

Figure 1

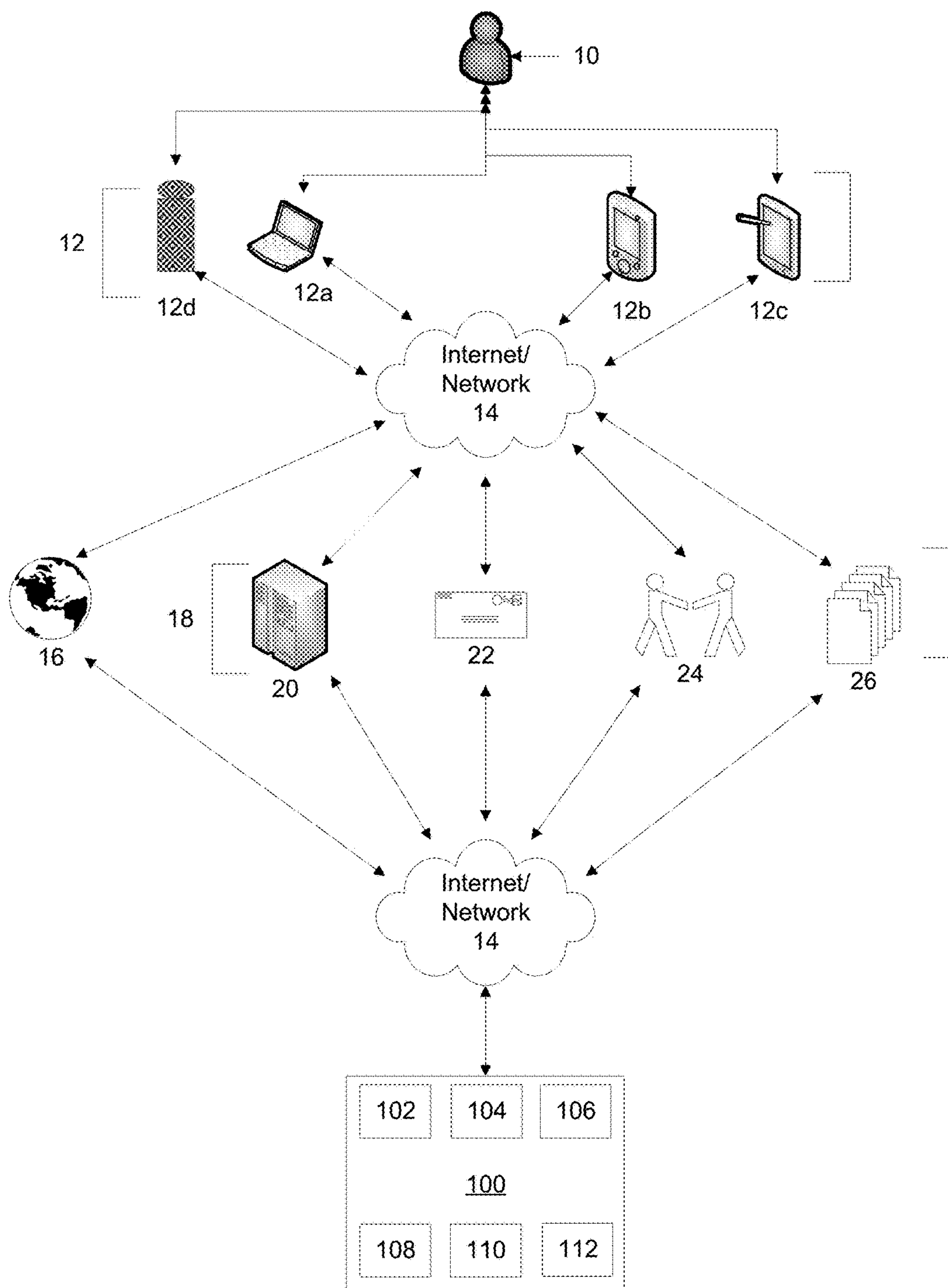


Figure 2

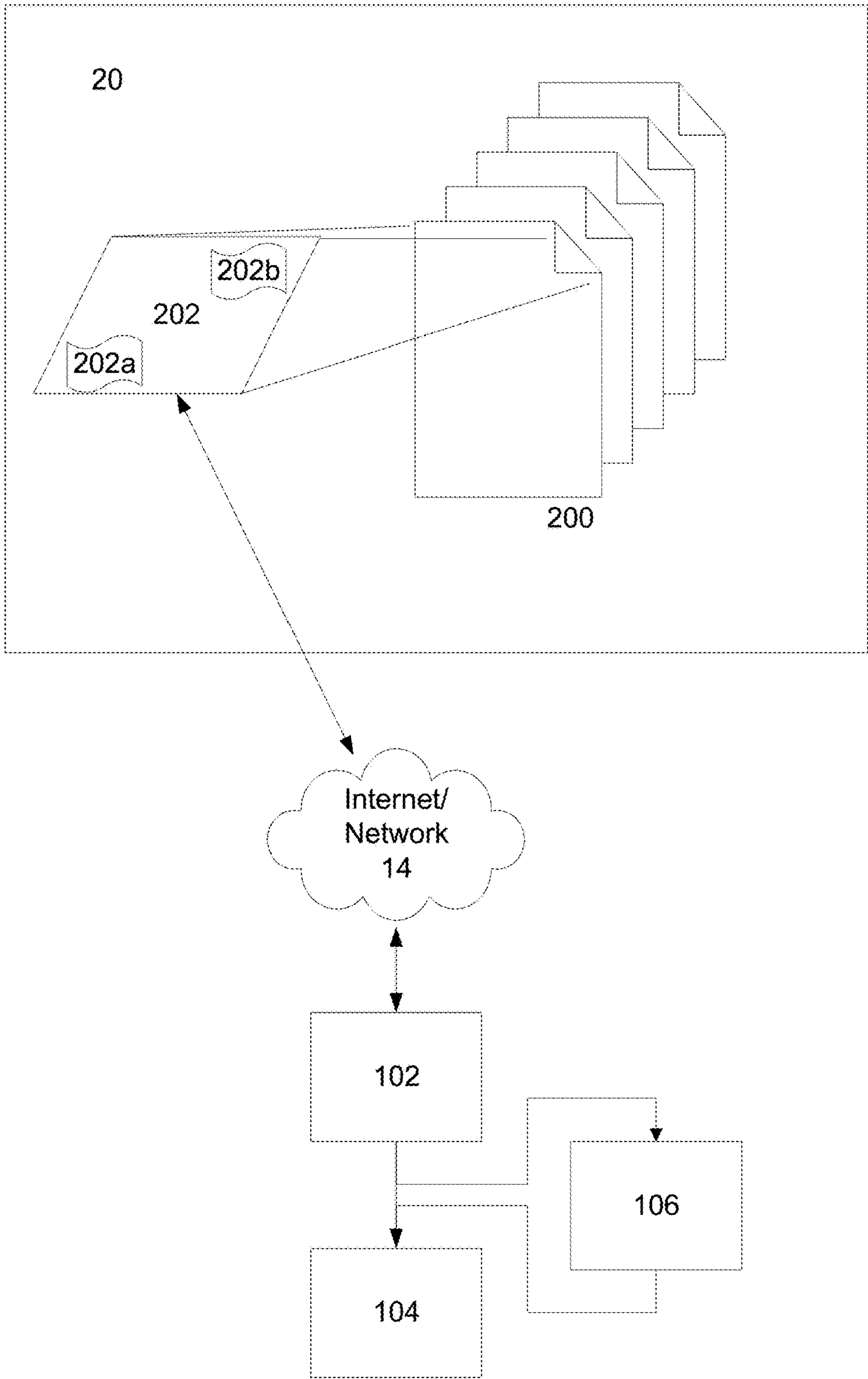


Figure 3

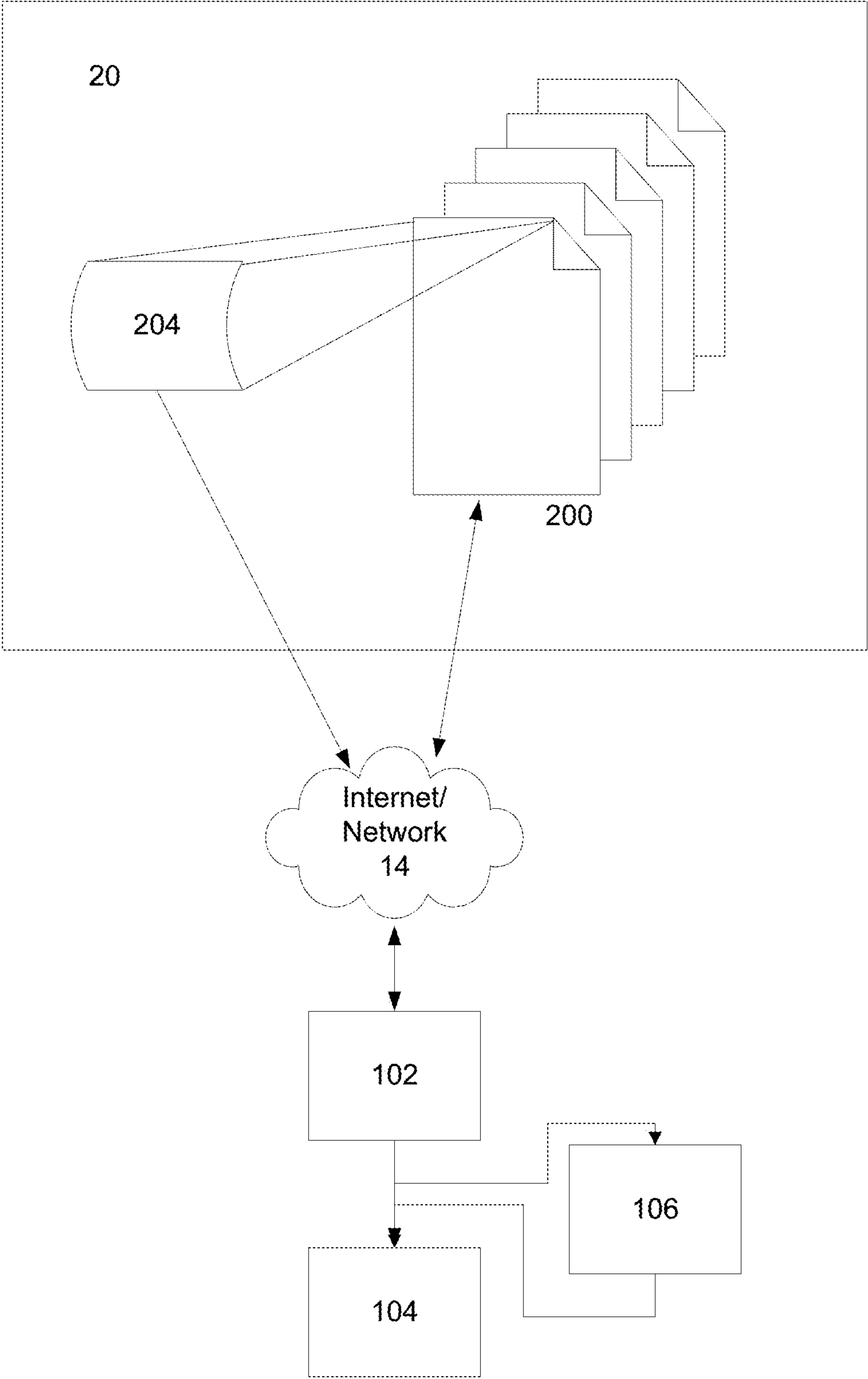
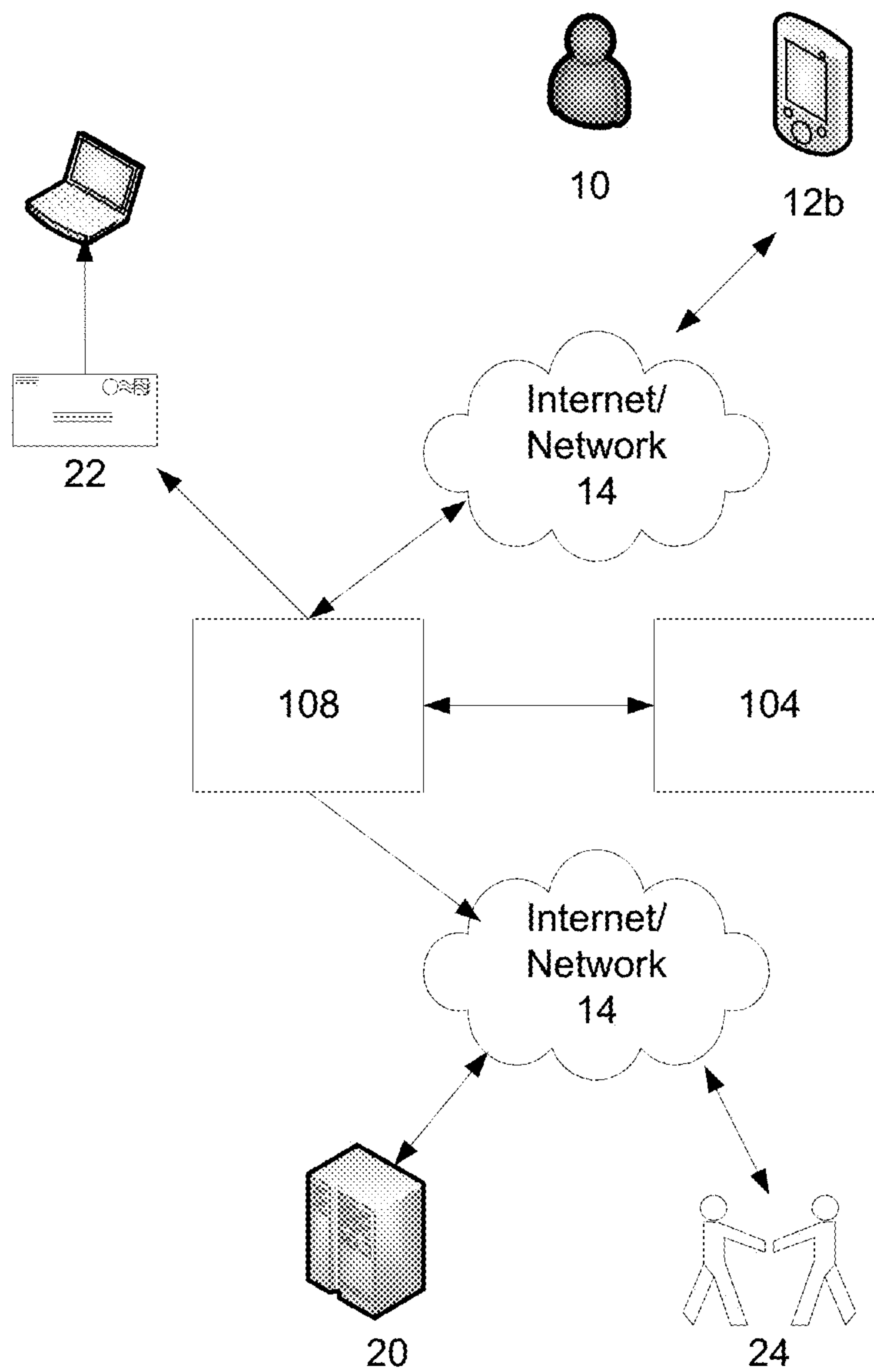


Figure 4



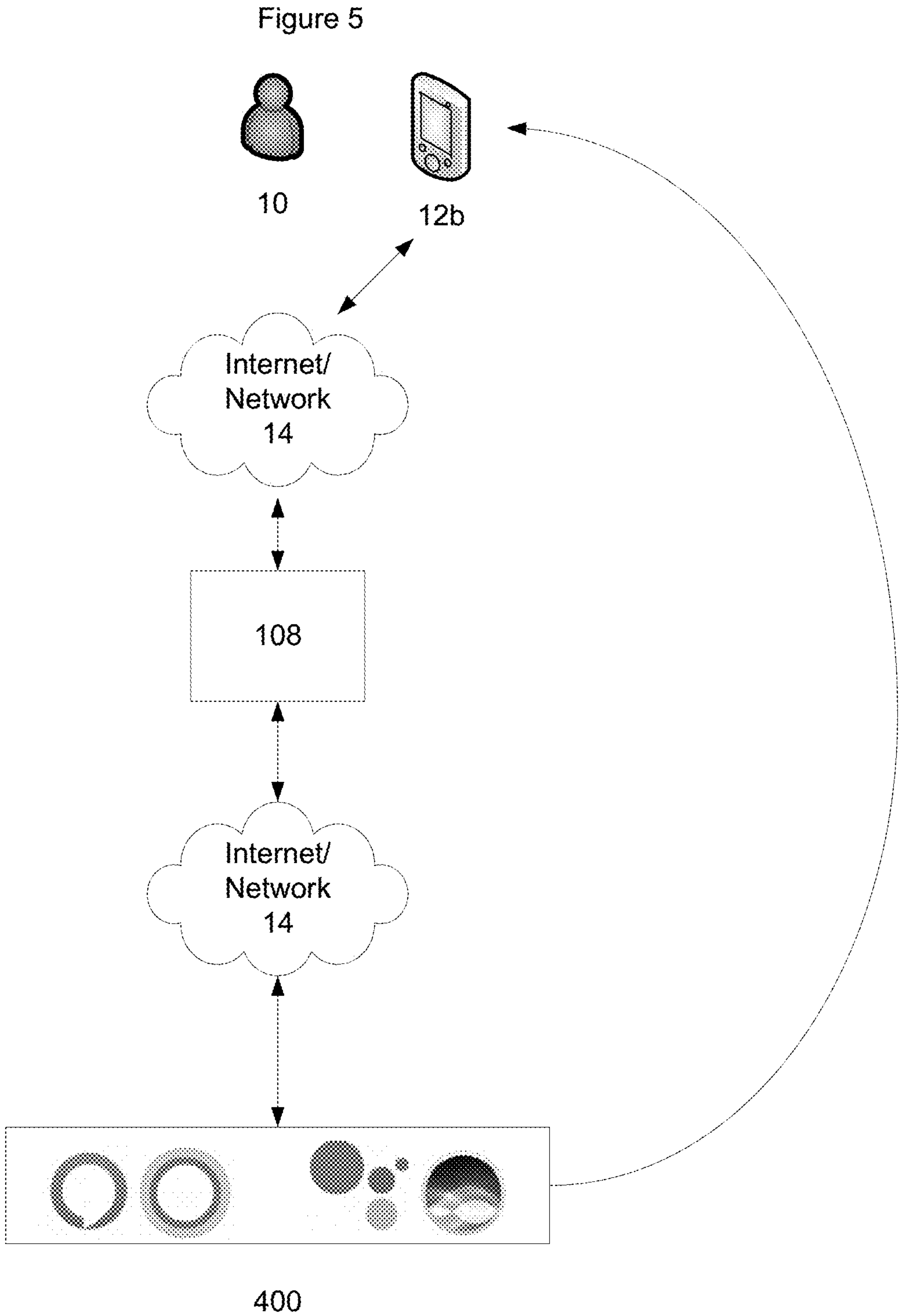


Figure 6

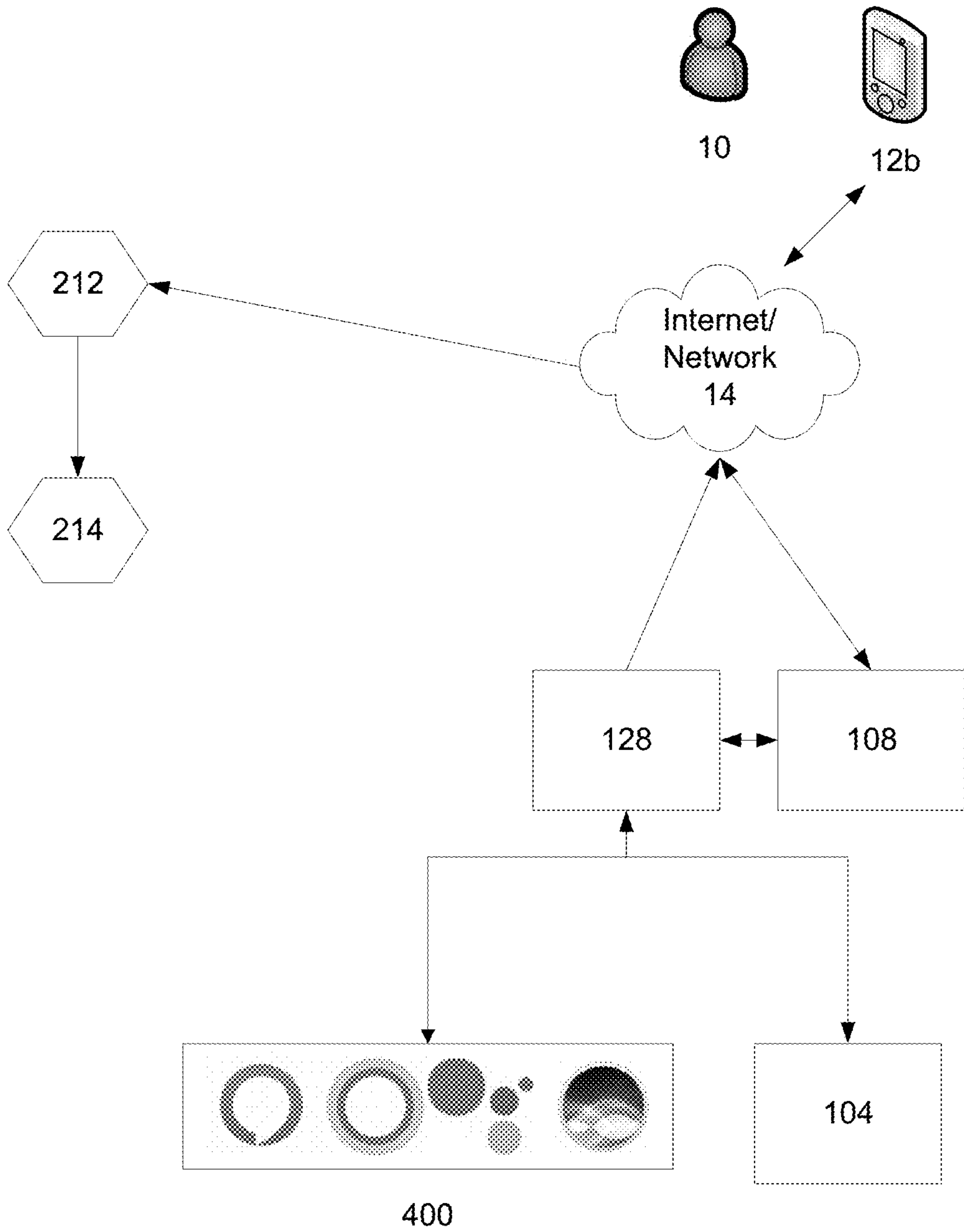


Figure 7

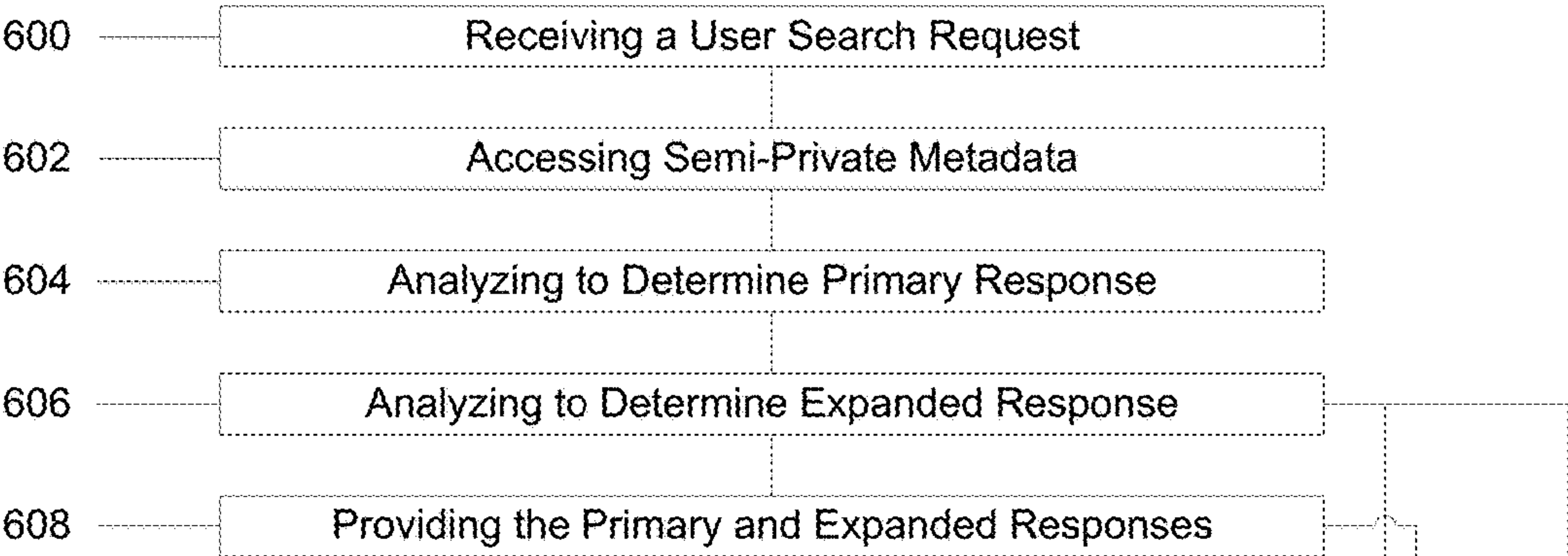


Figure 8

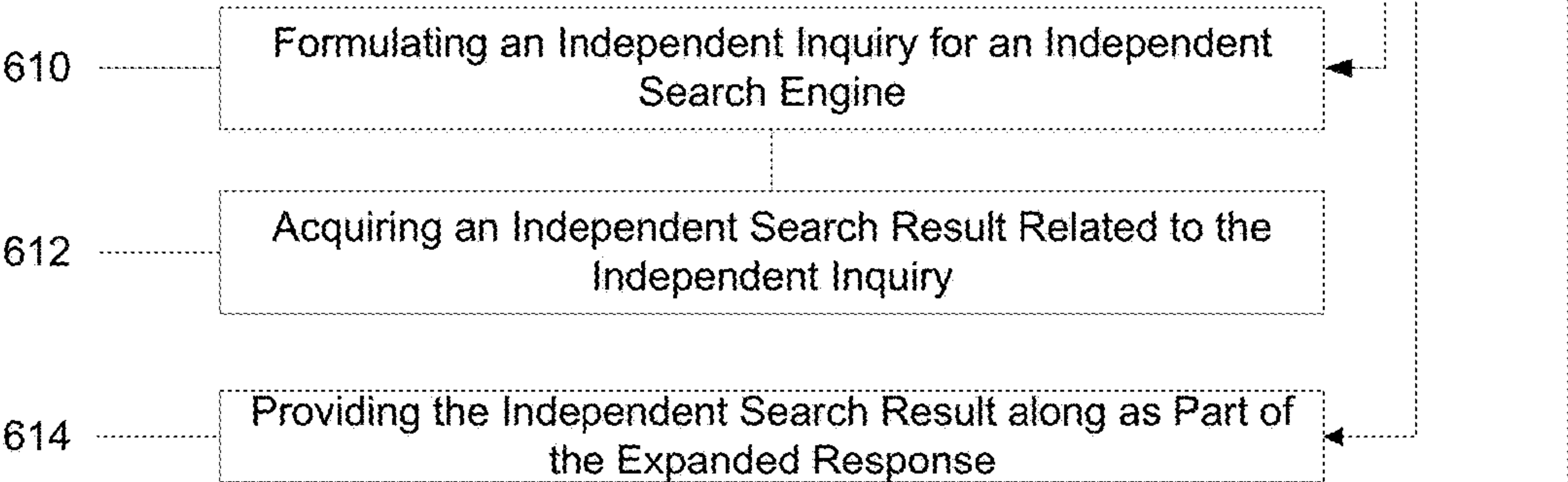
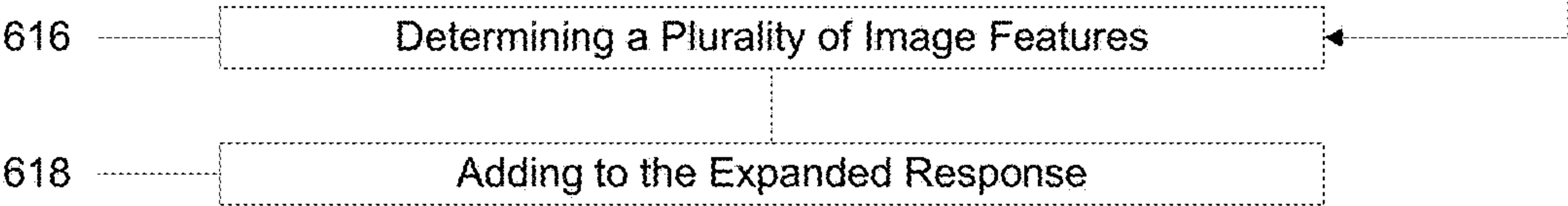


Figure 9



SYSTEM AND METHOD OF AI ASSISTED SEARCH

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates to utilizing artificial intelligence to assist a user in searching and retrieving digital data.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Human and machine generated metadata is exponentially increasing and fragmenting across an expanding universe of cloud services and Internet of Things (IoT) devices. The average person actively uses 27 apps that rely on cloud-based services in their personal lives, a combination of 36 personal and enterprise cloud services for work, owns 4 connected devices (e.g. smart phone, tablet, PC and smart TV) and uses additional devices for work. The average organization uses 1,427 cloud services across its employees including 210 collaboration services (e.g. Office 365, Slack), 76 file sharing services (e.g. Box, OneDrive), 56 content sharing services (e.g. YouTube, Flickr) and 41 social media services (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn) and generates over 2.7 billion unique transactions each month (e.g. user logins, uploads, edits).

[0003] This proliferation of cloud services and IoT devices has accelerated the volume of data generated by consumers and organizations to 23 billion gigabytes per day. As some examples:

Data Generated	Per Minute	Per Day
Dropbox Files Uploaded	833 thousand	1.2 billion
Email Sent/Received	150 million	215 billion
Facebook Posts Shared	3 million	4.3 billion
Facebook Posts Liked	4 million	5.8 billion
Instagram Posts Liked	2.5 million	3.6 billion
Twitter Tweets Posted	350 thousand	504 million
YouTube Minutes of Video Uploaded	18 thousand	25.9 million

This pervasive and growing problem of data fragmentation across cloud services and IoT platforms affects consumers and organizations alike. As an example of a real word situation, a user is headed to a meeting and remembers a data point that is needed for the meeting. However, the user cannot remember where or when she last saw it. Email? Cloud drive? File sharing? Chat? Social media? The only feature the user can remember that the info is about travel trends, and that there's a picture of a smiling woman and a palm tree. Currently, the user has to search for the data individually across all of her known digital connections. This increases time lost and increases the probability that the data cannot be found timely. What is needed is a means to quickly retrieve and act on data across a broad spectrum of cloud services and IoT platforms.

[0004] Even using search engines utilizing predictions, it is still a burdened search. Predictive searches are made based on factors, like the popularity and freshness of search terms, the terms the user is typing, relevant searches a user has done in the past, what other people are searching for, including popular topics that might change throughout the day. This cannot help the user to search her data.

SUMMARY

[0005] The present invention solves the above problems using a system for assisted expanded search. The system can have a server, receiving from a user, a user search request to access semi-private data, and a controlled access non-transient memory storing at least the semi-private data. An expanded search engine can implement at least one algorithm to analyze semi-private metadata and semi-private correlated metadata related to the semi-private data to determine a primary response and an expanded response to the user search request. The system can also include a display providing the user the primary response and the expanded response.

[0006] A method for assisted expanded search can have steps that can include receiving a user search request to access semi-private data. This request can be entered from any user device and received by the system or search engine. In one example, the user search request is typically transmitted over the network to a server. The user is requests a search of her semi-private data, this can reside on a controlled access non-transient memory. The search engine and/or AI search assistant accesses semi-private metadata and semi-private correlated metadata related to the user search request and the semi-private data. The search engine and/or AI search assistant can analyze the semi-private metadata and the semi-private correlated metadata to determine a primary response to the user search request. Also, the search engine and/or AI search assistant can analyze the semi-private metadata and the semi-private correlated metadata to determine an expanded response to the user search request. This analysis can be performed using a processor running instructions to implement at least one algorithm. Then the user can be provided the primary response and the expanded response.

[0007] Examples of the expanded response can include that it provides additional information related to the user search request different from the primary response. Further, the additional information in the expanded response may not be requested in the user search request.

[0008] Additional examples of the analyzing metadata to determine the expanded response include formulating, based on the analysis, an independent inquiry to an independent search engine. The AI search assistant can then acquire, from the independent search engine, an independent search result related to the independent inquiry. The providing step can then also include providing the independent search result as part of the expanded response. In a different example, the analyzing to determine the expanded response can include using image recognition to determine a plurality of features of image data within semi-private data. The plurality of features can be used as part of the determination of the expanded response.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] This invention is described with particularity in the appended claims. The above and further aspects of this invention may be better understood by referring to the following description in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which like numerals indicate like structural elements and features in various figures. The drawings are not necessarily to scale, emphasis instead being placed upon illustrating the principles of the invention.

[0010] The drawing figures depict one or more implementations in accord with the present teachings, by way of example only, not by way of limitation. In the figures, like reference numerals refer to the same or similar elements.

[0011] FIG. 1 is a schematic overview of the system of the present invention;

[0012] FIG. 2 illustrates an example of the data reticulation process;

[0013] FIG. 3 illustrates another example of the data reticulation process;

[0014] FIG. 4 illustrates an example of the search engine;

[0015] FIG. 5 illustrates an example of the system interfacing with digital assistants;

[0016] FIG. 6 illustrates an example of an AI search assistant;

[0017] FIG. 7 illustrates an example of a method of generating a primary and expanded search response;

[0018] FIG. 8 illustrates an example of a method of inquiring an independent search engine; and

[0019] FIG. 9 illustrates a method of using image data for the expanded response.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0020] Turning to FIG. 1, an overview of the system 100 is illustrated. A user 10 can have any number of internet connect devices 12, including a laptop 12a, a smartphone 12b, a tablet 12c, a smart speaker 12d, an internet connected watch (not illustrated), smart car (not illustrated), smart appliance (not illustrated), smart TV (not illustrated), and all other networked content creation and delivery devices. The user 10 can interact with the devices which in turn are connected to the internet 14 or other networks: public, private, or worldwide. These connections allow the user to access content 16 broadly or utilize any number of services 18, including file storage 20, email servers 22, social media 24, and collaboration and content sharing 26, calendar (not illustrated), and gaming platforms (not illustrated), as just an example of the myriad of on-line services and accounts available to the user 10. The user 10 then can permit the system 100 to access her content 16 and services 18 to begin the process of data reticulation.

[0021] The system 100 can have a scanning engine 102, storage 104, analysis engine 106, search engine 108, security exchange 110, and display engine 112. Discussions of the security exchange 110, the display engine 112 and other aspects of the system 100 are incorporated herein by reference from co-pending application Ser. No. 15/950,866, filed Apr. 11, 2018 and titled "System and Method of Correlating Multiple Data Points to Create a New Single Data Point".

[0022] FIG. 2 is an example of the system 100 that performs the data reticulation process. In an example of a first instance, the scanning engine 102 scans all of the information associated with the user's devices 12, content 16, and services 18. As is known in the art, all or most individual pieces of data 200 have metadata 202 attached. The metadata 202 describes and provides information about the data 200 without needing to access the data 200 itself. The metadata 200 can include metadata 202a added by the individual services 18 in addition to user generated metadata 202b. In one example, the scanning engine 102 can just extract the metadata 202 associated with each piece of data 200 and store the metadata 202 in the memory 104.

[0023] As a concrete example, the user 10 can store a Word document 200 in her DropBox account 20. The Word

document has the user generated metadata 202b attached to it, which can include author, creation date, and store a number of changes made by the user 10 during the creation of the document. DropBox 20 can also add metadata 202a regarding the time and number of uploads, downloads, etc. The scanning engine 102 can just extract that metadata 202 without accessing the document 200. The scanning engine 102 then stores the metadata 202 for further use, described below.

[0024] Another example of the scanning engine 102 can be that the scanning engine 102 takes each piece of data 200 and creates new metadata 204 based on its own scanning and processing algorithm. FIG. 3 illustrates that the scanning engine 102 accesses each piece of data 200, performs a scan, and then creates the new metadata 204. The new metadata 204 is then stored in memory 104. In this example, extended from the one above, the scanning engine 102 reads the Word document 200 and can capture additional information (i.e. addresses and addressees of correspondence, main themes, etc.) and then creates the new metadata 204 from the read.

[0025] A further example can allow the scanning engine 102 to both read the existing metadata 202 and acquire the new metadata 204. The two metadata 202, 204 can be combined or stored separately in memory 104. Additionally, both examples above allow the data 200 to remain stored at the service 18 or device 12 and only the metadata 202, 204 is stored in the memory 104 of the system 100. In alternate examples, all of the data 200 can be redundantly backed up and stored in the memory 104 as well.

[0026] The scanning engine 102, along with scanning the user's devices 12, content 16, and services 18 can also acquire information regarding the user's profile attached with each of the devices 12 and services 18. This allows for more personalized data 208 to be provided to the analysis engine 106. The scanning engine 102 can also track the user's 10 interactions with each of the devices 12, content 16, and services 18. For example, that the scanning engine 102 can track the facts that the user 10 typically access her social media sites 24 from her smartphone 12b but accesses e-mail primarily from her laptop 12a. These trends can also be passed to the analysis engine 106 to be added to correlated metadata 206 (discussed below) and be of use to optimize the search engine 108. For example, a search for data noted to be likely found in an e-mail can be optimized by looking first at data created on the laptop 12a.

[0027] As data 200 is constantly changing, the scanning engine 102 is constantly updating the metadata 202, 204 it provides to storage 104 and/or the analysis engine 106. The scanning engine 102 can also monitor which device 12 the user 10 is using at any one time and which devices 12 are registered to the user 10. That information can be provided to the system 100 to permit seamless delivery of data 200 to the user 10.

[0028] The scanning engine 102 can be one or more algorithms designed to analyze user data 200. Specialized algorithms can be designed for each type of data 200. Photo analysis and image recognition can be performed by one algorithm while text analysis for words and context can be done by another. These scanning modules of the scanning engine 102 can then be upgraded, debugged, and replaced without disturbing the other aspects of the scanning engine 102.

[0029] The storage/memory 104 is non-transient and can be of the type known to those of skill in the art, e.g.,

magnetic, solid state or optical. The storage **104** can be centralized in a server or decentralized in a cloud storage configuration. The metadata **202**, **204** and/or correlated metadata **206** can be stored in a database. In one example, each user **10** can have a record or entry in the database. A user's entry is ever expanding as she generates more and more data **200** to reticulate and extract from. The correlated metadata **206** can be expanded as the user **10** also engages additional services **18**. The user entry can be updated in real time, providing a constantly up-to-date profile of the user **10** and her digital footprint, allowing the system **100** to more easily provide results to the questions/requests posed to the search engine **108**, as discussed below.

[0030] As the data **200** is being scanned by the scanning engine **102** and metadata **202**, **204** stored in memory **104**, the analysis engine **106** reviews the metadata **202**, **204** and creates additional correlated data points **206** relating the data **200**. The correlated data points **206** can be generated from a combination of metadata **202**, **204** and interpreting the information therein. Thus, the analysis engine **106** analyzes the metadata **202**, **204** and finds correlations between what may be disparate and unrelated data points **200** and saves that information as correlated metadata **206**.

[0031] For example, the user **10** could have taken a trip to Italy and there are photos taken during the trip on one or more of the user's devices **12** and/or uploaded to the user's photo storage **20** and social media accounts **24**. Further, there are calendar entries detailing where the user **10** is on a particular day and a Word diary of the trip. The analysis engine **106** can use the date and geotagging information in the photos to determine location. Image recognition analysis can be performed on the images to extract additional details and all of this can be compared against the calendar and diary entries for increased accuracy. Correlated metadata **206** can be created linking all of the original data **200** and additional details can also be extracted and correlated to data points **206** related to the user's likes and dislikes.

[0032] Thus, in one example, user metadata **202** and new metadata **204** can be used to link a photo, calendar, and diary entry to detail that the user **10** met a particular person at a particular place and time, and ate a meal. Thus, the correlated metadata **206** can link a picture of the Trevi Fountain, a calendar entry to meet Robert Langdon, and ate at the Il Gelato de San Crispino in Rome. In a deeper correlation, from, for example, the photos and diary **202**, **204** it can be determined that pistachio is the user's **10** favorite gelato and Mr. Langdon was wearing a tweed jacket and that correlated metadata **206** can also be saved **104**.

[0033] The analysis engine **106** can also be a combination of algorithms or individual services that sort and analyze the metadata **202**, **204**, **208** and create the correlated metadata **206**. The correlated metadata **206** can be metadata not already generated from the service metadata **202a**, the user metadata **202b** and the personalized metadata **208**. The correlated metadata **206** can include very specific details gleaned from the data **200** or relationships between the metadata **202**, **204**, **208** that no one set of metadata **202**, **204**, **208** had captured.

[0034] For example, Word, while generating document metadata **202a** cannot correlate that data with images posted on Facebook and music listened to on Pandora. The analysis engine **106** can determine that after the user's trip to Italy, she developed a taste for opera. Facebook may have the images of the opera house, Outlook may have the calendar

entry for the user's first opera, and Pandora may note that the user is now listening to opera streams, but the analysis engine **106** assembles the pieces to determine that the user **10** started to appreciate opera only after her trip. This analysis happens across all of the user's data.

[0035] In additional examples, the correlated metadata **206** can include data groupings. The data groupings are information that relates like files over one or more dimensions. The groupings can relate to a single event, like a trip to Italy, or even more specific to just the churches visited in Italy, or churches visited throughout Europe over many trips to different cities. The same data **200** can be in many different groupings, if the content dictates. The groupings can be formed from data **200** residing on any device **12**, content **16**, or service **18**. The similarities between related data **200** are gleaned from the correlated metadata **206**. The analysis for correlated metadata **206** can get as granular as sentiment/emotional state in the writings and images. Smiles, frowns, clipped tones, laughs, and inflections can be used to determine basic emotional states and that can be added to the correlated metadata **206**.

[0036] FIG. 4 illustrates the search as detailed above looking for the single data point. The user **10** queries the system **100**, by voice on her smartphone **12a** "I am looking for a picture of a smiling woman and a palm tree with text involving travel." The search engine **108** now searches the correlated metadata **206** in the memory **104** to find the answer to the question. The search engine **108** determines the possible answers to the question and additionally determines that one possible answer resides in the user's file storage **20** and the other resides in the user's social media account **24**. The search engine **108** can then reply to the user **10** either with copies of the data **200** from both locations **20**, **24** or links to those locations/data. The user **10** can further request the search engine **108** to e-mail the data to a third party. The search engine **108** can access the user's e-mail account **22** and contacts to create a new e-mail with attachments and ask the user **10** to dictate the accompanying text.

[0037] The scanning, analysis and storage of correlated metadata **206** allows for a much more robust search with the search engine **108**. The search engine **108** can receive user input in any form, including text and voice, to search the user's **10** data **200**. The search can be general, specific, and/or somewhat free form. By using the correlated metadata **206** a user can ask for "when was I at Trevi Fountain", "who did I meet at Trevi Fountain", and/or "what was my favorite gelato flavor"? Because the correlated metadata **206** can link back the original metadata **202**, **204**, the original data **200** can be produced if a subsequent search query requests it. The search engine **108** can also create links or attachments for the data **200** requested.

[0038] The search engine **108** can use natural language processing to search the user data **200** linked to the service **100**, in most or all of the native world languages of the user **10**. In addition, the search engine **108** can interface across platforms with other digital assistants **400** (e.g. Alexa, Cortana, Siri, Google Assistant, etc.) to leverage the search features built into the digital assistants. Different digital assistants **400** perform and are optimized for different search and query functions. Certain digital assistants **400** are optimized for ecommerce, device and OS operations, fact retrieval, etc. and the search engine **108** can expand the results of a user **10** inquiry. For example, the analysis engine **106** determined the user **10** is interested in opera. The search

engine 108 can query an ecommerce digital assistant for books, videos and audio recordings, the fact assistant for time, date, and location of the next operatic performance near the user 10, and the OS assistant to add the feature to the user's calendar and provide directions to the performance. The results from the digital assistant 400 can be directed back through the search engine 108 or reported directly from the digital assistant 400 to the user 10, as in illustrated in FIG. 5.

[0039] Given all of the above, while advanced algorithms are being used to create metadata 202, 204, 206 to be searched there is still a need for advanced machine learning algorithms (also called artificial intelligence or "AI") to assist the user 10 in requesting and retrieving the data 200 quickly and efficiently.

[0040] As illustrated in FIG. 6, an AI search assistant 128 can be part of the user's 10 search experience. The AI search assistant 128 can access the memory 104, search engine 108 and utilize the digital assistants 400 to anticipate the user's 10 search and provide expanded results. The AI search assistant 128 can automatically provide granular details based on the metadata 202, 204, 206 surrounding the search. Thus, if a user 10 requests a search for "Robert Langdon's contact information", the search engine 108 can return a primary search result 212, which can be his contact information. However, the AI search assistant 128 can then provide expanded results 214. From the above example, the AI search assistant 128 can return a list of dates the user 10 previously met with Langdon and highlighting the last time, the list of restaurants the user 10 and Langdon previously ate in, links to all photos of the user 10 and Langdon, email and text threads, and any documents addressed to or referencing Langdon. Additionally, the expanded results 214 can include data from a general search of Langdon's social media accounts to provide summary updates on Langdon's last posts. The expanded results 214 can be provided along with the primary search result 212 or provided optionally on the user's 10 request.

[0041] Details in the expanded results 214 can be categorized based on the analysis of the metadata 202, 204, 206 208 and not a static pattern based on the initial search string. The AI search assistant 128 utilizes the metadata 202, 204, 206 208 to determine the relevant expanded results 214. Typical search engine predictive analysis utilizing the searches and results of others to assist in the user's search is not applicable when the user 10 searches her data 200.

[0042] Since photo analysis and image recognition can be performed, the AI search assistant 128 can further analyze the details of the images to provide expanded results 214 based on photographic data 200 as well. For example, the AI search assistant 128 can determine that most of the photos of the user 10 and Langdon are in front of churches. The AI search assistant 128 can then access the metadata 202, 204, 206 208 (including the latitude and longitude embedded in most digital images and image matching) to generate a list of the churches the user 10 and Langdon have visited. This can be returned as part of the expanded results 214.

[0043] Said another way, the data 200 and metadata 202, 204, 206, 208 is semi-private. Semi-private means the data 200 and metadata 202, 204, 206, 208 are not available to the general public. The data 200 and metadata 202, 204, 206, 208 are personal to the user 10 or related to the user's employment or employer. In this example, the data 200 and metadata 202, 204, 206, 208 are kept on controlled access

storage 104. Controlled means that the data 200 and metadata 202, 204, 206, 208 are restricted to non-permitted users, but can be accessed by groups of permitted users. Examples include the data 200 and metadata 202, 204, 206, 208 kept on a personal smartphone, cloud storage accessible to friends and family, and/or company based servers and storage. While the user 10 and a select group have access, the majority of people cannot search or access the data 200 and metadata 202, 204, 206, 208. Thus, the past or trending searches are generally not helpful in delivering the expanded results 214.

[0044] FIG. 7 illustrates an example of a method for assisted expanded search. The steps can include receiving a user search request to access semi-private data (step 600). This request can be entered from any user device 12 and received by the system 100 or search engine 108. In one example, the user search request is typically transmitted over the network 14 to a server. The user 10 is requests a search of her semi-private data, this can reside on a controlled access non-transient memory 104. The search engine 108 and/or AI search assistant 128 accesses semi-private metadata and semi-private correlated metadata related to the user search request and the semi-private data (step 602). The search engine 108 and/or AI search assistant 128 can analyze the semi-private metadata 202 and the semi-private correlated metadata 206 to determine a primary response to the user search request (step 604). Also, the search engine 108 and/or AI search assistant 128 can analyze the semi-private metadata and the semi-private correlated metadata to determine an expanded response to the user search request (step 606). This analysis can be performed using a processor running instructions to implement at least one algorithm. Then the user 10 can be provided the primary response and the expanded response (step 608).

[0045] Examples of the expanded response can include that it provides additional information related to the user search request different from the primary response. Further, the additional information in the expanded response may not be requested in the user search request.

[0046] FIG. 8 illustrates additional examples of the analyzing to determine the expanded response (step 606). Formulating, based on the analysis, an independent inquiry to an independent search engine (step 610). The AI search assistant 128 can then acquire, from the independent search engine, an independent search result related to the independent inquiry (step 612). The providing step 608 can then also include providing the independent search result as part of the expanded response (step 614).

[0047] In a different example, analyzing to determine the expanded response (step 606) can include using image recognition to determine a plurality of features of image data within semi-private data (step 616). The plurality of features can be used as part of the determination of the expanded response (step 618), see FIG. 9.

[0048] Turning back to the system 100 as a whole, one or more aspects of the search engine 108 can reside on the user devices 12 while the memory 104 and other aspects of the search engine 108 can reside either on a single server or distributed through cloud computing and storage. A decentralized computing example can have the benefit of quicker response time and the ability to leverage additional computing power and storage quickly.

[0049] The search engine 108 can be software implemented on general purpose or specifically designed hard-

ware or processors. Each of the parts **102**, **104**, **106**, **108**, **110**, **112** of the system **100** can also be distributed over a network. In one example, the scanning engine **102** can be numerous different algorithms on numerous different platforms. Thus, data **200** that comprises both text and images can be processed twice, once through the text analyzer and a second time through the image analyzer. This allows both mediums to have optimal processing.

[0050] The system **100** is robust to operate with all or most devices **12** and services **18**. Table 1 is a partial list of the devices **12** and services **18** that the system **100** can currently interact with.

TABLE 1

Collab- oration	File Sharing	Content Sharing	Social Media	IoT Devices
Asna	Amazon Cloud Drive	Dailymotion	Facebook	Amazon Echo
Bitbucket	Box	DeviantArt	Foursquare	Amazon Fire
Evernote	Dropbox	Flickr	Google Hangouts	Android Smartphones
GoToMeeting	Google Drive	Imgur		Android Tablets
GitHub	Microsoft OneDrive	Instagram	LinkedIn	Android Smart TVs
Gmail		Pandora Radio	Messenger	Android Wearables
Google Docs		Photobucket	Twitter	Android Smart Speakers
Microsoft Teams		Picasa	Tumblr	iPhone
Office 365		Pinterest		iPad
Outlook Mail		Soundcloud		HomePod
Salesforce		Spotify		Apple TV
SharePoint		Vimeo		Apple Watch
Online Skype		Xbox Live		Mac Computers
Slack		YouTube		Win 10 PCs
Slideshare				Win 10 Tablets
Trello				Win 10 Smartphones
WebEx				Xbox One
Yammer				Win 10 Wearables

[0051] It must also be noted that, as used in the specification and the appended claims, the singular forms “a,” “an” and “the” include plural referents unless the context clearly dictates otherwise. By “comprising” or “containing” or “including” is meant that at least the named component or method step is present in the article or method, but does not exclude the presence of other components or method steps, even if the other such components or method steps have the same function as what is named.

[0052] It is also understood that the mention of one or more method steps does not preclude the presence of additional method steps or intervening method steps between those steps expressly identified. Similarly, it is also to be understood that the mention of one or more components in a device or system does not preclude the presence of additional components or intervening components between those components expressly identified.

[0053] The design and functionality described in this application is intended to be exemplary in nature and is not intended to limit the instant disclosure in any way. Those having ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the

teachings of the disclosure may be implemented in a variety of suitable forms, including those forms disclosed herein and additional forms known to those having ordinary skill in the art.

[0054] Certain examples of this technology are described above with reference to flow diagrams. Some blocks of the block diagrams and flow diagrams may not necessarily need to be performed in the order presented, or may not necessarily need to be performed at all, according to some examples of the disclosure.

[0055] While certain examples of this disclosure have been described in connection with what is presently considered to be the most practical and various examples, it is to be understood that this disclosure is not to be limited to the disclosed examples, but on the contrary, is intended to cover various modifications and equivalent arrangements included within the scope of the appended claims. Although specific terms are employed herein, they are used in a generic and descriptive sense only and not for purposes of limitation.

[0056] This written description uses examples to disclose certain examples of the technology and also to enable any person skilled in the art to practice certain examples of this technology, including making and using any apparatuses or systems and performing any incorporated methods. The patentable scope of certain examples of the technology is defined in the claims, and may include other examples that occur to those skilled in the art. Such other examples are intended to be within the scope of the claims if they have structural elements that do not differ from the literal language of the claims, or if they include equivalent structural elements with insubstantial differences from the literal language of the claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A method for assisted expanded search, comprising the steps of:

receiving at a server, from a user, a user search request to access semi-private data, wherein the semi-private data resides on a controlled access non-transient memory; accessing semi-private metadata and semi-private correlated metadata related to the user search request and the semi-private data;

analyzing, using a processor running instructions to implement at least one algorithm, the semi-private metadata and the semi-private correlated metadata to determine a primary response to the user search request;

analyzing, using a processor running instructions to implement at least one algorithm, the semi-private metadata and the semi-private correlated metadata to determine an expanded response to the user search request; and

providing, to the user, the primary response and the expanded response.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the expanded response provides additional information related to the user search request different from the primary response.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the additional information in the expanded response is not requested in the user search request.

4. The method of claim 2, wherein:

the analyzing to determine the expanded response step further comprises the steps of:

formulating, using a processor running instructions to implement the step, based on the analysis, an independent inquiry to an independent search engine; and acquiring, from the independent search engine, an independent search result related to the independent inquiry; and

the providing step further comprises the step of providing the independent search result as part of the expanded response.

5. The method of claim 2, wherein the analyzing to determine the expanded response step further comprises the steps of:

using image recognition to determine a plurality of features of image data within semi-private data; and using one or more of the plurality of features as part of the determination of the expanded response.

6. A system for assisted expanded search, comprising:

a server, receiving from a user, a user search request to access semi-private data;

a controlled access non-transient memory storing at least the semi-private data;

an expanded search engine implementing at least one algorithm to analyze semi-private metadata and semi-private correlated metadata related to the semi-private data to determine a primary response and an expanded response to the user search request; and

a display providing the user the primary response and the expanded response.

* * * * *