ABSTRACT

In a system for managing electronic document formats, a format issuing agency uses a signature calculating unit to add a digital signature to format data for an electronic document and transmits the data to a format certificate authority. The format certificate authority generates an attribute certificate and transmits the certificate back to the format issuing agency. The format issuing agency stores all data related to the format in a database. A client terminal receives format data from the format issuing agency, inputs details into the form, and affixes a signature and the like. The recipient of the electronic document verifies the digital signatures of the document author and issuing agency, confirms the attribute certificate from the format certificate authority, and contacts the format certificate authority with any additional inquiries.

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