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(71) Applicant: COMPUTER ASSOCIATES THINK, INC. [US/US]; One Computer Associates Plaza, Islandia, NY 11749 (US).

(72) Inventors: KOSCIUSZKO, Edward; 259 Highland Avenue, Upper Montclair, NJ 07043 (US). MENON, Sreekumar; 6 Pine Tree Place, Parsippany, NJ 07054 (US). VO, Hung-Vuong; 62 Sheridan Street #1, San Francisco, CA 94103 (US).

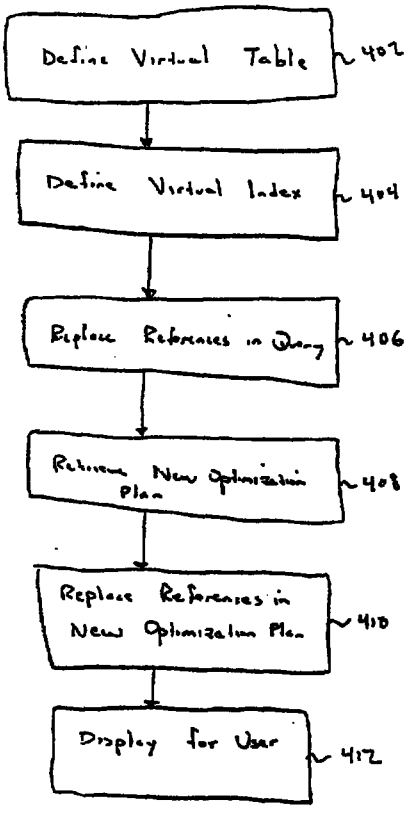
(74) Agent: FLIESLER, Martin, C.; Fliesler Dubb Meyer and Lovejoy LLP, Suite 400, Four Embarcadero Center, San Francisco, CA 94111-4156 (US).

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(54) Title: A DATABASE SYSTEM FOR VIEWING EFFECTS OF CHANGES TO A INDEX FOR A QUERY OPTIMIZATION PLAN



(57) Abstract: A method and apparatus for viewing the effect of changes to an index for a database table on an optimization plan for a database query, such as an SQL statement. A virtual table (312) is created which mimics the structure of an original table (308) on the database. The virtual table (312) is created by copying the original table (308), excluding any data in the original table. Any existing original indexes (310) associated with original table (308) are copied to define a virtual index (314) associated with the virtual table (312). References in the query to the original table are replaced with references to the virtual table (408). The database management system then determines a new optimization plan (324) for the query.

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