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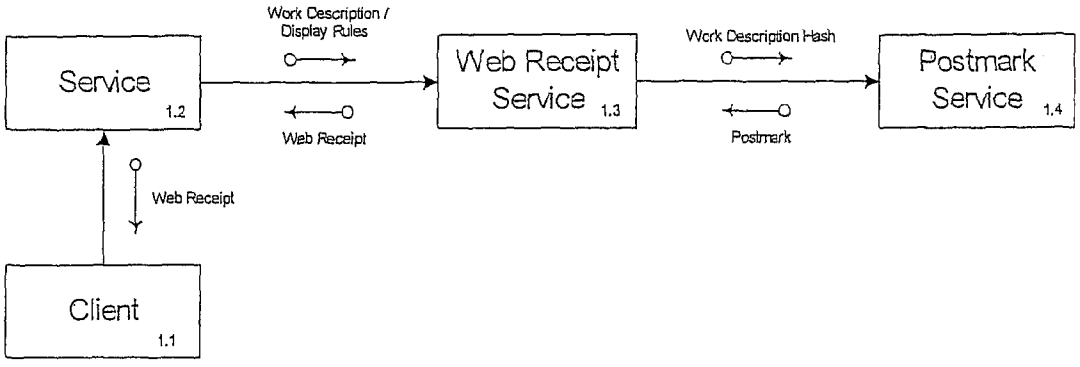
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(54) Title: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR CREATING AND VALIDATING AN ENCRYPTED DIGITAL RECEIPT FOR THIRD-PARTY ELECTRONIC COMMERCE TRANSACTIONS




(57) Abstract: A method and apparatus provide digital receipts for third-party electronic commerce transactions, using a Web Receipt Service (1.3). The digital receipts can be used to validate the details of electronic transactions carried out over public networks such as the Internet. A Web service (1.2) provides a digital receipt comprising a transaction record identifying transaction details. The transaction record is sent to the Web Receipt Service (1.3), where a computer controlled by the Web Receipt Service digitally signs and encrypts the record. The transaction record is encrypted such that it may be later decrypted only by the Web Receipt Service (1.3) and cannot be altered by others. A digital receipt is formed comprising the encrypted transaction record, which may be embedded in a graphic using steganography to enable display in a Web page. The digital receipt containing the encrypted transaction record is returned electronically to each of the parties to the transaction. The digital receipt may be formed in real-time, so that it can be made an integral part of the electronic commerce transaction. The Web Receipt Service need not store the digital receipts. Each party may later present the digital receipt to the Web Receipt Service (1.3) for verification. The Web Receipt Service decrypts the transaction record and returns the transaction record so that the parties may then compare the decrypted transaction record to any previously stored version they may possess.

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