Claims

1. A data processing method, comprising the steps of:

(a) executing a messaging application program, a bulletin board application, and one or more other application programs on a computer system, each of the messaging application program and the one or more other application programs displaying data to a user of the computer system, wherein the messaging application program enables real-time transmission of messages to and from the user;

(b) analyzing text in each message received by or to be sent by the user in the messaging application program to identify one or more textual data items in the message that can potentially be processed by the one or more other application programs;

(c) displaying messages analyzed in (b) to the user by the messaging application, wherein each textual data item in the messages identified in step (b) is visually marked and selectable by the user;

(d) receiving an input from the user selecting a textual data item in one of the messages;

(e) broadcasting information on the textual data item selected by the user through the bulletin board application to the one or more other application programs;

(f) determining independently through each of the one or more other application programs whether the information on the textual data item broadcast in step (e) is semantically relevant to that application program; and

(g) when the information on the textual data item is determined to be semantically relevant to an application program, automatically processing the information on the textual data item through the application program and displaying results to the user.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein analyzing text in each message received by or to be sent by the user in step (b) is performed using natural language processing.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the one or more textual data items are identified in step (b) by searching for the one or more textual data items in one or more databases of known entities or concepts.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the information on each textual data item comprises a type:value pair associated with the textual data item in the one or more databases.

5. The method of claim 3, wherein the data comprises financial data, and wherein the entities or concepts comprise Issuers, Securities, Investment Managers, Consultants, Employees, Products, or sales activities.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the one or more other application programs include at least one of a Price Chart application, a Security Detail application, a Search application, and a Performance Chart application.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the one or more textual data items are visually marked by being underlined or shown in a different color or font relative to other text in the messages.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the textual data item selectable by the user comprises a clickable hotspot.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the computer system comprises a user-operated device and one or more remote computers connected to the user-operated device over a communications network, and wherein the application programs execute entirely on the user-operated device, partly on the user-operated device and partly on the one or more remote computers, or entirely on the one or more remote computers.

10. A computer system, comprising:

at least one processor;

memory associated with the at least one processor;

a display; and

a messaging application program, a bulletin board application, and one or more other application programs stored in the memory that can be executed by the at least one processor, each of the messaging application program and the one or more other application programs capable of processing data and displaying data to a user of the computer system on the display, wherein the messaging application program enables real-time transmission of messages to and from the user, wherein the computer system is configured to:

(a) execute the messaging application program and the one or more other application programs on a computer system;

(b) analyze text in each message received by or to be sent by the user in the messaging application program to identify one or more textual data items in the message that can potentially be processed by the one or more other application programs;

(c) display messages analyzed in (b) to the user by the messaging application, wherein each textual data item in the messages identified in step (b) is visually marked and selectable by the user;

(d) receive an input from the user selecting a textual data item in one of the messages;

(e) broadcast information on the textual data item selected by the user through the bulletin board application to the one or more other application programs;

(f) determine independently through each of the one or more other application programs whether the information on the textual data item broadcast in step (e) is semantically relevant to that application program; and

(g) when the information on the textual data item is determined to be semantically relevant to an application program, automatically process the information on the textual data item through the application program and display results to the user.

11. The system of claim 10, wherein the text in each message received by or to be sent by the user is analyzed in (b) using natural language processing.

12. The system of claim 11, wherein the one or more textual data items are identified in (b) by searching for the one or more textual data items in one or more databases of known entities or concepts.

13. The system of claim 12, wherein the information on each textual data item comprises a type:value pair associated with the textual data item in the one or more databases.

14. The system of claim 12, wherein the data comprises financial data, and wherein the entities or concepts comprise Issuers, Securities, Investment Managers, Consultants, Employees, Products, or sales activities.

15. The system of claim 14, wherein the one or more other application programs include at least one of a Price Chart application, a Security Detail application, a Search application, and a Performance Chart application.

16. The system of claim 10, wherein the one or more textual data items are visually marked by being underlined or shown in a different color or font relative to other text in the messages.

17. The system of claim 10, wherein the textual data item selectable by the user comprises a clickable hotspot.

18. The system of claim 10, wherein the computer system comprises a user-operated device and one or more remote computers connected to the user-operated device over a communications network, and wherein the application programs execute entirely on the user-operated device, partly on the user-

operated device and partly on the one or more remote computers, or entirely on the one or more remote computers.

19. An inter-application communication method, comprising the steps of:

(a) executing a messaging application program, a bulletin board application, and one or more other application programs on a computer system, each of the messaging application program and the one or more other application programs displaying data to a user of the computer system, wherein the messaging application program enables real-time transmission of messages to and from the user;

(b) analyzing text in each message received by or to be sent by the user in the messaging application program using natural language processing to identify one or more textual data items in the message that can potentially be processed by the one or more other application programs, and by searching for the one or more textual data items in one or more databases of known entities or concepts;

(c) tagging the one or more textual data items identified in step (b) by visually marking the one or more textual data items and making the one or more textual data items user-selectable in the messages displayed to the user;

(d) receiving an input from the user selecting a textual data item in one of the messages;

(e) broadcasting information on the textual data item selected by the user through the bulletin board application to the one or more other application programs;

(f) determining independently through each of the one or more other application programs whether the information on the textual data item broadcast in step (e) is semantically relevant to that application program; and

(g) when the information on the textual data item is determined to be semantically relevant to an application program, automatically processing the

information on the textual data item through the application program and displaying results to the user.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the information on each textual data item comprises a type:value pair associated with the textual data item in the one or more databases.