CLAIMS

Therefore, the following is claimed:

1. A non-transitory computer-readable medium embodying a program executable in a computing device, the program comprising:

code that obtains a request from a first merchant to contribute a first inventory of a product to a common pool of inventory of fungible products, the first inventory of the product being held on behalf of the first merchant in at least one fulfillment center in a fulfillment network;

code that determines whether the product is fungible with respect to the common pool of inventory of fungible products;

code that contributes the first inventory of the product to the common pool of inventory of fungible products in response to the request when the product is fungible, the common pool of inventory of fungible products including a second inventory of the product contributed by a second merchant and held in at least one other fulfillment center in the fulfillment network;

code that, in response to determining the product is fungible, associates a quantity of inventory credits for the product with the first merchant, the quantity corresponding to the first inventory of the product contributed by the first merchant to the common pool of inventory of fungible products;

code that, in response to determining the product is fungible, initiates a transfer of at least a portion of the common pool of inventory of fungible products held at a first fulfillment center in the fulfillment network to a second fulfillment center in the fulfillment network in response to a projected demand for the product in a region served by the second fulfillment center;

code that, in response to determining the product is fungible, obtains an order for the product from a customer of the first merchant in the region served by the second fulfillment center;

code that, in response to determining the product is fungible, initiates fulfillment of the order from the common pool of inventory of fungible products held at the second fulfillment center;

code that, in response to determining the product is fungible, debits the quantity of inventory credits associated with the first merchant in response to the order; and

wherein the order is fulfilled from the second inventory of the product contributed by the second merchant, and a quantity of inventory credits associated with the second merchant is not debited in response to the order.

~~1~~2. A system, comprising:

at least one computing device; and

an inventory management application executable in the at least one computing device, the inventory management application comprising:

logic that contributes a first inventory of a~~n~~ fungible item held at a first fulfillment center on behalf of a first merchant to a common pool of inventory of fungible items, wherein the fungible item is considered fungible with respect to the common pool of inventory of fungible items if the fungible item shares a unique identifier with another fungible item within the common pool of inventory of fungible items;

logic that contributes a second inventory of the fungible item held at a second fulfillment center on behalf of a second merchant to the common pool of inventory of fungible items; and

logic that, in response to receiving an order for the fungible item placed by a customer of the first merchant, initiates fulfillment of ~~an~~the order ~~for the item placed by a customer of the first merchant~~ from the second inventory of the fungible item that was contributed to the common pool of inventory of fungible items.

~~23~~. The system of claim ~~12~~, wherein the logic that contributes the first inventory of the fungible item and the logic that contributes the second inventory of the fungible item are further configured to associate a respective quantity of inventory credits with ~~the~~a respective merchant, and the respective quantity of inventory credits corresponds to a respective quantity of the item contributed to the common pool of inventory of fungible items by the respective merchant.

~~34~~. The system of claim ~~23~~, wherein the logic that initiates fulfillment of the order is further configured to debit a quantity of the fungible item corresponding to the order from the respective quantity of inventory credits associated with the first merchant.

~~45~~. The system of claim ~~42~~, wherein the order is fulfilled from the second fulfillment center.

~~56~~. The system of claim ~~42~~, wherein the inventory management application further comprises logic that initiates a transfer of at least a portion of the common pool of inventory of fungible items held at the second fulfillment center to a third fulfillment center.

~~67~~. The system of claim ~~56~~, wherein a destination address associated with the order is in a region served by the third fulfillment center, and the order is fulfilled from the third fulfillment center.

~~78~~. The system of claim ~~56~~, wherein the transfer is initiated automatically in response to a projected demand for the fungible item in a region served by the third fulfillment center.

~~89~~. The system of claim ~~42~~, wherein the first fulfillment center serves a first region associated with a first electronic marketplace, and the second fulfillment center serves a second region associated with a second electronic marketplace.

10. The system of claim 9, wherein the first region corresponds to a first country, and the second region corresponds to a second country.

~~9~~11. The system of claim ~~1~~2, wherein the first fulfillment center and the second fulfillment center are operated by an entity that also operates at least one electronic marketplace in which the first merchant participates and at least one electronic marketplace in which the second merchant participates.

~~10~~12. The system of claim ~~9~~11, wherein the inventory management application further comprises:

logic that initiates fulfillment of another order for the fungible item placed by a customer of the second merchant from the first inventory of the fungible item that was contributed to the common pool of inventory of fungible items; and

wherein a destination address associated with the other order is in a region served by the second fulfillment center, the other order is fulfilled from the first fulfillment center, and the entity absorbs at least a portion of a cost associated with shipping the other order.

13. The system of claim 2, wherein the inventory management application further comprises logic that adjusts a price in a first currency for a respective offering of the fungible item by the first merchant in each one of a subset of electronic marketplaces to compensate the first merchant for an

exchange rate fluctuation between the first currency and a second currency so as to preserve a desired return for the first merchant in the second currency.

~~11~~14. A method, comprising the steps of:

obtaining, in at least one computing device, a request from a merchant to contribute an inventory of a~~n~~ fungible item to a common pool of inventory of fungible items, the inventory of the fungible item being held on behalf of the merchant in at least one fulfillment center in a fulfillment network;

determining, in the at least one computing device, whether the fungible item is fungible with respect to the common pool of inventory of fungible items;

contributing, in the at least one computing device, the inventory of the fungible item to the common pool of inventory of fungible items in response to the request, the common pool of inventory of fungible items including another inventory of the fungible item contributed by

at least one other merchant and held in at least one other fulfillment center in the fulfillment network; and

associating, in the at least one computing device, a quantity of inventory credits for the fungible item with the merchant, the quantity corresponding to the inventory of the fungible item contributed by the merchant to the common pool of inventory of fungible items.

~~12~~15. The method of claim 1~~1~~4, further comprising the step of initiating, in the at least one computing device, a transfer of at least a portion of the common pool of inventory of fungible items held at a first fulfillment center in the fulfillment network to a second fulfillment center in the fulfillment network in response to a projected demand for the fungible item in a region served by the second fulfillment center.

16. The method of claim 14, wherein the request designates a subset of a plurality of electronic marketplaces in which the merchant requests to offer the fungible item for order and each of the electronic marketplaces targets a distinct region.

~~13~~17. The method of claim ~~11~~16, further comprising the step of adjusting~~establishing~~, in the at least one computing device, a price in a first currency for a respective offering of the fungible item by the merchant in each one of the subset of the electronic marketplaces to compensate for an exchange rate fluctuation between the first currency and a second currency so as to

preserve a desired return for the merchant in ~~a local~~the second currency ~~of the merchant~~.

18. The method of claim 14, further comprising the steps of:

obtaining, in the at least one computing device, an order for the fungible item from a customer of the merchant in a region served by the at least one other fulfillment center;

initiating, in the at least one computing device, fulfillment of the order from the common pool of inventory of fungible items held at the at least one other fulfillment center; and

debiting, in the at least one computing device, the quantity of inventory credits associated with the merchant in response to the order.

~~14~~19. The method of claim ~~11~~14, further comprising the steps of:

obtaining, in the at least one computing device, an order for the fungible item from a customer of the merchant in a region served by a fulfillment center in the fulfillment network;

purchasing, in the at least one computing device, ~~an~~the fungible item from another merchant that is being held on behalf of the other merchant in the fulfillment center;

initiating, in the at least one computing device, fulfillment of the order from the fulfillment center using the fungible item purchased from the other merchant; and

debiting, in the at least one computing device, the quantity of inventory credits associated with the merchant in response to the order.

20. The method of claim 14, wherein no fungible item in the common pool of inventory of fungible items is identifiably owned by any one merchant participating in the common pool of inventory of fungible items.

21. The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of:

rejecting, in the at least one computing device, the request when the fungible item is not fungible with respect to the common pool of inventory.