CLAIMS

1. A method of conducting an electronic collateralisation search, the method conducted by an asset inventory system and comprising:

generating an image of asset records of a first party, the asset records being distributed on one or more remotely-located asset depositories;

receiving, over a network, a first set of parameters from a user terminal, the first set of parameters indicating one or more predefined threshold criteria of the first party;

storing the first set of parameters in the asset inventory system;

filtering the image of asset records into a subset of asset records based on the stored first set of parameters;

receiving, over the network, a search query from a third party collateralisation search engine to identify assets for use as collateral in a transaction between the first party and a second party, the search query comprising a second set of parameters indicating one or more criteria of the second party;

restricting the search query to be executed on only the filtered subset of asset records;

receiving, over the network, a data message from a given asset depository, the data message comprising an updated status of one or more asset records of the given asset depository;

updating the image of asset records based on the received data message; and

updating the subset of asset records based on the updated image of asset records and the stored set of parameters.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the updating steps are carried out on receipt of the data message.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the updating steps are carried out after a predetermined time period.

4. An asset inventory system for conducting an electronic collateralisation search, the system comprising:

an image of a plurality of asset records, each asset record specifying an asset belonging to a first party and available to at least one remotely-located asset depository, wherein each specified asset comprises one or more variable asset characteristics associated with a status of the specified asset;

a communication module arranged to receive a predefined set of qualifying characteristics from a user terminal over a network connection, the predefined set of qualifying characteristics indicating one or more predefined threshold criteria of the first party;

a non-transitory storage medium arranged to store the predefined set of qualifying characteristics;

a first processing module arranged to define a qualifying subset of the asset records by comparing the one or more variable asset characteristics of each asset record with the predefined set of qualifying characteristics and assigning any asset records which comprise the predefined qualifying characteristics to the qualifying subset;

the communication module further arranged to receive a search query from a third party collateralisation search engine over the network connection, the search query indicating one or more criteria of a second party;

a controller arranged to restrict the search query to be executed on only the qualifying subset of asset records;

the communication module further arranged to receive a data message from one of the asset depositories over the network connection, the data message comprising current status information associated with updated variable asset characteristics of a given asset;

a second processing module arranged to update the given asset in the image of asset records, with the updated variable asset characteristics;

wherein the first processing module is arranged to determine whether the updated variable asset characteristics of the given asset in the asset record satisfy the predefined set of qualifying characteristics and to include the updated asset record in the qualifying subset when the updated variable asset characteristics of the updated asset record satisfy the predefined set of qualifying characteristics.

5. The asset inventory system of Claim 4, wherein the first processing module is arranged to remove the updated asset record from the qualifying subset when the updated variable asset

characteristics of the updated asset record do not satisfy the predefined set of qualifying characteristics.

6. The asset inventory system of Claim 5, wherein the second processing module is arranged to generate a database record update instruction for updating the asset record associated with the given asset with the updated variable asset characteristics comprised in the received data message.

7. The asset inventory system of Claim 6, wherein the second processing module comprises a variable kernel process architecture, each kernel process being arranged to generate the database record update instruction, and the second processing module is arranged to vary the number of kernel processes running in the second processing module, in order to vary the number of asset database update instructions generated in real-time, on the basis of the number of received data messages.

8. The asset inventory system of Claim 7, wherein the second processing module comprises:

a plurality of processors arranged in parallel, each processor running a kernel process;

a second processing module controller for controlling operation of the plurality of processors; and wherein

the second processing module controller is arranged to determine and select the number of processors required to generate an asset database update instruction for each received data message in real-time, on the basis of the number of received data messages.

9. The asset inventory system of Claim 4, wherein the first processing module comprises:

an instruction generator arranged to:

determine if the updated variable asset characteristics of the given asset in the asset record satisfy the predefined qualifying characteristics; and

generate a qualifying subset update instruction for updating the qualifying subset, the update instruction comprising instructions to include the updated asset record in the

qualifying subset when the updated variable resource characteristics satisfy the predefined qualifying characteristics.

10. The asset inventory system of Claim 4, wherein the second processing module is arranged to:

query one or more remotely-located asset depositories for one or more variable asset characteristics associated with a given asset available to the one or more remotely-located asset depositories;

generate an asset record within the asset database for the given asset; and

populate the asset record with the received one or more asset characteristics for the given asset.

11. The asset inventory system of Claim 4, wherein the communication module is arranged to:

determine if the format of the received data message is compatible with the processing requirements of the second processing module; and

convert the format of the received data message into a format compatible with the processing requirements of the second processing module.

12. The asset inventory system of Claim 4, wherein the data message from the at least one remotely-located asset depository comprises one or more global configuration parameters, the one or more global configuration parameters defining characteristics of subsequent data exchanges with the at least one remotely-located asset depository, and the communication module is configured to associate the received one or more configuration parameters with all asset records comprised in the asset database that are associated with asset available to the at least one remotely-located asset depository.

13. The asset inventory system of Claim 4, wherein the communication module is arranged in independent hardware having an independent power source, and being operatively

coupled to the asset database, the first processing module, the second processing module and the controller.

14. The asset inventory system of Claim 4, wherein the first processing module is arranged to determine whether the updated variable asset characteristics of the given asset in the asset record satisfy the predefined set of qualifying assets after a predetermined period of time.

15. The asset inventory system of Claim 4, wherein the first processing module is arranged to determine whether the updated variable asset characteristics of the given asset in the asset record satisfy the predefined set of qualifying characteristics upon each receipt of a data message.

16. The asset inventory system of Claim 4, wherein the controller is arranged to output the qualifying subset of asset records to the external collateralisation search engine.