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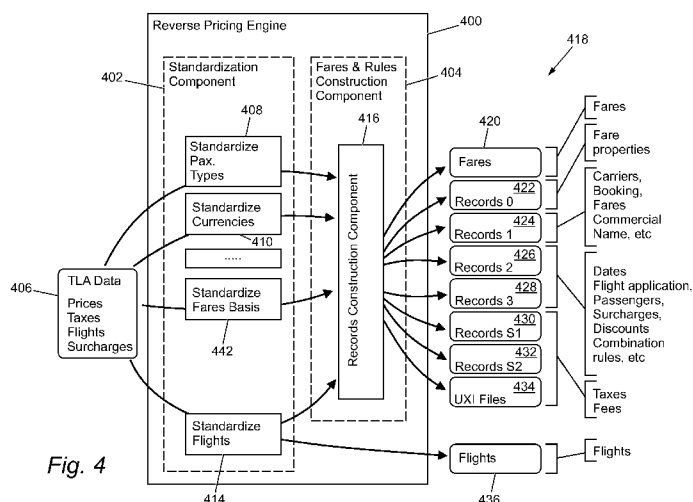


Fig. 4

(57) Abstract: A method of searching for an entity amongst a plurality of entities, wherein all the entities are linked by at least one criterion in common and have a plurality of data formats, wherein each entity comprises a set of data which can be searched by means of criteria entered by a user; and wherein each entity has a data format; and further wherein a specific one of the data formats defines a standard record format; the method comprising the steps of: determining the data format of an entity; if the data format of the entity does not match the standard record format, passing the entity to a pre-processing engine; if the data format of the entity does match the standard record format, passing standard record format data of the entity to a main processing engine; in the pre-processing engine comparing the entity data format to the standard record format and applying a conversion to the entity set of data; converting the entity set of data to the standard record format based on the conversion to form a converted set of data; passing the converted set of data to the main processing engine; in the main processing engine receiving the standard record format entity set of data and the converted set of data; and producing a set of results combining the converted set of data and the standard record format data for selection by a user of a preferred entity.