mobile phones, Tablet Computers bring most features of personal computing to a portable platform. Along with the advent and the widespread acceptance of the portable computing devices, came the need for applications ("apps") which operate on said devices and perform specific functions as desired by a consumer ("user"). One such app is an app to send and receive electronic greetings.

[0004] Currently, users may use electronic mail ("email") to send and receive electronic greetings on their portable computing devices. However, there is a need for an app which is deployed on the device's native operating system and which allows the user to send and receive an electronic version of a high definition greeting card.

[0005] In view of the above, there is an unmet need for systems, methods and apparatuses for creating, editing and distributing electronic greeting cards through an app which runs natively on the portable computing device's operating system and which allows the user to communicate with other users and non-users in multiple ways.

BRIEF SUMMARY

[0006] The general inventive concepts contemplate systems, methods, and apparatuses for creating, displaying, editing, distributing and viewing of high-resolution electronic greeting cards for present day and future portable computing devices. By way of example, to illustrate various

aspects of the general inventive concepts, several exemplary embodiments of systems methods and/or apparatuses are disclosed herein.

[0007] Systems, methods, and apparatuses, according to one exemplary embodiment, allow downloading an electronic greeting card application to a portable computing device. The downloading system comprises a server, a paper greeting card, and a code printed on the paper greeting card. The electronic greeting card application is downloaded to the portable computing device from the server in response to the portable computing device scanning the code on the paper greeting card. The electronic greeting card application can also be downloaded to the portable computing device directly from the server through an online, internet, consumer decision or transaction to download the app from an app store without purchasing or scanning a paper greeting card.

[0008] Systems, methods, and apparatuses, according to one exemplary embodiment, provide a category of greeting cards in the electronic greeting card application. As contained within the electronic greeting card application, the category of greeting cards has at least one greeting card. The greeting card comprises a plurality of pages, with at least one of the plurality of pages having an option to customize, and each of the plurality of pages being movable by a touch of a finger. The customized greeting card can be previewed and has an area for selecting a medium to be used to send the greeting card.

[0009] Systems, methods, and apparatuses, according to one exemplary embodiment, provides for delivering electronic greeting cards to an electronic greeting card application. The delivery of electronic greeting cards is achieved via inputs to a content merchandising system, which accepts new greeting card categories and new greeting cards. A web server is updated with the new greeting card categories and new greeting cards inputted into the content merchandising system. A portable computing device through operation of the app compares the new greeting card categories and the new greeting cards with application greeting card categories. The portable computing device through operation of the downloaded app retrieves changes to the application greeting card categories and application greeting cards and stores them in a local cache, and updates the portable computing device with information stored in the local cache.

[0010] Additional features and advantages will be set forth in part in the description that follows, and in part will be obvious from the description, or may be learned by practice of the embodiments disclosed herein. The objects and advantages of the embodiments disclosed herein will be realized and attained by means of the elements and combinations particularly pointed out in the appended claims. It is to be understood that both the foregoing brief summary and the following detailed description are exemplary and explanatory only and are not restrictive of the embodiments disclosed herein or as claimed. The claims have their full ordinary meanings and the descriptions of the embodiments herein are not intended to limit them in any way.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0011] The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated in and constitute a part of this specification, illustrate some embodiments disclosed herein, and together with the description, serve to explain principles of the embodiments disclosed herein.

[0012] FIG. 1 shows a diagram of an exemplary system environment for electronically merchandising and delivering electronic greeting cards over the internet, in accordance with the embodiments of the present disclosure.

[0013] FIG. 2 shows an exemplary Code disposed on a paper greeting card.

[0014] FIG. 3 shows the use of a portable computing device to scan a QR Code.

[0015] FIG. 4 shows a QR Code being captured on a portable computing device.

[0016] FIG. 5 depicts a flow diagram of an exemplary system environment for electronically merchandising and delivering electronic greeting cards over the internet.

[0017] FIGS. 6 through 33 show several exemplary embodiments of the various screens in accordance with the embodiments of the present disclosure.

[0018] FIG. 34 depicts a flow diagram for electronically personalizing and delivering electronic greeting cards over the internet.

[0019] FIGS. 35 through 46 show several flow diagrams which describe the application and logic flow in the ecard app.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0020] The embodiments disclosed herein will now be described by reference to some more detailed embodiments, with occasional reference to the accompanying drawings. These embodiments may, however, be embodied in different forms and should not be construed as limited to the embodiments set forth herein. Rather, these embodiments are provided so that this disclosure will be thorough and complete, and will fully convey the scope of the embodiments to those skilled in the art.

[0021] Unless otherwise defined, all technical and scientific terms used herein have the same meaning as commonly understood by one of ordinary skill in the art to which these embodiments belong. The terminology used in the description herein is for describing particular embodiments only and is not intended to be limiting of the embodiments. As used in the specification and the appended claims, the singular forms “a,” “an,” and “the” are intended to include the plural forms as well, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise. All publications, patent applications, patents, and other references mentioned herein are incorporated by reference in their entirety.

[0022] The following are definitions of exemplary terms used throughout the disclosure. Both singular and plural forms of all terms fall within each meaning:

[0023] “Software” or “computer program” as used herein includes, but is not limited to, one or more computer or machine readable and/or executable instructions that cause a computer, microprocessor, logic circuit, or other electronic device to perform functions, actions, and/or behave in a desired manner. The instructions may be embodied in various forms such as routines, algorithms, modules or programs including separate applications or code from dynamically linked libraries. Software may also be implemented in various forms such as a stand-alone program, an app, a function call, a servlet, an applet, instructions stored in a memory or any other computer readable medium, part of an operating system or other type of executable instructions. It will be appreciated by one of ordinary skill in the art that the form of software is dependent on, for example, requirements

of a desired application, the environment it runs on, and/or the desires of a designer/programmer or the like.

[0024] “Mobile Application” or “Mobile App” or “App” as used herein, includes, but is not limited to, applications that run on smart phones, tablet computers, and other mobile devices. The terms “Mobile Application” or “Mobile App” or “App” can be used synonymously with “software”. Mobile applications allow users to connect to services which are traditionally available on the desktop or notebook platforms. Typically, these services access the internet or intranet or cellular or wireless fidelity (Wi-Fi) networks, to access, retrieve, transmit and share data.

[0025] “Computer” or “processing unit” as used herein includes, but is not limited to, any programmed or programmable electronic device, microprocessor, logic circuit, that can store, retrieve, and process data.

[0026] A “Network” as used herein, includes, but is not limited to, a collection of hardware components and computers or machines interconnected by communication channels that allow sharing of resources and information, including without limitation, the worldwide web or internet.

[0027] A “Web browser” as used herein, includes, but is not limited to, a software for retrieving and presenting information resources on the World Wide Web. An information resource may be a web page, an image, a video, or any other type of electronic content.

[0028] A “Server” as used herein, includes, but is not limited to, a computer or a machine or a device on a network that manages network resources. The general term “Server” may include specific types of servers, such as a File Server (a computer and storage device dedicated to storing files), Print Server (a computer that manages one or more printers), a Network Server (a computer that manages network traffic), and a Database Server (a computer system that processes database queries). Although servers are frequently dedicated to performing only server tasks, certain multiprocessing operating systems allow a server to manage other non-server related resources.

[0029] A “Web Server” as used herein, includes, but is not limited to, a server which serves content to a Web browser by loading a file from a disk and serving it across a network to a user’s Web browser, typically using a hyper text transfer protocol (HTTP).

[0030] “E-greeting” or “Electronic Greeting Card” or “E-greeting card” or “ecard” as used herein, includes, but is not limited to, any greeting card, or a personalized message, or a message which delivers a piece of communication from one user to another user or non-user through electronic media.

[0031] “SVG” or “SVG File” or “Scalable Vector Graphics” or “Scalable Vector Graphics File” as used herein, includes, but not limited to, a vector graphics file format which enables the display of certain multi-dimensional images in XML pages on the web.

[0032] “XML” or “Extensible Markup Language” as used herein, includes, but not limited to, a set of rules for encoding documents in a machine-readable form.

[0033] “Call” or “System Call” or “Pull” or “Pulled” as used herein, includes, but not limited to, a mechanism by which a program makes a request for a service from either an operating system or an application program or software.

[0034] “API Files” or “API” or “Application Programming Interface” as used herein, includes, but not limited to, an interface between different software programs or soft-

ware files, which facilitates the interaction of the different software programs or software files by way of a specific set of rules and specifications.

[0035] “XINCLUDE” as used herein, includes, but not limited to, a mechanism whereby multiple XML documents are merged. The merger is accomplished by incorporating inclusion tags in the source XML document which prompts the source XML document to include other documents or parts of other XML documents resulting in a single XML Information Set.

[0036] “Source Code” or “Product Code” as used herein, includes, but not limited to, a textual software code, or a machine code, or notations in graphical software languages, which specify actions to be performed by a machine, which includes, but not limited to, a computer.

[0037] “Product” as used herein, includes, but not limited to, a single Electronic Greeting Card or a collection of Electronic Greeting Cards. “Product” as used herein, includes, but is not limited to, either the service, or the code, or the user interface or the screen interactions relating to the electronic greeting cards.

Downloading the Ecard App

[0038] Now, with particular reference to the drawings, exemplary embodiments of the invention are described below. FIG. 1 depicts a flow diagram of an exemplary environment 100 for electronically acquiring and downloading an electronic greeting service mobile application (the “ecard app”). In one embodiment, environment 100 may include a portable computing device 104, an application store 106, and a Code 102 on a paper greeting card 108. The application store 106 is marked to generally represent any mobile application store, but it is to be understood that the actual identity of the application store 106, such as an App Store® or Android Marketplace®, is dependent on the operating system downloading the ecard app.

[0039] Code 102 is generally disposed on paper greeting cards, but may be disposed on any physical medium or article without deviating from the spirit of this invention. For example, Code 102 may be disposed on store signage and on advertising materials. Code 102 may be a bar code or a Quick Response (QR) code or any other type of code which functions to resolve a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) address upon scanning. A URL is a reference to an internet resource or address, such as an application store or a website. In one embodiment, Code 102 may be rendered based on the operating system which seeks to resolve the address upon scanning. Specifically, Code 102 may be rendered differently for different mobile operating systems. Alternately, Code 102 may be operating system neutral, and may be rendered similarly for any mobile operating system.

[0040] With further reference to FIG. 1, the user may wish to download the ecard app by scanning Code 102. The user may choose any known scanning program or application to perform the scanning, as long as the program or application functions to resolve an address upon scanning, such as the mobile application “Scan” (provided by QR Code City).

[0041] In one embodiment, where different Codes 102 exist for different operating systems, after the user scans the desired operating system’s Code 102, the portable computing device 104 resolves the scan as a call to download the ecard app from the application store 106. The portable computing device 104 is routed to the application store 106

dedicated to the operating system identified, where the user is prompted to download the ecard app.

[0042] In one embodiment, where the Code 102 may be operating system neutral, after the user scans the Code 102, the portable computing device 104 is routed to a website 110 (not shown). Website 110 is housed on a server 112 (not shown), which further automatically interprets the user’s operating system and prompts the user to download the ecard app by re-directing the portable computer device 104 to the application store 106 dedicated to the operating system identified.

[0043] In another embodiment, after the user scans the Code 102, the portable computing device 104 is routed to a website 114 (not shown) which contains links to several application stores which the user may select. Website 114 is housed on a server 112 (not shown). Once the user selects the appropriate application store link, portable computing device 104 is routed to the application store 106 dedicated to the operating system identified, where the user is prompted to download the ecard app.

[0044] In another embodiment, scanning Code 102 may also be utilized to capture statistical and analytical data about the users. For instance, the scanning program or application which is utilized for scanning Code 102 may initially direct the portable computing device 104 to a statistical aggregation site and/or an analytics site 140 (not shown), such as Google Analytics®.

[0045] In each of the embodiments described above, when the user is prompted to download the ecard app, the user may do so and install the application on the portable computing device 104 from the application store 106.

[0046] To further illustrate capturing a Code on a portable computing device, with reference to FIG. 2, an exemplary Code, styled QR Code 200, is disposed on a paper greeting card. With reference to FIG. 3, the user may utilize a portable computing device 300 to scan (e.g. by pointing and shooting using the portable computing device’s camera) the QR Code 200. The QR Code is then captured as shown by the exemplary QR Code 400 in FIG. 4.

[0047] The various embodiments of downloading an ecard app are described in more detail below, with particular reference to flowcharts which help illustrate the embodiments.

[0048] In one embodiment, with reference to FIG. 4A, different Codes 102 exist for different operating systems. After the user scans Code 102 at step 402, the portable computing device 104 resolves the URL for downloading the ecard app at step 404. At step 406, the portable computing device 104 is then routed to the application store 106 dedicated to the operating system identified, where the user is prompted to download the ecard app.

[0049] In another embodiment, with reference to FIG. 4B, Code 102 is operating system neutral. After the user scans Code 102 at step 408, the portable computing device 104 resolves the URL for a website 110 (not shown) at step 410. Website 110 is housed on a server 112 (not shown). Website 110 automatically interprets the portable computing device 104 operating system at step 412, by utilizing the header packet information provided by the portable computing device 104 browser. At step 414, the portable computing device 104 resolves the URL for downloading the ecard app. At step 416, the portable computing device 104 is then routed to the application store 106 dedicated to the operating system identified, where the user is prompted to download

the ecard app. In another embodiment, after website 110 interprets the portable computing device 104 operating system at step 412, rather than the device 104 resolving a URL for downloading the app, the device 104 may be directed to another website 160 (not shown), which contains multiple download options. At website 160, the user may choose one option before proceeding to steps 414 and 416 described above, to resolve the URL for downloading the app and downloading the app respectively.

[0050] In another embodiment, with reference to FIG. 4C, Code 102 is operating system neutral. After the user scans Code 102 at step 418, the portable computing device 104 resolves the URL for a website 114 (not shown) at step 420. Website 114 is housed on a server 112 (not shown). Website 114 presents the user of the portable computing device 104 with multiple download options based on the operating system of the user. At step 422, the user selects a single download option, such as a link to the App Store®. At step 424, the portable computing device 104 resolves the URL for downloading the ecard app. At step 428, the portable computing device 104 is then routed to the application store 106 dedicated to the operating system identified, where the user is prompted to download the ecard app. Once the ecard app is downloaded into the portable computing device, much of the software comprising the app is stored within the portable computing device.

Providing Content to the Ecard App

[0051] Once the ecard app is downloaded to a portable computing device 104, the ecard app provides a system for merchandising and delivering electronic greeting cards. FIG. 5 depicts a flow diagram of this exemplary system environment 500 for electronically merchandising and delivering electronic greeting cards over the internet, consistent with the exemplary methods described herein. In one embodiment, system environment 500 may include a content merchandising system 510, a content delivery platform 580 (not shown), a cloud service system 560 and a plurality of portable computing devices 570.

[0052] Content merchandising system 510 may consist of any number of computers or servers that the merchandiser uses to program and create electronic greeting cards and card categories to be downloaded to users' portable computing devices. Content delivery platform 580 is the software platform which enables the content merchandiser to program and create electronic greeting cards and card categories to be downloaded to the users' portable computing devices. A content merchandiser may include the owner/host/provider of the ecard app, or a third party provider which provides content, such as card categories and electronic greeting cards, to the owner/host/provider for use in the content merchandising system 510. A cloud service system 560 is a collection of servers, including web servers 562.

[0053] Using the content merchandising system 510, a content merchandiser programs card categories and electronic greeting cards into the content delivery platform 580. Programming card categories may include, but not limited to, creating new card categories, deleting existing card categories, and modifying existing card categories. Categories may correspond to birthdays, anniversaries, or any other type of holidays or events. Similarly, programming electronic greeting cards may include, but is not limited to,

creating new electronic greeting cards, deleting existing electronic greeting cards, and modifying existing electronic greeting cards.

[0054] After the card categories and/or electronic greeting cards are programmed into the content delivery platform 580, the "changes" 520 are propagated or transmitted into the cloud service system 560. Changes 520 include any edits, updates, deletions and additions to the card categories and/or electronic greeting cards. The cloud service system 560 may include or interact with a plurality of web servers 562 (not shown) that are disposed in communication with the system environment 500.

[0055] A plurality of portable computing devices 570 with the downloaded ecard app monitor the cloud service system 560 for changes 520. Once changes 520 are recognized by the plurality of portable computing devices 570, any of said devices 570 request the changes 520 from the cloud service system 560.

[0056] Depending on the type of portable computing device 570 (e.g. Tablet Computers, Smart Phones, and various brands thereof, such as Apple® or Motorola® or HP® or Android®) making the request for changes 520, an Application Programming Interface (an API) of the content delivery platform 580 serves up or transmits changes 520 that correspond to the type of portable computing device 570 making the request. The changes 520 are stored in the portable computing device 570 local cache 550, for later use. Local cache 550 in each portable computing device may assist in reducing network bandwidth, improving User Interface (UI) responsiveness, enabling offline usage and preserving battery life. When the ecard app is loaded initially, the ecard app will download a content catalog and card content through the API. The ecard app also requests card content for new categories and cards based on respective device screen sizes and resolutions (i.e., pixel density). The API provides a nearest match for the requested sizes, so that resources for a tablet computer, for example, will serve larger content than resources for smaller screened devices. In one embodiment, subsequent requests for the content changes 520 are then made by comparison to the applicable local cache 550, each time checking whether the existing content has changed. If the cache has changed, before downloading the any new changes, the app will check with the server whether or not the content has been modified. This validation step helps to prevent unnecessary requests for redundant data. In another embodiment, subsequent requests for the content changes 520 are made to the API without first checking for changes to the existing content in the local cache 550. Here, new content is simply requested from the API, and any new content provided therein by the API is cached in the local cache 550.

[0057] In one exemplary embodiment, the API 540 is utilized for the purposes of facilitating the rendering of Scalable Vector Graphics (Images) (SVG) on the portable computing devices, including external images which are stored in an SVG format. SVG format is a type of format which uses extensible markup language (XML) specifications to render static and dynamic two-dimensional vector graphics. The API is used for, but not limited to, visualization, scalable icons, scalable graphics, scalable text, scalable images, scalable dynamic text and other uses which require scalable data. The system interactions between the several SVG files, non-SVG files and the API is handled via a communication network, comprised of a portable computing

device, the internet and the host server(s) that comprise the cloud **560**. The communication network uses the API as the bridge between the user's portable computing device and the SVG graphics and other files that comprise the card content. Source code that comprises the app allows the user of the app to interact with and manipulate the elements within an SVG file and any non-SVG files through the API.

[0058] In several exemplary embodiments, the user interacts with, or edits, or displays, or perform actions with, or views, or adds/edits/replaces information on the user interface. The user interactions are enabled by system interactions between several SVG files, API files and the app Source Code. They include displaying, interacting with, and managing animations, loading text within SVG files, and loading dynamic text in the SVG files. Further, when the user wishes to interact with the screen of the smart phone, such user interactions are enabled by system interactions between several SVG files, API files and the app Source Code. In one exemplary embodiment, the SVG files can be scaled. Unlike the files with Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG) properties and/or files with Graphics Interchange Format (GIF) properties, SVG files, and especially SVG images are scalable to the size of the window where the image is viewed. After rendering, the SVG file adjusts in size and resolution to the size of the viewing window. Additionally, the SVG files are interactive. In one exemplary embodiment, the SVG files are formatted such that the resultant SVG file complies with XML specifications. The SVG files are created through text-based commands. In one exemplary embodiment, the SVG files are utilized for many purposes, including but not limited to, transformations of objects, colors of a shape or text, opacity of a shape or text, gradients of a shape or text, textures of a shape or text, filling a shape or text, stroking a shape or text (stroke), clipping a shape or text, filter effects on a shape or text, inserting symbols or images at coordinates, interactive elements, event handling within and outside the script, scripting and animation functions.

[0059] In one exemplary embodiment, a document object may be used to access an SVG file or a non-SVG file. A document object may be used to inquire into the document properties of the SVG file or a non-SVG file as well as to create new document elements within the accessed document. In one exemplary embodiment, several references within the accessed document can be retrieved using calls and pulls. In this context, calls may be viewed as requests for information and pulls may be viewed as the retrieval of said information requested. Several API methods can be used to manipulate the SVG elements or non-SVG elements, each of which is associated with a definitive property or function. The API files can also be used to register event listeners to work with the SVG files or non-SVG files. An event listener listens for events such as a 'return' call (pressing the return key) within the portable computing device. In one exemplary embodiment, an SVG file (main.svg) is pulled from one of the cloud servers **560**. The pulled SVG file creates an entry point into the SVG data associated with that pulled ecard. The pulled SVG file may reference to one or more additional SVG files or non-SVG files creating a resulting file. In one exemplary embodiment, the reference from the pulled SVG file to other SVG or non-SVG file(s) is achieved through a pull mechanism via an XINCLUDE or any other XML inclusion means.

[0060] In one exemplary embodiment, the resulting file, as described above, is parsed into a product model. The product model as used herein, includes, but not limited to, a symbol library containing references to images to be used in ecards. In one exemplary embodiment, the symbol library contains references to images for ecards, which include, but are not limited to, sounds, files, static text, dynamic text, functions and images. In one exemplary embodiment, the symbol library contains references to the usage of the images (assets) which include, but are not limited to, identifying whether the image is a background, a sticker, a portion of the e-greeting card, a foreground, a font, a signature element, a text element, an image element, an audio element and an element which defines function of the image. In one exemplary embodiment, the symbol library contains a list of "scenes". The scenes may correspond to pages in a greeting card which is held in a physical (e.g. paper) medium. The list of scenes, includes, but not limited to, a front-cover scene, an inside left scene, an inside right scene, a back-cover scene and a middle page scene. In one exemplary embodiment, the scenes may be comprised mostly of references to objects in the symbol library. For instance, a front cover scene may reference a background image from the symbol library. Also, a front cover scene may reference an audio clip from the symbol library which may be used for the purposes of background audio.

[0061] In one exemplary embodiment, the product code translates the SVG file(s), the non-SVG file(s), the resultant file and any references to the symbol library into a series of "draw" calls that the application performs, which directs the application into drawing or creating a page on the portable computing device's screen. In one exemplary embodiment, the application is directed into drawing or creating a page, without identifying or "knowing" the underlying SVG data.

User Operation and Flow of Ecard App

[0062] Reference will now be made in detail to the flow of a user's operation and function of the ecard application on a portable computing device after it has been downloaded to the device. The user interactions are operated through the methods and systems described above with respect to FIG. **5**.

[0063] In one exemplary embodiment, the ecard app's home screen displays one or more electronic greeting cards. The user may navigate between several electronic greeting cards by interacting with the user interface. For example, as illustrated in FIG. **6**, the user interface is a touch screen, and the user may tap on an electronic greeting card **606** (or any other cards, such as **602** and **604**) to open the selected card's interactive view. The user may swipe his or her finger to the right or to the left to view, select and navigate between any of the electronic greeting cards available under the selected occasion. Thus, for example, the user may swipe right to move from the first electronic greeting card **606** to the last electronic greeting card, while the user may swipe left to move from the last electronic greeting card to the first electronic greeting card **606** within the selected occasion.

[0064] With further reference to FIG. **6**, the ecard app may display a list of categories in response to the user interacting with the user interface. For example, in one embodiment, the user interface is a touch screen, and the user may interact with the touch screen by tapping and dragging any part of a categories graphic icon, styled Occasions **608**, to view a list of primary occasions **610** for which an electronic greeting

card may be created. Further, the user may, by tapping and dragging any part of the Occasions screen **608**, be able to view several occasions **610**, including, but not limited to, Birthday, Wedding, Thank You and Baby occasions. One of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that any number and type of occasions may be displayed in the ecard app. For example, the user interface screen of the ecard app may display a set of 6 occasions or a set of 12 occasions as defined by the user. Selecting a single occasion will display all the electronic greeting cards available under the selected occasion. For example, as illustrated in FIG. 6, the user may single tap the Birthday occasion to view and select any of the available electronic greeting cards **612**, **614**, **616** under the Birthday occasion.

[0065] In one exemplary embodiment, the ecard app may display a list of all of user's event reminders. For example, with reference to FIG. 6, the user may tap the graphic icon designated to display birthday reminders **618**. The tap on the reminders graphic icon **618** will reveal a view of the user's upcoming reminders **620**.

[0066] In one exemplary embodiment, the ecard app may display a list of sub categories in response to the user interacting with the user interface. For example, with reference to FIG. 7, the user interface is a touch screen, and the user may tap any occasion from the list of occasions to view said occasion's sub categories. The user may scroll through the list either vertically (portrait view) or horizontally (landscape view). To illustrate, the user may tap the occasion Thinking of You **702** to view subcategories **704**, under the selected occasion **702**. The user may be able to view several subcategories **704**, including, but not limited to, Romantic, Friendship, Miss you and Apology. One of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that any number of sub categories may be displayed in the ecard app. For example, the user interface screen of the ecard app may display a set of 6 sub categories or a set of 12 sub categories as defined by the user. Selecting a single sub category will display all the electronic greeting cards available under the selected sub category.

[0067] In one exemplary embodiment, the ecard app may allow the user to move back to an earlier display screen of the portable computing device, by facilitating interaction with the user interface. For example, in one embodiment, with reference to FIG. 7, the user may tap the graphic icon designated to move the user screen behind one screen. The tap on the "Back" graphic icon will reveal the user's last screen. For example, a tap on the Back graphic icon **802** takes the user from the card category (Occasions) screen to the sub category screen **864**.

[0068] In one exemplary embodiment, the user may also wish to display on the screen of the portable computing device, a list of all the occasions, by interacting with the user interface. For example, with reference to FIG. 7, the user may tap the graphic icon designated to display a certain fixed number of occasions on the user screen. The tap on the Occasions graphic icon **706** will reveal a view of the most popular list of occasions or a pre-determined list of occasions.

[0069] The ecard app may display an interactive preview of an electronic greeting card on the screen of the portable computing device. For example, with reference to FIG. 8, the user may tap anywhere within a listed item **804**, **806**, **808**, **810** (e.g. a thumbnail of an electronic greeting card), to view an interactive preview of the selected card.

[0070] In one exemplary embodiment, the ecard app may display a page view of electronic greeting cards on the screen of the portable computing device. For example, with reference to FIG. 8, the user interface is a touch screen, and the user may tap on a graphic icon **812** which allows the user to switch between a grid view **814** and a list view **864** of electronic greeting cards. One of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that any number of views can be created within the user interface and could be displayed on the user interface.

[0071] With further reference to FIG. 8, the ecard app may also display several "Options" within the interactive preview, on the screen of the portable computing device. For example, the user may tap and hold the thumbnail of an electronic greeting card **804**, **806**, **808** or **810**, which allows the user to either view the interactive preview of the selected card or acquire options to personalize the card.

[0072] In one exemplary embodiment, the ecard app may display a navigation graphic icon bar on the screen of the portable computing device. For example, with reference to FIG. 8, the navigation graphic icon bar **840** is disposed across the bottom section of the ecard app. The navigation graphic icon bar **840** gives the user the option to navigate within the ecard application, for example, occasions, reminders, etc.

[0073] In one exemplary embodiment, the ecard app may display a Personalization Hub on the screen of the portable computing device. For example, with reference to FIG. 9, the user interface is a touch screen, and the user may tap on the Personalize and Send graphic icon **902** which allows the user to view the Personalization Hub for the selected card.

[0074] In one embodiment, there may be 4 pages within an electronic greeting card. For example, page 1 is the front cover page, page 2 is the inside left page, page 3 is the inside right page and page 4 is the back cover page of the electronic greeting card. The ecard app may also allow users to view an inside page of an electronic greeting card on the screen of the portable computing device. For example, with reference to FIG. 9, the user may tap and drag from right to left on page 1 of the electronic greeting card **906**, allowing the user to view the inside right page or page 3. Thus, the electronic greeting card **906** that may be generated by the Application is a depiction of a conventional, folded four page paper card with a front page (page 1) and back page (page 4) and two inside pages (pages 2 and 3). Thus, after the card **906** is received by the recipient, the recipient may interact with the card **906** through the use of the recipient's electronic device (for example, a touch screen of a mobile or portable computing device). The recipient's interaction with the card **906** through the recipient's electronic device is defined as the recipient "pick up experience." The recipient may interact with the four pages of the card **906** by "turning the pages" with finger touches similar to turning the pages of a conventional paper card.

[0075] The ecard app may also allow the user to freeze a current position of an electronic greeting card on the screen of the portable computing device. For example, with further reference to FIG. 9, the user may tap and drag from right to left on page 1 of the electronic greeting card **906**, but stop dragging less than half way, allowing the user to view the inside right page or page 3 in whatever position left open by the current open point. In a similar embodiment, the user may tap and drag the page more than the half-way point to

snap the card **906**/complete opening the card **906** all the way to a pre-designated full open point.

[0076] The ecard app may also allow the user to alternate viewing the inside right page and the inside left page of an electronic greeting card, or to return to a front cover page of a greeting card, or to move from and away from a back cover page on the screen of the portable computing device. For example, with further reference to FIG. **9**, the user may tap and drag from right to left on page 1 of the electronic greeting card **906** which allows the user to view the inside right page or page 3 and a single tap on page 3, switches the user to view page 2. Likewise, the user viewing page 2, may, by a single tap of page 2 return to a full view of page 3. A tap and drag from left to right while viewing page 3, closes the card **906** to page 1. A single tap on page 4 returns the user to page 2.

[0077] In one exemplary embodiment, the ecard app may also allow the user to utilize or view visual cues in viewing an electronic greeting card on the screen of the portable computing device. For example, with reference to FIG. **9**, the user may use visual cues, such as arrows, to move between the pages of a greeting card. The visual cues fade out from view after a pre-determined period of time. For example, with reference to FIG. **9**, this period is 1.5 seconds.

[0078] In one exemplary embodiment, the ecard app may also allow the user to add, edit, replace or remove a photo to the electronic greeting card on the screen of the portable computing device. For example, with reference to FIG. **10**, the user interface is a touch screen, and the user may tap the photo area **1002** which takes the user to a photo personalization screen **1004**. Once a photo has been added at **1006**, another single tap would allow the user to go back and edit, replace, or remove the photo that has been added. The ecard app may also allow the user to add, edit, replace or remove a message to the electronic greeting card **1040** on the screen of the portable computing device. For example, with further reference to FIG. **10**, the user may tap the message area **1008** which takes the user to a message personalization step. Once a message **1010** has been added, another single tap would allow the user to go back and edit, replace, or remove the message that has been added. The ecard app may also allow the user to add, edit, replace or remove a signature to the electronic greeting card on the screen of the portable computing device. For example, in one embodiment, with further reference to FIG. **10**, the user may tap the signature area **1012** which takes the user to a signature personalization step. Once a signature **1014** has been added, another single tap would allow the user to go back and update, clear, or redraw the signature that has been added. Further, with reference to FIG. **13**, the user interface is a touch screen, and the ecard app may allow the user to control the thickness of the signature **1302** by choosing one of the thickness options **1304** presented to the user on the screen of the portable computing device. An alternative to providing signature thickness options is to provide a slide bar type icon that changes the thickness of the signature based on moving a user's finger to various positions on a slide bar. The user may shake the portable computing device side-to-side to clear any signature applied until that point. The user may also wish to single tap the 'clear signature' graphic icon **1306** to remove the signature. Further, the user may also use freeform gestures to capture the user's movements onto the portable computing device as a signature drawn in real time.

[0079] In one exemplary embodiment, the ecard app may allow the user to view several options as it relates to updates that the user makes in the user area in the electronic greeting card on the screen of the portable computing device. For example, with reference to FIG. **10**, the user may tap and hold any area that has been updated, which will then present the user an action sheet with the options to delete existing changes, or make changes.

[0080] In one exemplary embodiment, the ecard app may allow the user to preview the electronic greeting card on the screen of the portable computing device. For example, in one embodiment, with reference to FIG. **10**, the user may tap the preview graphic icon **1030** which then provides the user with the interactive preview screen, with the user personalization included.

[0081] In one exemplary embodiment, the ecard app may allow the user to perform several photo-related actions with the electronic greeting card on the screen of the portable computing device. For example, with reference to FIG. **11**, the user interface is a touch screen, and the user may select a photo by either choosing one from a photo album **1102** or by taking a picture **1104** with the portable computing device. Further, the user may choose to remove **1106**, replace **1108**, edit the photo that has already been placed on a card. The user may choose to cancel the photo inserting option **1110** into the electronic greeting card. The user may choose to use the camera interface to take a picture. Further, the user may choose to use a picture from the camera roll or picture roll associated with the portable computing device. The user may choose to tap a zoom graphic icon to zoom in and zoom out by spreading and pinching the screen respectively. With the user's fingers, as is customary with touch screen portable computing devices. The user may choose to move the photograph side-to-side by tapping and dragging on the screen. The user may choose to rotate the photo by interacting with the user screen. Further, the user may choose to select several options from a dialog/action sheet which is presented to the user who has previously added a photo and has returned to add another photo. The dialog/action sheet options include the option to remove the photo, set an animation for the photo, create a delay in an animation in the photo, replacing a photo or selecting a different photo.

[0082] In one exemplary embodiment, the ecard app may allow the user to utilize the standard operating system text keyboard to input text associated with sending the electronic greeting card on the screen of the portable computing device. For example, with reference to FIG. **12**, the user interface is a touch screen, and the user may choose to use the standard operating system text keyboard **1202** to input text **1204** on the greeting card **1206**. The user may also wish to adjust the size of a text associated with sending the electronic greeting card on the screen of the portable computing device. For example, with further reference to FIG. **12**, the user may choose to tap and drag a slider **1210** which is provided on the screen and which allows the user to adjust the text size smaller or larger by moving the slider left or right respectively.

[0083] In one exemplary embodiment, the ecard app may allow the user to view the various options and media that may be used to send the electronic greeting card on the screen of the portable computing device. For example, with reference to FIG. **14**, the user interface is a touch screen, and the user may single tap the email graphic icon **1402** to choose the 'Email Send' screen or single tap the Facebook®

graphic icon **1404** to choose the 'Facebook Post' screen or single tap the Text Message graphic icon **1406** to choose the Text Send screen or single tap the Twitter® graphic icon **1408** to choose the 'Twitter Post' screen or single tap the Real Mail graphic icon **1410** to choose the 'Real Mail' screen. Of course, other social networking web sites or any other delivery medium could be used as a choice in this menu.

[0084] In one exemplary embodiment, the ecard app may allow the user to view the various options associated with sending the electronic greeting card as an email on the screen of the portable computing device. For example, with reference to FIG. **15**, the user interface is a touch screen, and the user may single tap the 'To' graphic icon **1502** to choose the email address of the receiver of the electronic greeting card. The user may also add multiple email addresses in this field. The user may also choose a date **1504** to send the email or choose the default date provided by the app. The user may also choose a birthday for the receiver of the electronic greeting card. The user may tap the send graphic icon which sends the electronic greeting card to the recipient of the electronic greeting card over the internet. The user may also see a message which notifies the user of the send status of the electronic greeting card.

[0085] In one exemplary embodiment, the ecard app may allow the user to view the various options associated with sending the electronic greeting card to a social networking website such as Facebook®. For example, with reference to FIG. **16**, the user interface is a touch screen, and the user may access the user's 'friends' **1602** on 'Facebook®' by tapping the 'My friend's wall' graphic icon **1604** on the user interface. Further, the user may choose a 'friend' from the list of friends **1602** on the Facebook screen, which then pre-populates said friend's name **1606** in the follow-up screen **1608** where the user may enter a personalized message **1610**. Further, the user may 'post' the electronic greeting card on the wall of another user or non-user. Further, the user may personalize the 'post' **1612** on the 'friend's' wall by adding a message to the electronic greeting card by utilizing the standard operating system keyboard. The user may also see a message which notifies the user of the send status of the electronic greeting card.

[0086] In one exemplary embodiment, the ecard app may allow the user to login to Facebook® with reference to sending the electronic greeting. For example, with reference to FIG. **17**, the user interface is a touch screen, and the user may utilize the standard operating system keyboard to enter the email address **1702**, or phone **1704** associated with the Facebook® account and the password associated with the Facebook® account of the sender of the electronic greeting card. Further, with reference to FIG. **17**, The options that are available to the user can be expanded at a later date and may include any options provided by 'Facebook Connect®', a service of Facebook®, or another social networking service or website.

[0087] In one exemplary embodiment, the ecard app may allow the user to view the various options associated with sending the electronic greeting card utilizing the SMS Text Send on the screen of the portable computing device. For example, with reference to FIG. **18**, the user interface is a touch screen, and the user may tap the 'To' field **1802** to open a numeric keyboard for the user to manually enter a phone number. The user interface may prompt the user of an invalid number if the phone number does not meet the field

limits set by the user interface software program or the user interface app. The 'To' field **1802** may also allow the user to add multiple phone numbers either manually or via selecting phone numbers from the user's portable computing device utilizing the portable computing device's native phone number database, a phone book for instance. The user may send the electronic greeting utilizing the SMS Text Send service by tapping the Send graphic icon **1804**. The user may also see a message which notifies the user of the send status of the electronic greeting card.

[0088] In one exemplary embodiment, the ecard app may allow the user to send the electronic greeting card to a recipient by utilizing an option on the screen of the portable computing device. For example, with reference to FIG. **19**, the user interface is a touch screen, and the user may select an option from 'Mail for Me' **1902** or 'Mail to Me' **1904**. This option allows the user to have the electronic greeting card printed as a conventional paper card and sent to the user or recipient by the conventional U.S. Mail. In either option, the user is initially prompted to enter address details **1906** of the recipient. The user is further prompted to enter address details **1908** of the user. The user is then prompted to review the address details of both the recipient and the user at **1910**, with a further option to review **1912** and approve **1914** the personalized greeting card.

[0089] In one exemplary embodiment, the ecard app may allow the user to send the electronic greeting card to multiple users by utilizing an option on the screen of the portable computing device. For example, with reference to FIG. **20**, the user interface is a touch screen, and the user may tap the 'Send Again' graphic icon **2002** to send the same electronic greeting card to other users and non-users. The user may also choose to send a previously personalized electronic greeting card to another or the same recipient, by further personalizing the electronic greeting card, as illustrated by 'Personalize Another' **2004** in FIG. **20**.

[0090] In one exemplary embodiment, the ecard app may allow the user to view and use the electronic greeting service's information by utilizing an option on the screen of the portable computing device. For example, with reference to FIG. **21**, the user may view a list of service information by selecting a 'More' graphic icon **2104**. A single tap of the 'Locate a Store' graphic icon **2106** takes user to the Store Locator screen, a described in FIG. **22**. A single tap of the 'My Account' graphic icon **2108** takes the users to the Account Management screens as described in FIG. **24**. A single tap of the Setting graphic icon **2110** takes the users to a Setting screen as shown in FIG. **33**. A single tap of the Help graphic icon **2112** takes the users to the Help screen as shown in FIG. **29B**. A single tap of the Feedback graphic icon **2114** takes the users to the Survey screen as shown in FIG. **29C**. A single tap of the About the App graphic icon **2116** takes the users to the About the App screen as shown in FIG. **29A**. A single tap of the Sales and Order History graphic icon **2118** takes the users to a Send an Order History screen as described in FIG. **28**.

[0091] In one exemplary embodiment, the user may wish to locate a store by utilizing an option on the screen of the portable computing device. For example, with reference to FIG. **22**, the user interface is a touch screen, and the user may input a zip code **2202** using the standard on-screen keyboard **2204**, to view a list of all stores **2206** in the user's geographic proximity, as defined by the software program or as defined by the app. In one embodiment, the user has the

option to view a list of stores **2206** that sell paper greeting card versions of the electronic greeting cards available within the ecard application. The user may also tap the Map graphic icon to view the listed results as pin points on a map and may also tap the Map graphic icon to view a single result as a pin point on the map. The user may also tap a list item to see a detailed view of the result's information, as illustrated in screen **2220**. The user may also tap and hold the result to view the options associated with the result, such as 'View Location Details' and 'Show Driving Directions.' The ecard app may prompt the user to give permission to use the user's existing location on the geographic GPS positioning system or by way of the user's proximity to a telecommunications tower to locate stores in the geographic proximity of the user. The ecard app may also disable the prompt after three affirmative responses from the user to the said prompt.

[0092] In one exemplary embodiment, the ecard app may allow the user to create a user account, or to browse electronic greeting cards, or to login using Facebook® or other social networking website, or login to an existing user account or request a replacement password by utilizing a corresponding option on the screen of the portable computing device. For example, with reference to FIGS. **23** through **27**, the user may choose to create an account by providing the user interface with an email address, first name, last name, password and a birthday (collectively, **2306**); all of which might be chosen using the operating system's native keyboard platform. Options to allow the user to sign up for a newsletter **2310**, or to catch errors **2312** while registering are also provided. The user may also choose to create an account by utilizing the 'Facebook Connect®' feature **2502** which links the software program or the mobile app with the developer tools provided by 'Facebook®'. The user may also choose to login to the electronic greeting service by entering the login information **2602** created in the said Create step above in FIG. **23**. The user may also choose to request the electronic greeting service to email the user a copy of the password by utilizing the 'Forgot Password' feature **2604** provided by the software program or the mobile app (See FIG. **27** for further illustration). In one embodiment, as shown in FIG. **24**, the user also has the option to revise and edit their name **2402**, email address **2404**, password **2406**, and the birthday **2408**, entered either in the Create step of FIG. **23**, or entered through any subsequent logins to the ecard app.

[0093] In one exemplary embodiment, the ecard app may allow the user to view the user's account information, particularly order history, by utilizing an option on the screen of the portable computing device. For example, with reference to FIG. **28**, the user interface is a touch screen, and the user may utilize the 'My Cards' feature **2802** to view a list of sent and/or scheduled cards **2806** under each occasion and sub category. A vertical swipe of the list of sent and/or scheduled cards reveals older items under each of the occasions or sub categories. The user may also choose to delete electronic greeting cards from this menu at **2804**. Deleting a scheduled card stops the card from being sent in the future, in addition to removing it from the current list on display.

[0094] In one exemplary embodiment, the ecard app may allow the user to view more information about the application, to view helpful answers to frequently asked questions, and to interact with the ecard app via a feedback/survey mechanism. With reference to FIG. **29A**, the user interface

is a touch screen, and the user may utilize the on-screen graphic icons to view information **2902** pertaining to the electronic greeting card service, including, but not limited to, About the product/company **2904**, Terms of Service of the Mobile Application **2906**, Privacy Policy **2908** of the service and the Mobile Application, as well as other legal, technical and corporate information as is made available to the user in the future. With reference to FIG. **29B**, the user interface is a touch screen, and the user may utilize the on screen graphic icon to find answers **2910** to frequently asked questions **2912**. With reference to FIG. **29C**, the user interface is a touch screen, and the user may utilize the on screen graphic icon to render feedback or participate in a survey **2916** for the ecard app.

[0095] In one exemplary embodiment, the ecard app may allow the user to open the 'Connect with Facebook®' prompt to personalize and login to the electronic greeting service using the Facebook login credentials. With reference to FIG. **30**, the user may use the operating system's native keyboard function to login to Facebook® using Facebook Connect® **3002** and to view and search **3006** a list of the user's 'Friends' **3004** on Facebook®. The user also has the ability to narrow down the list of Friends **3004** by selecting from an Auto-Suggest feature of Facebook®. The user may also choose to display the list of Friends in either ascending or descending order of the Birthday, with the dates calculated by the software program to be the closest or farthest date from today's date respectively. The user has the ability to set reminders **3010** to enable Facebook® to send reminders to the user based on a friend's birthday on Facebook®. Further, the user has the ability to set reminders **3010** such that the user receives a notification of the reminder from outside the ecard application. The notification of the reminder may be set at varying time intervals, for example, a notification on the day of the reminder, and a notification seven days in advance of the reminder.

[0096] In one exemplary embodiment, as referenced in FIG. **31**, the ecard app may allow the user to view reminders created locally **3102** in the ecard app, as well as via the Facebook® application **3104**. As referenced in FIG. **32**, the ecard app also allows the user to create a reminder **3206**, add an associated event to the reminder **3208**, and viewing the reminder **3210**.

[0097] FIG. **33** shows an exemplary embodiment of ecard app's settings, including the settings as they pertain to a portable computing device's operating system and to the ecard app.

[0098] FIG. **34** describes the potential life cycle of an electronic greeting card as illustrated in the ecard app. As described in FIG. **34**, the ecard app allows the user to preview and personalize an electronic greeting card at **3402**. The personalized electronic greeting cards may be picked up by and interacted with the recipient users on their mobile devices, at **3404**, or on their desktop computers, at **3406**. ecard app also allows the users to receive personalized greeting cards through the United States Postal Service (USPS), as shown at **3408**. The interactions between the personalization and viewing of the electronic greeting card is facilitated by the API and SVG content, **3410**, described earlier with reference to FIG. **5**.

[0099] FIG. **35** is a flow chart describing the "Send Flow" in the ecard app. At **3502**, category, product data and content or assets are all cached on the portable computing device's disk for fast loading. Further, the category and product assets

are served according to the device running the ecard app and the merchandised categories of cards are pulled from the API and loaded in the background. This is the 'Home' screen. At **3504**, in addition to viewing the Categories of cards, the user has an option to either login to the Reminders area **3507** (See FIG. 37-39), or to view additional information in follow-up pages **3505** (See FIG. 36). At **3506**, the Occasion pages are built dynamically based on the data read from the cache and the API. At **3508**, a single selected electronic greeting card is presented for view. At **3510**, the user enters the Personalization step by entering into the Card Builder Hub. At **3512**, the user personalizes the 'message' portion of the electronic greeting card. At **3514**, the user personalizes the 'signature' portion of the electronic greeting card. At **3516**, the user personalizes the 'photo' portion of the electronic greeting card. At **3518**, the user is presented with an interactive preview of the personalized electronic greeting card. If the user chooses to send the personalized greeting card at **3518**, the user progresses to **3520**, where the user's sign on status is checked. If the user is not signed in, the user access flow at **3522** is described by FIG. 41.

[**0100**] As described in FIG. 41, if a user, who chooses to send the personalized greeting is signed in, the user is directed to the Send Options **4106**, which is further described in FIG. 35, at step **3524**. If a user, who chooses to send the personalized greeting is not signed in, at **4100**, the user is directed to create a new account at **4102**. The new account is checked for validity at **4104**, failing which, the user is directed back to **4102**. If the new account's validity is checked positively, the user is directed to the Send Options **4106**, which is further described in FIG. 35, at step **3524**.

[**0101**] With reference to step **3524** in FIG. 35, the user is presented with an option to Print on Demand at **3526**. The Print on Demand option is further discussed in FIG. 46. As described in FIG. 46, the user is prompted to sign in to the ecard app account at **4602**. A 'Forgot Password' feature is made available to the user at **4604**. If the user account validity is checked positively at **4606**, the user is moved along to **4608**, where the user is prompted to agree to the terms of service of the ecard app. If the user account validity is checked negatively at **4606**, the user is moved back to **4602** for re-signing in to the user's ecard app account. At **4608**, the user is prompted to accept the terms of the ecard app, accepting which, the user is moved to **4610**, where the user enters sender and receiver address information. At **4612**, the user reviews the order and pays for the order at **4614**. The order confirmation step **3534** ends in the flow diagram in FIG. 35.

[**0102**] In FIG. 35, the user is presented with an option to send the electronic greeting card via email at **3528**. The user is prompted to confirm their choice of send medium (email) at **3536**, and a confirmation of the sent email is received at **3538**. Similarly, the user is presented with an option to send the electronic greeting card via SMS (text message) at **3530**. The user is prompted to confirm their choice of send medium (email) at **3536**, and a confirmation of the sent email is received at **3538**. In either option, when a receiving user picks up the electronic greeting card at **3540**, confirmation of pickup is transmitted back to the user via step **3538**.

[**0103**] With further reference to FIG. 35, the user is presented with an option to send the electronic greeting card via Facebook® or some other social networking website at **3532**. If the user is connected to Facebook®, the user is

prompted to enter their personal message at **3546**. If the user is not connected to Facebook®, the user is prompted to sign into the service at **3542** and **3544**.

[**0104**] With reference to FIG. 36, the user has access to more navigation flows in the ecard app. At **3602**, the user has the option to obtain more information about the ecard app. At **3604**, the user has the option to change the application settings. At **3606**, the user has the option to review sales and order history. At **3608**, the user has the option to review 'help' information. At **3610**, the user has the option to provide feedback, which is completed and confirmed in **3616**. At **3612**, the user has access to the user account. At **3614**, the user has the option to locate a store. With reference to locating a store, at **3620**, the geo location permissions are checked. If there is no permission for geo location at **3620**, the user is prompted to enter a zip code to locate a store, at **3622**. If permission for geo location is given at **3620**, the user is provided with a list of results at **3624**.

[**0105**] FIGS. 37 through 40 disclose the flows of reminders in the ecard app. With reference to FIG. 37, the user is reminded with a notification at **3702**. The user may wish to cancel the notification at **3704**. At **3706**, the user chooses to enter the reminder dashboard. At **3708**, the user chooses to select a reminder to send an electronic greeting card. At this point, the flow of the ecard app is identical to the flow described in FIG. 35. At **3710**, the user is prompted to confirm the send medium, with an option to view additional reminders. In FIG. 38, the user logs in to the reminder dashboard at **3802**. A check of the user's login status is checked at **3804**. If not logged in, the user is prompted to connect to Facebook® at **3806** and **3808**. At **3810**, the user is logged in to the reminder dashboard with the user's Facebook® login information (Facebook® reminders). When the user chooses to tap a 'birthday' in Facebook®, the user is directed to the send flow as described in FIG. 35. In FIG. 39, the user is provided the option to either view or add a reminder. At **3902**, the user is at the reminder dashboard. At **3904**, the user makes a choice to add a reminder. At **3908**, a prompt for a new reminder is provided to the user. At **3910**, the user enters additional details for adding a new reminder. At **3914**, the user is prompted to verify their selection to cancel the new reminder. At **3906**, the user makes a choice to view a reminder. At **3912**, the user views information as it pertains to an existing reminder. FIG. 40 shows the various default reminder settings of the ecard app.

[**0106**] FIGS. 42 through 45 show the various pick up flows of the recipient. FIG. 42 shows the recipient receiving an electronic greeting card at **4202**. The recipient picks up the electronic greeting card at **4204**. At **4206**, the recipient has an option to share their receipt on Facebook®. At **4208**, the recipient has an option to thank their receipt via email. At **4210**, the recipient has an option to visit a landing page for the ecard app. In FIG. 43, the recipient receives an electronic greeting card at **4302**. At **4304**, the recipient views the electronic greeting card on a mobile optimized page. At **4306**, the recipient has the opportunity to send a thank you note. At **4308**, the recipient has the opportunity to share the card on Facebook®. At **4310**, the recipient is linked to a mobile landing page, and at **4312**, the recipient lands on the mobile landing page. At **4314**, the recipient is linked to an area to download the ecard app or any other mobile application, and at **4316**, the recipient downloads the ecard app or any other mobile application.

[0107] FIG. 44 shows the recipient receiving the electronic greeting card at 4402. At 4404, the recipient views the electronic greeting card on the ecard app's web site. At 4406, the recipient has the opportunity to share the card on Facebook®. At 4408, the recipient has the opportunity to send a thank you text. At 4410, the recipient visits a mobile landing page.

[0108] FIG. 45 shows the recipient receiving the electronic greeting card, either via email or via a Facebook® 'wall post', at 4502. The recipient's electronic greeting card pick up experience is based on the operating system and/or browser of the device being used to pick up and view the electronic greeting card. At 4504, for example, the recipient views the electronic greeting card on a HTML 5 wrapped content page for iOS® operating system enabled devices. For Android® operating system enabled devices, at 4504, the recipient views the electronic greeting card using JavaScript. Similarly, for a recipient viewing the electronic greeting card on a web browser, the pickup experience is Flash driven. At 4506, the recipient has the opportunity to 'like' the card on Facebook®. At 4508, the recipient has the opportunity to 'comment' on the card on Facebook®. At 4510, the recipient has the opportunity to visit the ecard app site. At 4512, the recipient has the opportunity to 'become a fan' of the ecard app on Facebook®.

[0109] The above description of specific embodiments has been given by way of example. From the disclosure given, those skilled in the art will not only understand the general inventive concepts and attendant advantages, but will also find apparent various changes and modifications to the structures and methods disclosed. For example, the general inventive concepts are not typically limited to any particular interface between a user and the user's mobile computing device. Thus, for example, use of alternative user input mechanisms, such as voice commands and keyboard entries, are within the spirit and scope of the general inventive concepts. As a further example, the general inventive concepts are not typically limited to downloading the electronic greeting card application by scanning a code on a paper greeting card. The electronic greeting card application can also be downloaded to the portable computing device directly from the server through an online, internet, consumer decision or transaction to download the app from an app store without purchasing or scanning a paper greeting card. As another example, although the embodiments disclosed herein have been primarily directed to a portable computing device, the general inventive concepts could be readily extended to a personal computer (PC) or other relatively fixed console computers, and may be pursued with reference to a website and/or other online or offline mechanisms. Further, other social networking sites other than those specifically described herein may be used as delivery media for ecards. It is sought, therefore, to cover all such changes and modifications as fall within the spirit and scope of the general inventive concepts, as described and claimed herein, and equivalents thereof.

[0110] The invention and embodiments are accomplished through software programs that reside as an app on the portable computing device and the web servers and computers of the merchandising and card system described herein. The interactive description below of this ecard creation system further describes the functions and logic flow of those exemplary software programs.

1. An electronic greeting card system comprising:
 - a server storing a plurality electronic greeting card assets;
 - an application downloadable to a portable computing device, the application having an application programming interface; and
 - an electronic greeting card file having
 - a data container component storing scalable graphics, and
 - a reference library component storing a reference to at least one electronic greeting card asset from the plurality of electronic greeting card assets;
 wherein, upon rendering an electronic greeting card file within the application, the application programming interface pulls the electronic greeting card asset from the server using an associated symbol in the reference library component and combines it with the scalable graphics.
2. The electronic greeting card system of claim 1, wherein the electronic greeting card file represents four distinct pages of an electronic greeting card.
3. The electronic greeting card system of claim 1, wherein the reference library component is stored using a markup language.
4. The electronic greeting card system of claim 1, wherein the at least one electronic greeting card asset is one of a sound, formatted text block, signature block, or image.
5. The electronic greeting card system of claim 4, wherein the at least one electronic greeting card asset is an image, and the image is configured to be applied as one of a background, foreground or sticker.
6. The electronic greeting card system of claim 1, wherein the electronic greeting card file is updated based on information stored in a local cache of the portable electronic device.
7. A method for rendering an electronic greeting card within a downloadable electronic greeting card application of a portable device, the method comprising:
 - storing a plurality of electronic greeting card assets on a server;
 - creating an electronic greeting card file by combining a scalable graphics component and a reference library component, the reference library component having a reference to at least one electronic greeting card asset from the plurality of electronic greeting card assets;
 - transmitting the electronic greeting card file to the electronic greeting card application;
 - rendering the scalable graphics component to the portable device;
 - pulling the at least one electronic greeting card asset from the server using the associated reference in the reference library component; and
 - rendering the at least one electronic greeting card asset to the portable computing device.
8. The method of claim 7, wherein the electronic greeting card file represents four distinct pages of an electronic greeting card.
9. The method of claim 7, wherein the reference library component is stored using a markup language.
10. The method of claim 7, wherein the at least one electronic greeting card asset is one of a sound, formatted text block, signature block, or image.
11. The method of claim 10, wherein the at least one electronic greeting card asset is an image, and the image is configured to be applied as one of a background, foreground or sticker.

12. The method of claim 7, further comprising:
 after transmitting the electronic greeting card file to the electronic greeting card application, storing an updated electronic greeting card file on the server;
 comparing the electronic greeting card file in the electronic greeting card application to the updated electronic greeting card file on the server and if they are not the same
 transferring differences of the updated electronic greeting card file to a cache of the portable device and updating the electronic greeting card file in the electronic greeting card application based on the differences stored in the cache.

13. An electronic greeting card system, comprising
 a paper greeting card;
 a code printed on the paper greeting card;
 a server storing a plurality electronic greeting card assets;
 an electronic greeting card application program that is downloaded to the portable computing device from the server in response to the portable computing device scanning the code on the paper greeting card;
 a category of greeting cards provided by the electronic greeting card application;
 a greeting card within the category of greeting cards, the greeting card being stored as an electronic greeting card file having
 a data container component storing scalable graphics, and
 a reference library component storing a reference to at least one electronic greeting card asset from the plurality of electronic greeting card assets; and
 a means for selecting a medium to be used to send the greeting card from a group of sending media provided by the electronic greeting card application;

wherein the greeting card comprises four pages, with at least one of the four pages having an option to customize, and each of the four pages being movable by a touch of a finger; and

wherein, upon rendering an electronic greeting card file within the application, the application programming interface pulls the electronic greeting card asset from the server using an associated symbol in the reference library component and combines it with the scalable graphics.

14. The electronic greeting card system of claim 13, wherein the electronic greeting card file represents four distinct pages of an electronic greeting card.

15. The electronic greeting card system of claim 13, wherein the reference library component is stored using a markup language.

16. The electronic greeting card system of claim 13, wherein the at least one electronic greeting card asset is one of a sound, formatted text block, signature block, or image.

17. The electronic greeting card system of claim 16, wherein the at least one electronic greeting card asset is an image, and the image is configured to be applied as one of a background, foreground or sticker.

18. The electronic greeting card system of claim 13, wherein the electronic greeting card file is updated based on information stored in a local cache of the portable electronic device.

19. The electronic greeting card system of claim 13, wherein the group of sending media comprises email, text message, social media, and postal mail.

20. The electronic greeting card system of claim 13, wherein the server is part of a network of servers in a cloud computing environment.

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