

PRODUCTS AND SERVICE DELIVERY AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

5 The present invention relates to a system for delivery and management of products and services in an on-line environment.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

10 Products and services are already available on-line over the Internet. Often these are presented at a dedicated world wide web site, such as for example an on-line grocery store that allows grocery items to be viewed, the prices displayed and the products to be purchased. Some services are also available on-line. This model works for individual "click and buy" applications, but difficulties arise when feedback is required. This may be, for example, where there is a production process involved. Each of the web sites offering these products and services on-line generally has their own specific product presentation and delivery process that does not allow interoperability or collaboration between different sorts of products and services. In addition, many goods and services are still not yet available on-line due to the complexities involved in delivering them on-line. An example of this is in the field of print.

20 Currently, computer graphics images for printing are stored as data files on a disk or compact disk (CD). The disk or CD may be vulnerable to damage due to handling. Where the image file needs to be duplicated the file has to be copied onto another CD or disk. Information relating to the image file may be stored on paper and may become physically separated from the actual media holding the image (the disk or CD) which can be vulnerable to being lost or misplaced. Physical storage space needs to be maintained to hold the documents as well as the CD or disks. Where a printed image is not needed for a period of time it is generally archived and it may be difficult or inconvenient to retrieve the archived disk or CD. Image documents are often saved in a high-resolution format that results in a large sized file. Large graphics files are not easily transferred electronically particularly via a low baud rate modem. A customer who has ordered a print job will often file a printed hard copy in a folder or will keep the disk or CD. It is therefore not always convenient to view all the data available or

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the individual images in an expeditious manner.

When working on a print job a draft is often faxed to the client for comments. There is a tendency for mistakes to occur due to a facsimile being unclear or instructions/comments being miscommunicated if provided over the telephone. In some instances, a draft print job is sent to a client as a portable document format (pdf) file via e-mail for the client to view. However, this format has a fixed page set-up and feedback is not easily provided to the print supplier.

When reordering print jobs, in some instances data can be misplaced, lost or damaged due to time elapsing and poor handling or storage.

The present invention seeks to provide a convenient system for delivery and managing products and services on-line.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

According to a first aspect of the present invention there is provided a method of delivery of an on-line product or service, including the steps of:

providing a plurality of viewable representations of a respective product or service, each representation being associated with viewable information about the product or service, each representation having one or more options specific to the product or service able to be selected; and

selecting one of the options, the selection causing a corresponding event to be initiated, the event contributing towards the delivery of the product or service.

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Preferably, the one or more representations are provided to a user at a computer terminal from a database over a computer network. Preferably, the information about the product or services is stored in the database, the information viewed being provided to the user's terminal over the computer network.

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In one embodiment the representation used is of an object used in the provision of the product or the service. Preferably, the object is a data file. More preferably, the object

is a media data file. Preferably, the data file is stored in a database. Alternatively, the representation is of a physical object.

5 Preferably, representations of related goods or services are grouped together into a plurality of categories. Preferably, at least one of the categories is viewable at a time. Preferably, each catalogue displayed is switchable with catalogues that are not being displayed.

10 Preferably, the representation is an icon. More preferably, the representation is a thumbnail image of the object.

In one embodiment the event is the delivery of the product or services. Alternatively, the event involves the triggering of an automated production process. Alternatively, the event is the signalling of a step in a production process requiring human intervention.

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Preferably, the options include feedback on the process of the production of the good or services. Preferably, the options include approval to produce the good or service. Preferably, the options include the submission of a bid for a product or service. Preferably, options include an agreement to purchase a good or service. Preferably, the options include tools to manipulate the object.

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Preferably, the information contains status information the state of production of the good or service. Preferably, the information contains the price of the product or service. Preferably, the information contains the availability of the product or service. Preferably, the information contains the history of the product or service. Preferably, the information contains a list of features or a description of the product or service.

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Preferably, the representations are provided via a browser interface. Preferably, the representations viewable are limited in access to authorised users.

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Preferably, a plurality of databases containing respective representations, viewable information and selectable options may be accessed to provide a multi-layered selection

of products and services.

Preferably, a server accesses the database and provides the information to the browser interface. Preferably, the server controls the event when a command is selected from
5 the selectable options.

According to a second aspect of the present invention there is provided a method of presenting products and services for managing the production or delivery of products and services on-line, including the steps of:

10 providing a plurality of viewable representations of a respective product or service, each representation being associated with viewable information about the product or service, each representation having one or more options specific to the product or service able to be selected.

15 Preferably, the viewable representation is updated to follow the progress of the production of the good or service. Preferably, the viewable representations include completed data files. Preferably, the plurality of representations are provided to a plurality of users and a plurality of selections can be made so that a plurality of production processes can be conducted in parallel.

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According to a third aspect of the present invention there is provided a system for managing the delivery of an on-line product or service, including:

processor means for providing a plurality of viewable representations of a respective product or service, each representation stored in a database storage means,
25 each representation being associated with viewable information about the product or service stored in the database storage means, each representation having one or more options specific to the product or service able to be selected stored in the database storage means ; and

means for causing a corresponding event to be initiated upon the selection of
30 one of the options, the event contributing towards the delivery of the product or service.

According to a fourth aspect of the present invention there is provided a method of producing a print job including the steps of:

creating a new print job according to specifications submitted with a request;

providing a viewable representation of the job on-line, the representation being
5 associated with information on the current status of the job, the information being viewable on-line;

providing an on-line feedback means for receiving ongoing instructions for the job, the feedback being available for acting thereon; and

producing print for the requested job, taking into account any feedback received.

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According to another aspect of the present invention there is provided a system for the management of print jobs including:

providing a viewable representation of the job on-line, the representation being
associated with information on the current status of the job, the information being
15 viewable on-line;

providing an on-line feedback means for receiving ongoing instructions for the job, the feedback being available for the print job.

Preferably, the feedback includes instructions for approval, alteration/s or cancellation
20 or comments on the print job.

Preferably, the representation is a low-resolution version of the actual image for printing. More preferably, the representation is a smaller sized image of the actual image. Preferably, the representation is a thumbnail version of the actual image. More
25 preferably, the representation is of a smaller file size than the actual image. Preferably, the representation is a viewable version of the current graphics image.

Preferably, the representation is a continuously updated low-resolution version of the actual graphics image.

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Preferably, the completed print job is archived for recall as required. Preferably, the archive may be recalled on-line. Preferably, the archive has a viewable representation

of the job associated with the actual graphics image file. Preferably, information relating to the print job is associated with the representation.

Preferably, a search facility is provided to find additional details relating to a print job
5 or for finding a print job amongst a large number of print jobs or for finding a print job from an archive of print jobs.

Preferably, a plurality of print jobs are processed in parallel.

10 Preferably, a cost estimate is provided in response to a request for a new job.

Preferably, an auction facility is provided where an image can be viewed of the item being auctioned and bids for the item can be received.

15 DESCRIPTION OF A PREFERRED EMBODIMENT OF THE INVENTION

A preferred embodiment of the present invention will now be described in detail, by way of example only, in which:

- Figure 1 is a schematic representation of a system for the presentation of the production, delivery and management of products and services according
20 to the present invention;
- Figure 2 is a schematic representation of grouped objects and their presentation according to the system of Figure 1;
- Figure 3 is a schematic representation of a front end print job management screen in accordance with the present invention;
- 25 Figure 4 is a schematic representation of a hardware set-up for running the management of print jobs;
- Figure 5 is a schematic representation of the association of a representation and information with an actual image of a print job; and
- Figure 6 is a schematic representation of the triggering of an automated
30 production process according to the present invention.

Referring to Figure 1, there is shown a schematic representation of a system 1 that

provides an interface 2 for the delivery and management of products and services under a hypothetical Internet "fetch" portal. Each of the products and services are provided via an Internet portal which provides a gateway to various goods and services hypothetically branded with the prefix "Fetch". The interface 2 may be provided by a
5 browser interface able to access the world wide web (WWW). The interface presents the user with a group of representations 3. Representations 3 are grouped together into categories listed as CAT 1, CAT 2 and CAT 3. The browser is an application running on PC 4 through which a user (USER 1) accesses the WWW to download web pages from server 5. The server builds the web pages from information contained in a
10 database 6. Each of the representations 3 corresponds to an object 7 in the database 6. Object 7 is one object of a plurality of objects A, B and C in the database 6. The object 7 may be a data file such as a media data file or it may simply be a label for a real world product or service. Each of the representations 3 is associated with information 8 about the object, which is provided to the user via the interface 2 at 8. The information 8 is
15 stored in the database 6. The information 8 may be, for example, a status of the price of object A, the availability of object A, the history of object A, the production history of object A, features of object A, a description of object A or any other relevant information. Each of the representations 3 have associated options 9 available for selection by the user which are presented to the user as 9.

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The options 9 are stored in the database 6. The options 9 are selectable by a user. The selection of one of the options 9 causes an event to be initiated according to instructions associated with each of the options 9. Server 5 controls the initiation of the event according to the instructions. Server 5 may be a distributed network of computers.
25 Database 6 may be distributed database.

The event may be an external event outside of the system such as something involving human involvement or intervention. A means to initiate the external involvement is represented by 11. The event may be for example the printing of a document, the
30 progression of a production process, the purchasing and delivery of a product, the provision of information, a sale, an auction bid or an assortment of other options available.

As can be seen, the database 6 is divided into users where each user is represented by U1, U2, U3 etc. A user profile may allow or restrict access to certain parts of the database 6. The database 6 is also divided into categories, CAT 1, CAT 2, CAT 3
5 which correspond to the groupings of representations shown at the interface 2.

Referring to Figure 2, some examples of the use of the present invention are now described. Figure 2A shows tabs labelled as "FetchCatalogue", "FetchMedia" and "FetchJobs" in which are displayed groups of representations (not shown).
10 "FetchCatalogue" is a catalogue used in a print production process (described in more detail below). "FetchMedia" provides electronic media used by advertising agencies, media houses and is a grouping of media data relating new or used by advertising agencies and media houses. "FetchJobs" represents a grouping of representations of jobs currently in process for a print media production process (again described in more
15 detail below).

Figure 2B shows the grouping "FetchTakeAway" has a group of representations which are able to fetch information and offer a selection of options related to take away food, such as viewing the menu and prices as well as ordering lunch or dinner delivery.
20 "FetchTours" is a grouping of tour packages ticketing information and options that may be ordered on-line over the Internet. "FetchLeisure" is a grouping of leisure programs, personal enrichment and entertainment products and services.

In Figure 2C "FetchShop" is a grouping of a virtual shopping mall selling on-line
25 products. "Fetchworks" is a grouping of works, designs and other related information where an author or artist's projects can be viewed for assessing whether to engage the services of the author. "FetchChat" provides a chat room facility for users of the "fetch" portal.

30 Figure 2D provides the grouping "FetchKiosk" which provides gift products that may be purchased. The kiosk facility can provide gifts, premiums and business items for clients that they can customise to their needs through the use of templates.

"FetchandGo" provides seasonal products that may be customisable, such as anniversaries, wedding products, new born products, Christmas etc. "FetchStationery" provides office stationery products.

- 5 Figure 2E provides the grouping of "FetchTechnology" which enables collaboration and research and development of technology. "FetchNews" provides a group of broadcast, current affairs and trends in the market place news items. "FetchEvents" provides events and trade fairs that the fetch portal is participating in.
- 10 Figure 2F provides the grouping of "FetchTender" which lists tenders for projects for submission and bid. "FetchBid" allows for the projects floating in the market place. "FetchAuction" provides a real time telecast of auctioned events along with information of featured artwork, which may be viewed and bid for over the Internet. The representations show the object being auctioned. Information on the object can be
- 15 viewed and either bids lodged directly or a teleconference software application launched for interactive participation in the auction. "FetchShare" allows pre-qualified vendors to perform business with their network of clients. "FetchJobCentre" provides job opportunities. "FetchFurniture" provides office and home furnishing products.
- 20 Many other groupings can be provided with the present invention providing a "plug and play" interface under which similar or related products and services may be grouped, information provided and options selected. With the information and options being tailored to their specific object. Such further examples include investments, software, anti-virus, health, courier, courses, sports, ideas and hotels. Many further applications
- 25 may also be realised.

A specific example using the management of print jobs will now be described which uses the above mentioned "FetchCatalogue" and "FetchJobs" groups.

- 30 The term "print" is used to refer to a work able to be printed on to paper one or more times. In particular, it relates to a computer graphics image that includes text and/or artwork, pictures, drawings or the like. The term "print job" refers to the progress of

production of the image and the printing of it.

Referring to Figure 3, there is shown an interface screen 10 which is able to be displayed on a web browser. The screen 10 is provided by a print supplier to customers over the Internet for assisting in the management of print jobs for the suppliers customers. Each customer is provided access to the screen by a login process, where only the print jobs of the customer that is logged in are available for viewing. The screen 10 is divided into a tools section 12, a catalogue section 14 and a jobs section 16.

10 The jobs section 16 includes representations of print jobs that are works in progress. The catalogue section 14 includes representations of print jobs that are completed works.

The tools section 12 includes a number of options which are able to be used by a customer. This corresponds with options 9. These include obtaining a selection 18 for acquiring a quote for a new print job; a selection 20 for reordering a print job from the print jobs in catalogue section 14; a selection 22 for viewing the actual print job in its current state; a selection 24 the downloading of a low-resolution version of the print job for viewing and work off-line; a selection 26 for searching for jobs archived or for one or more print jobs from a large number of print jobs; a selection 30 for communicating back to the print supplier feedback in relation to a print job; a selection 28 for obtaining current information associated with the print job; and a selection 32 for indicating for the print supplier to contact the customer. A help or explanation box is also provided at 34 for explaining the use of the various tools as a cursor or pointer moves over the various selections.

The catalogue section 14 provides images 36 of completed print jobs in a thumbnail format. The thumbnails 36 provide a readily intuitive link between the print job and the actual image file and associated information. A particular print job may be highlighted and will appear with a different coloured boarder as indicated by 38. In this instance when the status tool selection 28 is selected, the customer can view status information as well as other relevant information. The catalogue section can be further divided into

categories and selected by a selection from pull-down menu 40. A number of thumbnails can be viewed in the catalogue selection 14 by scrolling using a scroll bar.

5 The job section 16 includes thumbnail images 42 of current print jobs that are works in progress. A number of representations can be displayed by using a scrolling function with a pull down scroll bar 44.

Again when a job is selected it will appear highlighted as a different colour and status information or other tools may be selected to provide feedback, obtain status
10 information download or other options provided by other tools. The thumbnail representations 42 are smaller lower resolution versions of the actual image files currently being worked on. The thumbnails 42 are kept up to date with changes made to the actual graphics image file.

15 Referring to Figure 4, a set-up for running the management system is shown. A number of workstations 52 which are PC or PC compatible are represented and MAC or MAC compatible workstations are shown as 54. These are linked together by a network switch or a hub 56, which communicates with a file server 58 running a multi-user multi-tasking operating system such as linux. The hub 56 also linking together the file
20 server 58, a web file server 60 running a database application and a web server application, a completed job file server 62 running suitable operating system such as Windows 2000, a mail exchange server 64, a firewall 66 connected to a router 68 which is in turn connected by a high speed WAN data link 70 to a payment gateway 72. The hub or switch 56 is also connected to an image setter 74 and a pool of print devices 76.

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The workstations 52 and 54 enable work to be conducted on print jobs. The print jobs are stored in a suitable backed up storage means through file server 58. Login access is provided to external clients by the web server 60 which provides database access to files in through server 58 or server 62, along with a web interface to the client. Completed
30 print jobs are stored in a storage means of file server 62 and may be accessed where reorders of a print run are required.

Referring to Figure 5, each print job is a graphics image file that may include text, artwork, drawings, diagrams and the like. Examples of print jobs may be product summaries, fact sheets, reports, posters, name cards, logo design or any other of an assortment of types of images produced for print work. Each image is created at a high resolution and is stored in high resolution file formats where the data is either not compressed or compression does not result in significant loss of resolution or image quality, such as for example, a TIFF file. The image file and the data contained therein is represented as 80.

10 A backend application 82 is used to access the data 82, this is conducted by for example, the work in progress job file server 58. The print job keeps images in two files, one of which contains the actual image in a high resolution format 84. The other is a low resolution version 86 stored in a suitable file format where compression and degradation of image quality is tolerable for example in an Internet web based environment 86. Such a format may be for example, in GIF format. The images are linked and have linked properties so that when the actual production image 84 is varied this change is reflected in the low-resolution image 86 immediately. Other information 88 is also associated with the image data files, such as the current status of the work and the specifications relating to the work. The low resolution image is then provided as the thumbnail to the catalogue section as indicated by 90 or the job section (not shown). The high resolution data may be exported for external storage or provision to third parties as indicated by 92, the low resolution version may provided to other third parties or stored as indicated by 94. The high resolution version may be sent for proofing at 86 it may also be sent to other devices such as a printer at 98. The processes 92, 94, 96 and 98 can be conducted automatically and do not need intervention of an operator.

The present system can provide a one-stop print solution for managing print jobs and be accessed by a client on-line for immediate feedback or access that is available at any time and will be available to the print company for action immediately.

The tool section 12 enables a person to be guided, step by step, through the process of setting up a print job where they specify the requirements of the job, submit the job for

action and are able to receive cost estimates. They are able to view the job as it progresses via the thumbnails 42 and view the status of the job by seeking information through the tracking selection 28 which provides current status and information of the print job. Feedback can be provided by way of comments, amendments, cancellation or approval of the final job whereupon it can then be immediately dispatched for action by the print supplier. The communicator selection 30 is also provided so that the company can be informed that a discussion is required regarding the print job and thus a customer service representation of the print service vendor can contact the client. Where a great many jobs are available to a client, searching for print jobs can be provided with the search facility 26. This can also be used to find archived print jobs. If required, the current job can be downloaded, either in a low resolution format or high resolution format, to the personal computer for view or work off-line. A catalogue of completed jobs remains available in case the customer wishes to reorder a print run or can be archived if it is anticipated that the job will not be required for a long period of time. A chat room facility can be provided where users and interested parties can meet to discuss issues pertaining to print and other related topics.

An on-line payment system can be provided through a designated payment gateway.

A client is able to view a single page or a multi-page job. In the case of a multi-page job individual web pages or individual pages via acrobat reader can be viewed. Amendments to text in a document can be made and posted back to the print service vendor. Further instructions can be provided by e-mail. The catalogue section is able to archive jobs for later use and is also able to act as a reference section where archived data can be immediately retrieved for use in other print jobs or can be reordered. The catalogue facility can be used to store information or images such as for example, art objects, paintings that are used for auctions and that can be auctioned immediately over the world wide web by video streaming facilities. This facility can also be used to upload files to the print vendor. A users account department can use an invoice facility to provide payment for completed jobs using a payment gateway.

Referring to Figure 6, the process of confirming approval to proceed with a production

process, such as a print job, is described. In this case the representation 3 will be one of the thumbnails 42. The person ordering the print job, having provided feedback, is satisfied with the print job and is providing approval to proceed with printing. Embedded information 8 shows that the print job is waiting approval. Selection 30 may
5 then be selected where the option is to approve the print job. This triggers a message 100 to be sent over the Internet to the server 5. The file server 5 checks the options instructions from the options information 9 in the database 6 and determines from this, that upon receiving an approval command, it may automatically retrieve the image data file 7 and send it to a relevant output or printer device 102 according to the
10 corresponding instructions provided with the selection of the options 9.

It will be clear to the skilled addressee that the present invention provides a "plug and play" interface of a layered portal for delivery of products and services on-line. It allows the collaboration between largely unrelated product and service suppliers in a
15 convenient portal that will have a uniform look and feel that is relatively easy to set up and commence running. It does not require individual web site design that is time consuming and expensive. The collaborative approach allows the benefits of accessing multiple databases (in effect a distributed large database). Access can be managed by the users profile and their membership to the hypothetical "fetch" portal.

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Modifications and variations may be made to the present invention without departing from the basic inventive concept disclosed in this specification. Such modifications and variations are intended to be within the scope of the present invention the nature of which is to be determined from the forgoing description.

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CLAIMS



1. A method of delivery of an on-line product or service, including the steps of:
providing a plurality of viewable representations of a respective product or
5 service, each representation being associated with viewable information about the
product or service, each representation having one or more options specific to the
product or service able to be selected; and
selecting one of the options, the selection causing a corresponding event to be
initiated, the event contributing towards the delivery of the product or service.
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2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the one or more representations are
provided to a user at a computer terminal from a database over a computer network.
3. A method according to claim 2, wherein the information about the product or
15 services is stored in the database, the information viewed being provided to the user's
terminal over the computer network.
4. A method according to claim 1, wherein the representation used is of an object
used in the provision of the product or the service.
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5. A method according to claim 4, wherein the object is a data file.
6. A method according to claim 4, wherein the object is a media data file.
- 25 7. A method according to claim 5, wherein the data file is stored in a database.
8. A method according to claim 1, wherein the representation is of a physical object.
9. A method according to claim 1, wherein representations of related goods or
30 services are grouped together into a plurality of categories.
10. A method according to claim 9, wherein at least one of the categories is viewable



at a time.

11. A method according to claim 10, wherein each catalogue displayed is switchable with catalogues that are not being displayed.

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12. A method according to claim 1, wherein the representation is an icon.

13. A method according to either claim 4 or 8, wherein the representation is a thumbnail image of the object.

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14. A method according to claim 1, wherein the event is the delivery of the product or services.

15. A method according to claim 1, wherein the event involves the triggering of an automated production process.

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16. A method according to claim 1, wherein the event is the signalling of a step in a production process requiring human intervention.

17. A method according to claim 1, wherein the options include feedback on the process of the production of the good or services.

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18. A method according to claim 1, wherein the options include approval to produce the good or service.

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19. A method according to claim 1, wherein the options include the submission of a bid for a product or service.

20. A method according to claim 1, wherein options include an agreement to purchase a good or service.

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21. A method according to claim 1, wherein the options include tools to manipulate

the object.

22. A method according to claim 1, wherein the information contains status information the state of production of the good or service.

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23. A method according to claim 1, wherein the information contains the price of the product or service.

24. A method according to claim 1, wherein the information contains the availability
10 of the product or service.

25. A method according to claim 1, wherein the information contains the history of the product or service.

15 26. A method according to claim 1, wherein the information contains a list of features or a description of the product or service.

27. A method according to claim 1, wherein the representations are provided via a browser interface.

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28. A method according to claim 1, wherein the representations viewable are limited in access to authorised users.

29. A method according to claim 2, wherein a plurality of databases containing
25 respective representations, viewable information and selectable options may be accessed to provide a multi-layered selection of products and services.

30. A method according to claim 2, wherein a server accesses the database and provides the information to the browser interface.

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31. A method according to claim 29, wherein the server controls the event when a command is selected from the selectable options.



32. A method of presenting products and services for managing the production or delivery of products and services on-line, including the steps of:

5 providing a plurality of viewable representations of a respective product or service, each representation being associated with viewable information about the product or service, each representation having one or more options specific to the product or service able to be selected.

33. A method according to claim 32, wherein the viewable representation is updated
10 to follow the progress of the production of the good or service.

34. A method according to claim 32, wherein the viewable representations include completed data files.

15 35. A method according to claim 32, wherein the plurality of representations are provided to a plurality of users and a plurality of selections can be made so that a plurality of production processes can be conducted in parallel.



36. A method of producing a print job including the steps of:
20 creating a new job from specifications requesting the job;
providing a viewable representation of the job on-line, the representation being associated with information on the current status of the job, the information being viewable on-line;

25 providing an on-line feedback means for receiving on going instructions for the job, the feedback being available for acting thereon; and
producing print for the requested job, taking into account any feedback received.

37. A method according to claim 36, wherein the feedback includes instructions for approval, alteration/s or cancellation or comments on the print job.

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38. A method according to claim 36, wherein the representation is a low-resolution version of the actual image for printing.



39. A method according to claim 36, wherein the representation is a smaller sized image of the actual image.
- 5 40. A method according to claim 36, wherein the representation is a thumbnail version of the actual image.
41. A method according to claim 36, wherein the representation is of a smaller file size than the actual image.
- 10 42. A method according to claim 36, wherein the representation is a viewable version of the current graphics image.
43. A method according to claim 36, wherein the representation is a continuously
15 updated low-resolution version of the actual graphics image.
44. A method according to claim 36, wherein the completed print job is archived for recall as required.
- 20 45. A method according to claim 44, wherein the archive may be recalled on-line.
46. A method according to claim 44, wherein the archive has a viewable representation of the job associated with the actual graphics image file.
- 25 47. A method according to claim 36, wherein information relating to the print job is associated with the representation.
48. A method according to claim 36, wherein a search facility is provided to find additional details relating to a print job or for finding a print job amongst a large
30 number of print jobs or for finding a print job from an archive of print jobs.
49. A method according to claim 36, wherein a plurality of print jobs are processed in

parallel.

50. A method according to claim 36, wherein a cost estimate is provided in response to a request for a new job.

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51. A method according to claim 36, wherein an auction facility is provided where an image can be viewed of the item being auctioned and bids for the item can be received.

10 52. A system for the management of print jobs including:

providing a viewable representation of the job on-line, the representation being associated with information on the current status of the job, the information being viewable on-line;

15 providing an on-line feedback means for receiving ongoing instructions for the job, the feedback being available for the print job.

53. A system for managing the delivery of an on-line product or service, including:

20 processor means for providing a plurality of viewable representations of a respective product or service, each representation stored in a database storage means, each representation being associated with viewable information about the product or service stored in the database storage means, each representation having one or more options specific to the product or service able to be selected stored in the database storage means ; and

25 means for causing a corresponding event to be initiated upon the selection of one of the options, the event contributing towards the delivery of the product or service.

