We claim :

1. A method of automatically setting initial setup options for an operating system, the method comprising:

receiving a computing device record comprising both hardware-identifying information of a computing device and operating system software-identifying information of a copy of the operating system that is to be set up on the computing device;

subsequently associating the computing device and its copy of the operating system with an entity based on a subsequent receipt of the computing device record in conjunction with an identification of the entity;

validating the copy of the operating system based on the operating system software-identifying information, the validating comprising determining that the automatic setting of the initial setup options is authorized for the copy of the operating system;

receiving a profile comprising settings for the initial setup options;

associating the received profile with the computing device and its copy of the operating system if the validating determined that the automatic setting of the initial setup options is authorized for the copy of the operating system;

generating operating system license data comprising both a license that authorizes the automatic setting of the initial setup options and the initial setup options that were specified in the received profile; and

providing the operating system license data to the computing device in response to a request containing the hardware-identifying information.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the receiving the computing device record comprises receiving a computer build record from a manufacturer of the computing device.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the hardware-identifying information comprises at least one of MAC address of the network interface, a BIOS identifier, or a cryptographic certificate of a Trusted Platform Module (TPM) of the computing device.

4. The method of claim 3, further comprising generating a single hardware hash value that incorporates two or more identifiers assigned to hardware components of the computing device.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the hardware-identifying information comprises a single hardware hash value incorporating two or more identifiers assigned to hardware components of the computing device.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the subsequent receipt of the computing device record is from an administrator of the entity; and wherein further the receiving the profile is also from the administrator of the entity.

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising requesting the generation of a durable device identifier for the computing device and the copy of the operating system from at least one of the hardware-identifying information or the operating system software-identifying information, the durable device identifier continuing to uniquely identify the computing device after upgrades to hardware components of the computing device.

8. The method of claim 1, further comprising associating the same received profile with multiple other computing devices.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein a setting for an initial setup option specified in the profile comprises disallowing a local administration of the computing device.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein a setting for an initial setup option specified in the profile comprises skipping presentation of an end-user license agreement associated with the operating system.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein a setting for an initial setup option specified in the profile comprises a customized directory sign-in that is specific to the entity.

12. A system comprising:

a computing device configured to perform steps comprising:

locally obtaining hardware-identifying information of the computing device;

receiving, through a network interface of the computing device, operating system license data based on the obtained hardware -identifying information, the received operating system license data comprising both a license for an operating system to be set up on the computing device and initial setup options for the operating system; and

automatically setting operating system options in accordance with the received initial setup options; and

the one or more server computing devices configured to perform steps comprising:

receiving a computing device record comprising both the hardware-identifying information and operating system software-identifying information of a copy of the operating system that is to be set up on the computing device;

subsequently associating the computing device and its copy of the operating system with an entity based on a subsequent receipt of the computing device record in conjunction with an identification of the entity;

validating the copy of the operating system based on the operating system software-identifying information, the validating comprising determining that the automatic setting of the initial setup options is authorized for the copy of the operating system;

receiving a profile comprising settings for the initial setup options;

associating the received profile with the computing device and its copy of the operating system if the validating determined that the automatic setting of the initial setup options is authorized for the copy of the operating system;

generating the operating system license data comprising both the license, authorizing the automatic setting of the initial setup options and the initial setup options that were specified in the received profile; and

providing the operating system license data to the computing device in response to a request containing the hardware-identifying information.

13. The system of claim 12, wherein the computing device is further configured to set the operating system options through one or more software licensing Application Program Interfaces (APIs).

14. The system of claim 12, wherein the one or more server computing devices are further configured to receive the computing device record as a computer build record from a manufacturer of the computing device and are further configured to subsequently receive the computing device record from an administrator of the entity.

15. The system of claim 12, wherein the one or more server computing devices are further configured to associate the same received profile with multiple other computing devices.

16. The system of claim 12, wherein the computing device is further configured to perform additional steps comprising :

presenting, through a graphics hardware interface of the computing device, a customized directory sign-in that was specified by the received initial operating system setup options; and

completing setting up the operating system in accordance with subsequent operating system setup options received based on user identifying information provided through the customized directory sign-in.

17. The system of claim 12, wherein the step of locally obtaining the hardware-identifying information of the computing device comprises generating, by the computing device, a single hardware hash value that incorporates two or more identifiers assigned to hardware components of the computing device.

18. The system of claim 12, wherein the one or more server computing devices are further configured to request the generation of a durable device identifier for the computing device and the copy of the operating system from at least one of the hardware-identifying information or the operating system software-identifying information, the durable device identifier continuing to uniquely identify the computing device after upgrades to hardware components of the computing device.

19. The system of claim 12, wherein the one or more server computing devices are further configured to associate the same received profile with multiple other computing devices.

20. The system of claim 12, wherein a setting for an initial setup option specified in the profile comprises disallowing a local administration of the computing device.