



## (51) International Patent Classification:

**G06F 9/06** (2006.01) **G06F 15/16** (2006.01)  
**G06F 9/44** (2006.01)

## (21) International Application Number:

PCT/US2011/054515

## (22) International Filing Date:

2 October 2011 (02.10.2011)

## (25) Filing Language:

English

## (26) Publication Language:

English

## (30) Priority Data:

12/908,671 20 October 2010 (20.10.2010) US

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(81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM, AO, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BH, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CL, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DO, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, GT, HN, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KM, KN, KP, KR, KZ, LA, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LY, MA, MD, ME, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MY, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PE, PG, PH, PL, PT, QA, RO, RS, RU, RW, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SM, ST, SV, SY, TH, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH,

[Continued on next page]

## (54) Title: CREATING AND DEPLOYING SERVICE-READY VIRTUAL HARD DISKS

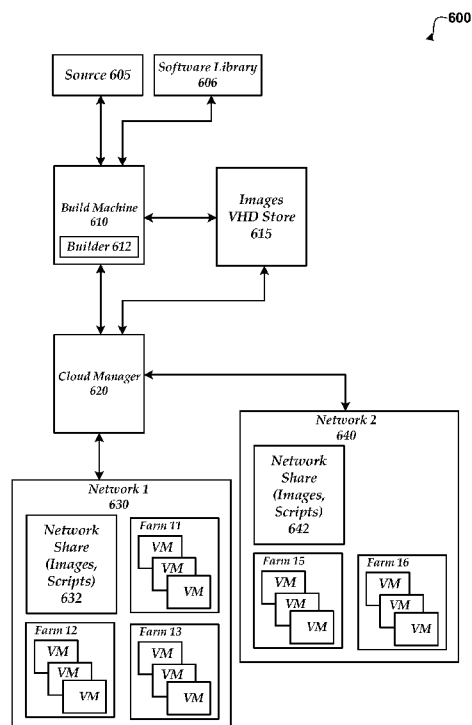


Fig. 6

(57) Abstract: A cloud manager controls the deployment and management of machines for an online service. A build system creates deployment-ready virtual hard disks (VHDs) that are installed on machines that are spread across one or more networks in farms that each may include different configurations. The build system is configured to build VHDs of differing configurations that depend on a role of the virtual machine (VM) for which the VHD will be used. The build system uses the VHDs to create virtual machines (VMs) in both test and production environments for the online service. The cloud manager system automatically provisions machines with the created virtual hard disks (VHDs). Identical VHDs can be installed directly on the machines that have already been tested.



GM, KE, LR, LS, MW, MZ, NA, RW, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European (AL, AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MC, MK, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, RS, SE, SI, SK, SM, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

**Declarations under Rule 4.17:**

- *as to applicant's entitlement to apply for and be granted a patent (Rule 4.17(ii))*
- *as to the applicant's entitlement to claim the priority of the earlier application (Rule 4.17(iii))*

**Published:**

- *without international search report and to be republished upon receipt of that report (Rule 48.2(g))*