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Rescorla

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(54) **METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR MANAGING
GROUP FORMATION AND ENTERTAINMENT**

(56) **References Cited**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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A method and system for forming and maintaining groups for the purposes of mutual entertainment is described. The social network comprises a plurality of participants who may receive invitation messages from one or more group coordinators. These invitation messages may be delivered via a plurality of communication channels and may contain instructions for group rendezvous at a predetermined location and time. Messages are retransmitted to ensure reliable delivery. Once the group has been formed, group members may consume a plurality of liquid and solid refreshments and send and receive messages to and from other group members.

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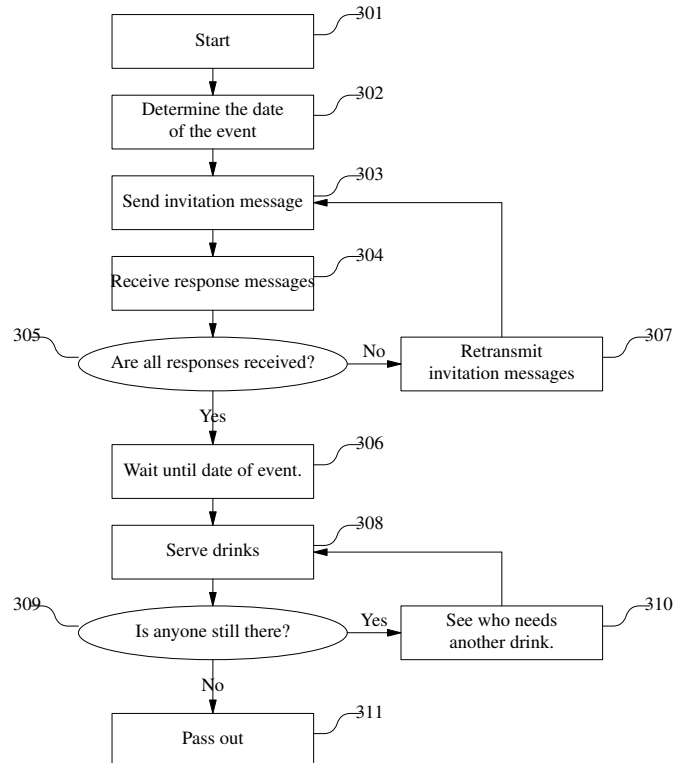
(51) **Int. Cl.**
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See application file for complete search history.

14 Claims, 3 Drawing Sheets



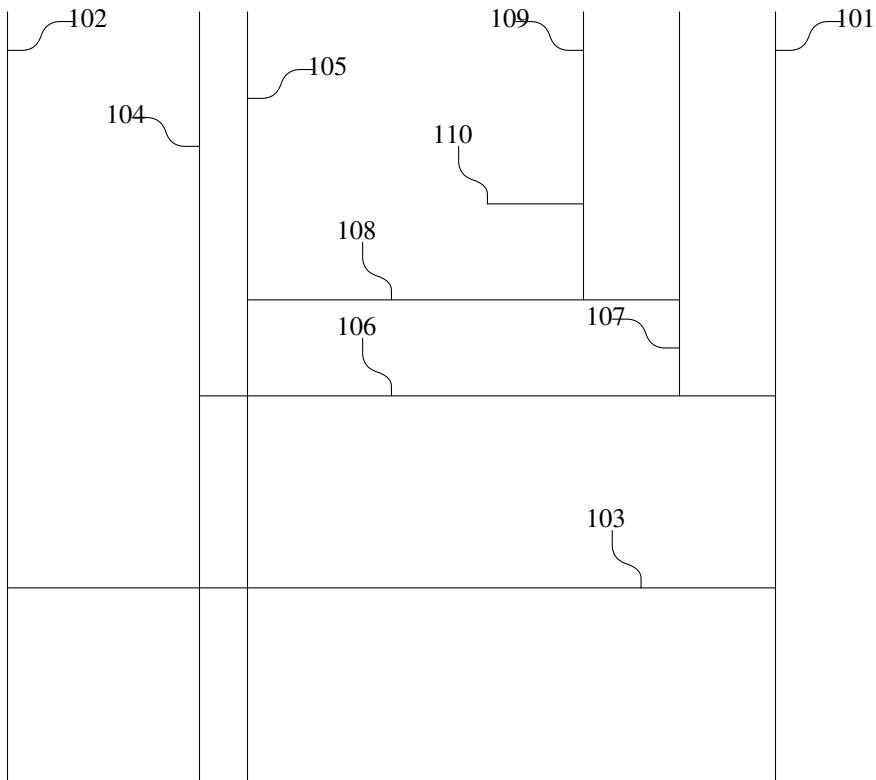


FIG. 1

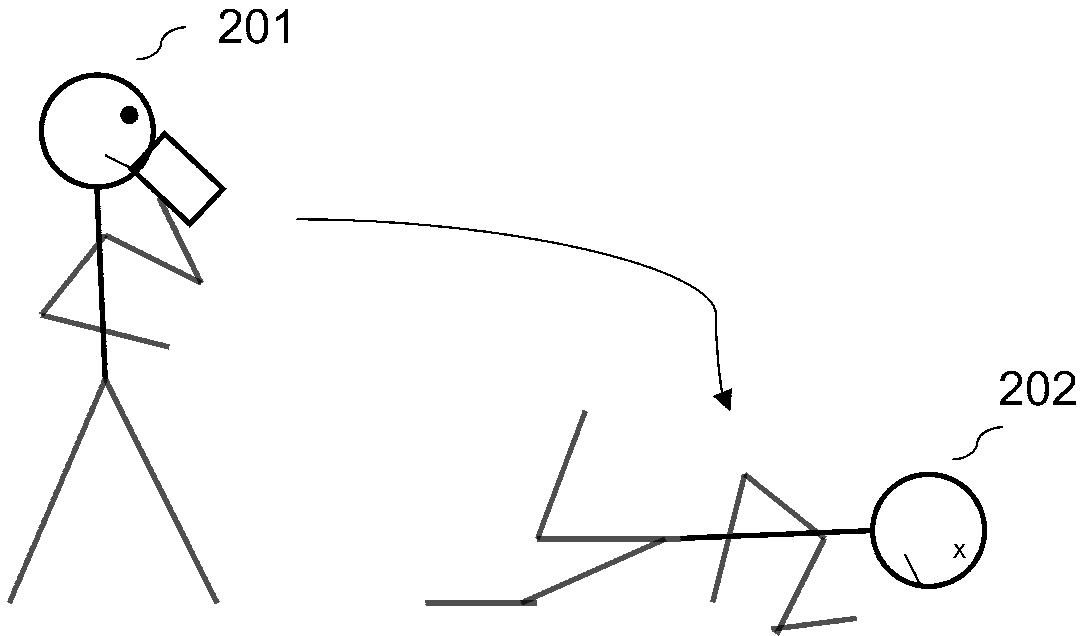


FIG. 2

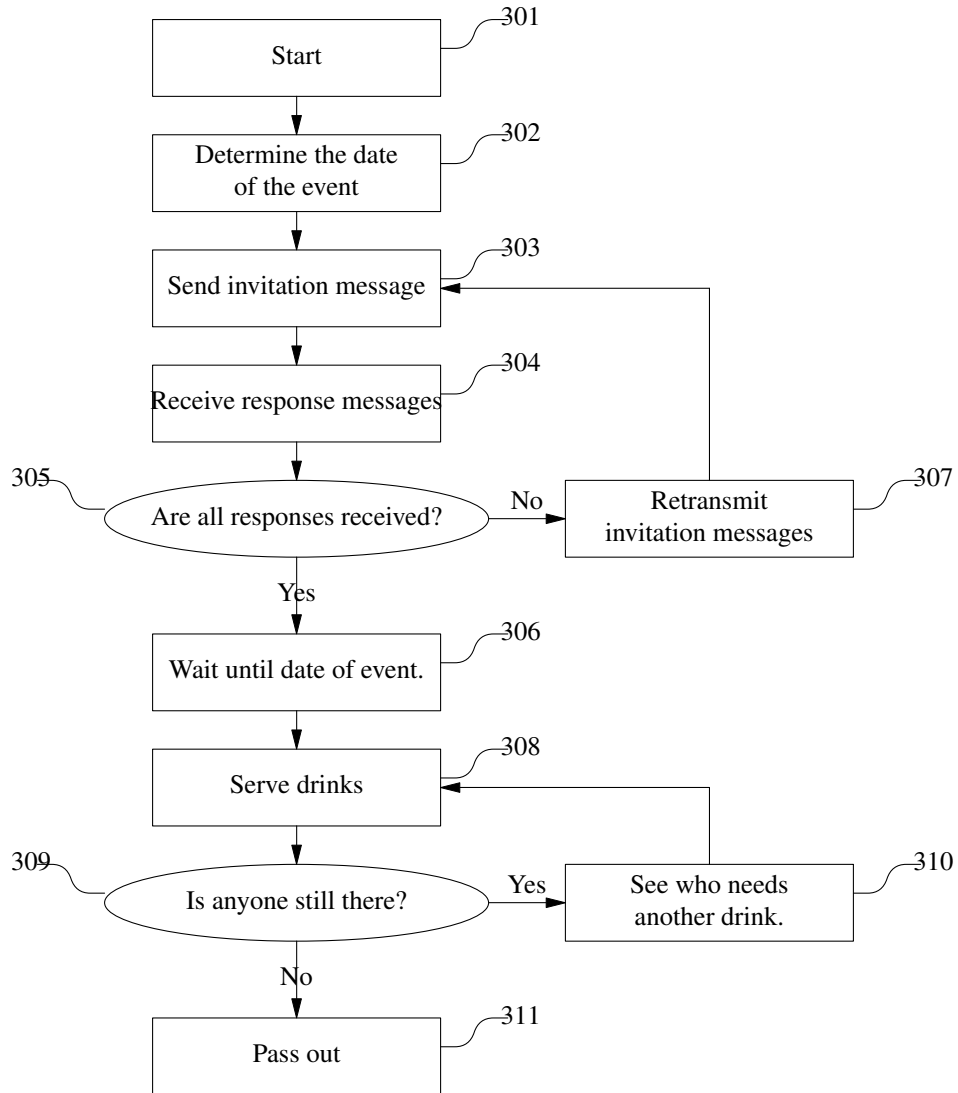


FIG. 3.

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METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR MANAGING GROUP FORMATION AND ENTERTAINMENT¹

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of Invention

This invention relates in general to entertainment and social networking. More specifically, the invention relates to methods and systems for establish and managing social events.

2. Description of the Background Art

Pre-planned and ad hoc meetings are used by social groups both as a method of entertainment and to facilitate social bonding. One member of the group may be designated as the planner for a given event. He or she then liaises with other group members to determine a suitable event time which maximizes availability and overall group utility. He or she then announces the event time and collects estimated attendance.

The need to provide an adequate amount of refreshments is a problem for planners. For example, the planner might send paper invitations to group members through the paper mail. Those invitations would request an RSVP from group members. Response rates are generally low and unrepresentative of eventual attendance.

Another difficulty with existing art is the difficulty of attendees in finding the location, leading to further uncertainty in the attendance. A final difficulty is determining the termination of the event.

SUMMARY OF EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION

Various embodiments of the invention allow for the organization of entertainment events in which a higher level of certainty may be achieved of the number of participants. For example, invitations might be automatically issued over an electronic communications channel to all invitees, allowing invitees to respond automatically.

In one embodiment, the organizer would prepare invitations in electronic form and transmit them via electronic mail to potential participants. The method comprises (i) transmitting one or more invitation messages over electronic mail from a first station operated by the organizer to one or more second stations operated by the participants (ii) receiving the one or more messages at the one or more second stations (iii) sending one or more RSVP messages from the one or more second stations to the first station (iv) operating an event in accordance with the parameters specified in the invitation message.

In a further embodiment, the one or more invitation messages would contain locators to universal references which may then be dereferenced at the one or more receiving stations. This method further comprises (i) publishing event information on a Web page or electronic bulletin board (ii) dereferencing the locator via a communications network such as the INTERTUBES (iii) indicating the participants participation status. In a further elaboration, participants would send additional messages to update their participation status.

In a further embodiment, the event information would contain an electronic map directing participants to the event site.

In yet another embodiment, the organizer's station would automatically send one or more reminder messages to participants. This method comprises (i) sending one or more messages from a first station to one or more second stations belonging to participants who have not yet RSVPed (ii) receiving the one or more messages and notifying participants of their non-RSVP status. (iii) sending one or more reminder messages from a first station to one or more second stations belonging to participants who have responded affirmatively (iv) receiving the one or more reminder messages and notifying the participant of the event status (v) updating the participants electronic calendar to describe event information.

In yet another embodiment, the participant would attend the event. This method comprises (i) traveling to the event by means of automobile, train, bicycle, foot or other mechanical or nonmechanical conveyance

(ii) consuming a plurality of alcoholic and nonalcoholic beverages (iii) exchanging a plurality of messages with one or more other participating stations (iv) responding to the one or more messages (v) departing the premises prior to being forcibly evicted.

These provisions, together with the various ancillary provisions and features that will become apparent to those skilled in the art, as the following description process, are obtained by devices, assemblies, systems, and methods of embodiments of the invention, the various embodiments thereof being shown with reference to the accompanying drawings, by way of example only, wherein:

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 illustrates an exemplary environment in which the invention operates, in accordance with an embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 2 illustrates the procedure to be followed by participants.

FIG. 3 illustrates a flowchart depicting a detailed method for inviting participants and managing the event.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION

The invention provides a method and system for forming and maintaining groups for the purposes of mutual entertainment. The social network comprises a plurality of participants who may receive invitation messages from one or more group coordinators. These invitation messages may be delivered via a plurality of communication channels and may contain instructions for group rendezvous at a predetermined location and time. Once the group has been formed, group members may consume a plurality of liquid and solid refreshments and send and receive messages to and from other group members.

FIG. 1 illustrates an exemplary environment in which the invention operates, in accordance with an embodiment of the invention. In accordance with an embodiment of the invention, participants proceed South on U.S. 101 **101**, exiting on Embarcadero Road West **106**. They further execute a right turn on Bayshore Road **107** followed by a left turn on Channing **108** followed by a right turn on Edgewood Drive **109** and a left turn onto the first cul de sac to 2064 Edgewood **110**. They then attend the event.

In another embodiment, participants proceed South on Interstate 280 **102**, then exit East on Page Mill Road **103**, then proceed to Alma Road **105**, turn left, and then right on Embarcadero Road East **106** and proceed as in the previous embodiment.

These descriptions are provided by way of example only and other embodiments will be clear to those skilled in the art.

FIG. 2 illustrates the algorithm to be followed by participants. An event participant **201** is provided with one or more beverages which are then consumed. After consumption has occurred, merriment commences. After the merriment, participants will pass out on the floor **202**. The floor is provided by way of example only and that other surfaces available will be clear to those skilled in the art.

FIG. 3 illustrates a flowchart depicting a detailed method for managing the invitations and functions of an event in the environment **110**. In step **301**, the event coordinator decides to organize the event. In step **302**, he or she determines the date of the event in accordance with best current practices. In step **303**, invitation messages are transmitted to the one or more stations operated by participants. In step **304** the event coordinator's station receives response messages from participants and verifies that all responses have been received **305**. However, in case not all participants have responded, messages are retransmitted **307** to the non-responding participants, known to those skilled in the art as dead-beats. The organizing station then sets a timer and waits until the event date **306**. Once the event time has been reached and participants have arrived, a plurality of drinks are served **308**. The organizer then verifies that participants remain **309** and if so serves additional one or more drinks **310**. Once all participants have left **311**, the process terminates. Other embodiments will be clear to practitioners skilled in the art.

¹Credit where it's due: some of the text here was cribbed from U.S. Patent U.S. 7,324,802 B2 by C. Jennings

The embodiments of the invention have the advantage of efficient utilization of the event communication channel, including optimal beverage consumption. This invention minimizes organizer overhead that would be consumed in a conventional system. The invention provides a mechanism for positively confirming participant participation, thereby decreasing the cost of event operation. Another advantage of the invention is efficient interparticipant messaging and networking. This helps in cases in which participants would otherwise not communicate except through digital channels.

Although the invention has been discussed with respect to its specific embodiments, these embodiments are merely illustrative and not restrictive of, the invention. For example, messages may be transmitted by a plurality of communications channels including wired, wireless, carrier pigeon, etc. Other features may be modified, added, or deleted, without departing from the scope of the invention.

Any suitable beverage can be used to implement the routines of the invention, including beer, wine, vodka, single malt, etc. Different mixing techniques such as blending, stirring, or shaking may be employed. The routines may execute on a single mixing station or multiple mixing stations. Although the steps, operations, or computations may be presented in a specific order, this order may be changed in different embodiments. In some embodiments, multiple steps shown sequentially in this specification can be performed at the same time. The sequence of operations described herein can be interrupted, suspended, or otherwise controlled by another process, such as a secondary host or participant.

Further, at least some of the components of an embodiment of the invention may be implemented by using a general-purpose mixing device such as a blender, by using application specific devices such as a martini shaker, by programmable logic devices, or field programmable gate arrays, or by using a network of interconnected components and circuits. Drinking devices may be glass, plastic, paper, or the like.

It will also be appreciated that one or more of the elements depicted in the drawings/figures can also be implemented in a more separated or integrated manner, or even removed or rendered as inoperable in certain cases, as is useful in accordance with a particular application.

What is claimed is:

1. A method of organizing and managing an event, the method comprising:
 - 35 sending a plurality of first messages from an invitation station dedicated to an organizing entity to one or more receiving participant stations the one or more stations being dedicated to different entities;
 - receiving a plurality of second messages from one or more stations 40 dedicated to potential participants, the second message being a response to the first message;
 - determining the number of expected participants based on the one or more second messages.
2. The method of claim 1 where the messages are transmitted via 45 electronic mail.
3. The method of claim 1 where the messages contain a locator of universal reference.
4. The method of claim 1 where the organizer operates a World Wide Web site allowing electronic submission of participant RSVP information. 50
5. The method of claim 1 where the organizer's station automatically retransmits invitations until a response is received.
6. A method of managing an event with multiple participants in a social network, comprising:
 - 55 multiple participants in a single geographic location;
 - a plurality of beverages;
 - complimentary food;
7. The method of claim 6 where the location is 2064 Edgewood Drive, Palo Alto, CA. 60
8. The method of claim 6 where the time of the event is 8 PM.
9. The method of claim 6 where the beverages include beer, wine, mixed drinks, or champagne;

10. The method of claim 6 where participants bring their own drinks.

11. The method of claim 6 where ibuprofen is consumed prior to sleeping;

12. The method of claim 6 where vomiting occurs;

13 The method of claim 6 where participants include the IETF leadership;

14 The method of claim 6 where a cat is present.