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Recording Date – May 24, 2017
Recording Availability – January 29, 2018

Meeting Location	Date	Time	Topic
King County Bar Association 1200 Fifth Avenue - Suite 700 Seattle, WA	**Wednesday, May 24, 2017**	12:00 PM to 1:15 PM	Protecting Your Law Firm's Intellectual Property

AGENDA

12:00 PM Introduction

12:10 PM Presentation: 'Protecting Your Law Firm's Intellectual Property', by J.D. Houvener, Bold IP

- Law Firm as a Business
- Creating/Enforcing Copyright generated in a law firm
- Creating/Enforcing Trademarks generated in a law firm
- Creating/Enforcing Patents generated in a law firm
- Creating/Enforcing Trade Secrets in a law firm

1:15 PM Adjourn

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY:

J.D. Houvener, Bold IP - J.D. Houvener is a Registered USPTO Patent Attorney who has a strong interest in helping entrepreneurs and businesses thrive. J.D. leverages his technical background in engineering and experience in the aerospace industry to provide businesses a unique perspective to their patent needs. J.D. works with clients that are serious about investing in their intellectual assets and provides counsel on how to capitalize their patent in the market.

His background in business and experience as an engineer and patent attorney empowers him to clearly communicate to a broad range of clients about their immediate and long-term needs for patenting in order to protect assets, leverage opportunities, and limit liabilities. Some key areas of the patent prosecution practice are: patentability searches, patent applications, office actions, infringement opinions, post-grant actions and consultation on patent strategy and portfolio management.

HOW DO I EARN CREDIT FOR SELF-STUDY OR AUDIO/VISUAL (A/V) COURSES?

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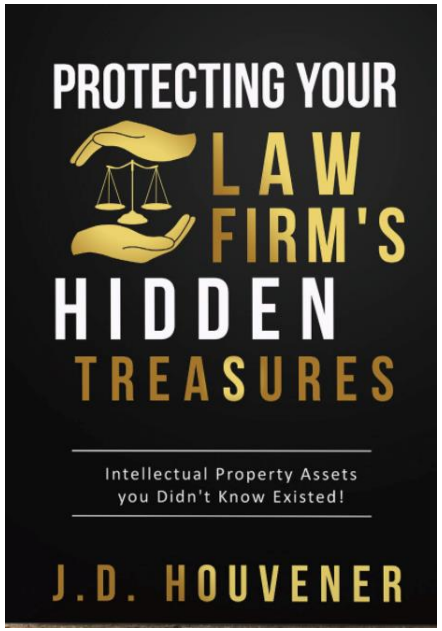
Protecting Your Law Firm's Hidden Treasures:

Intellectual Property Assets you didn't know existed

J.D. HOUVENER,

PATENT ATTORNEY AND FOUNDER OF
BOLD IP, PLLC

MAY 24, 2017



First, Some Myths…

"Law Firms are known only by their Surnames, and those can't be registered trademarks…"

"There is no sense in registering a copyright for things you write for the firm, it puts you at a serious risk for breaching ethical rules"

"…Attorneys do not need to worry about IP because its only important for businesses who develop/sell real products and need to protect their brands."

"Law Firms and their attorneys can't patent anything, they wouldn't qualify…"

"There is no special sauce here at the law firm, we simply serve our clients the best we can with the resources we are given"

Some Truths…

- Law firm is like any other business
- Selling Legal Services
- Goodwill/Reputation
- Copyrighted Works
- Patents
- Trade Secrets

Types of Intellectual Property

- Trademark
- Copyright
- Trade Secret
- Patent

What is a trademark?

15 U.S. Code § 1127

- A trademark is a word, symbol, or phrase that accomplishes two things:
  - 1. distinguish an individual's (or company's) goods/services from the goods/services of others
  - 2. indicate the source of goods/services
- An applicant for a trademark registration must have a bona fide intention to use the trademark in commerce (or already be using the mark in commerce)

What is “use in commerce” as applied to law firms (service marks)?

15 U.S. Code § 1127

- **A service mark is “used in commerce” when:**
  (1) the mark is used or displayed in the sale or advertising of services, and
  (2) the services are rendered in commerce

(a service mark is considered a sub-set of trademark)

How do you acquire rights in a trademark?

- Assuming a trademark qualifies for protection, rights to the trademark can be acquired in one of two ways:

  (1) by being the first to use the mark in commerce; or

  (2) by being the first to register the mark with the USPTO

What is trademark infringement?

15 U.S. Code § 1114

A trademark is infringed when:

- (1) someone who is not the owner of the trademark uses (or intends to use), without permission or authorization from the owner, a reproduction/copy/colorable imitation of a registered trademark in connection with the sale/ distribution/advertising of any goods/services, and
- (2) that unauthorized use (or intent to use) is likely to cause confusion for consumers

What is the standard courts use for determining trademark infringement?

- Consumer Confusion / Likelihood of Confusion Standard

- Courts typically look at 7 factors
  - (1) the **strength** of the mark;
  - (2) the **proximity** of the goods;
  - (3) the **similarity** of the marks;
  - (4) evidence of **actual confusion**;
  - (5) the similarity of **marketing channels** used;
  - (6) the **degree of caution** exercised by the typical purchaser;
  - (7) the **defendant's intent**.

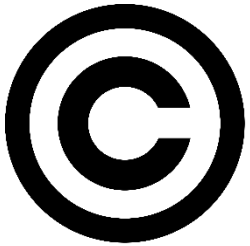
How do trademarks apply to law firms?

- Law firms provide legal services!
- No law firm should be the same as another, show off your distinctiveness!
- Protect Different Service Offerings:
  - Example: Bold Patents, Bold Ventures, and Bold Innovations are both pending applications
- Protect Goods Offerings:
  - Example: “Law Firm In a Box”, proprietary software or practice management suite

What is a copyright?

17 U.S. Code

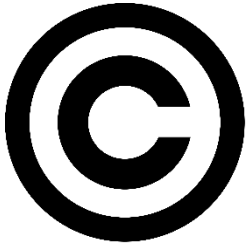
A Copyright is the right of an author/creator to control the use and distribution of his/her work for a limited period of time.



What can be copyrighted?

17 U.S. Code § 102

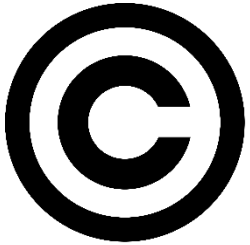
- Only an original work of authorship which is fixed in a tangible medium of expression can receive a copyright.
- You cannot copyright an idea. However, once an idea is written down, recorded, or otherwise transferred into physical form, that resulting “work of authorship” is “fixed” and therefor eligible for copyright protection.



What does the owner of a copyright have the exclusive right to do?

17 U.S. Code § 106

- The owner of a copyright has the exclusive right to
  - reproduce
  - perform
  - display (publicly) and/or
  - prepare derivative works based on his/her original work of authorship (or authorize others to do so)

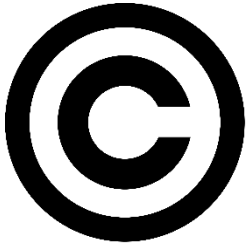


When does copyright protection begin and how long does it last?

17 U.S. Code § 302

- Copyright protection begins when the original work of authorship is created and fixed in a tangible form

- Copyright protection lasts until 70 years after the author's death (if author is named), 95 years from the year of the works' creation (if work is anonymous), and 120 years from the work's creation (if the work is done for hire)



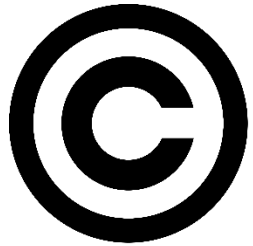
How do copyrights apply to law firms?

- Many of the documents that attorneys prepare in the course of their legal practice can be considered “original works of authorship” which are absolutely eligible for copyright protection

- Some examples of copyrightable materials often used by law firms or prepared by a firm’s attorneys are:

  (1) the written code for discovery software developed in-house, and

  (2) legal documents which are unique to the firm (i.e. not industry standard or comprised of boiler plate language)



What is a Trade Secret?

18 U.S. Code § 1839

- A trade secret is any confidential business information, not generally known by the public, which has economic value to the business or entity, and which the business or entity has taken reasonable steps to keep secret

When is another's use of an entity's trade secret actionable?

UTSA § 1

- If a court determines that the information qualifies as a trade secret, the court can prohibit another party from using the trade secret if:
  - Obtained the information through improper means, or
  - Obtained the information through misappropriation

How do trade secrets apply to law firms?

- A law firm is a business. Just like many other businesses, law firms often possess information that is not publicly or widely known and from which the firm derives economic benefit.

- Some examples of the types of information law firms may possess which can be considered trade secrets are:

  (1) advertising strategies/processes to attract/retain clients,

  (2) lists of current clients,

  (3) in-house developed discovery software for which no patent has yet been filed

What is a patent?

- A patent is a contract between an inventor and the U.S. government granting (for a limited time) the inventor the sole right to exclude others from making, using, or selling the invention in exchange for public disclosure of the invention

What is patentable?

35 U.S. Code § 102

- An invention is patentable if it is different from all previous inventions that were public knowledge prior to the filing date (it is novel)

35 U.S. Code § 103

- An invention is patentable if, when the invention is compared to all previous inventions, a determination is made that a person having ordinary skill in the art would not have thought to create the invention (it is non-obvious)

- To be patentable the invention must also be patentable subject matter, and be useful, but both of these requirements are easier to satisfy than novelty and non-obviousness

What must be included in a patent application?

35 U.S. Code § 111

- A patent must include:

(1) a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making using it, and conclude with claims which identify the subject matter which the inventor regards as the invention,

(2) drawings of the invention, and

(3) the name of the inventor(s)

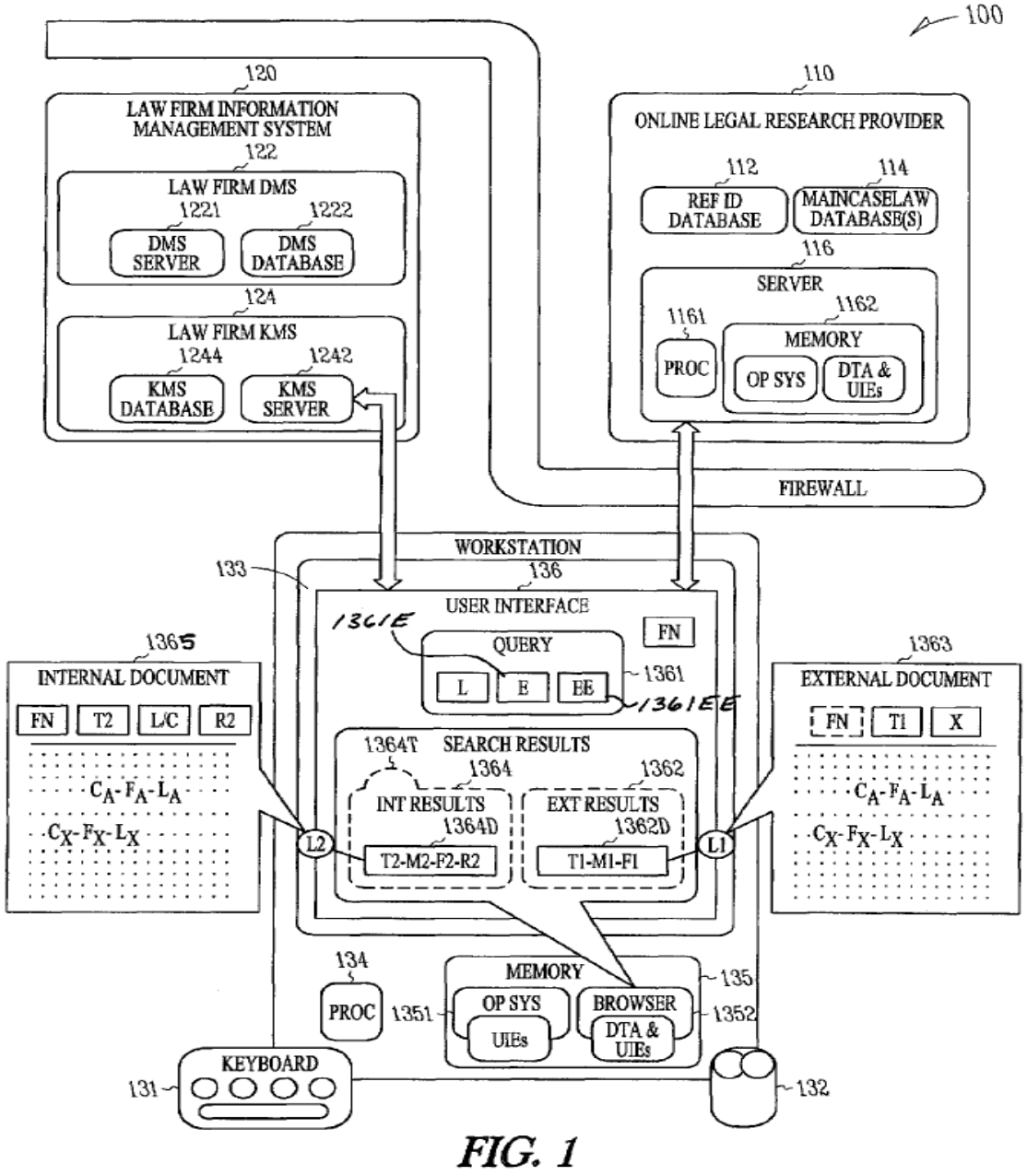
How do patents apply to law firms?

- Law firms utilize technology and various business processes when providing legal advise to clients.
- Some examples of things that law firms could potentially obtain patents for are:

  (1) discovery software

  (2) methods or processes of conducting client intake or discovery (or any other necessary elements of a legal practice)

Microsoft Word 97 - 2004 Document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DMS SERVER
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DMS DATABASE
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KMS DATABASE
1242
KMS SERVER
110
ONLINE LEGAL RESEARCH PROVIDER
112
REF ID DATABASE
114
MAINCASELAW DATABASE(S)
116
SERVER
1161
PROC
1162
MEMORY
OP SYS
DTA & UIEs
FIREWALL
WORKSTATION
133
136
USER INTERFACE
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C_X-F_X-L_X
1363
EXTERNAL DOCUMENT
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C_X-F_X-L_X
1364T
SEARCH RESULTS
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INT RESULTS
1364D
T2-M2-F2-R2
1362
EXT RESULTS
1362D
T1-M1-F1
L2
L1
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MEMORY
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OP SYS
UIEs
BROWSER
DTA & UIEs
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KEYBOARD
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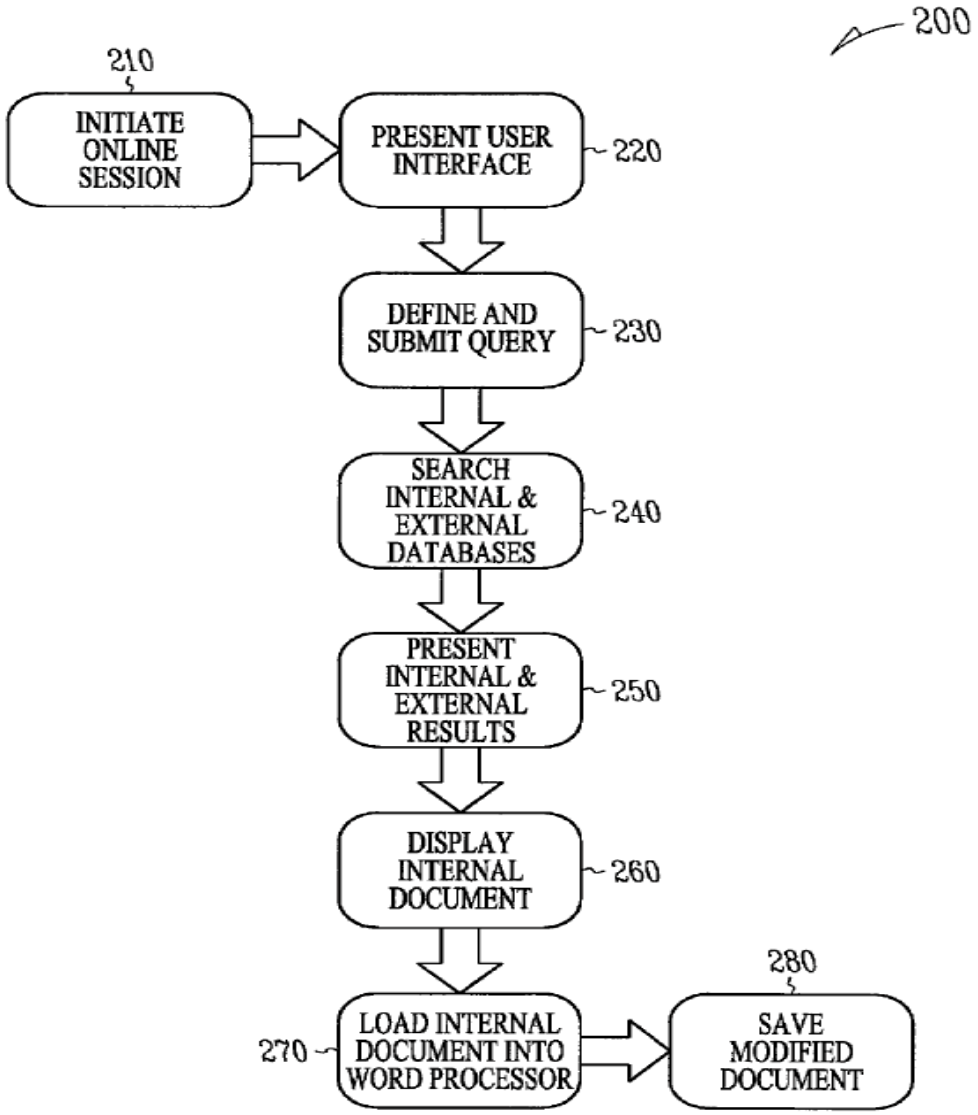
FIG. 1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210
INITIATE ONLINE SESSION
PRESENT USER INTERFACE
220
DEFINE AND SUBMIT QUERY
230
SEARCH INTERNAL & EXTERNAL DATABASES
240
PRESENT INTERNAL & EXTERNAL RESULTS
250
DISPLAY INTERNAL DOCUMENT
260
270
LOAD INTERNAL DOCUMENT INTO WORD PROCESSOR
280
SAVE MODIFIED DOCUMENT

FIG. 2

Thank you!

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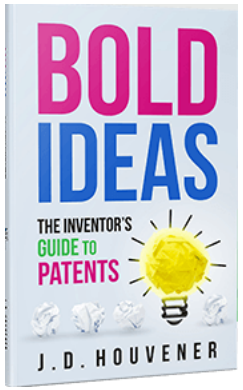

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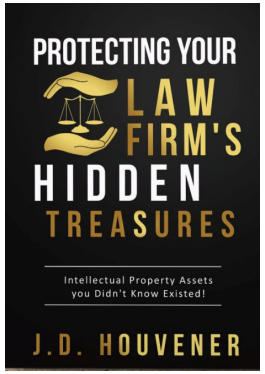

Questions?

Q & A

Q: Why are trademarks important for law firms?

Q: What prerequisites must a mark satisfy to serve as a trademark?

Q & A

Q: Does an original work of authorship need to be registered to receive copyright protection?

Q: What is a “derivative work?”

Q & A

Q: What is a “work made for hire?”

Q: What constitutes “improper means” for obtaining a trade secret?

Q & A

Q: What constitutes “misappropriation” for obtaining a trade secret?

Q & A

Q: What steps (at a minimum) must a law firm take to protect trade secrets?

Q: What is patentable subject matter?

Q & A

Q: When is an invention considered “useful” for purposes of determining patentability?

Q: How long are patents valid (i.e. how long does patent protection last)?

Q: When is an invention considered “public knowledge?”

United States Patent and Trademark Office

Trademarks > Trademark Electronic Search System (TESS)

TESS was last updated on Tue May 23 02:21:04 EDT 2017

Record 1 out of 1

Bold IP

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Standard Characters Claimed	
Mark Drawing Code	(4) STANDARD CHARACTER MARK
Serial Number	86372032
Filing Date	August 20, 2014
Current Basis	1A
Original Filing Basis	1A
Published for Opposition	June 2, 2015
Registration Number	4793287
Registration Date	August 18, 2015
Owner	(REGISTRANT) Bold IP PLLC LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY WASHINGTON P. O. Box 13744 Mill Creek WASHINGTON 98082
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Abstract	"This paper analyzes the effect of labor and product market regulation in a dynamic stochastic equilibrium with search frictions. Modeling multiple-worker firms allows us to distinguish between the exit-and-entry (extensive) margin, and the hiring-and-firing (intensive) margin. We characterize analytically how both margins depend on regulation before we calibrate the model to the US economy. We find that firing costs matter most for the intensive margin. Fixed or set-up costs in the product market instead alter primarily the behavior of firms at the extensive margin. Moreover, we find important interactions between the policies through firm selection. Finally, the opposite effect of product and labor market regulation on job turnover rationalizes the empirically observed similarity of turnover rates across countries"--Forschungsinstitut zur Zukunft der Arbeit web site.
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US008126818B2

(12) **United States Patent**
Rhoads et al.

(10) **Patent No.: US 8,126,818 B2**
(45) **Date of Patent: Feb. 28, 2012**

(54) **KNOWLEDGE-MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS FOR LAW FIRMS**

(75) Inventors: **Forrest Rhoads,** North Oaks, MN (US); **Trace Liggett,** Rosemount, MN (US)

(73) Assignee: **West Publishing Company,** Eagan, MN (US)

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 1022 days.

(21) Appl. No.: **10/751,269**

(22) Filed: **Dec. 30, 2003**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2005/0149343 Al Jul. 7, 2005

Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Provisional application No. 60/437,169, filed on Dec. 30, 2002, provisional application No. 60/480,476, filed on Jun. 19, 2003.

(51) **Int. Cl.**
G06Q 50/00 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **705/310;** 705/311; 707/738

(58) **Field of Classification Search** 707/1, 2, 707/3, 4
See application file for complete search history.

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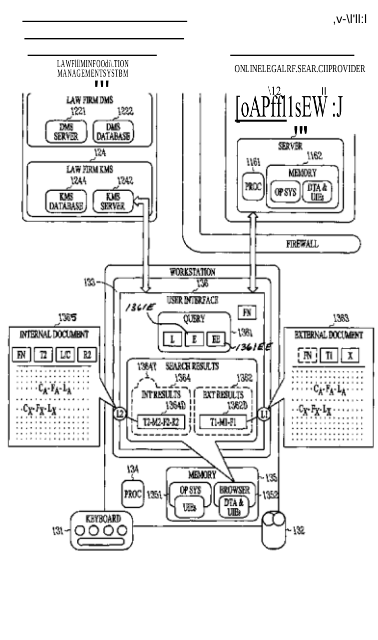
Primary Examiner - Parhan Syed
(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* - Edwards Wildman Palmer LLP; Barry Kramer; George N. Charles

(57) **ABSTRACT**

The present inventors devised unique systems, methods, interfaces, and software for managing and leveraging knowledge in law firms and potentially other enterprises. For example, one system provides a single user interface for researching case law for online legal research service and identifying and accessing law-firm documents.

21 Claims, 2 Drawing Sheets



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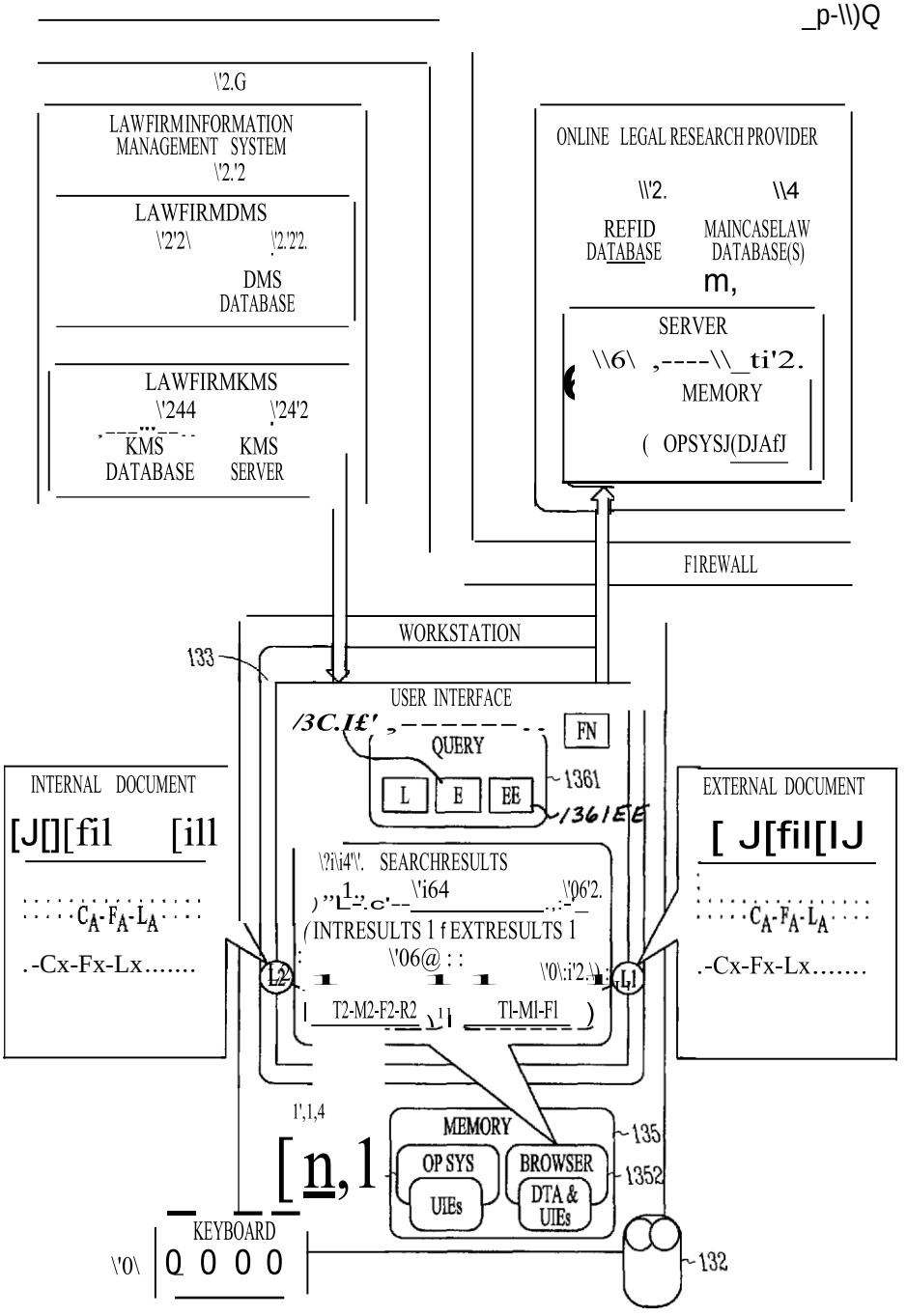
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INTERNAL DOCUMENT
EXTERNAL DOCUMENT
SEARCHRESULTS
INTRESULTS 1 f EXTRESULTS 1
T2-M2-F2-R2
Tl-MI-Fl
MEMORY
OP SYS
BROWSER
UIEs
DTA & UIEs
135
1352
KEYBOARD
132

FIG.1

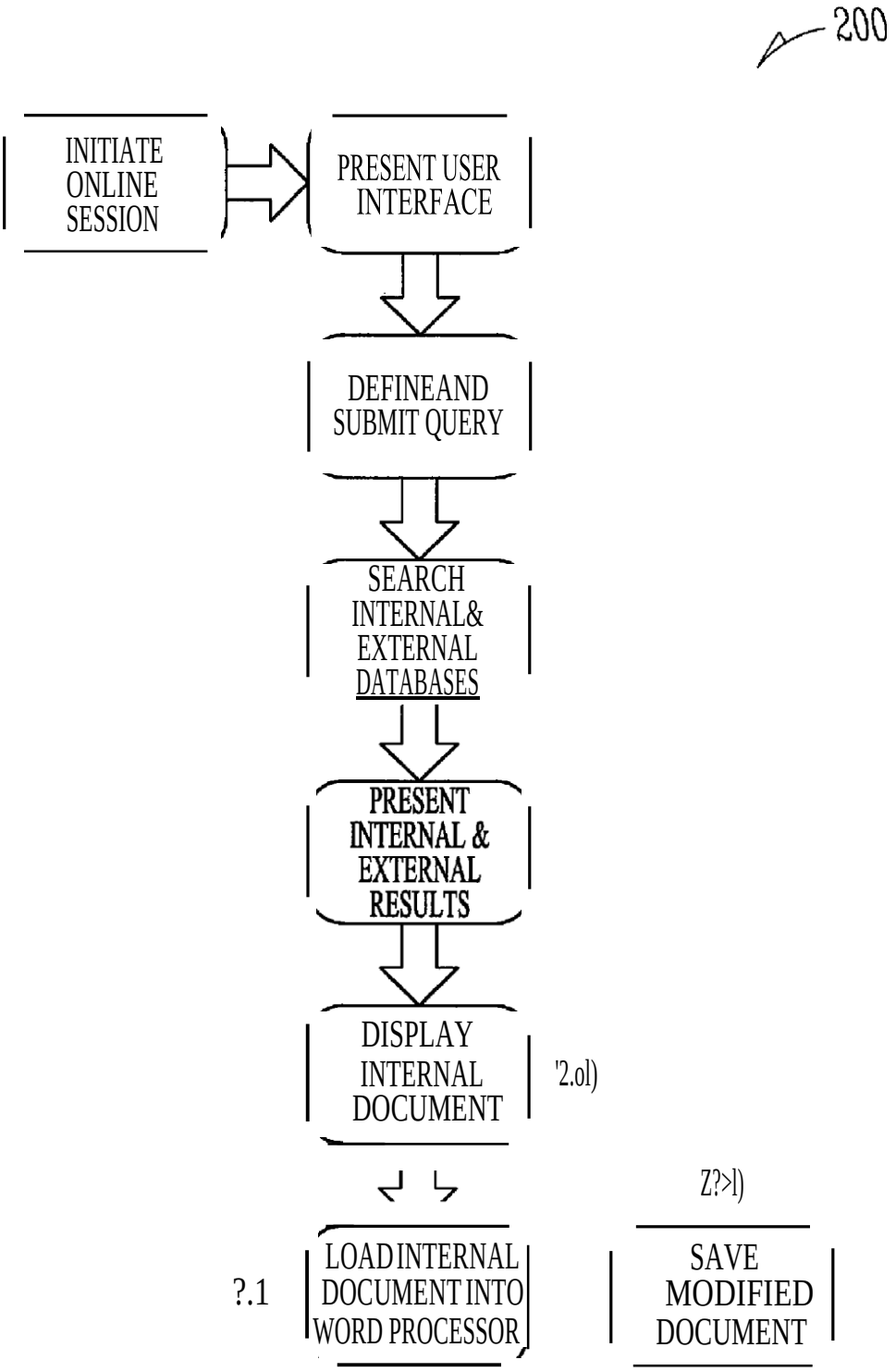
200
INITIATE ONLINE SESSION
PRESENT USER INTERFACE
DEFINEAND SUBMIT QUERY
SEARCH INTERNAL& EXTERNAL DATABASES
PRESENT INTERNAL & EXTERNAL RESULTS
DISPLAY INTERNAL DOCUMENT
'2.ol)
Z?>l)
?.1
LOADINTERNAL DOCUMENT INTO WORD PROCESSOR
SAVE MODIFIED DOCUMENT

FIG.2

KNOWLEDGE-MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS FOR LAW FIRMS

RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application claims priority to U.S. Provisional Patent Application 60/437,169, which was filed on Dec. 30, 2002 and to U.S. Provisional Patent Application 60/480,476, which was filed on Jun. 19, 2003. Both of these applications are incorporated herein by reference.

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TECHNICAL FIELD

Various embodiments of the present invention concern information retrieval systems and knowledge-management systems, particularly such systems in a legal-research or law-firm context.

BACKGROUND

The American legal system, as well as some other legal systems around the world, rely heavily on written judicial opinions, the written pronouncements of judges, to articulate or interpret the laws governing resolution of disputes. As a consequence, judges and lawyers within our legal system are continually researching an ever expanding body of past opinions, or case law, for the ones most relevant to resolution or prevention of new disputes. Found cases are studied for relevance and are ultimately cited and discussed in documents, called work product, which, for example, advocate court action, counsel clients on likely court actions, or educate clients and lawyers on the state of the law in particular jurisdictions.

Over time, law firms, particularly large one with scores of lawyers and hundreds of clients, amass large collections of work product. In attempting to manage and leverage the value of these collections, many law firms in the last decade or so have sought to use knowledge-managements systems.

Most, if not all, of these systems have been built around document-management systems (DMSs) that assist in storing, indexing, and searching law-firm documents. The indexing and searching capability of these systems allows lawyers to reuse some of their work product, and thus have in some instances enhanced the efficiency of lawyers in developing new work product.

However, the present inventors have recognized that centering a law firm's knowledge management on document-management systems presents at least two problems. First, the document collections in these systems are generally undisciplined in the sense that they include multiple versions of the same document, non-legal documents, and so forth. Thus, searches in the DMS collections often turn up marginally relevant documents or draft documents that frustrate

sary for lawyers or other highly trained personnel to assess not only whether their legal arguments are of high quality, but also whether their supporting case law has been overruled, weakened, or otherwise affected by newer case law or other legal developments. (Even with online legal research services, such as the Westlaw online service, that allow one to check the validity of case law on a case-by-case basis,) this assessment is generally time consuming and thus offsets the efficiency gains of reusing work product.

Accordingly, the present inventors have identified a need for better systems, tools, and methods of managing and leveraging the accumulated knowledge within law-firm document collections.

SUMMARY

To address this and/or other needs, the present inventors have devised unique systems, methods, interfaces, and software for managing and leveraging knowledge in law firms and potentially other enterprises. For example, one system provides a single user interface for researching case law for online legal research service and identifying and accessing law-firm documents. The interface allows a user, such as an attorney, to initiate or submit a legal research query and view search results that identify not only relevant external documents from the online legal research service, but also relevant internal documents, such as briefs, client letters, and legal memoranda, from the law firm's own document collection.

Moreover, in this exemplary system, the external and internal documents are displayed with validity indicators, such as color-coded icons, that indicate whether cases they cite are still valid law, enabling the attorney to more readily assess the strength or weakness of each identified document.

Notably, the exemplary embodiment provides a seamless integration of the internal and external documents, yet the internal documents never leave the security of the law firm firewalls.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** is a block diagram of an exemplary information system **100** corresponding to one or more embodiments of the present invention.

FIG. **2** is a flow chart corresponding to one or more exemplary methods of operating an information system and associated components that embody the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF EXEMPLARY EMBODIMENTS

The following description, which incorporates the figures and the appended claims, describes and/or illustrates one or more exemplary embodiments of one or more inventions. These embodiments, offered not to limit but only to exemplify and teach the invention(s), are shown and described in sufficient detail to enable those skilled in the art to make and use the invention(s). Thus, where appropriate to avoid obscuring the one or more inventions, the description may omit certain information known to those of skill in the relevant art.

Exemplary Information System

efforts to quickly identify the high-quality finished documents most likely to have reusable content. Second, even when apparently reusable documents are found, it is hard

FIG. **1** depicts an exemplary information retrieval and knowledge management system **100** that incorporates one or more teachings of the present invention. System **100** includes

a commercial online legal-data (or research) provider **110,** a law-firm information-management system **120,** and a client access device **130.**

Specifically, commercial online legal data (or research) provider **110** includes main databases **112,** reference identification database **114,** and server **116.** In the exemplary embodiment, main databases **112** contain a wide variety of legal documents, including for example, case law Gudicial opinions), legislation, and journal articles. Reference identification database **114** includes a list of document identifiers and corresponding citations, with each document identifier and citation corresponding to a document within main databases **112.** Databases **112** are coupled to server **116.**

Server **116,** representative of one or more servers, includes a processing unit **1161,** and a memory **1162.** Memory **1161,** which can take the form of an electronic, magnetic, or optical computer- (or machine-) readable medium, includes one or more one or more search engines, and other modules and software, such as browser-compatible user-interface elements (UIEs) for receiving and fulfilling queries from clients.

In the exemplary embodiment, server **116** serves active or dynamic content in the form of hypertext markup language (HTML), extensible markup language (XML), or more generally a markup-language, documents or pages. To this end, the exemplary server supports the following web services or protocols: TCP/IP, SOAP (HTTP, HTML, XML), and UDDI. Additionally, the UIEs of server **116** include one or more Java scripts, applets, or other related software and data structures for serving data in association with desired interactive control or user-interface features, objects, modules, or elements. (In some embodiments, the HTML pages include URL or other embedded instructions that include one or more portions of queries submitted from an access device, such as access device **130.)** These features work in conjunction with client processor and software platforms to define one or more portions of a browser-based graphical user interface for legal research. Server **116** is coupled or couplable, for example, via an Internet Protocol (IP) network, to law-firm information-management system **120.**

Law-firm information-management system **120** includes a document-management subsystem **122,** and a kuowledge-management subsystem **124.** Document-management subsystem (DMS) **122** includes a DMS database server **1221** and a DMS database **1222.** DMS database **1222** includes internal firm work-product documents, such as briefs, legal memorandum, opinions, letters, and multiple versions of same in multiple stages of completion. It may also include non-legal materials. The contents of the DMS database are generally associated withmetadata profiles indicating authors, creation dates, update dates, client numbers, security settings, access restrictions and so forth.

Knowledge management subsystem (KMS) **124** includes a KMS server **1242** and a KMS database (or document repository) **1244.** KMS server **1242,** which may present one or more servers depending on loading and performance issues, includes a full-text index module, an engines-and-applications module, an HTML library module, a metadata database module, a citation index module, and a usage-and-tracking module, all of which are not shown as separate items in FIG. **1.**

In the exemplary embodiment, full-text-indexer module is documents from DMS database, DMS integration components, and system administration tools.

HTML library module stores HTML version of each document contained in the research repository, including KeyCite flags and tags. Metadata database module **1242D** stores descriptive information and attributes of documents contained in the KMS database, includes information from the DMS database. Citation index module indexes the citations relationships between documents to maintain flags and tags on citations. And, usage-tracking database stores and maintains a historical log of all search and retrieval activity containing detail information by document name, author, area of law, and user ID.

KMS database stores a selected set of high-quality internal work-product documents. In the exemplary embodiment, these documents are copies of documents selected from DMS database **1222.** When copied into KMS database **1244,** one or more portion of the metadata profile data is also incorporated into KMS database.

Law-firm information-management system **120** and online legal-research provider **110** are both communicatively coupled or couplable, via a local-area network (such a corporate intranet) or wide-area network (such as the Internet) to access device **130.**

Access device **130,** which is generally representative of one or more access devices within a business organization, such as a law firm, takes the exemplary form of a workstation. In addition to a keyboard **131** (lower left hand corner), a mouse (graphical pointer) **132,** and a display **133,** access device **130** includes a processing unit **134,** a memory module **135,** and a browser-compatible legal-research interface **136.** More particularly, processing unit **134** includes at least one processing circuit. Memory module **135,** which takes the form of one or more electronic, magnetic, optical machine-readable mediums, includes operating system **1351,** a browser application **1352,** and a word processor application **1353.**

Operating system **1351,** which cooperates with processing unit **134** and takes the exemplary form of the Microsoft Windows operating system, includes a set of user-interface objects, modules, or elements, accessible via application programs such as browser application **1352.** Browser application **1352** takes exemplary form of a Microsoft Internet Explorer™ or Netscape Navigator browser, cooperates with operating system **1321** and externally provided data, coded instructions (collectively UIEs) from servers such as (external legal-research) server **116** and internal KMS server **1242,** to define and render, on display **133,** browser-compatible legal-research interface **136.**

Legal-research interface **136** includes a query portion **1361,** an external re-results portion **1362,** an external document display portion **1363,** an internal-results portion **1364,** and an internal document display portion **1365.** In the exemplary embodiment, portions **1361-1365** are not necessarily used to facilitate general retrieval of documents from KMS database by indexing documents and/or providing index data. Engines-and-applications module includes the following engines and applications: citation-identification engine, full- text search engine, KeyCite Flags engine (see appendix for further details); scheduler application for handling migrating

displayed or accessed simultaneously. For example, the inter- face can include tabs and full-screen-display options that enable the user to focus the display on a particular portion of the data or interface portions. One embodiment provides one folder tab to invoke display of a combined listing of internal and external results with corresponding indicators to distin- guish internal results from external ones and the other to invoke display of internal results only.

Query portion **1361** includes a label portion L and one or more associated interactive user-interface (UI) elements (objects, features, or widgets), E and EE (referred to hereinafter as label portion **1361L,** and elements **1361E** and **1361EE.)** Label portion **1361L** is defined to display a query-indicator

label, such as "Search Based on this New Citation," "KeyCite this Citation, or"Search these Databases," to indicate to a user that some form of query input is expected within this portion of the interface. UI element **1361E** accepts input from a user. In the exemplary embodiment, this UI element takes the form of a text box or menu, with the menu enabling the use to select a target for the query, such as the KMS database. As a default, the exemplary embodiment will run the query against the KMS database in combination with any other database set that is selected. (Some embodiments provide a set of UI elements that enable the user to select from a number of predefined category- or subject-matter-specific queries. The queries are defined, for example, by expert legal researches in the specific legal areas. A hierarchical organization or outline of the queries facilitates user selection of the appropriate query by the user. The user may also view the details of the predefined queries and modify as desired prior to submission.)

UI element **1361EE** allows a user to initiate submission and execution of a query defined via user-interface element **1361E.** The exemplary embodiment provides this feature in the form of a "go" button, which upon actuation results in transmission of the defined query (or relevant portion of it) to not only main database **112** (server **116),** but also to KMS database XYX for fulfillment. (In some embodiments, the query is submitted only to KMS database XYX.)

External-results portion **1362** is defined to display search results obtained or received from online legal-research provider **110,** or more precisely its main database **112.** In the exemplary embodiment, external-results portion **1362** includes one or more document identifiers or descriptors **1362D** which are displayable in association with corresponding user-interface element **Ll.** Descriptor **1362D** provides information regarding a corresponding external-results document within database **112.** In the exemplary embodiment, this information includes a title **Tl,** metadata **Ml,** and a case validity flag **Fl.** UI element **Ll,** for example a hyperlink, provides an option which can be invoked for example, by clicking, to retrieve and display the document(s) associated with descriptor **1362D,** as indicated by document display **1363.**

Document display **1363,** which in some embodiments is presented in a spit-screen along a listing of the internal and/or external results, displays at least a portion of the external document associated with UI element Ll. The document includes text (denoted by the broken lines) and legal citations CA and CB, which are respectively associated with case-validity flags FA and FB andhyperlinks LA and LB. Selection of hyperlinks LA and LB all a user retrieve the documents corresponding to the citations from online legal-research provider **110.**

Internal-results portion **1364** is defined to display results of querying internal firm database, KMS database **1244.** In the exemplary embodiment, internal-results portion **1364** includes one or more sets of document-specific UI elements, such as UI element set **1364D,** one or more of which are displayable in association with a corresponding UI element **L2.** Each UI-elementprovides data or access to data about the contents of an associated internal-results documents, such as a document title **T2,** metadata **M2,** case-law validity flag **F2,** and law-firm rating **R2.**

More precisely, metadata **M2** includes one or more portion of the metadata associated with the original DMS copy of the identified document. (The exemplary embodiment populates etc. Case-law validity flag **F2** provides an indication of the validity of case law cited within the corresponding firm document. Law-firm rating **Rl** provides an indication of the utility and/or quality of the document as determined by previous law-firm users of the document.

UI element **L2,** similar to UI element **Ll,** provides a user option to retrieve and display the internal document(s) associated with descriptor **1364D.** Exercising this option results in a display document display **1365.**

Document display **1365,** which in some embodiments is presented in a spit-screen along a listing of the internal and/or external results, displays at least a portion of the internal document associated with UI element L2. The document includes text (denoted by the broken lines) and legal citations CA and CX, which are respectively associated with case-validity flags FA and FB and hyperlinks LA and LX. In addition to providing a visual indication of case-law validity, the case-validity flags can be selected in some embodiments to cause retrieval and/or display of further information regarding the nature of the flags. Hyperlinks LA and LX all a user retrieve the documents corresponding to the citations from online legal-research provider **110.** In addition to the text and citations, document display **1365** provides a firm-name label FN to clearly identify the document as an internal law firm document, a title label **T2** for indicating the title of the corresponding internal document, and a load-copy UI element LC for enabling user to initiate loading of a copy of the corresponding internal document directly into a word processor application of access device **130** for use in generating a new work product document. Moreover, document display portion **1365** also includes a ratings VI-element **Rl** which enables a user to see the current law-firm-user rating of the document as well as to rate the current document. Figure X shows an exemplary set of UI elements for achieving this rating.

Exemplary Method of Operation

FIG. **2** shows a flow chart **200** of one or more exemplary methods of operating an information-management system, such as system **100.** Flow chart **200** includes blocks **210-280,** which are arranged and described in a serial execution sequence in the exemplary embodiment. However, other embodiments execute two or more blocks in parallel using multiple processors or processor-like devices or a single processor organized as two or more virtual machines or sub processors. Other embodiments also alter the process sequence or provide different functional partitions to achieve analogous results. Moreover, still other embodiments implement the blocks as two or more interconnected hardware modules with related control and data signals communicated between and through the modules. Thus, the exemplary process flow applies to software, hardware, and firmware implementations.

Atblock210, theexemplarymethodbeginswithalaw-firm user, such as an attorney or paralegal, initiating a search session with online legal-research system **110.** In the exemplary embodiment, this entails the user at access device **130** logging onto a law-firm network using security measures, such as an assigned username and password. After login, the user then launches and directs the Internet browser within access device **130** to connect to the online legal research system. In some embodiments, the user enters a separate

KMS database with copies of documents selected from DMS database.) In the exemplary embodiment, this includes author, client, document ID, dates of creation and revision,

username and password to initiate the search session, and in others the previous network login suffices. Execution continues at block **220.**

Block **220** entails displaying or otherwise loading and presenting one or more portions oflegal-research user interface **156.** In the exemplary embodiment, this entails server **116** of online legal-research system **110** sending an HTML document (or webpage) that includes scripts, applets, and associated data for causing access device **130** to display query portion **1361** of user interface **136.** For users at law firms that have a knowledge management system, such as management system **100,** which is provided or authorized by the online legal research system, the associated data includes at least one firm-name label to use in labeling specific portion of the user interface as well as the name of KMS server **1242,** which is configured and/or authorized to access KMS database **1244.** Execution continues at block **230.**

Block **230** entails the user defining and submitting a query. In the exemplary embodiment, this entails the user defining a query using query portion **1361** of interface **136.** Query portion includes features, such as a text box or pull-down menus that enable the user to define a citation, natural-language, or terms-and-connectors query. The interface also presents the user an option to specify the scope of the search or query as including one or more databases within online legal research system and/or at least one internal law firm database. Options related to identifying the internal law firm databases are labeled based on the firm-name label provided by the online legal research system. After defining the query, the user submits it to system by actuating a UI element, such as a "go" button, using an input device, such as a mouse or keyboard. The query is then communicated over the Internet to server **116** and KMS server **1242.**

Block **240** entails searching databases at one or both of the online legal search system and the law-firm information management system based on the submitted query. In the exemplary embodiment, online legal-search system **110,** or more precisely, server **116** executes or causes execution of the query against the requested databases, and returns results the search (external results) to access device **130** in the form of HTML documents with associated control features and data. If the query was defined to include law-firm databases, an applet, script or other device is returned along with the external results of access device **130** to trigger or cause access device to call KMS server **1242** to execute the query against an internal law-firm database, such as KMS database **1244.** Some embodiments may call the KMS server concurrently with submission of a query identifying an internal law-firm database. In any case, KMS server executes the search against the KMS databases and serves results in the form of a markup language document, such as HTML, to access device **130.** Execution of the exemplary method continues at block **250.**

Block **250** entails presenting the search results. In the exemplary embodiment, this presentation entails presenting the internal results and the external results via the browser interface in association with one or more sets ofUI elements (or interactive control features), as shown in FIG. **1.**

Block **260** entails displaying an internal law-firm document from internal results set. In the exemplary embodiment, this entails the user selecting a UI element, such a link, associated with one of the listed internal documents and the KMS server retrieving the document from the KMS database and serving it to the access device. Notably, the KMS server automatically updates the document to the current state of the law-that is, current validity flags are inserted next to all of the authorities in the document. The KMS server requests these from the online legal-research provider-in real time-the document that contained terms from the search, for example, a citation in the case of a citation search.

Block **270** entails loading the displayed internal document into a word-processing application program. In the exemplary embodiment, this entails the user selecting a "load copy" icon LC on the internal-document display portion **1365** of interface **136.** In response, user interface **136,** which includes an appropriate application program interface, launches or otherwise communicates with the word-processing application to load the document from interface **136** into the word-processing application for user modification. In response, tracking system data within KMS server **1242** is also updated to reflect usage of this internal document. (The exemplary system generally tracks everytime a user clicks on something, specifically creating a usage record indicating the date, time, user, client-mater, type oftransaction.)

Block **280** saves the modified copy of the internal document in the DMS database as a new work product document. In the exemplary embodiment, this entails the user also providing metadata profile data for the new document.

Exemplary Method of Building the Research Repository

In the exemplary system of FIG. **1,** knowledge-management subsystem **120** includes KMS database **1244,** which serves as a research repository of documents selected from DMS database **1224.** KMS server **1242** includes software (that is, coded instructions) for automatically migrating or mirroring select documents from firm's DMS or network file system to the KMS database **1242.**

In the exemplary embodiment, this migration process initially entails retrieving one or more documents from DMS database, for example, using administrator defined queries and executing those queries on a scheduled basis or event-driven basis. Next, the exemplary method entails converting the retrieved documents into a markup language, such as HTML, subsequently indexing the converted documents based on citations and text. The next series of operations include storing citation relationships, storing the HTML documents with tagged citations, and storing document profile data all in a relevant portion of the KMS server.

Conclusion

The embodiments described above are intended only to illustrate and teach one or more ways of making and using the present invention, not to restrict its breadth or scope. The actual scope of the invention, which embraces all ways of practicing or implementing the teachings of the invention, is defined only by one or more issued patent claims and their equivalents.

The invention claimed is:

1. A server for facilitating a knowledge management system, wherein the server communicates with client computers via a distributed computing network, and wherein the server comprises:

(a) a memory storing an instruction set, a first database related to work-product documents of a law firm, and a

aninserts them prior to serving up the pages to the access device. Another feature of this interface allows the use to click

on an UI element and move the mouse cursor to each place in

second database related to non-work-product legal precedence; and

(b) a processor for running the instruction set, the processor being in communication with the memory and the distributed computing network, wherein the processor is operative to perform the following steps:

(i) receive a query from an agent of a law firm operating one of the client computers, wherein the processor

receives the query and provides, to the agent for display on a graphical user interface, a taxonomy oflegal topics for selection by the agent, with selection of one or more of the legal topics indicative of the query being received;

(ii) search the first and second databases for content related to the query;

(iii) retrieve a first set of work-product documents of the law firm from the first database based upon the search step, wherein the first set of work-product documents is stored in a third database in one of the client computers, wherein the first set of work product documents is converted into a markup language and subsequently indexed based on legal citations and text to permit the work product documents to be searched, and the work-product documents are internal law-firm content;

(iv) retrieve a second set of non-work-product legal precedence from the second database based upon the search step; and

(v) provide, to the agent for display on a graphical user interface, at least a portion of the work-product documents and the non-work-product legal precedence from the first and second sets including citations within the work-product documents and the non-work-product legal precedence, wherein at least one of the citations is associated with an indicator of current reliability of a corresponding document as a legal authority,

wherein each provided work-product document is associated with a depth-of-treatment indicator indicating a degree to which the provided work-product document treats a legal case and one or more of the provided work-product documents are associated with a feedback indicator selected to view one or more user comments on the one or more listed work-product documents.

2. The server as recited in claim **1,** wherein the internal law-firm content includes briefs, client letters and legal memoranda.

3. The server as recited in claim **1,** wherein the degree is qualitative as determined by previous users of the provided work-product documents.

4. The server as recited in claim **1,** wherein the degree indicates a quantity.

5. The server of claim **1,** wherein the first and second databases are separated by a firewall.

6. The server of claim **1,** wherein the second database is part of an online pay-for-access legal research service.

7. The server of claim **1,** wherein each provided work-product document is associated with an indicator identifying an author of the document, an office location of the author, and an identification of documents within a document management system for the law firm.

8. The server of claim **1,** wherein the query includes an identification of a legal case.

9. The server of claim **1,** wherein the server is further operative to perform the step of providing, to the agent for display on a graphical user interface, at least a portion of each document found by the search step.

10. The server of claim **1,** wherein the server is further operative to perform the step of providing, to the agent for display on a graphical user interface, a displayable table of authorities listing documents cited within a work-product document selected from within the first set.

11. The server of claim **1,** wherein the server is further operative to perform the step of providing, to the agent for display on a graphical user interface, a listing of other documents citing the selected work-product document.

12. The server of claim **1,** wherein each portion of the documents in the search step includes a selection device for invoking display of text of the document, with text including one or more selectable citations to other corresponding documents and with each citation associated with an indicator of current reliability of a corresponding document as a legal authority.

13. The server of claim **1,** wherein at least a portion of the metadata profile data of the work product documents are incorporated into the converted work product documents.

14. A computer-implemented method for facilitating a knowledge management system in a distributed computing network have a server in communication with client computers, and memory storing a first database related to work-product documents of a law firm, and a second database related to non-work-product legal precedence, wherein the method comprises the steps of:

(a) receiving a query at the server from an agent of a law firm operating one of the client computers,

(b) providing, to the agent for display on a graphical user interface, a taxonomy oflegal topics for selection by the agent, with selection of one or more of the legal topics indicative of the query being received;

(c) searching the first and second databases for content related to the query;

(d) retrieving a first set of work-product documents of the law firm from the first database based upon the searching step;

(e) storing the first set of work-product documents in a third database in one of the client computers;

(f) converting the first set of work product documents into a markup language and subsequently indexing the first set based on legal citations and text to permit the first set of work product documents to be searched, wherein the work-product documents are internal law-firm content;

(g) retrieving a second set of non-work-product legal precedence from the second database based upon the searching step; and

(h) providing at least a portion of the work-product documents and the non-work-product legal precedence from the first and second sets including citations within the work-product documents and the non-work-product legal precedence,

wherein at least one of the citations is associated with an indicator of current reliability of a corresponding document as a legal authority, and each provided work-product document is associated with a depth-of-treatment indicator indicating a degree to which the provided work-product document treats a legal case and one or more of the provided work-product documents are associated with a feedback indicator selected to view one or more user comments on the one or more listed work-product documents.

15. The computer-implemented method of claim **14,** wherein the second database is part of an online pay-for-access legal research service, each provided work-product document is associated with an indicator identifying an author of the document, an office location of the author, and an identification of documents within a document management system for the law firm, and the query includes an identification of a legal case.

16. The computer-implemented method of claim **14,** further comprising the steps of:

providing, to the agent for display on a graphical user interface, at least a portion of each document found by the search step; and

providing, to the agent for display on a graphical user interface, a displayable table of authorities listing documents cited within a work-product document selected from within the first set.

17. The computer-implemented method of claim **14** further comprising the step of providing, to the agent for di;play on a graphical user interface, a listing of other documents citing the selected work-product document,

wherein each portion of the documents in the search step includes a selection device for invoking display of text of the document, with text including one or more selectable citations to other corresponding documents and with each citation associated with an indicator of current reliability of a corresponding document as a legal authority, and

wherein at least a portion of the metadata profile data of the work product documents are incorporated into the converted work product documents.

18. A non-transitory computer-readable medium whose contents cause a distributed computer network to perform a et od for facilitating a knowledge management system, the d1stnbuted computing network having a server in communication with client computers, and memory storing a first database related to work-product documents of a law firm and a second database related to non-work-product legal pre cedence, the distributed computer network having a server program and a client program with functions for invocation by performing the steps of:

(a) receiving a query at the server from an agent of a law firm operating one of the client computers,

(b) providing, to the agent for display on a graphical user interface, a taxonomy oflegal topics for selection by the ge_nt, ith selection of one or more of the legal topics md1catJve of the query being received;

(c) searching the first and second databases for content related to the query;

(d) retrieving a first set of work-product documents of the law firm from the first database based upon the searching step;

(e) storing the first set of work-product documents in a third database in one of the client computers;

(f) converting the first set of work product documents into a markup language and subsequently indexing the first set based on legal citations and text to permit the first set of work product documents to be searched, wherein the work-product documents are internal law-firm content;

(g) retrieving a second set of non-work-product legal precedence from the second database based upon the searching step; and

(h) providing at least a portion of the work-product documents and the non-work-product legal precedence from the first and second sets including citations within the work-product documents and the non-work-product legal precedence,

wherein at least one of the citations is associated with an indicator of current reliability of a corresponding document as a legal authority, and each provided work-product document is associated with a depth-of-treatment indicator indicating a degree to which the provided work-product document treats a legal case and one or more of the provided work-product documents are associated with a feedback indicator selected to view one or more user comments on the one or more listed work-product documents.

19. The non-transitory computer-readable medium of claim **18,** wherein the second database is part of an online pay-for-access legal research service, each provided work-product document is associated with an indicator identifying an author of the document, an office location of the author and an identification of documents within a document man agement system for the law firm, and the query includes an identification of a legal case.

20. The non-transitory computer-readable medium of claim **18,** further comprising the steps of:

providing, to the agent for display on a graphical user interface, at least a portion of each document found by the search step; and

providing, to the agent for display on a graphical user interface, a displayable table of authorities listing documents cited within a work-product document selected from within the first set.

21. The non-transitory computer-readable medium of claim **18,** further comprising the step of providing, to the agent for display on a graphical user interface, a listing of other documents citing the selected work-product document

w erein each portion of the documents in the search ste mcludes a selection device for invoking display of text of the document, with text including one or more selectable citations to other corresponding documents and with each citation associated with an indicator of current reliability of a corresponding document as a legal authority, and

wherein at least a portion of the metadata profile data of the work product documents are incorporated into the converted work product documents.

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