

EFFICIENCY ENHANCEMENTS IN TASK MANAGEMENT APPLICATIONS

CROSS-REFERENCES TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

The present disclosure claims priority to U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 62/418,268 filed Nov. 6, 2016, the disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety.

BACKGROUND

[0001] Electronic task management systems and applications enable users to track various tasks more efficiently than with hardcopy notes; users can access the same tasks from multiple devices, rearrange the tasks, and share tasks between users remotely. The ease of adding tasks to an electronic task manager, however, can leave users overwhelmed; too many, irrelevant, or contextually inappropriate tasks can distract the user from the tasks that are relevant to the user at a given time and place. The provision of unwanted tasks not only degrades the user experience, but also wastes computing resources that are used to provide tasks that are not wanted by the user that could be used more efficiently for other tasks.

SUMMARY

[0002] This summary is provided to introduce a selection of concepts in a simplified form that are further described below in the Detailed Description section. This summary is not intended to identify all key or essential features of the claimed subject matter, nor is it intended as an aid in determining the scope of the claimed subject matter.

[0003] Enhancements to the efficiency of a task management application are discussed herein in relation to systems, methods, and computer readable media that provide such enhancements. Relational data for entities and the context in which users interact with task items, including the productivity applications used to complete task items, are used to provide users with more relevant tasks, fewer irrelevant tasks, and with greater control and convenience in manipulating task items.

[0004] In one aspect, a unified interface is provided for accessing and manipulating task items retrieved from multiple task sources. Various credentials are stored to access the task sources, which include username/password pairs, access tokens, and the like. Proxy tasks are created for the tasks discovered from each source and are presented to the user in the unified interface, to interact with the task items. The user interactions are observed and are used to track progress on the task items and report that progress back to the multiple task sources. For example, a user with two calendar applications can have tasks in each calendar presented in one interface, and mark off a given task as complete in the unified interface, and the calendar application from which the given task was discovered will be updated to reflect the completed task noted in the unified interface.

[0005] By providing enhanced efficiency for a task management application, not only is the user's experience improved, but the functionality of the device used to provide the task management application is also improved. The device spends computing resources (processor cycles and memory storage space) with greater precision; wasting fewer resources to provide unwanted tasks for the user's consideration.

[0006] Examples are implemented as a computer process, a computing system, or as an article of manufacture such as a device, computer program product, or computer readable medium. According to an aspect, the computer program product is a computer storage medium readable by a computer system and encoding a computer program comprising instructions for executing a computer process.

[0007] The details of one or more aspects are set forth in the accompanying drawings and description below. Other features and advantages will be apparent from a reading of the following detailed description and a review of the associated drawings. It is to be understood that the following detailed description is explanatory only and is not restrictive of the claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0008] The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated in and constitute a part of this disclosure, illustrate various aspects. In the drawings:

FIGURE 1 illustrates an example operating environment in which the present disclosure may be practiced;

FIGURES 2A and 2B are illustrations of example graphical user interfaces in which a task list is implemented;

FIGURE 3 illustrates an example graphical user interface in which Task List item creation from within a productivity application is shown;

FIGURE 4 illustrates a graphical user interface in which a Task List is implemented;

FIGURE 5 illustrates a graphical user interface in which an interface to create a task list item is provided within a productivity application, such as a messaging application;

FIGURE 6 illustrates an additional option for creating a task list item within the example messaging application;

FIGURE 7 illustrates a graphical user interface in which the creation of a task list item is shown within a communication application, such as, for example, a messaging application;

FIGURE 8 illustrates various source attributions for suggested tasks items;
FIGURE 9 illustrates an example user interface for a digital assistant to create task items;

FIGURES 10A and **10B** illustrate example user interfaces for a time period
5 view of a set of task items as the time period's task list is constructed;

FIGURE 11 is a flow chart showing general stages involved in an example method for enhancing efficiency by providing a unified interface for accessing and manipulating task items retrieved from multiple task sources;

FIGURE 12 is a block diagram illustrating example physical components
10 of a computing device;

FIGURES 13A and **13B** are block diagrams of a mobile computing device;
and

FIGURE 14 is a block diagram of a distributed computing system.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

15 **[0009]** The following detailed description refers to the accompanying drawings. Wherever possible, the same reference numbers are used in the drawings and the following description refers to the same or similar elements. While examples may be described, modifications, adaptations, and other implementations are possible. For example, substitutions, additions, or modifications may be made to the elements illustrated
20 in the drawings, and the methods described herein may be modified by substituting, reordering, or adding stages to the disclosed methods. Accordingly, the following detailed description is not limiting, but instead, the proper scope is defined by the appended claims. Examples may take the form of a hardware implementation, or an entirely software implementation, or an implementation combining software and hardware aspects. The
25 following detailed description is, therefore, not to be taken in a limiting sense.

[0010] Enhancements to the efficiency of a task management application are discussed herein in relation to systems, methods, and computer readable media that provide such enhancements. Relational data for entities and the context in which users interact with task items, including the productivity applications used to complete task
30 items, are used to provide users with more relevant tasks, fewer irrelevant tasks, and with greater control and convenience in manipulating task items.

[0011] In one aspect, a unified interface is provided for accessing and manipulating task items retrieved from multiple task sources. Various credentials are stored to access the task sources, which include username/password pairs, access tokens,

and the like. Proxy tasks are created for the tasks discovered from each source and are presented to the user in the unified interface, to interact with the task items. The user interactions are observed and are used to track progress on the task items and report that progress back to the multiple task sources. For example, a user with two calendar applications can have tasks in each calendar presented in one interface, and mark off a given task as complete in the unified interface and the calendar application from which the given task was discovered will be updated to reflect the completed task noted in the unified interface.

[0012] By providing enhanced efficiency for a task management application, not only is the user's experience improved, but the functionality of the device used to provide the task management application is also improved. The device spends computing resources (processor cycles and memory storage space) with greater precision; wasting fewer resources to provide unwanted tasks for the user's consideration.

[0013] **FIGURE 1** illustrates an example operating environment **100** in which the present disclosure may be practiced. As illustrated, a user device **110** is in communication with a task list service **120**. In various aspects, the task list service **120** is hosted on the user device **110**, while in other aspects, the task list service **120** is hosted on a remote device as a service accessible by the user device **110**. The task list service **120** includes in various configurations one or more of a: heuristic engine **121**, a suggestion engine **122**, a context clusterer **123**, a preview generator **124**, user profiles **125**, a context listener **126**, and a relational store **127**. The task list service **120** is in further communication with one or more services that may be hosted on the user device **110** or another device that include, but are not limited to: a relational graph service **130**, an email service **140**, a calendar service **150**, and a productivity service **160**. Although only one of each component is illustrated in **FIGURE 1**, it will be appreciated that in different aspects more than one of one or more components are provided (e.g., more than one user device **110** is in communication with the task list service **120**, which is in communication with more than one email service **140**).

[0014] Each of the user device **110**, task list service **120**, and the services **130-160** are illustrative of a multitude of computing systems including, without limitation, desktop computer systems, wired and wireless computing systems, mobile computing systems (e.g., mobile telephones, netbooks, tablet or slate type computers, notebook computers, and laptop computers), hand-held devices, multiprocessor systems, microprocessor-based or programmable consumer electronics, minicomputers, printers, and mainframe

computers. The hardware of these computing systems is discussed in greater detail in regard to **FIGURES 12, 13A, 13B, and 14**. User devices **110** are operated by users, who may be humans or automated systems (e.g., “bots”). In various aspects, the user device **110**, task list service **120**, and the services **130-160** may be accessed by a user or each
5 other locally and/or by a network, which may include the Internet, a Local Area Network (LAN), a private distributed network for an entity (e.g., a company, a university, a government agency), a wireless *ad hoc* network, a Virtual Private Network (VPN) or other direct data link (e.g., Bluetooth connection, a direct wired link).

[0015] The user device **110** is accessed by a user to operate a task list application,
10 among other features and applications. The task list application provides user-specific tasks that the user wishes to be reminded of to complete and tools for manipulating those tasks (e.g., assign task to another user, share task with another user, complete task, mark status of task, add task, remove task). For example, a user may access the task list application to receive a reminder to pay rent on a given set of days, to attend a meeting at
15 a given time, or to go grocery shopping at an undefined time. In various aspects, the task list application is provided by the task list service **120** in a thin client running on the user device **110** in conjunction with a client running on a remote server. In other aspects, the task list application is provided by a task list service **120** running on the user device **110** as a thick client. In yet other aspects, the task list service **120** operates as a distributed
20 system, running on the user device **110** as a thick client when a network connection to the remote server is not available (or not needed) and as a thin client when the network connection is available.

[0016] The task list service **120** includes one or more components that may be enabled or disabled as users enable or disable features or network connections to a remote
25 server are established or lost. In various aspects, a task list service **120** local to a given user device **110** may also disable or reduce in size or complexity one or more components compared to a task list service **120** that is accessible over a network by multiple user devices **110**.

[0017] A heuristic engine **121** is operable to learn user behavior over time to
30 enhance the determinations of which candidate tasks discovered from task sources are to be presented, and in what order, to a given user at a given time and location. The heuristic engine **121** is operable to use one or more machine learning approaches to determine how to best serve the needs and use-cases presented by individual users.

[0018] A suggestion engine **122** is operable to determine whether a candidate task received from a tasks source should be suggested to the user as a task to perform at a given time and/or location. From all of the candidate task items that may be presented to the user at any given time, the suggestion engine **122** filters those task items to a manageable subset based on the user's existing task items (to avoid scheduling conflicts), prior acceptances/rejections of suggested task items, and the prior actions of the user. For example, if a user's calendar includes an event for an upcoming birthday, a suggested task is created that the person whose birthday is coming up should be called prior to that date. In another example, where the user sent an email that included a promise to send an attachment by a deadline, a task is suggested to meet this deadline. In a further example, an important meeting is observed on the calendar service **150** as occurring on Friday, and the suggestion service **122** will observe the rest of the week's calendar to determine which days prior to the meeting are likely to allow for a task item to prepare for the important meeting. For example, the task item will be presented on Monday and Thursday, but not Tuesday or Wednesday, due to the number of task items already accepted for on those days (Tuesday and Wednesday being busier or having more task items accepted in the present example than Monday and Thursday).

[0019] A content clusterer **123** is operable to cluster tasks and entities that are related in the location, time, and semantics terms that they contain. As will be understood, clustering is a statistical operation that groups items based on shared characteristics (and combinations thereof). In one aspect, tasks interacted with (created/completed) with similar time ranges are clustered together based on similar time characteristics. In another aspect, tasks interacted with (created/completed) when the user is at a given location will be clustered together based on location characteristics. In a further aspect, tasks with similar words, terms, or entities (persons, documents, resources) will be clustered together based on semantic characteristics. For example, the content clusterer **123** is operable to create two clusters of events when it is noticed that a user performs certain tasks when working at a first location during a first time period and performs other tasks when working at a second location during a second time period to inform the heuristic engine **121** that there are two clusters of activity types regularly performed by the user. The content clusterer **123** enables the suggestion engine **122** to provide suggested tasks that are appropriate for a given time and/or location at which those tasks are presented to the user.

[0020] For example, the user will be presented with task items related to work on days associated with the work week and business hours, but will be presented with tasks

items related to domestic activities (e.g., clean bathroom, go shopping, groom dog) outside of business hours. In another example, the user will be presented with tasks related to work when located at the user's place of work (e.g., detected via Global Positioning System (GPS), Internet Protocol (IP) Location Services, network names in range of the user device **110**) and domestic tasks when located at another location (e.g., home, the grocery store, the dog groomer). In various aspects, the suggestion engine **122** will place various weights on clustering determinations that may change over a period of time, so that as time progresses, more or less weight will be given to the clustered content's location, time, or semantic data to allow for blended suggestions. For example, as the workday draws to a close, the user may be presented fewer work related tasks for the day as suggestions, and more domestic related tasks (e.g., "pick up milk on the way home from work"). In another example, when a location or a time period unknown to the content clusterer **123** is observed by the suggestion engine **122**, the suggestion engine **122** may rely on the other contextual data used to cluster tasks, such as, when a user is on vacation (in a location previously unknown to the suggestion engine **122**), the suggestion engine **122** may rely on time context and semantic context to provide suggestions, and ignore locational context.

[0021] A preview generator **124** is operable to generate previews for entities associated with a suggested task (or a selected task). For example, a portion of a document that is to be completed as part of a task is extracted by the preview generator **124** for presentation in a user interface as a preview. In another example, a portion of an audio recording of a phone call that is related to a task is generated as a preview. In a further example, a person who is related to a task (as a resource, an assignor, a teammate, or object of the task) has a preview generated with information from the relational graph service **130**, such as, for example, that person's contact information, an image of that person, biographical details of that person, etc.

[0022] User profiles **125** are stored by the task list service **120** so that as the behaviors of the users are observed by the heuristic engine **121**, the observations are stored to provide an increasingly more accurate view of the user's habits and use patterns for predicting future behaviors. In various aspects, the user or an administrator may also manually set preferences in the user profiles **125** to define how tasks are to be presented to the user and aid the heuristic engine **121** in determining the user's preferences in addition to observing the user's actions to learn those preferences.

[0023] A context listener **126** is operable to receive (or request) contextual data and task items from the user device **110** and the services **130-160** for use by the task list service **120**. In various aspects, these data include appointments, events, meetings, and tasks set for the user and/or accepted by the user in addition to when and where these appointments, events, meetings, and tasks were set, accepted, worked on, and/or completed. In some aspects, the context listener **126** is operable to provide the state of the computing device (e.g., what applications were active, which application resulted in interacting with the task) to the task list service **120**. For example, metadata related to whether a user has looked at a given entity part of a task, how long the user has worked on a given task, how long it took between accepting the task and starting or completing the task, and what interactions were made by the user may be gathered for analysis and reporting.

[0024] A relational store **127** stores the relations observed for the creation of task items so that dynamic context can be provided to the user when the task is suggested to the user at a later date. For example, when the user manually or a system automatically creates a task item, the task is parsed to locate entities (e.g., persons involved, objects to be acted on) and recent actions (e.g., actions taken in the last m minutes) that may relate to the task item. For example, if the user receives a message containing the phrase “profit sharing plan” and creates a task that also include that phrase, a relationship between the task and the message will be formed and stored in the relational store **127**. In another example, when the user creates a task item to meet with another person, a relationship is formed between the task item, the meeting, and the person so that additional information about the meeting or the person can be recalled (e.g., from the relational graph service **130**) when the task item is presented to the user. In various aspects, the node identifiers from the relation graph service **130** for related entities are stored in the relational store **127**.

[0025] The relational graph service **130** hosts a graph database of a relational graph with nodes describing entities and a set of accompanying properties of those entities, such as, for example, the names, titles, ages, addresses, etc. Each property can be considered a key/value pair – a name of the property and its value. In other examples, entities represented as nodes that include documents, meetings, communication, etc., as well as edges representing relations among these entities, such as, for example, an edge between a person node and a document node representing that person’s authorship, modification, or viewing of the document. The relational graph service **130** executes graph queries that are submitted by various users to return nodes or edges that satisfy various

conditions (e.g., users within the same division of a company, the last X documents accessed by a given user). In various aspects, the relational graph **130** is in communication with the other services **140-160** to match actions to documents and track edges between nodes representing entities from those other services **140-160**.

5 **[0026]** The email service **140** hosts the email communications for one or more users. In various aspects, the email service **140** is part of or includes a directory service for an organization. In other aspects, the email service **140** is integrated into or accessible by a productivity application of the productivity services **160**. For example, an email server storing email messages for an organization is accessible by email applications for
10 members of that organizations and acts as an email service **140** accessible by the task list service **120**.

[0027] Emails provided from the email service **140** may be added as entities in the relational graph **130**, and/or the communications embodied by the emails are treated as edges between communicating parties. In various aspects, emails that are part of the tasks
15 (e.g., “send an email to John Doe”) that are monitored by the task list service **120**, and also provide context for other tasks, such as, for example, when a task is originated in an email (e.g., an email whose content includes “please review the meeting agenda” originates the task of “review meeting agenda”).

[0028] The calendar service **150** hosts calendar and appointment information for
20 one or more users. Various appointments, meetings, and events (collectively, events) are stored in the calendar service **150** that include one or more persons as participants/hosts. Events include one or more of: participants (required or optional), attendance information, times, locations, resources, attached documents, and event information (e.g., event title and description). In various aspects, the calendar service **150** is provided in a unified
25 email/calendar application, such as, for example, THUNDERBIRD® (offered by the Mozilla Fnd of Mountain View, CA) or GMAIL® (offered by Alphabet Inc. of Mountain View, CA), which stores events for a user of that application. In other aspects, the calendar service **150** includes a social media platform, such as, for example, FACEBOOK® (offered by Facebook, Inc. of Menlo Park, CA) where various events are posted that users
30 may attend.

[0029] Events provided from the calendar service **150** may be added as entities in the relational graph **130**, and/or the interactions embodied by the events are treated as edges between interacting parties. In various aspects, events are part of the tasks (e.g., “attend birthday party”) that are monitored by the task list service **120**, and also provide

context for other tasks, such as, for example, when a task is originated in an event (e.g., action items created during a meeting).

[0030] The productivity service **160** includes one or more productivity applications and document repositories that are accessible by one or more users. In various aspects, the productivity service **160** is hosted on the user device **110** and/or a remote server accessible by the user device **110**. For example, the productivity service **160** includes a locally executed authoring application (e.g., PAGES®, KEYNOTE®, or NUMBERS® offered by Apple, Inc. of Cupertino, CA) and remotely executed authoring applications (e.g., the GOOGLE DOCS™ suite offered by Alphabet, Inc. of Mountain View, CA) that are accessible via a thin client or web browser. In another example, the productivity service **160** include a library of documents stored on the user device **110** as well as libraries stored on networked computers or as part of a document management system and remote storage locations (e.g., GOOGLE DRIVE™ offered by Alphabet, Inc. of Mountain View, CA).

[0031] Documents provided from the productivity service **160** may be added as entities in the relational graph **130**. In various aspects, documents are part of the tasks (e.g., “edit the quarterly report”) that are monitored by the task list service **120**, and provide context to report on how tasks have been handled to an initiating or collaborating party. For example, when a manager assigns the task of “edit the quarterly report” to an employee, the manager may receive an indication when the employee has completed the task, and the interactions that comprise that task. Similarly, when a manager assigns the task to a work group of several employees, when one employee assumes the task (e.g., begins work, accepts the task, completes the task), the other employees may be notified that the task has been assumed by their coworker.

[0032] In various aspects, the services **130-160** are operable to transmit interactions to the task list service **120** or to have interactions listened to/pulled from the services **130-160** to the task list service **120**. An API (Application Program Interface) or agent between the task list service **120** and services **130-160** facilitate communication between the services **130-160** and the task list service **120**, ensuring communications are received in a format interpretable by the receiving service. In one example, the SIRI® or GOOGLE NOW® personal digital assistants (offered by Apple, Inc. and Alphabet, Inc., respectively) may parse the sources **130-160** as agents to report relevant data to the task list service **120**. In another example, the sources **130-160** are configured to communicate to the task list service **120** as actions are taken in those services **130-160** in a format specified via an API.

[0033] FIGURES 2A-10B illustrate various example user interfaces for a task list application employing the tasks list service 120 to improve the efficiency in how tasks are presented to the user. As will be appreciated, FIGURES 2A-10B are provided as non-limiting examples and other arrangements and groupings of user interface elements with different content are included in the concepts of the present disclosure.

[0034] FIGURES 2A and 2B are illustrations of example graphical user interfaces in which a Task List is implemented. The task list user interface illustrated in FIGURE 2A displays the scheduled tasks for “today”. In one aspect, along with the task item, a link to the application relevant in completing the task item is provided. For example, the second item on the task list user interface displayed in FIGURE 2A, is “review notes for launch”. A link to the notes application is provided along with the task item to allow the user to access the notes application from the task list application, instead of the user having to search for the application and then open it.

[0035] In one aspect, a link to the content item relevant to completing the task item is provided. For example, the first task item is “prepare screens for presentation”. The task item is provided along with the content item “product_launchdeck” to allow the user to access the content item “product_launchdeck” in the presentation application without having to remember the content item and its location to complete the task item “prepare screens for presentation”.

[0036] In one example, the tasks for “today” are listed in the order of time when they are due. In another example, they are listed in the order of priority. According to an example, the priority is identified by the system. In another example, the user is allowed to provide the priority details when creating the task item.

[0037] According to an aspect, the task list user interface illustrated in FIGURE 2B displays a suggested task list item. As illustrated, a suggested task list item “Book flight to San Francisco” is provided. According to an aspect, the task is suggested based on user context. User context may be developed by the system gradually by learning user patterns and user interaction data. The option to add the suggested task item to the task list shown in FIGURE 2A is provided. According to another aspect, the link provides a brief description of the task list item. For example, as illustrated in FIGURE 2B, a brief description of the city of San Francisco is provided along with the suggested task list item “Book flight to San Francisco”. In another example, others options such as for example, an option to provide “directions” to the city and an option to “book tickets” are provided.

[0038] **FIGURE 3** is an illustration of an example graphical user interface in which Task List item creation from within a productivity application is shown. As is illustrated in **FIGURE 3**, a task creation option is provided in an email productivity application. In one example, the system identifies the “volunteer registration” as an entity possibly related to a task and identifies the candidate time as “tonight” and provides the task creation control. Upon selection of the task creation control, the “volunteer registration” task is created as a task item for “tonight”. In another aspect, the user selects the task creation option and identifies the objects, persons, and times relevant to that task. In various aspects, dialogs or prompts are provided to the user to select the values from the productivity application or manually input those values to build the task.

[0039] **FIGURE 4** is an illustration of a graphical user interface in which a Task List is implemented. In one aspect, upon selection of the Task creation option in **FIGURE 3**, the task item is created in relation to the content item from which it was created and is displayed in a calendar. For example, the system identifies the “volunteer registration” task in the email illustrated in **FIGURE 3** and that the task needs to be completed tonight – relative to the day of creation or a date in the content item. The system creates the task and displays the task in the calendar application as illustrated in **FIGURE 4** for completion tonight. In one example, the user is provided with an option whether to accept the task or to make any desired changes to the task such as for example, change the date and or time, reassigned the task, etc.

[0040] **FIGURE 5** is an illustration of a graphical user interface in which an interface to create a task list item is provided within a productivity application, such as for example, a messaging application. As illustrated in **FIGURE 5**, an option to create a task list item is provided within a messaging application for a user to select. In one example, once the system identifies a task item is to be created, the productivity application is parsed for relevant objects for inclusion in the task item. For example, a series of messages in a conversation document of a messaging application are parsed to identify objects of “Jason Bourne movie” and a task time “this weekend”, to prepopulate a task item. The user is provided an interface to accept or substitute different values for the prepopulated with an option to add the task list item in the task list application.

[0041] In another example, once the system identifies a task list item, for example, “Jason Bourne movie” and a task time “this weekend”, the system automatically adds the task list item to the tasks list application. Further, in one example, the user visits the task list application and views the task list categories of movies to watch to find the “Jason

Bourne movie” task list item and does not remember the context in which the movie was added to the task list. The system may provide a context along with a link to the particular messaging conversation to the user, with the “Jason Bourne movie” task list item, in the task list application.

5 **[0042]** **FIGURE 6** illustrates an additional option to create a task list item within the messaging application. For example, a user may select an option to add a task item from the productivity application via a control or menu, as illustrated in **FIGURE 5**, or a control may be provided contextually by the task list service **120** within the productivity application in response to the user’s actions. For example, as illustrated in **FIGURE 6**,
10 when a user is entering text into a field, a control to create a task based on the contents of the field may be provided so that the user does not need to access a menu or control as part of a ribbon, but instead is provided a contextual control proximate to where the user is interaction with the productivity application.

15 **[0043]** **FIGURE 7** is an illustration of a graphical user interface in which the creation of a task list item is shown within a communication application, such as, for example, a messaging application. The system provides an agent which can be added as an entity to the user’s contact list. For example, as illustrated in **FIGURE 7**, the user is allowed to create a task list item by sending a message to the task list agent or an agent within the messaging application. Further, the agent sends a message to the user via the
20 messaging application confirming that the task list item has been created. In another aspect, along with the confirmation message, the agent also provides additional information related to the task list item. For example, as illustrated in **FIGURE 7**, when the user requests the agent to create a task to “make a reservation for dinner at the famous restaurant”, the system provides a confirmation message, via the messaging application,
25 notifying the user that the task list item has been created along with additional relevant information, such as, for example, a brief review of the restaurant, the timing of the reservation, a rating from a popular review site, a link to access the website of the restaurant, and a link to access directions to the restaurant, etc.

30 **[0044]** **FIGURE 8** illustrates various source attributions for suggested tasks items. As shown in **FIGURE 8**, the task sources from which suggested tasks are drawn and the agent or suggestion engine **122** that is used to identify those suggested tasks is presented to the user. Various icons and source names are also presented in association with the suggested tasks items to alert the user as to where, and potentially why, a given suggested task item is presented as a suggestion. For example, text from an email message may be

extracted as promising a task item that is discovered by a context listener **126** and is therefore presented with an email icon along with the text that cause the context listener **126** to infer that a task item exists. In another example, a task in a user's task list for a later date is presented with a task list icon, and is suggested due to a surplus of inferred time on the user's schedule for the current date (e.g., today is open and the task item is due tomorrow). In a further example, a calendar icon is presented in association with an inferred task list item discovered from a calendar application.

[0045] **FIGURE 9** illustrates an example user interface for a digital assistant to create task items. As illustrated in **FIGURE 9**, a digital assistant has been invoked and provides various controls for defining a task item. In various aspects, user input may be received by the digital assistant from input devices such as keyboards, mice, and touch screens, but also from microphones when the digital assistant is operable to interpret speech for content input and commands. The digital assistant may be invoked by the user uttering a command sequence to summon the digital assistant, selecting a control in a user interface, or automatically in response to user actions in a productivity application, task list application, or operating system.

[0046] Input fields include, but are not limited to, title, description, persons involved, places involved, and times involved fields. The user is operable to set which task list the task item is added to, or the system may automatically add the task item to a task list according to a determination of common subject matter, time, or location according to a clusterer **123**. Additional controls are provided for the user to accept the creation of the task item (e.g., "remind"), reject the creation of the task item (e.g., "cancel"), and to locate additional data related to the task item (e.g., "search for ...").

[0047] **FIGURES 10A and 10B** illustrate example user interfaces for a time period view of a set of task items as the time period's task list is constructed. **FIGURE 10A** illustrates a starting position for a time period, a daily task list in the present example, which is blank when the time period list initiates. The blank view allows the user control over which candidate tasks for the day appear on the day's task list; suggested task items are shown but are not included on the list until selected by the user. In various aspects, the blank view is presented to the user at the start of the time period or at the conclusion of the prior time period. Although a user may pre-plan several tasks, in various aspects, the time period view is only accessible in the time period directly before or during the time period associated with the time period list (e.g., that day or the day before for a daily list, at the start of a week or the end of the prior week for a weekly list, etc.).

[0048] Proceeding from **FIGURE 10A**, the interface illustrated in **FIGURE 10B** shows several suggested tasks for the time period as they are provided to the user. As shown in an upper portion in the interface, tasks from the prior time period (e.g., yesterday in a daily task list) are shown to the user so that incomplete tasks may be selected for inclusion in the current time period task list or the user is reminded of what was completed tasks were accomplished in the prior time period to create ongoing tasks. As shown in a middle portion of the interface, tasks that are overdue are shown to the user so that overdue tasks items may be selected for inclusion in the current time period task list. As shown in a lower portion of the interface, suggested task items from one or more services **130-160** as selected by a suggestion engine **120** are shown to the user to select from for inclusion in the time period list.

[0049] Various details about the suggested task items are shown to the user, including, without limitation: a title, a description, interested or relevant parties (e.g., assignor, assignee, sender, receiver, resource), due dates, start dates, portion already completed, sub-tasks, and related objects. Controls are provided in the interface in association with the suggested tasks to select one or more of the suggested task items to add an existing task list or new task list. Controls are also provided for the user to manually add task items to an existing or new task list. In other aspects, controls are provided to reject suggested task items, and the suggestion engine **122** is operable, in some aspects, to replace the rejected task items with other suggested task items. The heuristic engine **121** is operable to learn the user's behavior based on the user's interactions (e.g., selection, rejecting, ignoring) with the presented task items to improve the task items that the suggestion engine **122** provides.

[0050] **FIGURE 11** is a flow chart showing general stages involved in an example method **1100** for enhancing efficiency by providing a unified interface for accessing and manipulating task items retrieved from multiple task sources. As users may be assigned tasks in different roles and from different sources, managing those sources and keeping tasks for different roles separate in a task management application can prove difficult. To improve the functionality of the user device **110** in displaying tasks from various sources for various roles, a unified view is provided. Proxies of the tasks from the various sources are shown in the unified view, and are displayed along with indicators for the source from which the task was drawn. The unified view is operable to accept and transmit actions to the tasks (e.g., status updates, completions, reassignments) back to the master task source to handle. In various aspects, the suggestion engine **121** is operable to take the task source

into account when presenting or ordering suggested tasks, such that tasks from a first task source are presented with a higher frequency than tasks from a second task source.

[0051] Method **1100** begins at OPERATION **1110**, where the task list service **120** connects to one or more task sources, such as, for example, an email service **140**, a calendar service **150**, or a productivity service **160**. Depending on the task source that the task list service **120** attempts to connect to, the task list service **120** may use existing connections or authentications with various task sources (e.g., using an access token from logging into an Operating System to access a task source) or store authentication credentials to log into one or more task sources.

[0052] In some aspects, sharing credentials and authenticating uses OAuth, or another authentication standard to authorize one system to access other systems and thereby exchange task item related data. For example, a user account for the task list service **120** could authorize a task list service **120**, on the user's behalf, to access an external system (e.g., a task source, another task list service **120**, etc.). In various aspects, more than one account of a given service may be connected to by the task list service **120**, thus allowing a first user to provide one set of authorization credentials to access personally associated tasks and also view/access tasks associated with other users who have given the first user permission to view/access task items associated with them. For example, a set of roommates may connect to their own accounts using their personal authentication credentials as well as their roommate's accounts to share task items between the roommates. The system would not need to store the username/password pairs for each of the roommates (which may expose additional personal data), but the system would be authorized by each roommate to share scheduling data with the other roommates when they logged in (with their own credentials) to the task list service **120**.

[0053] Once connections to the task sources have been established, method **1100** proceeds to OPERATION **1120**, where the task sources are inventoried to discover task items. In various aspects, task items are inventoried by discovering meeting, events, and appointments from a calendar service **150**, recently manipulated documents from a productivity service **160**, unsent and recently received emails from an email service **140**, and task items entered into a task application for the user or another person related to the user according to a relation graph service **130**. In additional aspects, documents (including emails, event descriptions, productivity application files, etc.) are parsed to locate actionable requests, such as, for example, an email including the text "please walk the dog when you get home," or an event description including text for "bring a side dish," which

are interpreted by the heuristic engine **121** to include task items for the user based on an analysis and understanding of the text of discovered documents. In further aspects, images are analyzed for text via an optical character recognition system, to enhance the abilities of the task list service **120** in identifying task items from the various task sources.

5 **[0054]** At OPERATION **1130**, proxy tasks are created by the task list service **120** from the inventoried tasks for use in a unified view provided by the task list application from the various sources. The task list service **120** maintains, as system of recording, all of the tasks discovered from the various task sources for presentation and use on the user device **110**, and maintains references to the discovered tasks as proxy tasks linked to the
10 external systems from which they were generated.

[0055] In one aspect, a task management system for the task list service **120** has its own storage for internal task items for individuals and groups, and is connected to various external task sources to include the external tasks found thereon in a unified view for the user. Those external tasks will be referenced in the unified view as proxy tasks, but to
15 actually look up the task items' details and modify those task items, the original task source will be communicated with. The unified view provides the user the ability that when a task view is loaded, it will return tasks from all the systems that have been linked as potentially providing tasks, but when the user modifies proxy tasks in the unified view, the task list service **120** will know where those tasks originate from. The task list service
20 **120** is operable to communicate modifications to proxy tasks to the external task source to handle (instead of attempting to make those modifications to the internal task management system).

[0056] For example, a user may primarily rely on a first task list application for work tasks, but primarily rely on a second task list application for personal tasks. The task
25 list service **120** is operable to integrate the tasks from one of the above task list applications into the other (or both into a third) task list application as proxy tasks. The use of proxy tasks allows each task list application to independently maintain its records, and to provide the user with the benefits and features that are unique to one task list application in the other.

30 **[0057]** Proceeding to OPERATION **1140**, the proxy tasks are provided to the user in the unified view. In various aspects, indicia of the source from which the proxy tasks are drawn are indicated in the unified view, and/or hyperlinks are provided to access a program to natively provide the external task item corresponding to the proxy task. For

example, a productivity application may be launched via a control in the unified view to access a document from which the proxy task is based.

[0058] At OPERATION **1150**, the user interactions with the proxy tasks are provided to the task source from which they were drawn to natively apply to the modifications. In various aspects, an API or an intelligent agent will format the input for the tasks source to interpret the user's interactions in its native format. In other aspects, the user interaction will launch an application for manipulating the task source to apply user interactions directly to the task source. In some aspects, when a user interaction to a proxy task is communicated to its originating task source, the task list service **120** will request an update from that task source to learn of the effects to the task item and any related task items on that task source affected by the modification. Method **1100** may then conclude.

[0059] While implementations have been described in the general context of program modules that execute in conjunction with an application program that runs on an operating system on a computer, those skilled in the art will recognize that aspects may also be implemented in combination with other program modules. Generally, program modules include routines, programs, components, data structures, and other types of structures that perform particular tasks or implement particular abstract data types.

[0060] The aspects and functionalities described herein may operate via a multitude of computing systems including, without limitation, desktop computer systems, wired and wireless computing systems, mobile computing systems (e.g., mobile telephones, netbooks, tablet or slate type computers, notebook computers, and laptop computers), hand-held devices, multiprocessor systems, microprocessor-based or programmable consumer electronics, minicomputers, and mainframe computers.

[0061] In addition, according to an aspect, the aspects and functionalities described herein operate over distributed systems (e.g., cloud-based computing systems), where application functionality, memory, data storage and retrieval and various processing functions are operated remotely from each other over a distributed computing network, such as the Internet or an intranet. According to an aspect, user interfaces and information of various types are displayed via on-board computing device displays or via remote display units associated with one or more computing devices. For example, user interfaces and information of various types are displayed and interacted with on a wall surface onto which user interfaces and information of various types are projected. Interaction with the multitude of computing systems with which implementations are practiced include, keystroke entry, touch screen entry, voice or other audio entry, gesture entry where an

associated computing device is equipped with detection (e.g., camera) functionality for capturing and interpreting user gestures for controlling the functionality of the computing device, and the like.

[0062] **FIGURES 12-14** and the associated descriptions provide a discussion of a variety of operating environments in which examples are practiced. However, the devices and systems illustrated and discussed with respect to **FIGURES 12-14** are for purposes of example and illustration and are not limiting of a vast number of computing device configurations that are utilized for practicing aspects, described herein.

[0063] **FIGURE 12** is a block diagram illustrating physical components (i.e., hardware) of a computing device **1200** with which examples of the present disclosure may be practiced. In a basic configuration, the computing device **1200** includes at least one processing unit **1202** and a system memory **1204**. According to an aspect, depending on the configuration and type of computing device, the system memory **1204** comprises, but is not limited to, volatile storage (e.g., random access memory), non-volatile storage (e.g., read-only memory), flash memory, or any combination of such memories. According to an aspect, the system memory **1204** includes an operating system **1205** and one or more program modules **1206** suitable for running software applications **1250**. According to an aspect, the system memory **1204** includes the task list service **120**. The operating system **1205**, for example, is suitable for controlling the operation of the computing device **1200**. Furthermore, aspects are practiced in conjunction with a graphics library, other operating systems, or any other application program, and are not limited to any particular application or system. This basic configuration is illustrated in **FIGURE 12** by those components within a dashed line **1208**. According to an aspect, the computing device **1200** has additional features or functionality. For example, according to an aspect, the computing device **1200** includes additional data storage devices (removable and/or non-removable) such as, for example, magnetic disks, optical disks, or tape. Such additional storage is illustrated in **FIGURE 12** by a removable storage device **1209** and a non-removable storage device **1210**.

[0064] As stated above, according to an aspect, a number of program modules and data files are stored in the system memory **1204**. While executing on the processing unit **1202**, the program modules **1206** (e.g., task list service **120**) perform processes including, but not limited to, one or more of the stages of the method **1100** illustrated in **FIGURE 11**. According to an aspect, other program modules are used in accordance with examples and include applications such as electronic mail and contacts applications, word

processing applications, spreadsheet applications, database applications, slide presentation applications, drawing or computer-aided application programs, etc.

[0065] According to an aspect, the computing device **1200** has one or more input device(s) **1212** such as a keyboard, a mouse, a pen, a sound input device, a touch input device, etc. The output device(s) **1214** such as a display, speakers, a printer, etc. are also included according to an aspect. The aforementioned devices are examples and others may be used. According to an aspect, the computing device **1200** includes one or more communication connections **1216** allowing communications with other computing devices **1218**. Examples of suitable communication connections **1216** include, but are not limited to, radio frequency (RF) transmitter, receiver, and/or transceiver circuitry; universal serial bus (USB), parallel, and/or serial ports.

[0066] The term computer readable media, as used herein, includes computer storage media. Computer storage media include volatile and nonvolatile, removable and non-removable media implemented in any method or technology for storage of information, such as computer readable instructions, data structures, or program modules. The system memory **1204**, the removable storage device **1209**, and the non-removable storage device **1210** are all computer storage media examples (i.e., memory storage.) According to an aspect, computer storage media include RAM, ROM, electrically erasable programmable read-only memory (EEPROM), flash memory or other memory technology, CD-ROM, digital versatile disks (DVD) or other optical storage, magnetic cassettes, magnetic tape, magnetic disk storage or other magnetic storage devices, or any other article of manufacture which can be used to store information and which can be accessed by the computing device **1200**. According to an aspect, any such computer storage media is part of the computing device **1200**. Computer storage media do not include a carrier wave or other propagated data signal.

[0067] According to an aspect, communication media are embodied by computer readable instructions, data structures, program modules, or other data in a modulated data signal, such as a carrier wave or other transport mechanism, and include any information delivery media. According to an aspect, the term “modulated data signal” describes a signal that has one or more characteristics set or changed in such a manner as to encode information in the signal. By way of example, and not limitation, communication media include wired media such as a wired network or direct-wired connection, and wireless media such as acoustic, radio frequency (RF), infrared, and other wireless media.

[0068] FIGURES 13A and 13B illustrate a mobile computing device 1300, for example, a mobile telephone, a smart phone, a tablet personal computer, a laptop computer, and the like, with which aspects may be practiced. With reference to FIGURE 13A, an example of a mobile computing device 1300 for implementing the aspects is illustrated. In a basic configuration, the mobile computing device 1300 is a handheld computer having both input elements and output elements. The mobile computing device 1300 typically includes a display 1305 and one or more input buttons 1310 that allow the user to enter information into the mobile computing device 1300. According to an aspect, the display 1305 of the mobile computing device 1300 functions as an input device (e.g., a touch screen display). If included, an optional side input element 1315 allows further user input. According to an aspect, the side input element 1315 is a rotary switch, a button, or any other type of manual input element. In alternative examples, mobile computing device 1300 incorporates more or fewer input elements. For example, the display 1305 may not be a touch screen in some examples. In alternative examples, the mobile computing device 1300 is a portable phone system, such as a cellular phone. According to an aspect, the mobile computing device 1300 includes an optional keypad 1335. According to an aspect, the optional keypad 1335 is a physical keypad. According to another aspect, the optional keypad 1335 is a “soft” keypad generated on the touch screen display. In various aspects, the output elements include the display 1305 for showing a graphical user interface (GUI), a visual indicator 1320 (e.g., a light emitting diode), and/or an audio transducer 1325 (e.g., a speaker). In some examples, the mobile computing device 1300 incorporates a vibration transducer for providing the user with tactile feedback. In yet another example, the mobile computing device 1300 incorporates input and/or output ports, such as an audio input (e.g., a microphone jack), an audio output (e.g., a headphone jack), and a video output (e.g., a HDMI port) for sending signals to or receiving signals from an external device. In yet another example, the mobile computing device 1300 incorporates peripheral device port 1340, such as an audio input (e.g., a microphone jack), an audio output (e.g., a headphone jack), and a video output (e.g., a HDMI port) for sending signals to or receiving signals from an external device.

[0069] FIGURE 13B is a block diagram illustrating the architecture of one example of a mobile computing device. That is, the mobile computing device 1300 incorporates a system (i.e., an architecture) 1302 to implement some examples. In one example, the system 1302 is implemented as a “smart phone” capable of running one or more applications (e.g., browser, e-mail, calendaring, contact managers, messaging clients,

games, and media clients/players). In some examples, the system **1302** is integrated as a computing device, such as an integrated personal digital assistant (PDA) and wireless phone.

[0070] According to an aspect, one or more application programs **1350** are loaded into the memory **1362** and run on or in association with the operating system **1364**. Examples of the application programs include phone dialer programs, e-mail programs, personal information management (PIM) programs, word processing programs, spreadsheet programs, Internet browser programs, messaging programs, and so forth. According to an aspect, the task list service **120** is loaded into memory **1362**. The system **1302** also includes a non-volatile storage area **1368** within the memory **1362**. The non-volatile storage area **1368** is used to store persistent information that should not be lost if the system **1302** is powered down. The application programs **1350** may use and store information in the non-volatile storage area **1368**, such as e-mail or other messages used by an e-mail application, and the like. A synchronization application (not shown) also resides on the system **1302** and is programmed to interact with a corresponding synchronization application resident on a host computer to keep the information stored in the non-volatile storage area **1368** synchronized with corresponding information stored at the host computer. As should be appreciated, other applications may be loaded into the memory **1362** and run on the mobile computing device **1300**.

[0071] According to an aspect, the system **1302** has a power supply **1370**, which is implemented as one or more batteries. According to an aspect, the power supply **1370** further includes an external power source, such as an AC adapter or a powered docking cradle that supplements or recharges the batteries.

[0072] According to an aspect, the system **1302** includes a radio **1372** that performs the function of transmitting and receiving radio frequency communications. The radio **1372** facilitates wireless connectivity between the system **1302** and the “outside world,” via a communications carrier or service provider. Transmissions to and from the radio **1372** are conducted under control of the operating system **1364**. In other words, communications received by the radio **1372** may be disseminated to the application programs **1350** via the operating system **1364**, and vice versa.

[0073] According to an aspect, the visual indicator **1320** is used to provide visual notifications and/or an audio interface **1374** is used for producing audible notifications via the audio transducer **1325**. In the illustrated example, the visual indicator **1320** is a light emitting diode (LED) and the audio transducer **1325** is a speaker. These devices may be

directly coupled to the power supply **1370** so that when activated, they remain on for a duration dictated by the notification mechanism even though the processor **1360** and other components might shut down for conserving battery power. The LED may be programmed to remain on indefinitely until the user takes action to indicate the powered-on status of the device. The audio interface **1374** is used to provide audible signals to and receive audible signals from the user. For example, in addition to being coupled to the audio transducer **1325**, the audio interface **1374** may also be coupled to a microphone to receive audible input, such as to facilitate a telephone conversation. According to an aspect, the system **1302** further includes a video interface **1376** that enables an operation of an on-board camera **1330** to record still images, video stream, and the like.

[0074] According to an aspect, a mobile computing device **1300** implementing the system **1302** has additional features or functionality. For example, the mobile computing device **1300** includes additional data storage devices (removable and/or non-removable) such as, magnetic disks, optical disks, or tape. Such additional storage is illustrated in **FIGURE 13B** by the non-volatile storage area **1368**.

[0075] According to an aspect, data/information generated or captured by the mobile computing device **1300** and stored via the system **1302** are stored locally on the mobile computing device **1300**, as described above. According to another aspect, the data are stored on any number of storage media that are accessible by the device via the radio **1372** or via a wired connection between the mobile computing device **1300** and a separate computing device associated with the mobile computing device **1300**, for example, a server computer in a distributed computing network, such as the Internet. As should be appreciated such data/information are accessible via the mobile computing device **1300** via the radio **1372** or via a distributed computing network. Similarly, according to an aspect, such data/information are readily transferred between computing devices for storage and use according to well-known data/information transfer and storage means, including electronic mail and collaborative data/information sharing systems.

[0076] **FIGURE 14** illustrates one example of the architecture of a system for improving the efficiency of managing task lists as described above. Content developed, interacted with, or edited in association with the task list service **120** is enabled to be stored in different communication channels or other storage types. For example, various documents may be stored using a directory service **1422**, a web portal **1424**, a mailbox service **1426**, an instant messaging store **1428**, or a social networking site **1430**. The task list service **120** is operative to use any of these types of systems or the like for improving

efficiency of task list management, as described herein. According to an aspect, a server **1420** provides the task list service **120** to clients **1405a,b,c**. As one example, the server **1420** is a web server providing the task list service **120** over the web. The server **1420** provides the task list service **120** over the web to clients **1405** through a network **1440**. By way of example, the client computing device is implemented and embodied in a personal computer **1405a**, a tablet computing device **1405b** or a mobile computing device **1405c** (e.g., a smart phone), or other computing device. Any of these examples of the client computing device are operable to obtain content from the store **1416**.

[0077] Implementations, for example, are described above with reference to block diagrams and/or operational illustrations of methods, systems, and computer program products according to aspects. The functions/acts noted in the blocks may occur out of the order as shown in any flowchart. For example, two blocks shown in succession may in fact be executed substantially concurrently or the blocks may sometimes be executed in the reverse order, depending upon the functionality/acts involved.

[0078] The description and illustration of one or more examples provided in this application are not intended to limit or restrict the scope as claimed in any way. The aspects, examples, and details provided in this application are considered sufficient to convey possession and enable others to make and use the best mode. Implementations should not be construed as being limited to any aspect, example, or detail provided in this application. Regardless of whether shown and described in combination or separately, the various features (both structural and methodological) are intended to be selectively included or omitted to produce an example with a particular set of features. Having been provided with the description and illustration of the present application, one skilled in the art may envision variations, modifications, and alternate examples falling within the spirit of the broader aspects of the general inventive concept embodied in this application that do not depart from the broader scope.

We claim :

1. A method for providing a unified interface of a task listing service for accessing and manipulating task items retrieved from multiple task sources, comprising:

establishing communication with a plurality of different user-accessed task sources for a specific user, wherein the user-accessed task sources include at least one of an email service, a calendar service and a productivity service ;

discovering from the plurality of different user-accessed task sources a first item created by a first one of the plurality of different user-accessed task sources and a second item created by a second one of the plurality of different user-accessed task sources;

creating a first task based on the first item, wherein the first task is associated with the first item and owned by the first one of the plurality of different user-accessed task sources and creating a second task based on the second item, wherein the second task is associated with the second item and owned by the second one of the plurality of different user-accessed task sources;

creating a first proxy task based on and associated with the first task, and creating a second proxy task based on and associated with the second task;

displaying the first and second proxy tasks in a unified interface of a task listing service and displaying in the unified interface a first selectable link and a second selectable link associated with the first and second proxy tasks, respectively; and

receiving a user-selection of at least one of the first link and the second link; and responsive to the user-selection, launching, via the first link or the second link, the first one or the second one of the plurality of different user-accessed task sources, respectively.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein establishing communication with the plurality of different task sources further comprises:

providing authentication credentials for the specific user to access each task source of the plurality of different task sources.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the authentication credentials grant the specific user access to one or more proxy tasks associated with the specific user and one or more proxy tasks associated with other users who have granted the specific user permission to view the one or more tasks associated with the other users.

4. The method of claim 1. wherein discovering the first and second items includes parsing one or more items created by each of the first one and the second one of the plurality of different user-accessed task sources to heuristically determine the first and second items based on content of the items.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving a user interaction with at least one of the first and second proxy tasks via the unified interface;

transmitting the user interaction to the first one or the second one of the plurality of different user-accessed task sources, respectively;

requesting an update on the first or second tasks from the first one or the second one of the plurality of different user-accessed task sources, respectively; and
in response to receiving the update, updating the first or second proxy tasks, respectively, in the unified interface.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein displaying the first and second proxy tasks in the unified interface includes displaying a hyperlink to access the first or second items, respectively, in the first one or the second one of the plurality of different user-accessed task sources, respectively.

7. A system for providing a unified interface of a task listing service for accessing and manipulating task items retrieved from multiple task sources, comprising:

a processor; and
a memory storage device including instructions that when executed by the processor enable the system to:

establish communication with a plurality of different user-accessed task sources for a specific user, wherein the user-accessed task sources include at least one of : an email service, a calendar service and a productivity service;

discover from the plurality of different user-accessed task sources a first item created by a first one of the plurality of different user-accessed task sources and a second item created by a second one of the plurality of different user-accessed task sources ;

create a first task based on the first item, wherein the first task is associated with the first item and owned by the first one of the plurality of different user-accessed task sources and create a second task based on the second item, wherein the second task is associated with the second item and owned by the second one of the plurality of different user-accessed task sources;

create a first proxy task based on and associated with the first task, and create a second proxy task based on and associated with the second task;

display the first and second proxy tasks in a unified interface of a task listing service and display in the unified interface a first selectable link and a second selectable link associated with the first and second proxy tasks, respectively; and

receive a user-selection of at least one of the first link and the second link; and

responsive to the user-selection, launch, via the first link or the second link, the first one or the second one of the plurality of different user-accessed task sources, respectively.

8. The system of claim 7, wherein to establish communication with the plurality of different task sources the system is further enabled to:

provide authentication credentials for the specific user to access each task source of the plurality of different task sources.

9. The system of claim 8, wherein the authentication credentials grant the specific user access to one or more proxy tasks associated with the specific user and one or more proxy tasks associated with other users who have granted the specific user permission to view the one or more proxy tasks associated with the other users.

10. The system of claim 7, wherein to discover of the first and second items the system is further enabled to parse one or more items created by each of the first one and the second one of the plurality of different user-accessed task sources to heuristically determine the first and second items based on content of the items.

11. The system of claim 7, wherein, responsive to the user-interaction, the system is further enabled to :

receive a user interaction with at least one of the first and second proxy tasks via the unified interface;

transmit the user interaction to first one or the second one of the plurality of different user-accessed task sources, respectively;

request an update on the first or second tasks from the first one or the second one of the plurality of different user-accessed sources, respectively; and

in response to receiving the update, update the first or second proxy tasks, respectively, in the unified interface.

12. The system of claim 7, wherein, to display the first and second proxy tasks in the unified interface, the system is further enabled to display a hyperlink to access the first or second items, respectively, in the first one or the second one of the plurality of different user-accessed task sources, respectively.

13. A computer readable storage device including processor executable instructions for providing a unified interface of a task listing service for accessing and manipulating task items retrieved from multiple task sources, the processor executable instructions comprising:

establishing communication with a plurality of different user-accessed task sources for a specific user, wherein the user-accessed task source include at least one of : the email service, a calendar service and a productivity service ;

discovering from the plurality of different user-accessed task sources a first item created by a first one of the plurality of different user-accessed task sources and a second item created by a second one of the plurality of different user-accessed task sources;

creating a first task based on the first item, wherein the first task is associated with the first item and owned by the first one of the plurality of different user-accessed task sources and creating a second task based on the second item, wherein the second task is associated with the second item and owned by the second one of the plurality of different user-accessed task sources;

creating a first proxy task based on and associated with the first task, and creating a second proxy task based on and associated with the second task;

displaying the first and second proxy tasks in a unified interface of a task listing service and displaying in the unified interface a first selectable link and a second selectable link associated with the first and second proxy tasks, respectively; and

receiving user-selection of at least one of the first link and the second link;
and

responsive to the user-selection, launching, via the first link or the second link, the first one or the second one of the plurality of different user-accessed task sources, respectively.

14. The computer readable storage device of claim 13, wherein establishing communication with the plurality of different task sources further comprises providing authentication credentials for the specific user to access each task source of the plurality of different task sources.

15. The computer readable storage device of claim 13, wherein discovering the first and second items includes parsing one or more items created by each of the first one and the second one of the plurality of different user-accessed task sources to heuristically determine the first and second items based on content of the items.

16. The computer readable storage device of claim 13, wherein, responsive to the user-interaction, additionally:

receiving a user interaction with at least one of the first and second proxy tasks via the unified interface;

transmitting the user interaction to the first one or the second one of the plurality of different user-accessed task sources, respectively;

requesting an update on the first or second tasks from the first one or the second one of the plurality of different user-accessed task sources, respectively; and

in response to receiving the update, updating the first or second proxy tasks, respectively, in the unified interface.

17. The computer readable storage device of claim 13, wherein displaying the first and second proxy tasks in the unified interface includes displaying a hyperlink to access the first or second items, respectively; in the first one or the second one of the plurality of different user-accessed task sources, respectively.