PROFILE SCANNER

CLAIM OF PRIORITY UNDER 35 U.S.C. §119

[0001] The present Application for Patent claims priority to Provisional Application No. 61/164,276 entitled "Electronic Discovery System" filed March 27, 2009, and assigned to the assignee hereof and hereby expressly incorporated by reference herein.

FIELD

[0002] In general, embodiments of the invention relate to methods, systems and computer program products for identifying users of personal computers within a network.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Electronic discovery, commonly referred to as e-discovery, refers to any process in which electronic data is sought, located, secured and searched with the intent of using it as evidence in a legal proceeding, an audit, a securities investigation , a forensics investigation or the like. E-discovery can be carried out offline on a particular computer or it can be accomplished in a network environment.

[0004] The nature of digital data makes it extremely well-suited for investigation. In particular, digital data can be electronically searched with ease, whereas paper documents must be scrutinized manually. Furthermore, digital data is difficult or impossible to completely destroy, particularly if the data is stored in a network environment. This is because the data appears on multiple hard drives, and because digital files, even if deleted, generally can be undeleted. In fact, the only reliable means of destroying digital data is to physically destroy any and all hard drives where it is stored.

[0005] In the process of electronic discovery, data of all types can serve as evidence. This can include text, image, calendar event data, databases, spreadsheets, audio files, multimedia files, web sites and computer programs. Electronic mail (*i.e.*, e-mail) can be an especially valuable source of evidence in civil or criminal litigation, because people are often less careful in these exchanges than in hard copy correspondence such as written memos or postal letters.

[0006] E-discovery is an evolving field that goes far beyond mere technology. It gives rise to multiple issues, many of which have yet to be resolved. For example, identifying data required to satisfy a given discovery request, locating the appropriate set of data that has been identified, and retrieving the data once it has been identified and located all pose problems in and of themselves. This is especially evident if the data that is being identified, located and retrieved comes from an evolving or disparate enterprise, such as a corporation that has experienced mergers, acquisitions, downsizing and the like. Mergers and acquisitions mean that the technology infrastructure across the enterprise may vary, at least in the interim. However, e-discovery must be able locate and retrieve data from these disparate technology infrastructure in a timely fashion, sometimes within days of when the merger/acquisition occurs.

[0007] In addition to identifying, locating and retrieving digital data, the most critical part of any electronic discovery is the preservation of data, which involves maintaining an original source copy and storing it for preservation purposes or furthering processing. This too becomes a daunting task for the enterprise system that encompasses a myriad of different technology infrastructures and the like. Therefore, a need exists to improve the identification, location, retrieval and preservation processes, especially in instances in which the enterprise system includes disparate technology infrastructures and the like.

[0008] As previously noted, e-discovery, as opposed as conventional discovery of printed materials, provides for the ability to filter or search the data so as to reduce the volume of data to only that which is relevant to the request. Such searching is typically accomplished by determining a specific date range for the request, providing key words relevant to the case and the like. Improvements in the area of searching are greatly in need to further add efficiency to the overall e-discovery process.

[0009] Once data has been retrieved, preserved and, in some instances, searched the electronic data may be reviewed by the requesting entity, such as a law firm, securities commission or the like. While large requests are generally suited for online review, the manner in which the data is presented for review adds efficiency to the review process and ultimately drives the cost of the review process. Therefore, improvements in the manner in which data is presented for review are also desirable as a means of increasing efficiency and reducing costs.

[0010] Lastly, once the digital data has been reviewed, data identified as relevant may need to be produced in a tangible format for further analysis or legal evidentiary purposes. The produced documents must be properly identified and include necessary redactions and confidentiality markings.

[0011] Up until now, e-discovery management has been conducted on a case-by-case basis, meaning all tasking and workflow related to the e-discovery is based at the case level. Such management does not allow for finer granularity in the management of a case or for links to exist between different cases for the purpose of leveraging the e-discovery related to one case to another new or pre-existing case. Therefore, a need exists to improve the manner in which cases are managed and, in particular, how tasking and workflow are managed depending on case requirements and the like.

SUMMARY

[0012] Embodiments of the invention relate to systems, methods, and computer program products for identifying users of personal computers within a network, and in particular, for generating a list of personal computers associated with custodians for the purposes of conducting electronic discovery. Some embodiments of the present invention provide a method for identifying users of personal computers within a network for the purposes of electronic discovery, wherein the method comprises: (1) accessing the personal computers via the network, (2) querying the profile list on each personal computer, (3) transmitting for each personal computer computer-identifying data associated with the personal computer and user-identifying data associated with a user of the personal computer, and (4) storing the computer-identifying data in a database.

[0013] In some embodiments, storing the computer-identifying data in a database comprises adding the computer-identifying data to an existing entry in a custodian directory associated with the user. According to some embodiments, the method also includes using the user-identifying information to store the computer-identifying data in the database. According to some embodiments, the method also includes using the user-identifying information to link the computer-identifying data stored in the database to an existing entry in a custodian directory associated with the user. In some embodiments, querying the profile list comprises reading the registry key list. In some embodiments, the computer-identifying data comprises a computer name. In some embodiments, the computer-identifying data comprises an IP address. According to some embodiments, querying the profile list comprises reading a registry key list on the personal computer comprising at least one registry key.

[0014] In some embodiments, the user-identifying data comprises at least a portion of a registry key. According to some embodiments, the method also includes presenting the computer-identifying data to an electronic discovery manager upon the identification of the user as a subject for electronic discovery. In some embodiments, the method also includes transmitting log-on data associated with the user of the personal computer. In some embodiments, the log-on data is transmitted in conjunction with the transmission of the computer-identifying data. In some embodiments, the log-on data comprises the last date and time that the user logged on to the personal computer. In some embodiments, the log-on data comprises the number of times that the user logged on to the personal computer during a predetermined period of time.

[0015] Some embodiments of the present invention provide a method for identifying users of personal computers within a network for the purposes of electronic discovery, wherein the method comprises: (1) installing on the personal computers a tool configured to transmit computer-identifying data and user-identifying to a database server, (2) accessing a preexisting directory comprising data relating to the users, (3) locating in the directory an entry that comprises data matching the user-identifying data, and (4) linking the computer-identifying data to the entry. In some embodiments, the tool is configured to transmit the computer identifying data and the user-identifying data every time a user logs on to a personal computer. In some embodiments, the user-identifying data comprises a network user identification. In some embodiments, the computer-identifying data comprises a computer name. In some embodiments, the computer-identifying data comprises an IP address. According to some embodiments, linking the computer-identifying data to the entry comprises recording the computer-identifying data in the entry. According to some embodiments, the method also

includes storing the computer-identifying data in a database configured to be in communication with the directory. In some embodiments, the method also includes presenting the computer-identifying data to an electronic discovery manager upon the identification of the user as a subject for electronic discovery.

[0016] Some embodiments of the present invention provide a system for identifying users of personal computers within a network for the purposes of electronic discovery, wherein the system comprises: a profile scanning tool configured to scan the personal computers, query the profile list on each personal computer, and transmit to a database server for each personal computer computer-identifying data associated with the personal computer and user-identifying data associated with a user of the personal computer, a database server configured to receive the computer-identifying data and the user-identifying data from the profile scanning tool and store the computer-identifying data in a database, and an electronic discovery management server in communication with the database server via the network configured to retrieve from the database server the computer-identifying data in response to an electronic discovery request targeting the user. According to some embodiments, the database server is configured to access a preexisting directory comprising data relating to the users and locate in the directory an entry that comprises data matching the user-identifying data. In some embodiments, the database is the directory and the database server is configured to store the computer-identifying data in the entry.

[0017] Some embodiments of the present invention provide a computer program product for maintaining a custodian management system in for the purposes of performing electronic discovery in an enterprise environment, the computer program product comprising a computer readable medium having computer readable program instructions stored therein, wherein the computer readable program instructions comprise: first instructions configured for accessing the

personal computers via the network, second instructions configured for querying the profile list on each personal computer, third instructions configured for transmitting for each personal computer computer-identifying data associated with the personal computer and user-identifying data associated with a user of the personal computer, and fourth instructions configured for storing the computer-identifying data in a database.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0018] Having thus described embodiments of the invention in general terms, reference may now be made to the accompanying drawings:

[0019] Figure 1 illustrates a network environment in which the processes described herein are implemented, according to one embodiment of the invention;

[0020] Figure 2 is a block diagram of an electronic discovery management server, in accordance with embodiment of the present invention;

[0021] Figure 3 is a block diagram of a database server, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

[0022] Figure 4 is a block diagram of a collection server, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

[0023] Figure 5 is a flow diagram of a method for identifying users of personal computers within a network, according to one embodiment of the invention;

[0024] Figure 6 is block diagram illustrating electronic discovery management structure, in accordance with an embodiment of the invention;

[0025] Figure 7 is a flow diagram of a method for initiating a case or matter including creating search terms, creating and sending preservation notices, sending reminder notices and

creating and sending surveys to custodians, in accordance with embodiments of the present invention;

[0026] Figure 8 is a flow diagram of a method for custodian management in an electronic discovery system, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention; and

[0027] Figures 9 and 10 are flow diagrams of methods for harvesting different data types in an electronic discovery system; in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION

[0028] Embodiments of the present invention now may be described more fully hereinafter with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which some, but not all, embodiments of the invention are shown. Indeed, the invention may be embodied in many different forms and should not be construed as limited to the embodiments set forth herein; rather, these embodiments are provided so that this disclosure may satisfy applicable legal requirements. Like numbers refer to like elements throughout.

[0029] As may be appreciated by one of skill in the art, the present invention may be embodied as a method, system, computer program product, or a combination of the foregoing. Accordingly, the present invention may take the form of an entirely software embodiment (including firmware, resident software, micro-code, *etc.*) or an embodiment combining software and hardware aspects that may generally be referred to herein as a "system." Furthermore, embodiments of the present invention may take the form of a computer program product on a computer-readable medium having computer-usable program code embodied in the medium.

[0030] Any suitable computer-readable medium may be utilized. The computer-readable medium may be, for example but not limited to, an electronic, magnetic, optical, electromagnetic, infrared, or semiconductor system, apparatus, device, or propagation medium.

More specific examples of the computer readable medium include, but are not limited to, the following: an electrical connection having one or more wires; a tangible storage medium such as a portable computer diskette, a hard disk, a random access memory (RAM), a read-only memory (ROM), an erasable programmable read-only memory (EPROM or Flash memory), a compact disc read-only memory (CD-ROM), or other optical or magnetic storage device; or transmission media such as those supporting the Internet or an intranet. Note that the computer-readable medium could even be paper or another suitable medium upon which the program is printed, as the program can be electronically captured, via, for instance, optical scanning of the paper or other medium, then compiled, interpreted, or otherwise processed in a suitable manner, if necessary, and then stored in a computer memory.

[0031] Computer program code for carrying out operations of embodiments of the present invention may be written in an object oriented, scripted or unscripted programming language such as Java, Perl, Smalltalk, C++, or the like. However, the computer program code for carrying out operations of embodiments of the present invention may also be written in conventional procedural programming languages, such as the "C" programming language or similar programming languages.

[0032] Embodiments of the present invention are described below with reference to flowchart illustrations and/or block diagrams of methods, apparatus (systems), and computer program products. It may be understood that each block of the flowchart illustrations and/or block diagrams, and/or combinations of blocks in the flowchart illustrations and/or block diagrams, can be implemented by computer program instructions. These computer program instructions may be provided to a processor of a general purpose computer, special purpose computer, or other programmable data processing apparatus to produce a machine, such that the

instructions, which execute via the processor of the computer or other programmable data processing apparatus, create mechanisms for implementing the functions/acts specified in the flowchart and/or block diagram block or blocks.

[0033] These computer program instructions may also be stored in a computer-readable memory that can direct a computer or other programmable data processing apparatus to function in a particular manner, such that the instructions stored in the computer readable memory produce an article of manufacture including instruction means which implement the function/act specified in the flowchart and/or block diagram block(s).

[0034] The computer program instructions may also be loaded onto a computer or other programmable data processing apparatus to cause a series of operational steps to be performed on the computer or other programmable apparatus to produce a computer-implemented process such that the instructions which execute on the computer or other programmable apparatus provide steps for implementing the functions/acts specified in the flowchart and/or block diagram block(s). Alternatively, computer program implemented steps or acts may be combined with operator or human implemented steps or acts in order to carry out an embodiment of the invention.

[0035] Embodiments of the present invention provide a profile scanning tool configured to scan each of the personal computers residing on a communication network and identifying which network users have used each personal computer. In a business environment, it is often the case that employees may log on to and use personal computers within the network that are not assigned to them. Thus, custodians within the business who may be the subject of an electronic discovery effort may have stored data on personal computers that would not ordinarily be targeted during the electronic discovery process. Indeed, in such instances, unless the

custodians themselves actually identify each and every computer the custodian has used to store data, there is a high likelihood that the data belonging to the custodian and stored on the unassigned machines would avoid collection completely. The profile scanning tool of the present invention solves this problem by generating a list of personal computers that have been used by each custodian and storing this list for future reference during electronic discovery. In order to explain the systems and processes of the present invention, the greater environment in which such systems and processes shall operate should first be explained.

[0036] Figure 1 illustrates an exemplary electronic discovery system 100 in accordance with an embodiment of the invention. In some embodiments, the environment of the electronic discovery system 100 is the information technology platform of an enterprise, for example a national or multi-national corporation, and includes a multitude of servers, machines, and network storage devices in communication with one another over a communication network. In particular, an electronic discovery management server 110, at least one database server 120, a collections server 130, enterprise personal computers 140, enterprise file servers 150, including at least one personal network storage area and at least one shared network storage area, enterprise email servers 160, a conversion services server 170, a short-term staging drive 180, and a long-term network storage network 190 are all in communication over a communication network 102. The communication network 102 may be a wide area network, including the Internet, a local area network or intranet, a wireless network, or the like.

[0037] As shown in the block diagram of Figure 2, the electronic discovery management server 110 provides user interface management for via user interface 118. In some embodiments, the electronic discovery management server 110 is a web server that can be accessed via a web browser. In one particular embodiment, the electronic discovery

management server 110 is an intranet website server that may be accessed utilizing a web browser on a machine within the enterprise. Through the electronic discovery management server 110, the user interface 118 may be presented to a user for the purposes of managing the electronic discovery process and all processes described herein that are inherent thereto. For illustrative purposes, it may be assumed herein that the primary user interacting with the user interface 118 is an employee or contractor of the company who serves an electronic discovery management role, and hereafter is referred to as the "e-discovery manager." As discussed in greater detail below, the e-discovery manager may utilize the user interface 118 to manage cases, custodians, collections, and collected data. It should be appreciated, however, that any individual could use the user interface 118 to perform the manual functions herein attributed to the e-discovery manager, and, indeed, that an automated process could perform those functions as well.

[0038] Referring again to Figure 1, the electronic discovery management server 110 is in communication with the database server 120 and the collections server 130 via the communication network 102. The database server 120, as shown in the block diagram of Figure 3, is configured to provide database services for the electronic discovery management server 110, including housing the Unified Directory/custodian database 122, which includes data relating to individual custodians, the case database 124, which includes data relating to particular cases, and ongoing collections database 126, which includes data relating to collections being undertaken by the collections server 130. Each of the foregoing databases within the database server 120 is discussed in detail below. It should be understood that multiple database servers could be employed instead of a single database server, and reference to a single database server is for illustrative and convenience purposes only. For example, the Unified Directory 122 could

be stored in one database server and the ongoing collections data 126 could be stored in another database server. Referring to Figure 4, the collections server 130 is configured to operate a number of tools, including the local collection tool 132, the file server collection tool 134, and the active email collection tool 136 in order to collect different types of data and store such data such that the data may be managed apart from cases.

[0039] Regardless of the number of database servers employed, it is an object of embodiments of the present invention that data relating to custodians and cases be stored in the database server 120 independently. While custodian data in the Unified Directory 122 and case data in the case database 124 may be linked or correlated within the database server 120, for example, when custodians are assigned to particular cases, custodians may be managed separately from cases. Therefore, when a case is initialized and a custodian is assigned to the case, information for that custodian (such as data storage locations for that custodian) is accessed by the electronic discovery management server 110 in the Unified Directory 122 in the database server 120 and linked to the particular case, rather than manually input by the e-discovery manager into the case.

[0040] Furthermore, in addition to separating (but allowing linkage of) custodian management and case management processes, and as discussed further below, data management processes relating to the collection of data from custodian storage locations during electronic discovery are also separated from case management and custodian management processes. In this regard, the data collected from a particular custodian is stored separately from both the custodian information and any relevant case information (as discussed below, it is stored in long-term network storage network 190), but is linked to a custodian, which is in turn linked to one or more cases. This is advantageous because in the event a particular custodian is assigned to

multiple cases, data collected from the custodian may be shared with the other case(s) to which the custodian is assigned. Therefore, the various processes and components of the electronic discovery system 100 may be categorized within one of case management, custodian management, or data management. And even though cases, custodians, and collected data may all be managed separately, there are necessarily links between the various datastores to allow management of the overall electronic discovery process.

[0041] CUSTODIAN

[0042] With regard to custodian management, according to some embodiments of the present invention, the Unified Directory/custodian database 122 houses information relating to all potential custodians within the enterprise and the locations where those custodians store data. The information stored in the Unified Directory 122 may include for a particular custodian, for example, the custodian's name, position, human resources identifier (a unique number for each employee of the enterprise), employment location, domain, email addresses, network user identification, personal computer(s) name, paths of network storage devices used by the custodian, including Shared Drives and HomeSpaces, work history, related persons (such as managers, team members or subordinates), and any other information that may be relevant to the discovery process. Since the human resources identifier is always unique for each custodian, in some embodiments, the Unified Directory 122 may be organized around the human resources identifier. All of the information relating to how the Unified Directory 122 is generated is a multi-step process that utilizes multiple tools and methods of identifying relevant information.

[0043] For example, the electronic discovery management server 110 or the database server 120 may interface with the computer databases of the human resources computer systems of the enterprise to copy the information from the human resources databases into the Unified

Directory 122. In some embodiments, the electronic discovery management server 110 may also reach out to a network directory, such as Windows Active Directory, to identify network resources related to particular custodians and integrate this information into the custodian entries including the copied human resources information. Information for the Unified Directory 122 may also be obtained from the managers of the information technology network, *i.e.*, those individuals responsible for setting up email accounts for custodians and managing the various file servers of the enterprise. Furthermore, in addition to retrieving information in the manners described above, in some embodiments, information in the Unified Directory 122 is generated through tools initialized and/or deployed by the electronic discovery management server 110. In particular, in some embodiments, as shown in Figure 2, a profile scanning tool 112, and a mapping tool 114 are provided.

[0044] The profile scanning tool 112 is utilized by the electronic discovery management server 110 in order to identify which of the enterprise personal computers 140 are associated with a particular custodian. While many custodians within an enterprise will be assigned one or more personal computers, and that information may already be stored in the Unified Directory 122 because it was received from human resources or information technology records and directories, custodians may have also used and stored data on personal computers that were not assigned to them. In some instances, however, there may be no personal computer information stored for a custodian within the Unified Directory 122. In such instances, the profile scanning tool 112 may be the only source of information about what local machines a custodian is using to store data. The profile scanning tool 112 provides a complete list of computers used by the custodians and may supplement any other personal computer information received from

alternative sources. This advantageously allows the e-discovery manager to be in a position to collect all of the relevant data from the custodian.

[0045] With reference now to Figure 5, an exemplary method of identifying the custodian users of the personal computers 140 within the communication network 102 utilizing one embodiment of the profile scanning tool 112 of the present invention is provided. According to some embodiments, the profile scanning tool 112 is initialized by the electronic discovery management server 110 and scans the enterprise personal computers 140 residing on the communication network 102. The profile scanning tool 112 may be scheduled to automatically run on a periodic basis, such as once a day or once a week, or may be manually run at any time by the e-discovery manager through the user interface 118. According to different embodiments, the profile scanning tool 112 may be run on the electronic discovery management server 110, the collection server 130, or another server in the communication network 102. As shown in Block 601, the profile scanning tool 112 will access each of the personal computers 140 that meet certain criteria that enable such computers to be scanned. Eligible machines are those of the enterprise personal computers 140 that are on the domain, are enabled, and are identified as workstations rather than servers. Next, as shown in Block 602, the profile scanning tool 112 queries the profile list on each of the eligible personal computers located during the scan. In some embodiments, for example, in a Microsoft Windows environment, querying the profile list comprises reading the registry key list in the Documents and Settings directory. The profile list for the computer contains entries for each different network user identification that has been used to log on to the computer, as well as the dates and times of each log-on for each user identification.

[0046] As shown in Block 603, the profile scanning tool 112 then transmits to the database server 120 the relevant data retrieved from about each computer, such as computer name and IP address, as well as a list of all profiles, including demographics information, (or network user identification) associated with each computer. In some embodiments, the profile scanning tool 112 is further configured to identify and transmit to the database server 120 the most recent date and time at which a particular profile was logged on to the machine and/or the number of times that a particular profile was logged on to the machine. As shown in Block 604, all of the data transmitted by the profile scanning tool 112 is stored in the database server 120. In some embodiments, the data from the profile scanning tool 112 will be stored in a table in the database server 122 within the Unified Directory, but distinct from the rest of the Unified Directory 122, i.e. the data coming from other sources, such as human resources databases, Active Directory, etc. This advantageously allows the profile data to be updated rather than repeatedly copied each time the profile scanning tool 112 is run. Thus, there is a sub-database within the Unified Directory 122 that houses all of the data transmitted by the profile scanning tool 112 which is updated during each profile scan.

[0047] In some embodiments, in accordance with Block 506, the database server 120 or the electronic discovery management server 110 links the profile scanning data to the related custodian entries in the Unified Directory 122 by matching the network user identifications appearing in the profile scanning data to the unique human resources identifiers that are associated with such user identifications. The profile scanning tool 112 transmits for each personal computer, the profile list that was located thereon, which includes user identifications. Therefore, as transmitted by the profile scanning tool 112, the personal computer identifying information, such as computer name and IP address, for each computer is related to one or more

network user identifications. In turn, each human resources identifier is related to one or more network user identifications, and this data is already stored in the Unified Directory 122. Thus, the database server 120 or the electronic discovery management server 110 compares the user identifications appearing in the sub-database in relation to the computer identifying information to the user identifications already stored in the Unified Directory 122 in relation to the unique human resources identifiers. When a match is located, a link is made between the computer identifying information and the human resources identifier associated with the matching user identification. The link essentially adds the computer identifying information (such as date, time, number of log-ons, etc.) to the profile/entry in the Unified Directory of the custodian having that human resources identifier. The profile log-on information would be linked into the custodian profiles with the computer identifying information or in the same manner. Thus, the profile scanning tool 112 ultimately generates a list of personal computers used by each custodian in the custodian's profile in the Unified Directory 122, including relevant log-on information. This list may be presented to the e-discovery manager when a collection of a custodian's local machine(s) is initialized, as discussed in detail below, and the e-discovery manager may review the list and the accompanying data to determine which machines to target during the collection process.

[0048] In other embodiments, the profile scanning tool 112 itself may be configured to determine the human resources identifier to which the network user identifications appearing in the profile list relate, and transmit the computer identifying information and related data to be directly stored in the appropriate custodian profiles in the Unified Directory 122, without the need for the database server 120 or electronic discovery management server 110 to perform matching processes or linking. In still other embodiments, the data is transmitted by the profile

scanning tool 112 to the database server 120, and the database server 120 or electronic discovery management server performs the user identification matching process described above before storing the computer-identifying information and related data directly into the appropriate custodian profiles in the Unified Directory 122. It should be understood that, according to the present invention, there are multiple ways to populate the custodian profiles in the Unified Directory 122 with the information retrieved by the profile scanning tool 112.

[0049] Another object of the present invention, and a final step according to some embodiments, is to record in the database server 120 any changes to profile data and/or computer-identifying data that occurs between scans. Referring again to Figure 5, as shown in Block 606, each time the profile scanning tool 112 is run, the profile scanning data is updated in the database server 120 and any changes in the profile scanning tool since the last execution of the profile scanning tool 112 is recorded. This creates a historical record of when custodians were using particular machines within the network 102. For example, if in a first scan a particular profile was found by the profile scanning tool 112 on a certain machine, but during a later scan, the profile scanning tool 112 does not locate that profile again, the removal of that profile from the machine will be recorded in the custodian entry in the Unified Directory 122 for the custodian matching the network user identification associated with that profile. In some embodiments, the database server 120 maintains a historic record of all profiles that have appeared on a particular computer.

[0050] Likewise, with regard to the actual computers rather than the profiles, in some embodiments, the profile scanning tool 112 or the electronic discovery management server 110 is configured to review Active Directory (or an analogous directory if in a non-Windows environment) to determine if a personal computer has been removed from the system.

Computers will often not appear to the profile scanning tool 112 because they are simply not online and capable of communicating via the network 102. However, in some instances, computers will be retired or wiped and reimaged. If it is determined that a computer has been removed from the system for retirement or wiping, the database server 120 will store a record of all of the profiles associated with that computer. In the event the computer reappears on Active Directory and during a later scan the profile scanning tool recognizes the identical computer name but missing profile information, the database server 120 will record that the computer was wiped and store the profiles that used the computer prior to its removal. Thus, in the event the profile scanning tool 114 identifies a new personal computer associated with a custodian and one of the personal computers associated with the custodian previously is no longer identified, the database server 120 is configured to store in the Unified Directory 122 the information for each computer, as well as indications as to when the new computer was first identified and when the old computer was no longer identified. In this way, the custodian profile within the Unified Database 122 may include a history of the personal computers used by the custodian and a record is also created for each computer of when it was imaged and who has logged on to it and when. Such information may be relevant at the time of investigation or collection of the custodian.

[0051] It should be understood that there may be alternative methods of operating the profile scanning tool in accordance with embodiments of the present invention. Indeed, the profile scanning tool 112 may be a tool that operates within the enterprise personal computers 140 themselves or within the domain controller to push the profile information out to the database server 120 for storage in the Unified Directory 122. In such instances, as soon as a custodian logs on to a machine, and the machine reaches out to the domain controller to verify the log-in information, data regarding the user identification used and the particular machine,

including IP address and computer name, would be sent to the Unified Directory 122, either from the machine directly or from the domain controller, to be stored in connection with the human resources identifier to which the user identification relates. This would be an alternative approach that would not require running the profile scanning tool 112 on a periodic basis. Under such approach, the profile data would be made available to the Unified Directory in real-time. The foregoing are only several ways of implementing the systems and methods of the present invention and one skilled in the art will recognize that there are other ways to utilize the profile scanning tool of the present invention in order to meet the intended objectives.

[0052] In accordance with some embodiments of the invention, the mapping tool 114 is configured to crawl the communication network 102 and examine the enterprise file servers 150 residing on the communication network 102 to locate and identify the path of any personal network storage area on each server. As used herein, a personal network storage area is a network storage area associated with a single user who reads data from or writes data to it. Personal network storage areas may be in the form of network storage devices or folders or other resources within a network storage device and may be referred to hereafter for clarity purposes as "HomeSpaces." According to different embodiments, the mapping tool 114 may be run on the electronic discovery management server 110, the collection server 130, or another server in the communication network 102. In some embodiments, the mapping tool 114 is a Windows service that is scheduled to execute through use of Windows Scheduled Task. As the mapping tool 114 crawls the communication network 102, it is configured to examine each file server and transmit to the database server 120 the path of any network storage area within the plurality of servers 134 that it positively identifies as a HomeSpace. In some embodiments, the mapping tool 114 is configured to explore the enterprise file servers 150 by obtaining and reviewing the

directories on each server and evaluating the paths of each network storage area therein, including folders and other storage devices and resources.

[0053] With regard to identifying a particular network storage area as a HomeSpace, according to some embodiments, the mapping tool 114 is configured to utilize conventional naming techniques for paths in the communication network 102 to identify those paths of network storage areas within the enterprise file servers 150 that include an indicator, based on the conventional naming techniques, that the particular storage areas associated with those paths are accessed and used by only one user, and are therefore HomeSpaces. In accordance with some embodiments of the invention, each user of the communication network 102 is assigned to at least one user identification and those user identifications are the indicators that the mapping tool 114 attempts to locate within paths when identifying HomeSpaces. In such embodiments, it is the convention that the paths of HomeSpaces on the communication network 102 include the user's user identification. On the other hand, paths of shared network storage areas do not include user identifications. Therefore, the mapping tool 114 may explore the directories of each server within the plurality of servers, evaluate each path in turn, and make a determination as to whether or not the path includes a user identification.

[0054] If it is determined that the path includes the designated indicator, for example, a user identification, the mapping tool 114 is configured to positively identify the particular network storage area identified by that path as a HomeSpace and transmit to the database server 120 the particular user identification and the path of the HomeSpace. When that information is received by the database server 120, the database server 120 uses the user identification to link the particular HomeSpace to the custodian in the Unified Directory 122 associated with that user identification. In some embodiments, the mapping tool 114 is also configured to recognize and

transmit, and the database server 120 is configured to house, an indication of the last time the HomeSpace was accessed by the particular user, for example, the last time any data was read from and/or written to the HomeSpace. Additionally, in some embodiments, the mapping tool 114 is configured to recognize when multiple paths map to the same network storage area. The collection server 130 compares paths for the same user to determine if duplicative entries exist. This advantageously enables avoidance of multiple collections of the same data. Thus, the mapping tool 114 ultimately generates a list of HomeSpaces used by each custodian, and this list may be presented to the e-discovery manager when a collection of a custodian's HomeSpaces is initialized, as discussed in detail below.

[0055] In addition to storing a list of personal computers and HomeSpaces used by a particular custodian, which lists were generated by the profile scanning tool 112 and the mapping tool 114 respectively, in accordance with some embodiments of the present invention, the database server 120 is also configured to store a list of any shared network storage areas used by the custodian. As used herein, a shared network storage area is a network storage area associated with multiple users who read data from and/or write data to it. Shared network storage areas may also be in the form of network storage devices or folders or other resources within network storage devices and may be referred to hereafter for clarity purposes as "Shared Drives." The user interface 118 is configured to receive a path of a Shared Drive input by the e-discovery manager and store the path in the Unified Directory 122 in relation to one or more custodians' human resources identifier(s). More particularly, in some embodiments, once a particular user of the communication network 102 is chosen for the collection process, the e-discovery manager may undertake to identify the particular shared network resources that that individual is using, and eventually, the paths associated with those shared network resources. This may be

accomplished through conversations with the particular individual, by utilizing data returned from the local collection tool 132 executed on collection server 130 (shown in the block diagram of Figure 4) deployed to the particular user's machine (as discussed in detail below), and/or by utilizing a file browsing tool 116 executed on electronic discovery manager server 110 (as shown in Figure 2).

[0056] According to some embodiments of the present invention, the file browsing tool 116 is configured to be utilized by the e-discovery manager through the user interface 118. The file browsing tool 116 gives the e-discovery manager elevated authority within the communication network 102 to access, in a limited manner, the enterprise file servers 150 within the communication network 102. While the file browsing tool 116 may not allow access to the actual files stored on certain file servers, it allows the e-discovery manager to browse through the directories of the file servers 150, locate files that have been accessed by the custodian, and determine the size of the files. In accordance with some embodiments, the e-discovery manager may initially have a general idea of a particular file server within the enterprise file servers 150 that the custodian has used in the past. For example, the custodian may communicate to the e-discovery manager a particular folder name and/or drive name on which he/she has stored files. Additionally, in some embodiments, the e-discovery manager may have already undertaken a local collection process on the custodian's machine, wherein the local collection tool 132 returned a list of the network resources that the user of that machine has used. In that event, the e-discovery manager may be aware of the particular drive referenced by the user. The e-discovery manager may then employ the file browsing tool 116 to browse out to the particular drive mentioned, scan the folders for any folder having a name resembling that name given by the user, identify any particular files created by and/or accessed by the user, determine the size of

such files, and retrieve the path of any folder (or Shared Drive) including data belonging to the user.

[0057] The retrieved paths of the Shared Drives may then be added, either manually or automatically, to the Unified Directory 122 in the database server 120. Thus, the Unified Directory 122 may store in connection with one custodian (and in particular in relation to the custodian's human resources identifier) a list of the personal computers, HomeSpaces, and Shared Drives associated with that custodian. Each of these locations is a potential source of data stored by the custodian, and once an investigation or collection of a custodian is initiated, the location information stored in the Unified Directory 122 may be accessed to determine the particular storage locations that need to be addressed during the investigation/collection. This is advantageous as it allows a completely automated investigation/collection process, rather than relying on the e-discovery manager to manually input the targeted machines and file servers at the time of collection.

[0058] It should be noted that the Unified Directory 122 may be regularly or continuously updated as new information is gathered using the tools described herein. More particularly, the electronic discovery management server 110 may be configured to automatically retrieve data from the human resources databases and Active Directory and any other relevant sources, such as information technology directories or lists, as well as deploy the profile scanning tool 112 and the mapping tool 114, at regularly scheduled intervals. Alternatively, rather than periodically retrieving data from the various data sources such as the human resources databases, the system 100 may be configured such that the database server 120 is continuously interfacing with the data sources such that the Unified Directory 122 is updated in real-time as the data within the data sources change. In either instance, each of the feeds of

information into the Unified Directory 122 is regularly updated to ensure that the data in the Unified Directory 122 is current.

[0059] In some embodiments, the database server 120 is configured such that all historical data relating to a custodian is stored in relation to that custodian's human resources identifier in the Unified Directory 122. Thus, when the feeds of information into the Unified Directory 122 are updated, in the event data relating to the custodian has changed, the database server 120 is configured to store in the Unified Directory 122 the new data and any relevant metadata, including, for example, the time and date of the change, as well as maintain a record of the old data so that it is still a part of the custodian's profile in the Unified Directory 122. For example, in the event the profile scanning tool 114 identifies a new personal computer associated with a custodian and one of the personal computers associated with the custodian previously is no longer identified, the database server 120 is configured to store in the Unified Directory 122 the information for each computer, as well as indications as to when the new computer was first identified and when the old computer was no longer identified. In this way, the custodian profile within the Unified Database 122 may include a history of the personal computers used by the custodian. Such information may be relevant at the time of investigation or collection of the custodian.

[0060] One feed of information into the Unified Directory 122 which is particularly relevant to electronic discovery is employment status. According to some embodiments, when the feed of information from the human resources databases to the Unified Directory 122 includes a change as to employment status of a particular custodian, the electronic discovery management server 110 is configured to recognize the change and possibly perform particular functions in response. More specifically, in the event it is recorded in the Unified Directory 122

that the employment status of a particular custodian changes from active to terminated, the electronic discovery management server 110 is configured to determine whether the custodian is assigned to any case or matter, and, if so, to transmit to the designated manager or contact for the case or matter an electronic communication notifying the manager of the terminated status and inquiring as to whether the manager would like the terminated custodian's data collected. In the event the manager responds in the affirmative, the electronic discovery management server 110 is configured to automatically initiate the various collection processes of the present invention. Therefore, the custodian's data may be advantageously collected prior to any destruction or unavailability that could be caused by the termination. Alternatively, in other embodiments, the electronic discovery management server 110 may not communicate with the manager and may automatically initiate collection upon recognizing a change in employment status.

[0061] CASE

[0062] With regard to case management processes, according to some embodiments, a case may be initialized by the e-discovery manager utilizing the user interface 118. In this regard, the e-discovery manager may enter into the user interface 118 certain information about a particular matter or case, such as a case name and/or number, a short description of the matter/case, a legal identifier, the particular requester (*i.e.*, who asked for the case to be opened), managers or contacts for the matter (*i.e.*, individuals involved in the substance of the matter rather than the process, like the e-discovery manager), custodians, *etc.* The electronic discovery management server 110 is configured to store this information in the case database 124 in the database server 120. The case database 124 is configured to house this information such that all information relating to a particular matter or case is related within the case database 124 and a

user can use the user interface 118 to view a profile of the matter or case including all the information.

[0063] Once the matter and/or case has been initialized, the e-discovery manager may add custodians to the matter or case. In some embodiments, the electronic discovery management server 110 is configured to add numerous custodians to a single matter or case at one time. In this regard, the e-discovery manager may use the user interface 118 to enter in identifying information about the custodians. The identifying information for each custodian does not have to be of the same type. For example, a name may be entered for one custodian, an email address for another, a network user identification for another, and a human resources identifier for another. The user interface 118 is configured to receive the identifying information in different input areas depending upon the type of identifying information being received. The electronic discovery management server 110 is configured to use the input information to search the Unified Directory 122 in the database server 120 to determine which custodians are associated with the input information. In the case of a human resources identifier being entered, only one custodian in the Unified Directory 122 may be a match. On the other hand, in the case of a name being entered, multiple custodians may be a match.

[0064] The electronic discovery management server 110, after searching the Unified Directory 122 with the input identifying information, is configured to present through the user interface 118 a list of all custodians matching the input identifying information. In the event only one match was returned for a particular set of input identifying information, the electronic discovery management server 110 is configured to automatically select the custodian to be added to the case or matter. On the other hand, in the event more than one match was located for a particular set of input identifying information, then the multiple matches may be presented

together to the e-discovery manager through the user interface 118 and marked so that the e-discovery manager must review the multiple custodian profiles associated with the matches to determine the correct custodian that should be added to the case or matter. In doing so, the e-discovery manager may consider the other information in the profiles, such as corporate title, work location, associated custodians, *etc.* Such information can inform the e-discovery manager as to whether the located custodian is the one intended. The e-discovery manager may then select the correct custodian for addition to the case or matter and confirm that all custodians selected may be added to the case or matter. According to some embodiments, "adding" a custodian to a case or matter involves linking correlating the custodian profile in the Unified Directory 122 to the case or matter in the Case database 124.

[0065] According to some embodiments, upon adding custodians to a matter, the electronic discovery management server 110 is configured to initiate the transmission of preservation notices and surveys to the custodians. In this regard, preservation notices and surveys relevant to the particular case or matter are stored in or linked to the case profile in the case database 124. Transmission of the preservation notices and surveys to custodians added to the case may be automated, for example, there may be preset instructions within the case profile that cause the electronic discovery management server 110 to transmit a particular preservation notice and survey at a particular date or time or upon a particular triggering event, such as a custodian being added to the case, or the e-discovery manager may manually cause the preservation notices and surveys to be transmitted. In some embodiments, the electronic discovery management server 110 is configured to transmit the preservation notices and surveys via a standard email function. The surveys may be tied to the preservation notices such that they are transmitted to custodians together, and one survey may be tied to more than one preservation

notice. When a custodian responds to a survey, the survey response is received by the electronic discovery management server 110 and stored in relation to the relevant custodian in the case profile in the case database 124. Furthermore, the electronic discovery management server 110 may be configured to store all or a portion of the data received in the survey response in the Unified Directory 122 in the custodian's profile.

[0066] According to some embodiments, each transmission of a preservation notice and survey to a custodian, and each corresponding response, is tracked in the relevant case profile in the case database 124. The electronic discovery management server 110 may also be configured to transmit reminder notices if responses to the surveys are not received within a predefined period of time. The electronic discovery management server 110 may also be configured to schedule reminder notices to be sent to custodians to periodically refresh the custodians' memory of their duty to preserve files/documents pertaining to the matter. In some embodiments, once a preservation notice has been sent to a custodian, the electronic discovery management server 110 may undertake to prevent any reimaging or refreshing of the custodian's personal computer(s) by transmitting an alert of the preservation notice to the enterprise's information technology management group. In addition, the survey responses received from custodians serve to inform the collection process. For example, one survey may inquire as to what network storage devices the custodian uses when storing data. The answer that the custodian gives to the survey may inform the addition of Shared Drives to the custodian profile in the Unified Database 122 that may be used later in collection.

[0067] According to some embodiments of the present invention, the e-discovery manager may utilize the user interface 118 to add attachments, notes, tasks, and search terms to a case or matter. In some embodiments, the contacts/managers for a case may also access the case

profile in the case database 124 using a web browser and may add attachments, notes, tasks, and search terms to be stored therein. Thus, the e-discovery manager may not be the only entity with access to the case and case management tools of the electronic discovery management server 110. The subject matter of the attachments, notes and tasks could be anything relevant to the case or matter. In some embodiments, the tasks are tasks that particular custodians must complete and the electronic discovery management server 110 is configured to transmit a notice to the custodians that that the task needs to be completed, perhaps using standard email functions. With regard to attachments, the e-discovery manager, or the contact/manager of the case, may upload relevant files to be attached to the case profile.

[0068] With regard to the search terms, the e-discovery manager or the case contacts or managers may add certain terms to the case profile to be applied when searching the collected data to locate data responsive or relevant to the underlying issues in the case. Storing the search terms within the case profile is advantageous as it creates a record of the searching that is to be undertaken with respect to the data and aids in organization of the data, as discussed further below.

[0069] According to some embodiments of the present invention, when a decision is made that it is time to collect from certain custodians in a matter, the e-discovery manager may use the user interface 118 to release the custodians from the matter to the underlying case. This release triggers the commencement of collection of the custodians' data. In some embodiments, the electronic discovery management server 110 is configured to allow all custodians assigned to the matter to be released to the case at the same time. In addition, in instances where the e-discovery manager has previously created groups of custodians within the case, the electronic

discovery management server 110 is configured to allow a group of custodians to be released from a matter to a case at the same time.

[0070] DATA

[0071] Once a custodian has been identified for collection, whether manually by the e-discovery manager or by being released from a matter to a case, the electronic discovery system 100 is configured to automatically collect the custodian's data using the location information stored in the Unified Directory 122. Therefore, the electronic discovery management server 110 accesses the custodian profile of the custodian to be collected in the Unified Directory 122 and determines, from the information stored therein, the different locations of data storage for the particular custodian that must be collected. There are many different locations that the system 100 can address, including personal computers, email accounts, and network storage areas, including HomeSpaces and Shared Drives.

[0072] If a custodian profile (for a custodian released for collection) includes at least one personal computer(s) associated with the custodian, then the electronic discovery management server 110 may undertake to collect the files on these machines. Therefore, the electronic discovery management server 110 may retrieve the relevant machine identifying information, such as domain, name, IP address, *etc.*, and may initialize deployment of a local collection tool 132 running on collections server 130 (as shown in Figure 4).

[0073] The local collection tool 132 is configured to be deployed from the collections server 130 or another server within the network 102 to any of the enterprise personal computers 140. Therefore, for a particular custodian, the local collection tool 132 is configured to utilize the machine identifying information supplied by the electronic discovery management server 110 to be deployed to the identified custodian computer. According to one embodiment, the local

collection tool 132 is configured to be automatically installed on the target custodian's personal computer. The local collection tool 132 is further configured to generate a snapshot of the data residing on the local storage of the personal computer 140, for example, by using a commercially available tool such as the Volume Shadow Copy Service, store the snapshot in a storage area on the personal computer, and transmit copies of the files included in the snapshot to the collections server 130. By transmitting the data from the snapshot of the data stored on the hard drive of the personal computer, the local collection tool 132 advantageously allows the custodian to continue to use her machine without substantial interference from the local collection tool 132 and even interact with the data stored on the hard drive as the snapshot of the data is being transmitted to the collections server 130.

[0074] In addition to the functions described above, the local collection tool 132 may also be configured to transmit to the database server 120 a catalog of the files included in the snapshot to be stored in the ongoing collections database. This catalog may be referenced by the collections server 130 in order to determine whether collection is complete and to resume interrupted collections at the point of interruption. Additionally, in accordance with some embodiments, the local collection tool 132 is configured to compile and transmit to the electronic discovery management server 110 a list of network resources the user is using, including, for example, network applications and file servers that the user has used or accessed. This list of resources may be stored in the database server 120 in the custodian's profile in the Unified Directory 122. With regard to transmission of the files themselves, according to one embodiment of the invention, the local collection tool 132 is configured to compress, hash, and upload the files included in the snapshot to the collections server 130.

[0075] In some embodiments, the electronic discovery management server 110 may utilize a computer watching tool 117 to determine when to attempt a collection from a custodian's machine. The computer watching tool 117 is configured to monitor the network 102 and determine which of the enterprise personal computers 140 are online. Therefore, in the event there is a custodian whose local machine needs to be collected, the computer watching tool 117 is configured to determine when that machine joins the network 102 (*i.e.*, when it appears to the computer watching tool 117) and inform the electronic discovery management server 110 that it should initialize the local collection tool 132 immediately.

[0076] If a custodian profile (for a custodian released for collection) includes any paths for HomeSpaces or Shared Drives, then the electronic discovery management server 110 may undertake to collect the files from these file servers by initializing the file server collection tool 134 running on collection server 130 (as shown in Figure 4). The file server collection tool 134 is configured to access the file server located at the given path, whether the file server is a HomeSpace or a Shared Drive, copy the data residing on the file server, and compress, hash, and transmit the copied data to the collections server 130. The file server collection tool 134 may be programmed with preset instructions that allow it to only copy files meeting certain criteria, for example, files that have certain file extensions. Alternatively, the programmed instructions may prevent the file server collection tool 134 from copying files having certain file extensions or other attributes. Either of the foregoing is advantageous if the e-discovery manager is not interested in copying executable files or source code, for example. In some embodiments, the file server collection tool 134 is also configured to generate a size estimate of the files residing on the targeted file server. In one embodiment, the file server collection tool 134 may automatically begin the collection process (copying and transmitting data) if the size estimate

falls below a predetermined threshold. In addition, in some embodiments, the file server collection tool 134 is configured to determine whether a particular folder that it is collecting from a file server includes more than a token amount of nearline files, and, in the event that the folder does include such nearline files, choose to not collect such files so as to avoid overloading the server. Therefore, according to different embodiments, the file server collection tool 134 copies all or a portion of the files residing on a file server located at the path given in the released custodian's profile and transmits them to the collections server 130.

[0077] If a custodian profile (for a custodian released for collection) includes an email address for an email account on the enterprise email server 160, then the electronic discovery management server 110 may undertake to collect the files from the enterprise email server 160 by initializing the active email collection tool 136 running on collections server 130 (as shown in Figure 4). In some embodiments, the active email collection tool 136 is configured to access the particular Microsoft Exchange server within the enterprise email server 160 on which the custodian's account resides (which is known based on the information included in the Unified Directory 122), copy all email located there, including emails deleted by the custodian up to a predetermined period of time prior to the collection, (for example, seven days prior to the collection) and transmit the copied emails to the collections server 130.

[0078] Regardless of the storage resource location from which data is being collected, or the particular type of data being collected, the collections server 130 is configured to store the data first (while the collection is still ongoing) in the short-term staging drive 180 until the particular collection is complete, attach a barcode to the set of data resulting from the particular collection, and then copy the data set to the long-term storage area network 190 for permanent storage. Furthermore, the collections server 130 transmits the barcode information to the

electronic discovery management server 110 to be stored in the database server 120, for example, in the custodian's profile in the Unified Database 122, in relation to the stored information about the particular collection, whether it was a local collection, an active email collection, a file server collection, *etc.* Therefore, the barcode can be used for reference at a later date to determine the origin of the data. After the data has been copied to the long-term storage area network 190, the collections server 130 compares the hashing of the data in permanent storage to the original data in the staging drive 180 and, if the hashing is identical, purges the data from the staging drive 180.

[0079] Once the data has entered the long-term storage area network 190, it is not necessarily ready for review. Indeed, it is likely that the data may need to be processed before it is searchable and suitable for review by investigators and attorneys. For example, the files may be encrypted in the form in which they are collected and sent to the long-term storage area network 190. Therefore, according to some embodiments, the data may be copied to the conversion services server 170 where a series of decryption and standardization functions may be applied to it. After the data is decrypted and standardized, it is returned to the long-term storage area network 190 and may remain there to be accessed for review purposes.

[0080] With reference now to Figure 6, a block diagram is provided that illustrates the electronic discovery management structure of the present invention, according to some embodiments. As illustrated in Figure 6, certain processes described herein may be categorized within one of case management, as represented by Block 200, custodian management, as represented by Block 220, or data management, as represented by Block 240. As described above, the electronic discovery system 100 is arranged such that cases, custodians and data may be managed independent of one another. However, there is still an element of the categorization

of processes within the categories that is conceptual, and it should be understood that certain processes may be correctly assigned to more than one category. Therefore, while the architecture of the system 100 allows separate management of custodians, cases, and data, certain processes of the present invention may affect more than one of the foregoing.

[0081] The first process that falls within the case management category is creation of a matter or case as a framework for litigation support activities, as shown in Block 202. As described above, the e-discovery manager may enter into the user interface 118 certain information about a particular matter or case, such as a case name and/or number, a short description of the matter/case, a legal identifier, the particular requester (*i.e.*, who asked for the case to be opened), managers or contacts for the matter (*i.e.*, individuals involved in the substance of the matter rather than the process, like the e-discovery manager) etc.

[0082] It is noted that custodian information is stored separately from the case information allowing for the same custodian in multiple cases. This provides for the electronic discovery system of the present invention to have scalability, whereby evidence associated with one custodian may be used in multiple cases.

[0083] The electronic discovery management server 110 stores this information in the case database 124 in the database server 120. The case database 124 houses this information such that all information relating to a particular matter or case is related within the case database 124 and a user, such as a manager or contact, can use the user interface 118 to view and edit a profile of the matter or case.

[0084] The next process within case management is the creation of preservation notices and surveys specific to the matter, as shown in Block 204. In this regard, the e-discovery manager may, through the user interface 118, either generate a new preservation notices or

surveys relevant to the particular case or matter to be stored in the case profile in the case database 124 or, alternatively, link a preservation notice or survey already stored in the database server 120 to the case profile of the specific case or matter at issue. Also within case management is the creation of search terms pertinent to the case, as represented by Block 206. As described above, the e-discovery manager or a contact or manager for the case may use the user interface 118 to input individual search terms or search term sets to be applied to the data harvested in the case. In some embodiments, the search terms may be limited to be used with particular custodians and/or with particular harvested data types. The search terms will be saved in the case database 124 so that they may be readily applied to harvested data and used in connection with storing the resulting responsive data.

[0085] The processes of entering relevant attachments, notes and updates to a particular case or matter also falls within the case management category, as demonstrated by Blocks 208 and 210. The e-discovery manager or a case contact or manager may use the user interface 118 to upload documents and enter notes and other relevant data, including updates and reminders, to be stored in the case profile of the case in the case database 124. Once these attachments, notes and updates are added, they may be referenced whenever a user views the case profile through the user interface 118. The cost estimation modules of the present invention are also processes that are categorized as case management processes, as shown in Block 212. In this regard, the electronic discovery management server 110 utilizes a cost estimation tool to determine the cost of harvesting and reviewing data, based on a number of factors including, for example, number of custodians, amount of harvested data, data types, etc. Finally, case management also includes a number of tasking and workflow processes that are represented by block 214.

[0086] Moving now to custodian management, certain processes falling within the category of custodian management are shown in Block 220. While the processes involving generation of the Unified Directory 122 certainly could be categorized as custodian management, the processes shown in Figure 6 include those processes involving management of custodians within the scope of a case or matter. In that regard, the first process of custodian management included in Figure 6 is the addition of custodians to a case or matter, as shown in Block 222. As described above, the e-discovery manager may use the user interface 118 to link a custodian's profile from the Unified Directory 122 to the particular case profile in the case database 124. Thus, the custodian profile and case profile are correlated. The next processes within custodian management is the transmission of preservation notices and surveys to custodians, as shown in Block 224, and the presentation of the surveys to custodians, as shown in Block 226. The electronic discovery management server 110 uses the contact information in the custodian's profile in the Unified Directory 122 to transmit the preservation notice(s) and survey(s) stored in the case profile to the custodian. In some embodiments, a standard email function is used, so that the only information needed from the Unified Directory 122 is the custodian's email address. When the custodian checks her email, the survey will appear as a message therein, and when she opens that message, the survey will be presented to her. The survey may be configured such that when she fills it out, the survey is automatically transmitted back to the database server 120 for storage in the case profile and the custodian's profile.

[0087] Also falling within custodian management is the process of releasing custodians from a matter to a case, as shown in Block 228. The e-discovery manager uses the user interface 118 to mark the custodian's profile so that the custodian is now activated for collection of data. This may occur within the case database 124 since the custodian's profile is linked thereto. Once

the custodian is released/marked, the electronic discovery management server 110 may access the custodian's profile and initialize collection based on the various data storage locations identified in the profile. Therefore, as represented by Block 230, the electronic discovery management server 110 may automatically determine the data types and locations of data to be harvested by accessing the custodian's profile in the Unified Directory 122. Alternatively, the e-discovery manager may manually make the same determination by accessing and viewing the custodian's profile. Finally, as with case management, custodian management also includes a number of tasking and workflow processes that are represented by Block 232.

[0088] The last category is data management, represented by Block 240. One major set of processes within data management are the processes relating to the harvesting of data, as shown in Block 242. These processes include the collection of data from all the different storage areas of a particular custodian, including the custodian's local storage on her personal computer(s), the custodian's network storage areas, the custodian's email, and any other areas, as are described herein. All of the data in the various storage areas is copied and transmitted to the collections server 130, as described in detail for each particular collection tool or process. Upon reaching the collections server 130, data resulting from a particular collection is temporarily stored in the short-term staging drive 180 until the collection is complete, at which point it is stored in the long-term storage area network 190 in association with a specific identifying barcode. The foregoing process is represented by Block 244. The data may require decryption or standardization functions to be applied to it in order for it to be searchable and/or otherwise usable, so the next process that falls within data management is the copying of the data to the conversion services server 170 for analysis and conversion as necessary, as shown in Block 246.

Once the data is converted, it is returned to the long-term storage area network 190 to be used in review.

[0089] Also falling within data management is the association of particular data sets with particular sets of search terms stored in the case profile of the case database 124. In this regard, certain search terms stored in the case profile are stored with the intention of being applied to certain types of data and/or certain custodian's data. Alternatively, certain search terms may be applied to all data collected for a specific case. In either instance, the electronic discovery management server 110 accesses the case profile, determines the search terms to be applied, and associates the search terms with the barcode of the appropriate data sets in long-term storage. Thus, the search terms will be applied to that data and the results will be generated and presented to reviewers for analysis. Finally, as with the other management categories, data management also includes a number of tasking and workflow processes that are represented by Block 250.

[0090] With reference to Figure 7, an exemplary process for managing a case is provided, in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention. As represented by Block 302, a case or matter is created by the e-discovery manager and stored in the case database 124. Next, custodians are added to the case, as shown in Block 304, by linking the custodian profiles of the Unified Directory 122 to the case profile. Next, as represented by Block 306, the e-discovery manager and/or the case contact or manager adds search terms to be applied to data harvested for the case, including instructions as to applying the search terms to particular data types or custodians. Block 310 represents the determination that must be made as to whether there is a matter or just a case. If there is no matter because preservation notices are not required, for example, for an audit, then the process will move straight to the initialization of

data collection. On the other hand, if there is matter, rather than just a case, then the creation of preservation notices is required, as shown in Block 312.

[0091] The preservation notice, as shown in Block 314 is transmitted to the custodians added to the matter, perhaps using email. As shown in Block 316, a reminder notice module may be employed. As shown in Block 318, the reminder notice module transmits periodic reminder notices to custodians. The notices may be sent over email and may remind custodians about the preservation notice and/or remind custodians to fill out surveys. With regard to surveys, in the event a survey is required or desired, according to Block 320, a survey is created. The survey may be saved in the case profile in the case database 124. As shown in Block 322, it is possible to enable the survey to be attached to and transmitted with the preservation notices.

[0092] Next, as shown in Block 324, the e-discovery manager may release custodians from the matter to the case, which initialized collection of the custodian's data. As shown in Block 326, the e-discovery manager or the electronic discovery management server 122 accesses the custodian profile, determines the data types and location to be collected, and initializes the applicable collection tools to go collect the data. Once the data has been collected and a unique barcode has been assigned to each dataset based on the particular custodian and storage location from which it originated, as shown in Block 328, the search terms previously stored in the case profile may be assigned to the dataset based on the input instructions regarding the search terms. These search terms may be applied to the dataset and the results saved to be presented to reviewers for analysis.

[0093] With reference to Figure 8, an exemplary process for managing a custodian is provided, in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention. First, as represented by Block 402, a custodian is added to a matter or case. In this regard, the custodian's profile in the

Unified Directory 122 is linked to the relevant case or matter profile. In order to locate the custodian's profile, a custodian search module may be employed, as shown in Block 404. Therefore, the e-discovery manager may enter any identifying information about the custodian, whether it is the custodian's name, network user identification, email address, etc. The custodian search module will take the input information and search the Unified Directory 122 for a match. If more than one match is obtained, the user interface 118 will present all matches and allow the e-discovery manager to browse the associated profiles to determine the intended custodian. In this way, the correct custodian is identified and the profile of that custodian is linked to the appropriate case or matter.

[0094] As represented by Block 406, the electronic discovery management server 110 may determine whether the particular custodian added is a member of the enterprise "do-not-call list." In this regard, there may be an indication in the custodian's profile in the Unified Directory 122 that the particular custodian should not be contacted regarding collections, and an alternative contact should be used, such as an administrative assistant of the custodian. Alternatively, there may be a separate do-not-call list stored in the database server 120 that must be accessed and searched to determine whether or not the custodian appears on that list. In either instance, a determination is made as to whether or not the custodian should be directly contacted, and in the event the custodian should not be directly contacted, the contact information for the custodian's assistant (or other stand-in) should be obtained. This information will be used later for transmitting preservation notices and surveys.

[0095] Next, in accordance with Block 408, a determination is made by the electronic discovery management server 110 as to whether the custodian has been added to a matter or a case. If it is a case, then the custodian is verified, as shown in Block 424, supplemental data may

be added to the custodian profile in the Unified Directory 122 as required, as shown in Block 426, and then the various collection tools are initialized by the electronic discovery management server 110 for collection of the custodian's data, as shown in Block 428. On the other hand, if it is a matter, then preservation notices are required. Therefore, as shown in Block 410, a preservation notice is sent via email to the custodian or custodian stand-in. As shown in Block 412, the custodian may then be inactivated from the case because, for some reason, data does not need to be collected from the custodian. In the future, when it comes time to collect from the custodian, the custodian will be reactivated, as shown in Block 422.

[0096] After a preservation notice is sent, a determination is made by the electronic discovery management server 110 as to whether a survey is required, as shown in Block 414. It should be noted that in alternate embodiments the decision on whether to send a survey may be made prior to sending the preservation notice. In such alternate embodiments, if the survey is required, it may become a component of the preservation notice and, thus, accessed simultaneously by the custodian. If a survey is required, it is transmitted in conjunction with a preservation notice, and the answers are collected by the electronic discovery management server 110 and stored in the database server 120, as shown in Block 416. Reminder notices for the preservation notices and surveys may also be transmitted to the custodian, as shown in Block 420. Next, once it is time to collect data, the custodian is released from the matter to the case, as shown in Block 418, and the various collection tools are initialized by the electronic discovery management server 110 for collection of the custodian's data, as shown in Block 428. In this process, the custodian's profile in the Unified Directory 122 is accessed in order to determine the various locations where the custodian may have stored data. Finally, as shown in Block 430, the custodian's data is collected.

[0097] Referring to Figures 9 and 10, flow diagrams are presented of a method 500 for harvest data from various data sources, in accordance with embodiments of the present invention. At Event 502, the collection of data ensues and, at Event 504, the type of data is identified. Data Block 506 signifies active email that is collected from an exchange system or the like. At Event 508 the automated active email collection tool is implemented to collect email from identified email address. As previously noted, and in accordance with present embodiments of the invention, if a custodian profile (for a custodian released for collection) includes an email address for an email account on the enterprise email server (160), then the electronic discovery management server (110) may undertake to collect the files from the enterprise email server (160) by initializing the active email collection tool (136) running on collections server (130). In some embodiments, the active email collection tool (136) is configured to access the particular Microsoft Exchange server within the enterprise email server 160 on which the custodian's account resides (which is known based on the information included in the Unified Directory 122), copy all email located there, including emails deleted up to a designated prior period, for example, seven days prior to the collection, and transmit the copied emails to the collections server (130). The email collection tool is also capable of implementing bulk requests and for collecting email on a scheduled basis, such as daily. The email collection tool is additionally capable of being implementing enterprise wide and requires no server identifiers or the like to collect the active email. In this regard, the email collection tool (136) serves to reduce security risk.

[0098] At Event 510, a barcoding tool is implemented at a staging location, such as short-term staging drive (180) to attach a barcode to the set of email resulting from the particular collection. The barcoded data is then copied and communicated to the long-term storage area

network (190) for permanent storage. Furthermore, the collections server (130) transmits the barcode information to the electronic discovery management server (110) to be stored in the database server (120), for example, in the custodian's profile in the Unified Database (122), in relation to the stored information about the particular collection. Therefore, the barcode can be used for reference at a later date to determine the origin of the data. After the data has been copied to the long-term storage area network (190), the collections server (130) compares the hashing of the data in permanent storage to the original data in the staging drive (180) and, if the hashing is identical, purges the data from the staging drive (180). As such, barcoding is performed without the need to execute the barcoding tool on an exchange server and, as such no human intervention is needed in the barcode process. In accordance with embodiments of the present invention, one barcode may be assigned per custodian, per data type and per event (*i.e.*, case, matter, *etc.*)

[0099] At Event 512, the collected email data may be associated with a specific search term set or sets. When the search terms are applied, a listing of the files and documents including those terms (the "search term hit list") are presented to the reviewer and also stored in the database server (120). The reviewer may provide an indication of this to the electronic discovery management server 110, which may then make a determination that other documents within the search term hit list are more likely to be responsive.

[00100] At Event 514, the collected and barcoded active email data is copied to a processing drive for subsequent analysis. It should be noted that the nature of email data obviates the need to perform conversion and/or decryption on the data set. At Event 516, the active email data set is loaded into the analysis tool and, at Event 518, the data set is exported to the requestor/reviewer for analysis.

[00101] Data Block 520 signifies other non-exchange server based email, such as email accessed through a client-server, collaborative application, such as Lotus Notes® or the like. At Event 522, NSF files or any other file types associated with non-exchange server based email is manually harvested from an enterprise-grade email server having collaborative capabilities, such as a Lotus Domino server or the like.

[00102] At Event 522, a barcoding tool is implemented at a staging location, such as short-term staging drive (180) to attach a barcode to the set of non-exchange server email resulting from the particular collection. The barcoded data is then copied and communicated to the long-term storage area network (190) for permanent storage. Furthermore, the collections server (130) transmits the barcode information to the electronic discovery management server (110) to be stored in the database server (120), for example, in the custodian's profile in the Unified Database (122), in relation to the stored information about the particular collection. Therefore, the barcode can be used for reference at a later date to determine the origin of the data. After the data has been copied to the long-term storage area network (190), the collections server (130) compares the hashing of the data in permanent storage to the original data in the staging drive (180) and, if the hashing is identical, purges the data from the staging drive (180).

[00103] At Event 526, the collected non-exchange server email data may be associated with a specific search term set or sets. When the search terms are applied, a listing of the files and documents including those terms (the "search term hit list") are presented to the reviewer and also stored in the database server (120). The reviewer may provide an indication of this to the electronic discovery management server 110, which may then make a determination that other documents within the search term hit list are more likely to be responsive.

[00104] At Event 528, the NSF files or any other file types associated with non-exchange server based email that may be encrypted is decrypted using a decryption tool, in accordance with embodiments of the present invention. The encryption of NSF files occurs at the user level and, therefore only the user has the password necessary for decryption. The decryption tool allows for decryption of the NSF file-type data without the knowledge of the user/encrypter. The decryption tool finds ID files that exist anywhere in the enterprise system, creates a database of the ID files, associates the database with the user/encrypter and subsequently decrypts the data.

[00105] At Event 530, the non-exchange server email data set is loaded into the analysis tool and, at Event 532, the data set is exported to the requestor/reviewer for analysis.

[00106] Data Block 534 signifies journaled data, such as electronic commerce data stored on a repository for the purpose of regulation, compliance to regulating bodies, such as the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) or the like. At Event 536, criteria is extracted from input system and manually entered in a designated third party system for data retrieval.

[00107] At Event 538, the barcoding tool is implemented at a staging location, such as short-term staging drive (180) to attach a barcode to the set of journaled data resulting from the particular collection. The barcoded data is then copied and communicated to the long-term storage area network (190) for permanent storage. At Event 540, the collected and barcoded journaled data may be associated with a specific search term set or sets.

[00108] At Event 542 source-to-processing is implemented to insure that any loose files are properly formatted in a standardized format. In this regard, according to one embodiment of the invention, loose files are examined for relevancy and, if relevant, stored in a proper data format, such as a PST file or the like. The metadata associated with the non-standardized files is

retained and remains with the reformatted data files. Source to processing file conversions may be required on EML formatted files, MSG formatted files and the like.

[00109] At Event 544, the journaled data set is loaded into the analysis tool and, at Event 546, the journaled data set is exported to the requestor/reviewer for analysis.

[00110] Referring to Figure 10, data block 548 signifies data from a local Personal Computer (PC), such as enterprise PC (140). At Event 550, the local collection tool (132) is implemented to collect data from designated PCs by taking a "snapshot" of the device's hard drive. According to one embodiment of the invention, the local collection tool may be autodeployed thus, obviating the need for any manual entry by the e-discovery manager or the like. In other embodiments of the invention, the local collection tool (132) may be employed to collect data from network storage.

[00111] At Event 552, the barcoding tool is implemented at a staging location, such as short-term staging drive (180) to attach a barcode to the set of local PC data resulting from the particular collection. The barcoded data is then copied and communicated to the long-term storage area network (190) for permanent storage. At Event 554, the collected and barcoded local PC data may be associated with a specific search term set or sets.

[00112] At Event 556 source-to-processing is implemented to insure that any loose files are properly formatted in a standardized format. In this regard, according to one embodiment of the invention, loose files are examined for relevancy and, if relevant, stored in a proper data format, such as a PST file or the like. The metadata associated with the non-standardized files is retained and remains with the reformatted data files. Source to processing file conversions may be required on EML formatted files, MSG formatted files, IPD formatted files and the like.

[00113] At Event 558, the local PC files that may be encrypted are decrypted using a decryption tool, in accordance with embodiments of the present invention. The decryption tool allows for decryption of the PC files data without the knowledge of the user/encrypter. The decryption tool finds ID files that exist anywhere in the enterprise system, creates a database of the ID files, associates the database with the user/encrypter and subsequently decrypts the data.

[00114] At Event 560, the local PC data set is loaded into the analysis tool and, at Event 562, the local PC data set is exported to the requestor/reviewer for analysis.

[00115] Data block 564 signifies data from network storage, such as a shared drive or HomeSpace. At Event 566, the file server collection tool (134) is implemented to automatically collect data from shared drives and/or HomeSpace. According to one embodiment of the invention, the file server collection tool (134) may be autodeployed thus, obviating the need for any manual entry by the e-discovery manager or the like.

[00116] At Event 568, the barcoding tool is implemented at a staging location, such as short-term staging drive (180) to attach a barcode to the set of network storage data resulting from the particular collection. The barcoded data is then copied and communicated to the long-term storage area network (190) for permanent storage. At Event 570, the collected and barcoded network storage data may be associated with a specific search term set or sets.

[00117] At Event 572 source-to-processing is implemented to insure that any loose files are properly formatted in a standardized format. In this regard, according to one embodiment of the invention, loose files are examined for relevancy and, if relevant, stored in a proper data format, such as a PST file or the like. The metadata associated with the non-standardized files is retained and remains with the reformatted data files. Source to processing file conversions may be required on EML formatted files, MSG formatted files, IPD formatted files and the like.

[00118] At Event 574, the network storage files that may be encrypted are decrypted using a decryption tool, in accordance with embodiments of the present invention. The decryption tool allows for decryption of the network storage data without the knowledge of the user/encrypter. The decryption tool finds ID files that exist anywhere in the enterprise system, creates a database of the ID files, associates the database with the user/encrypter and subsequently decrypts the data.

[00119] At Event 576, the network storage data set is loaded into the analysis tool and, at Event 578, the network storage data set is exported to the requestor/reviewer for analysis.

[00120] Data block 580 signifies electronic data for forensics. At Event 582, a forensic collector tool, such as EnCase® may be executed on the devices of interest to collect data. According to one embodiment of the invention, the forensic collector tool may be automatically deployed on the device of interest without the knowledge of the device user. In accordance with another embodiment of the invention, a computer watcher tool may be implemented (not shown in Figure 10) that watches the network to determine the addition or subtraction of computers to the network based on ID's/IP addresses returned from the network.

[00121] At Event 584, the barcoding tool is implemented at a staging location, such as short-term staging drive (180) to attach a barcode to the set of forensic data resulting from the particular collection. The barcoded data is then copied and communicated to the long-term storage area network (190) for permanent storage. At Event 586, the collected and barcoded forensic data may be associated with a specific search term set or sets.

[00122] At Event 588 source-to-processing is implemented to insure that any loose files are properly formatted in a standardized format. In this regard, according to one embodiment of the invention, loose files are examined for relevancy and, if relevant, stored in a proper data

format, such as a PST file or the like. The metadata associated with the non-standardized files is retained and remains with the reformatted data files. Source to processing may be required on EML formatted files, MSG formatted files, IPD formatted files and the like.

[00123] At Event 590, the forensic files that may be encrypted are decrypted using a decryption tool, in accordance with embodiments of the present invention. The decryption tool allows for decryption of the network storage data without the knowledge of the user/encrypter. The decryption tool finds ID files that exist anywhere in the enterprise system, creates a database of the ID files, associates the database with the user/encrypter and subsequently decrypts the data.

[00124] At Event 592, the forensic data set is loaded into the analysis tool and, at Event 594, the network storage data set is exported to the requestor/reviewer for analysis.

[00125] Data block 596 signifies collaborative data, such as data residing at discovery sites, for example LiveLink® or the like. At Event 598, a discovery site collector tool, such as a LiveLink® collector tool may be executed on the devices of interest to collect data. According to one embodiment of the invention, the discovery site collector preserves at least a portion of the discovery site database in the e-discovery database, including all files and all revisions of the files. In this regard, the discovery site collector tool queries against the database to define what files need to be retrieved, then copies those files based on the result of the query. Metadata pertaining to the files is retained in the case management system tables. In accordance with another embodiment of the invention, the discovery site collector tool collects the documents and the related metadata and uses the metadata to automatically rename the files.

[00126] At Event 600, the barcoding tool is implemented at a staging location, such as short-term staging drive (180) to attach a barcode to the set of discovery site data resulting from

the particular collection. The barcoded data is then copied and communicated to the long-term storage area network (190) for permanent storage. At Event 602, the collected and barcoded discovery site data may be associated with a specific search term set or sets.

[00127] At Event 604 source-to-processing is implemented to insure that any loose files are properly formatted in a standardized format. In this regard, according to one embodiment of the invention, loose files are examined for relevancy and, if relevant, stored in a proper data format, such as a PST file or the like. The metadata associated with the non-standardized files is retained and remains with the reformatted data files. Source to processing may be required on EML formatted files, MSG formatted files, IPD formatted files and the like.

[00128] At Event 606, the discovery site data set is loaded into the analysis tool and, at Event 608, the discovery site data set is exported to the requestor/reviewer for analysis.

[00129] Thus, present embodiments herein disclosed provide for improvements in electronic discovery. Embodiments herein disclosed provide for an enterprise wide e-discovery system that provides for data to be identified, located, retrieved, preserved, searched, reviewed and produced in an efficient and cost-effective manner across the entire enterprise system. In addition, by structuring management of e-discovery based on case/matter, custodian and data and providing for linkage between the same, further efficiencies are realized in terms of identifying, locating and retrieving data and leveraging results of previous e-discoveries with current requests.

[00130] While certain exemplary embodiments have been described and shown in the accompanying drawings, it is to be understood that such embodiments are merely illustrative of and not restrictive on the broad invention, and that this invention not be limited to the specific constructions and arrangements shown and described, since various other changes, combinations,

omissions, modifications and substitutions, in addition to those set forth in the above paragraphs, are possible.

[00131] Those skilled in the art may appreciate that various adaptations and modifications of the just described embodiments can be configured without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention. Therefore, it is to be understood that, within the scope of the appended claims, the invention may be practiced other than as specifically described herein.

CLAIMS

1. A method for identifying users of personal computers within a network for the purposes of associating the personal computers with custodians in an electronic discovery system, comprising:

accessing the personal computers via the network;

identifying one or more users of the personal computer by reading a registry key list, including at least one registry key stored on each personal computer, wherein at least a portion of each registry key includes a network user identification, each network user identification associated with a user of the personal computer ;

transmitting, for each personal computer, (1) computer-identifying data associated with the personal computer, (2) the portions of each registry key including the network user identifications associated with one or more users of the personal computer and (3) log-on data associated with each of the one or more users of the personal computer;

determining one or more matches between the network user identifications and custodian entries in a custodian directory of the electronic discovery system; and

in response to determining the one or more matches, linking the computer-identifying data of the personal computer associated with the matched network user identification and the log-on data to the matched custodian entry in the custodian directory.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein linking the computer-identifying data further comprises adding the computer-identifying data to the matched custodian entry in the custodian directory.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the computer-identifying data comprises a computer name.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the computer-identifying data comprises an IP address.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

presenting the computer-identifying data to an electronic discovery manager upon an identification of at least one of the one or more users as a subject for electronic discovery.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the log-on data is transmitted in conjunction with the transmission of the computer-identifying data.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the log-on data comprises a last date and time that each of the one or more users logged on to the personal computer.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the log-on data comprises a number of times that each of the one of more users logged on to the personal computer during a predetermined period of time.

9. A method for identifying users of personal computers within a network for the purposes of associating the personal computers with custodians in an electronic discovery system, comprising:

installing, on the personal computers, a tool configured to identify and transmit, to a database server, (1) computer-identifying data, (2) user-identifying data associated with one or more users of a personal computer, wherein the user-identifying data is at least a portions of a registry key that includes a network user identification associated with one or more users of the personal computer and (3) log-on data associated with each of the one or more users of the personal computer;

accessing a preexisting custodian directory comprising data relating to the custodians in the electronic discovery system;

locating in the directory a custodian entry that comprises data matching the user-identifying data of one of the users; and

based on locating the custodian entry, automatically linking the computer-identifying data and the log-on data to the custodian entry.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the tool is configured to transmit the computer-identifying data and the user-identifying data every time a user logs on to a personal computer.

11. The method of claim 9, wherein the computer-identifying data comprises a computer name.

12. The method of claim 9, wherein the computer-identifying data comprises an IP address.

13. The method of claim 9, wherein linking the computer-identifying data to the entry further comprises recording the computer-identifying data in the custodian entry.

14. The method of claim 9, further comprising:

storing the computer-identifying data in a database configured to be in communication with the directory.

15. The method of claim 9, further comprising:

presenting the computer-identifying data to an electronic discovery manager upon an identification of the user as a subject for electronic discovery.

16. A system for identifying users of personal computers within a network for the purposes of associating the personal computers with custodians in an electronic discovery system, comprising:

a plurality of personal computers;

an electronic discovery management server including a memory and a processor in communication with the memory;

a profile scanning tool stored in the memory, executable by the processor and configured to scan the personal computers, identifying one or more users of the personal computer by reading a registry key list, including at least one registry key stored on the personal computer for, wherein at least a portion of each registry key includes a network user identification, each network user identification associated with a user of the personal computer, and initiate transmission of (1) computer-identifying data associated with the personal computer, (2) the portions of each registry key including the network user identification associated with one or more users of the personal computer and (3) log-on data associated with each of the one or more users of the personal computer; and

a database server in network communication with the plurality of personal computers and configured to receive the computer-identifying data, the portions of each registry key including the network user identification and the log-on data from the plurality of personal computers and store the computer-identifying data in a database,

wherein one of the electronic discovery management server or the database server is further configured to determine on or more matches between the network user identifications and custodian entries in a custodian directory and, in response to determining the one or more matches, linking the computer-identifying data of the personal computer associated with the matched network user identification and the log-on data to the matched custodian entry in the custodian directory.