APPARATUS, ARTICLE OF MANUFACTURE AND METHODS FOR PURCHASING ARBITRAGE

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[001] This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Application Serial No. 13/022,885, filed on Feb. 8, 2011, which claims benefit to U.S. Provisional Application Serial No. 61/434,502, filed on Jan. 20, 2011, all of which are incorporated by reference herein.

SUMMARY

[001a] According to a first aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method for facilitating electronic communication over a network with interfaces of computing devices for delivery of items, the method comprising: receiving, via an interface of a computing device, from an interface of a remote computing device of a user, data representing an order for delivery of a plurality of items, in which each item comprises an unique identifier, in which the computing device and the remote computing device are in electronic communication over a network; determining a location of the user; identifying at least two providers located within a radius of the user, in which each provider is capable of delivering the requested plurality of items; after receiving the order, computing for each of the at least two providers a total cost of delivery of the requested plurality of items; after identifying the at least two providers within a radius of the user, receiving a request for one of the at least two providers to deliver the requested plurality of items; and facilitating delivery of the requested plurality of items pursuant to the order.
[001b]

According to a second aspect of the present invention, there is provided an apparatus for facilitating electronic communication over a network with interfaces of computing devices of users for delivery of items to users, the apparatus comprising: a processor of a computing device; and a memory, in which the memory stores instructions which, when executed by the processor of the computing device, direct the processor of the computing device to: receive from an interface of a remote computing device of a user, data representing an order for delivery of a plurality of items, in which each item comprises an unique identifier; determine a location of the user; identify at least two providers located within a radius of the user, in which each provider is capable of delivering the requested plurality of items; after receiving the order, compute for each of the at least two providers a total cost of delivery of the requested plurality of items; after identifying the at least two providers within a radius of the user, receive a request for one of the at least two providers to deliver the requested plurality of items; and facilitate delivery of the requested plurality of items pursuant to the order.

[001c]

According to a third aspect of the present invention, there is provided an article of manufacture comprising: a computer-readable medium that is non-transitory, in which the computer-readable medium stores instructions for facilitating electronic communication over a network with interfaces of computing devices for delivery of items, the instructions which, when executed by a processor of a computing device, direct the processor of the computing device to: receive from an interface of a remote computing device of a user, data representing an order for delivery of a plurality of items, in which each item comprises an unique identifier; determine a location of the user; identify at least two providers located within a radius of the user, in which each provider is capable of delivering the requested plurality of items; after receiving the order, compute for each of the at least two providers a total cost of delivery of the requested plurality of items; after identifying the at least two providers within a radius of the user, receive a request for one of the at least two providers to deliver the requested plurality of items; and facilitate delivery of the requested plurality of items pursuant to the order.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

[002] FIG. 1 depicts a system according to at least one embodiment of the systems disclosed herein;

[003] FIG. 2 depicts a payment processing device according to at least one embodiment of the systems disclosed herein;

[004] FIG. 3 depicts another payment processing device according to at least one embodiment of the systems disclosed herein;

[005] FIG. 4 depicts a some menus interactions according to at least one embodiment of the systems disclosed herein;

[006] FIG. 5 depicts an example method according to at least one embodiment disclosed herein;

[007] FIG. 6 depicts another example method according to at least one embodiment disclosed herein;

[008] FIG. 7 depicts yet another example method according to at least one embodiment disclosed herein;

[009] FIG. 8 depicts some more menu interactions according to at least one embodiment disclosed herein;

[0010] FIG. 9 depicts yet another example method according to at least one embodiment disclosed herein;

[0011] FIG. 10 depicts yet another example method according to at least one embodiment disclosed herein;

[0012] FIG. 11 depicts yet another example method according to at least one embodiment disclosed herein;

[0013] FIG. 12 depicts an example of a delivery service provider and a point of sale terminal;

[0014] FIG. 13 depicts yet another example method according to at least one embodiment disclosed herein; and

[0015] FIG. 14 depicts yet another example method according to at least one embodiment disclosed herein.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0016] U.S. patent publication 2008/0161944 entitle Method and Apparatus for Group Filtered Reports, U.S. patent publication 2008/0195538 entitled Payment During Trial Period of Referral Service, U.S. patent publication 2009/0083135 entitled Products and Processes for Revenue Sharing, and U.S. patent publication 2009/0083324 entitled Method and Apparatus for Menu Generation and all hereby incorporated in its entirety herein by reference.

[0017] It is recognized that communication (e.g., one way and/or two way) with a merchant may be desirable in some embodiments. For example, order information may be transmitted to a merchant, confirmation information may be transmitted from a merchant, time estimate information may be transmitted from a merchant, time request information may be transmitted to a merchant, payment information may be transmitted to a merchant, special request information may be transmitted to the merchant, credit authorization may be transmitted to the merchant, reservation information may be transmitted to/from a merchant, delivery information, and so on. Such information may be transmitted to and/or from a communication device associated with the merchant. A merchant for example, may include a restaurant.

[0018] It is recognized that in some embodiments a merchant may have space constraints in an area in which a communication device is desired. For example, a communication device may be desired in a kitchen area in which space is at a premium, a communication device may be desired at a counter area near where a host or hostess works, a communication device may be desired near a cash register to process payment information, and so on. In some embodiments, a merchant may already have one or more devices in such a desired area that may have some communication functionality but not all desired functionality. In some embodiments, such a communication device may include a payment transaction device configured to authorize payments such as on a credit and or debit card.

[0019] In some embodiments, a payment transaction device may be configured to provide one way and/or two way communication regarding non-payment related information. Such information may be communicated to a merchant, to a customer, to a delivery agent, to a third party, to a referral service, and so on. Because a merchant may already have a payment transaction device, the additional functionality regarding this information may be added to the merchant without adding an additional type of device that takes up additional space.

[0020] Some embodiments may include methods and apparatus related to a referral service and/or a delivery service. Some embodiments of such a service may receive an indication of an

order for a merchant from a user of the service and may forward the indication of the order to the merchant. Some embodiments may facilitate delivery of items fulfilling the order from the merchant to the user.

[0021] It should be recognized that the term facilitate and derivations thereof are used herein in an extremely broad sense. Such terms may be used to include any action that may directly, and/or indirectly bring about and/or help to bring about a thing. For example facilitating transmission may include allowing a transmission, transmitting, transmitting directly, transmitting indirectly, any action that may aid in transmission, and so on.

[0022] In some embodiments, orders for one or more merchants may be collected by an order collector such as a website operated at www.delivery.com. Such a website may provide options for a user to select one or more items from one or more merchants to order and/or have delivered. Such a website may be operated at one or more web servers and or other servers. Such a web site may be reached over the Internet using a web browser, over another network, and so on. Other methods of submitting orders may be used, such as telephone, fax, email, proprietary software, and so on.

[0023] In some embodiments, payment for one or more orders may be made through an order collector, to a merchant, to a delivery agent, and so on. Payments may originate from various sources, such as banks, individuals, payment processing services and / or money transferors. Payments may be distributed among merchants, referral service providers, delivery agents, delivery service providers, payment processing services, and any other desired entity.

[0024] In some embodiments, an indication of a payment for an order may be received. An indication of a payment may include, for example, one or more of an indication that a payment has been made, an indication that a payment has been authorized, and / or an indication of a promise to make a payment in the future. In some implementations, an indication of a payment may include an indication that a payment has been made to a desired money account. In some implementations, the indication may be received from an entity making or processing a payment to the desired money account (e.g., a bank, a credit card company, a money transferor, a payment processing service). In some implementations, the indication may be received from an entity receiving the money (e.g., a bank, a credit card company, a money transferor, a payment processing service). In some implementations, the indication may be received after the money is authorized to be transferred into the desired account but before the money is transferred / received. In some implementations, the indication may be received after the money is transferred into / received at the desired account.

[0025] Some embodiments may include collection of a payment. For example, in some embodiments, a delivery agent may collect a promised payment upon delivery and/or pickup, a credit card may be charged an authorized amount, and so on. In some embodiments, a payment agreed upon initially may be changed later, such as to add a tip, adjust for undelivered items, refund for a coupon, and so on. Some embodiments may further include distributing the collected payment among one or more entities, such as the delivery agent, a merchant, a referral and/or delivery service, a payment processing service, and so on.

[0026] Figure 1 illustrates an example diagram of a service implemented in some embodiments. System 101 may include a computer system as described above. System 101 may be configured to provide a referral and/or delivery service. System 101 may include a web server configured to provide a user interface to one or more users to place orders, to one or more merchants to establish menus and merchant information, to one or more administrators, and so on. System 101 may include any number of servers configured to provide any desired processing regarding order information, payment information, delivery information, review information, and so on. System 101 may include a communication interface configured to communicate information to one or more remote destinations, such as to a merchant, to a payment processing service, to a delivery agent, and so on. Such a communication interface may include a network interface, a SIM card for cellular access, a telephone line, and so on.

[0027] Some embodiments may include a merchant 103. In some embodiments, a plurality of merchants may be provided referral and/or delivery service by system 101. Merchant 103 may register with the referral and/or delivery service, such as providing menu information, hours of operation, delivery area information, and so on to the service (e.g., through a website and/or other interface, over the phone, through mail, etc.). Merchant 103 may include a restaurant in some implementations. Such information may include one or more food items offered by a menu of the restaurant.

[0028] Some embodiments may include a user 105. User 105 may access a system 101, such as a website to place an order for one or more merchants 103 that use the services offered by system 101. The system 101 may provide information about the items offered by the merchants such as food items offered through a menu of a restaurant. A user may place an order for one or more food items offered by one or more restaurants and/or other items offered by other merchants. Such an order may include a purchase of an item and/or service, a delivery order, a pickup order, and so on. Such an order may include any number of details regarding the order such as allergy information, delivery time, pickup time, directions, delivery agent, and so on. A user may submit payment information for such an order through such a service and/or may later

provide payment information to a merchant, to a delivery agent, and so on. Such an interaction may take place through software, through a web browser, on a phone, over fax, via email, and so on.

[0029] Some embodiments may include a delivery agent 107. Such a delivery agent may be part of the merchant and/or may be a third party. Such a delivery agent may act to deliver items from the merchant to the user as indicated by a dashed line in Figure 1. In one implementation, delivery agent 107 may include a person who travels from merchant 103 to user 105. In some implementations, delivery agent 107 may deliver to another location rather than to the user if the user 105 desires such delivery (e.g., if the order indicates such delivery). In some implementations, delivery agent 107 may include a person traveling by an automobile, bicycle, or any other means. Some embodiments may include a communication interface with the delivery agent. Such an interface may allow the delivery agent to communicate with the merchant, the user, the system, the payment processing center, and so on. Such a communication interface may include a telephone line (e.g., a cell phone), a fax machine, a computer and / or another means of electronic communication. For example, in some implementations a cellular telephone may communicate information regarding the delivery to the delivery agent 211, e.g., through a telephone call or text message. In other implementations, an electronic message such as an SMS, MMS, or email message may communicate the information, for example to a mobile device carried by delivery agent 107 or to a central dispatcher that then relays the information to delivery agent 107. Such information may be sent to the delivery agent by another source, such as system 101, merchant 103, user 105, a payment processing service, and so on as desired in an implementation, for example, based on who desired to arrange such a delivery if such a delivery is even desired at all.

[0030] Some embodiments may include a payment processing service 109. In some embodiments, payment processing service may be configured to receive information about a credit and/or debit card transaction and facilitate a charge being placed with the credit and/or debit card. The payment processing service may transmit authorization information identifying that the payment has been processed. Payment processing service may include a service such as VeriFone. Such a service being used to provide payment processing to a merchant is well known. For example, a merchant may swipe a credit card into a payment processing device, which may transmit information about the credit card to the payment processing service. The payment processing service may verify the credit card and authorize a charge. In response the payment processing service may send authorization information to the payment processing device which may then print a receipt that a customer signs. It should be recognized that this is

one non-limiting example of a use of a payment processing service to process payments. Further examples of a payment processing service, payment processing device, and/or operation not involving processing payments are described elsewhere herein.

[0031] Some embodiments may include one or more communication networks 111. Such networks may include one or more combination of networks as desired. For example, such networks may include a telephone line, cable lines, cellular links, Wi-Fi, DSL lines, face-to-face communication, the Internet and / or one or more local area networks. Each communication link may be separate or may be shared. For example, a network used by a user to access the system may include a local network and/or the Internet. A network used to communicate between a payment processing service and a merchant may include a dedicated link, a telephone line, and/or the Internet. A network used to communicate between a payment processing service and the system may include a dedicated link, a telephone line, and/or the Internet. Various information desired to perform any desired method or transaction may be communicated in any desired format through such networks.

[0032] Some embodiments may include a payment processing device 113. Such a device may be disposed at a merchant (e.g., at a host stand, at a cashier, at a kitchen, etc.). An example of such a device interacting with a payment processing service to process a credit card payment is described above. Figures 2 and 3 show non-limiting example payment processing devices that may be used in some embodiments. Such devices may be obtained from VeriFone, Inc. of Canton Massachusetts, Hypercom of Scottsdale Arizona, and Ingenico of Alpharetta Georgia. Some non-limiting examples, include the ZON Jr, Tranz models, Omni models, Vx Solutions models, NURIT models, Hypercom T models, and so on.

[0033] Figure 2 illustrates one example payment processing device. Such a device may include a credit card and/or debit card processing device. Such a device may allow a merchant to authorize and/or place a charge on a credit card and/or debit card for a product and/or service. Such a device may communicate with a payment processing service to authorize and/or place such a charge, as described above and known in the art. A payment processing device may include a communication interface, a printer, a keypad, a display, a card reader, a processor, a memory, a peripheral device, and so on.

[0034] As indicated at 201, a payment processing device may include a communication interface such as a Wi-Fi connection, a SIM card, an Ethernet port, a telephone plug, a modem, and so on. Such an interface may provide a continuous connection with a payment processing service. For example, a dedicated data line may connect the device to a communication network such as the Internet. Such an interface may provide an on demand connection with a payment

processing service (e.g., demand by the merchant and/or the payment processing service). For example, a telephone call may be made to provide a connection to and/or from the device. In some embodiments, communication using the interface may be encrypted to protect customer privacy.

[0035] As indicated at 203, a payment processing device may include a printer. Such a printer may be used, for example, to output a receipt for a customer and/or for a signature. In some embodiments, such a printer may be used to output order information and/or other non-payment information.

[0036] As indicated at 205, a payment processing device may include a display. Such a display may be used to display information about a payment. Such a display may be used to display a menu through which a merchant may navigate (e.g., to enter payment details, to enter non-payment details, to view information, and so son). Such a display may be used to output non-payment information. Such a display may output information determined by a processor and/or memory of the device and/or information received from an outside source (e.g., payment processing service).

[0037] As indicated at 207, a payment processing device may include a keypad. Such a keypad may be used to navigate a menu. Such a keypad may be used to input information into the device (e.g., payment information, non-payment information, confirmation information, menu navigation commands, and so on). Such a keypad may be used to enter PINs, security codes, and so on.

[0038] As indicated at 209, a payment processing device may include a card reader. Such a card reader may be used to read a magnetic strip from a credit and/or debit card. Some embodiments may include an RFID or other wireless card reader that may wirelessly read card information from a credit and/or debit card. Such card readers are known in the art. In some embodiments, a keypad may be used to enter card information.

[0039] A payment processing device may include any desired computing device components. For example, a payment processing device may include a processor 211 and/or memory 213 that may execute and/or store a program and/or data. For example such a program may perform a method regarding payment transaction that allows a merchant to use the device to authorize and/or charge a payment to a credit card and/or debit card. Such a program may perform a method regarding non-payment transactions such as a method described elsewhere herein.

[0040] Some embodiments may include connections to peripheral devices, such as external printers, external display screens, cash registers, and so on. Such devices may take the place of and/or work with included devices. For example, in some embodiments, a cash register may

input payment totals to the payment processing device, a printer may be used to printer reports or information on larger paper, and so on.

[0041] Figure 3 illustrates another example payment processing device. In this example, such a payment processing device includes a wireless handheld model that may be used in some embodiments. Such a device may, in some embodiments, communicate with a base station. Such a device may perform similar functionality of the example shown in Figure 2.

[0042] It should be recognized that Figures 2 and 3 are given as examples only and that other embodiments may include any form of payment processing device. Such a device may include any form of input and/or output such as hearing and/or vision impaired methods of input and/or output and so on. Some embodiments may include audio input and/or output, haptic input and/or output, and so on.

[0043] In some embodiments, operation of a payment processing device to perform a payment may include receiving information about a sale, such as from a keypad entry, from an external device such as a cash register. Then, information about a payment method may be received. Such information may be received by entry of information using a keypad and/or display, swipe and/or tap of a card and so on. Payment method information may be transmitted to a payment processing service, and an authorization may be received from the payment processing service indicating that the payment has been authorized and/or charged to a credit and/or debit card. An output of such authorization may be provided through the device or a peripheral, such as a display and/or a receipt.

[0044] Various actions may be performed through using a payment processing device by accessing one or more menus. Some example menu prompts and interactions are shown in Figure 4 that may allow a merchant to enter payment information, tip information, print receipts, and so on. Operation through such a menu may result in one and/or two way communication with a payment processing service and/or output through a display, printer and/or other device. Additional menus may be used to extend functionality to non-payment options as explained elsewhere herein.

[0045] In some embodiments, a payment processing device and/or payment processing service may be configured to provide non-payment related services such as service related to the system 101 of Figure 1. For example, such a device and/or service may allow communication regarding orders, delivery, confirmation, and so on that may be received by system 101. Such communication may be one way and/or two way. Such communication may be originated by system 101 through a payment processing service.

[0046] In operation, a system such as that shown in Figure 1 and/or any other entity may perform one or more processes to provide non-payment functionality using a payment processing device of a merchant. In some embodiments, to enable such functionality, as described elsewhere herein, one or more programs may be configured to accept input, respond to input, receive and/or transmit data, and/or perform any desired function. Such a program may, for example, include a program on a memory, such as a memory of a server, of a computer system of a payment processing service, of a payment processing device, of a user's computing device, and/or any other device.

[0047] As discussed elsewhere herein, some embodiments may include different formatting of information and payments for various entities. In some embodiments, a single system 101 may interact with multiple payment processing systems that may use different formatting and/or payment schemes. An arrangement may be made between such entities to provide for proper formatting, work arrangements, payment, and so on.

[0048] Figure 5 illustrates one non-limiting example method that may be used in some embodiments. Such a process may be performed, for example by system 101, payment processing service 103, a user, and/or a payment processing device of a merchant in any combination desired. Such a process may be performed by one or more servers and/or processors. In some embodiments, such a process may be performed at least in part by a system such as system 101.

[0049] Some embodiments may include receiving and/or transmitting information about one or more items and/or services that may be ordered from one or more merchants. Such information may be received from a merchant and/or another source. Such information may be received by a provider of a referral and/or delivery service.

[0050] As indicated at block 501, some embodiments may include transmitting information about items and/or services that may be ordered from one or more merchants to one or more users of a referral and/or delivery service. Such transmitting may be performed, in some embodiments by system 101. Such information may be transmitted via the Internet to be displayed as a webpage in a web browser operated by a compute ring device of the user. Such information may include be a menu of food items offered by one or more restaurants. In some embodiments, a user interface may include for example, a website, mobile device interface and so on. The user interface may allow the user to select a particular merchant or merchants and products and / or services from the particular merchant or merchants. In such implementations, for example, the user interface may display a representation of available merchants (e.g., a list of merchants that may be in an identified geographical location associated with the user and / or

merchants that are open at the time) to which the user may submit orders. In some embodiments, a listing or other representation of items and/or services may be displayed in a user interface for the user to select from.

[0051] In some embodiments, the user may select one or more items and/or services and in response, an indication of an order be transmitted from the user. In some implementations, the selected products and / or service may be stored in a "shopping cart" of a website and the order may be submitted for processing after the user has finished selecting products and / or services, for example, after the user has proceeded to a checkout interface through which the user may authorize payment for the products and / or services, as is known in the art.

[0052] As indicated at block 503, some embodiments may include receiving an order for one or more items and/or services from one or more users. Such receiving may be performed, in some embodiments by service 101. The order may include any information desired to identify desired items and/or product, any desired merchant, and/or any desired characteristics about an order (e.g., time, allergies, delivery location, special request, etc.). In some implementations, the received indication of the order may include one or more electronic messages. In some embodiments, an indication of an order may include an order for products and / or services from multiple merchants.

[0053] In some embodiments, in which such an order includes items and/or services from multiple merchants, a different method of forwarding onto each merchant may be used. The following description describes an example in which an order is for a single merchant, but it should be recognized that similar methods may be used in other embodiments.

[0054] In some embodiments, payment information may be received with and/or separate from order information. Such payment information may be used to make a payment for an order. In other embodiments, payments may be arranged with a merchant and/or a delivery agent.

[0055] As indicated at block 505, some embodiments may include transmitting the order to a payment processing service. Such transmitting may be performed by system 101. Such transmitting may be performed in response to the receiving of block 503. In some embodiments, a determination may be made as to which of a number of payment processing services a merchant uses and transmission may be made o that payment processing service. This may be performed based on a lookup table that includes information about the merchant (e.g., information obtained at the time of sign up). Such transmission may include transmitted over a communication network in any desired format.

[0056] As indicated at block 507, some embodiments may include formatting an indication of the order for transmission to a payment processing device. Such formatting may be done at a

system 101 and/or at a payment processing service 109 before and/or after block 505. Such formatting may be performed in response to the receiving of block 503, a receiving of the transmission of block 505, and so on. Such formatting may include placing order information into a form that may be understood by the payment processing device. This may include, for example, a proprietary format, an XML format, any desired packet format, and so on. Such a format may be a same or different format than the format in which the order is received forma user.

[0057] As indicated at block 509, some embodiments may include establishing a connection to a payment processing device of the merchant. Such establishing may be done at a system 101 and/or at a payment processing service 109 before and/or after any other actions. Such establishing may be done in response to receiving a transmission of block 505, in response to a receiving of block 503, and so on. A connection to the payment processing device may be established by a payment processing service in a similar manner for payment processing activities. Establishing such a connection may include establishing a dedicated connection with the payment processing device that may have been established prior to the user placing an order, for example. Establishing such a connection may include establishing a transaction specific connection that may be established in response to the user placing the order. Establishing a connection may include, for example, transmitting connection information to an IP address, making a telephone call to a line connected to the payment processing device, and so on.

[0058] As indicated at block 511, some embodiments may include transmitting an order to a payment processing device of the merchant. Such transmitting may occur at a system 101 and/or at a payment processing service 109. Such transmitting may take place using the established connection from block 509 and using a format from block 507. Such transmitting may be performed in response to a receiving of block 503, a receiving of a transmission of block 505, an establishing of block 509, and so on. In some embodiments, the transmitted order information may include details about an order. The detail may include abbreviations that may be established by the merchant. The details may include prices, times, quantity, item names, a pickup time, a delivery time, a delivery address, a delivery agent, and so on. In some embodiments, transmitting may include transmitting confirmation information. Such confirmation information may include a confirmation code, a confirmation image, a confirmation telephone number and so on. Such information may be used so that a merchant may confirm receipt and acceptance of an order. Such confirmation information may include, for example, a CRC number or other error detecting codes.

[0059] In some embodiments, transmitting and/or formatting may include arranging so that output is properly output. For example, a system may determine an end of a description of one item in an order so that the description is less than a maximum number of characters for an output method (e.g., one receipt page, one page of a display). In some embodiments, this may be performed by a payment processing device such as sing a memory or program and/or a menu system.

[0060] As indicated at block 513, some embodiments may include receiving a confirmation of the order from the merchant. Such receiving may occur at a system 101 and/or at a payment processing service 109. In some embodiments, such confirmation may be received from a payment processing device of the merchant. For example, a merchant may enter a confirmation code from the order transmission into the device and that code may be transmitted from the device (e.g., using the established connection and/or another connection) and received. As another example, a merchant may enter a confirm button associated with an order and/or one or more items in the order to confirm the order and/or the items. Such confirmation may be transmitted from the device(e.g., using the established connection and/or another connection) and received.

[0061] In some embodiments, in which confirmation is received by a payment processing service that is separate from a referral and/or delivery service system, such a confirmation may be to the referral and/or delivery service system and received thereby. In some embodiments, in which such a confirmation is received by a system 101 and/or in which system 101 and a payment processing service are a same entity, such forwarding may not be performed.

[0062] In some embodiments, confirmation may take any number of forms that may or may not involve a payment processing device. For example, in some embodiments, a confirmation may include calling a number and/or receiving a call and inputting a code or other information about the order (e.g., to an automated system), sending an email, entering information on a website, faxing, and so on.

[0063] Some embodiments may include retrying to send information about an order if confirmation is not received within a desired time period. Such a time period may include any amount of time such as 1 minute 5 minutes 10 minutes 20 minutes, and so on. Such retrying may be performed by a payment processing service and/or a system 101. Retrying may be performed any number of times desired. Retrying may include other methods of sending order information other merchant. After some threshold number of failed retries the user may be notified that the order cannot be completed and may be given an opportunity to place a new order with a different merchant. For example, a system may determine other merchants that may

service the user with similar items and/or service and may provide an indication of those opportunities to the user (e.g., through a user interface, through a phone call, through an email, and so on). such information may be presented to a customer service representative that may then call the user with the information. Any other method of facilitating re confirmation and/or order change may be performed in an embodiment.

[0064] Some embodiments may include facilitating delivery. Such facilitation may be performed by a merchant and or system 101. Such facilitation may be performed in response to a receipt of a confirmation. Such facilitation may include sending information to one or more delivery agents. In some embodiments, information about a delivery may be transmitted along with order information to a merchant. Such information may include a time of delivery and/or pick up for an order, an authorized delivery agent, contact information for the delivery agent, and so on. Such information may be sent along with order information, at a different time from order information, and so on. For example, such information may be sent after a delivery agent confirms that they will be able to make the delivery which may be after the order information is sent to the merchant.

[0065] In some embodiments, a payment may be exchanged among merchant, user, delivery agent, referral and/or delivery service, payment processing service, and/or any other desired entity. In some implementations, for example, the user may provide a payment to delivery agent. Delivery agent may provide the payment to the merchant who may later provide the payment to any other desired entity. The delivery agent may take a or receive a payment at that time or a later time.

[0066] It should be recognized that while Figure 5 illustrate one non-limiting example method, other embodiments may include any method desired which may include same or different actions in any desired order and/or number. It should be recognized that while the above description is given in terms of order information, that similar methods may be used to provide any desired non-payment information, such as reservation information, shipping of goods (e.g., wines, ingredients, and so on) information, and/or any other desired non-payment information. It should be recognized that while non-payment information may be communicated in some embodiments, payment information may be communicated in addition to such non-payment information to and/or form the merchant at any desired step in any method (e.g., a payment method and/or authorization may be transmitted to the merchant along with the order and/or in response to a confirmation by the merchant). It should be recognized that action of such a process may be performed by any entity as desired in various embodiments.

[0067] Some embodiments may include one or more processes that may be performed by a system 101, a payment processing service 109, a user, and/or a merchant in any combination. Figure 6 illustrates a non-limiting example of such a process. Such a process may be performed by one or more servers and/or processors. In some embodiments, such a process may be performed at least in part by a payment processing service.

[0068] As indicated at block 601, some embodiments may include receiving an order. Such an order may be received in any format. Some embodiments may include formatting the received information to another format such as that used by a payment processing device. In some embodiments, the order may be received in such a format. The order may be received from system 101 by a payment processing service. The order may be received by system 101 from a user. A recipient of the order may determine how to communicate the order to a merchant.

[0069] As indicated at block 603, some embodiments may include establishing a connection to a merchant. Such establishing may be performed in response to receiving of block 601. Such establishing may be performed by system 101 and/or a payment processing service. Such establishing is described elsewhere herein.

[0070] As indicated at block 605, some embodiments may include transmitting the order to a payment processing device of the merchant. Such transmitting may be performed in response to the establishing of block 603, in response to the receiving of block 601, and so on. Such transmitting may be done by system 101 and/or a payment processing service such as over the established connection in the desired format. Such transmitting is described elsewhere herein.

[0071] As indicated at block 607, some embodiments may include responding to input from a merchant made through the payment processing device. For example, input from the merchant may be received, and output to the merchant may be made in response to the input. Input may include, for example, a button being pressed, such as a more information and/or page up or down button. In some embodiments, such responses may be performed by the payment processing device. For example, an entire order may be sent to the payment processing device and a portion may be shown per screen. When a next page button is pressed, the payment processing device may access a memory to display the next portion of the order. In some embodiments, such responses may be performed by system 101 and/or a payment processing service. For example, only portions of an order may be transmitted at a time that correspond to what is shown to a merchant on a display and when a merchant presses a next page button more information may be transmitted.

[0072] As indicated at block 609, some embodiments may include receiving confirmation of the order from the merchant. In some embodiments, such receiving may be performed by system 101 and/or a payment processing service. Such receiving is described elsewhere herein.

[0073] Some embodiments may include retrying transmission if a confirmation is not received. Such retrying may be on an order by order basis and/or an item by item basis. Retrying is described elsewhere herein.

[0074] As indicated at block 611, some embodiments may include transmitting the confirmation to one or more destination. Such transmitting may be performed din response to the receiving of block 609. Such transmitting may be performed by system 101 and/or a payment processing service. For example, such transmitting may include transmitting to system 101 from a payment processing system, transmitting to a user from system 101, and so on. Such transmitting is described elsewhere herein.

[0075] It should be recognized that while Figure 6 illustrate one non-limiting example method, other embodiments may include any method desired which may include same or different actions in any desired order and/or number. It should be recognized that while the above description is given in terms of order information, that similar methods may be used to provide any desired non-payment information, such as reservation information, shipping of goods (e.g., wines, ingredients, and so on) information, and/or any other desired non-payment information. It should be recognized that while non-payment information may be communicated in some embodiments, payment information may be communicated in addition to such non-payment information to and/or form the merchant at any desired step in any method (e.g., a payment method and/or authorization may be transmitted to the merchant along with the order and/or in response to a confirmation by the merchant). Some embodiments of Figure 6 may be performed by a payment processing service. Some embodiments may be performed by any desired entity. It should be recognized that action of such a process may be performed by any entity as desired in various embodiments.

[0076] Some embodiments may include one or more processes that may be performed by a system 101, a payment processing service 109, a user, a merchant, and/or a payment processing device in any combination. Figure 7 illustrates a non-limiting example of such a process. Such a process may be performed by one or more servers and/or processors. In some embodiments, such a process may be performed at least in part by a payment processing device.

[0077] As indicated at block 701, some embodiments may include connecting to a payment processing service. Such connecting may be performed by a payment processing device of a merchant. Such connecting may include accepting a connection request such as picking up a

phone call, using a modem to demodulate information, accepting an incoming packet over a data cable, and so on. Such connecting may include making a connection request such as dialing a phone number, using a modem to modulate information, transmitting an outgoing packet over a data cable, and so on. In some embodiments, as discussed elsewhere, such a connection may include an on demand connection, a constant connection and so on. In some embodiments, a periodic, continuous, occasional, constant and so on connection and/or periodic polling of a payment processing service for non-payment information may be initiated by a payment processing device. In some embodiments, a payment processing service may push such information to a payment processing device when it is available in addition to and/or as an alternative to such polling.

[0078] As indicated at block 703, some embodiments may include receiving information about an order. Such information may be received by a payment processing device of a merchant. Such information may be received from a payment processing service, a system 101, a user, and/or any other entity. Such information may be received in a format readable by a payment processing device. Such information may be received using an established connection from block 701. Such information may indicate one or more ordered items, one or more confirmation items, one or more delivery and/or pickup items, one or more special instructions, and/or any other desired information. Such information may be received in multiple portions at a same or different time (e.g., items ordered first then later delivery confirmation, first page first, then second page after a next page button is pressed, all information at one time, etc.). Various examples of such information and transmitting such information that may apply in some embodiments are given elsewhere herein.

[0079] As indicated at block 705, some embodiments may include outputting information about an order. Such outputting may be performed by a payment processing device and/or accessory. Such outputting may be performed in response to the receiving of block 703. Such outputting may include displaying onscreen, printing, and so on. In some embodiments, outputting may include outputting such that a item break does not occur at a screen break or a paper break, for example. Outputting may include outputting confirmation information that may be part of and/or received with the order information. Various examples and discussions of outputting are described elsewhere herein that may apply.

[0080] As indicated at block 707, some embodiments may include receiving input indentifying a confirmation of the order. Such receiving may be performed by a payment processing device. Such receiving may include receiving input from a merchant, such as button presses, touch screen presses, and so on. Such confirmation may be on a per order basis and/or a per item basis.

[0081] Such confirmation may include a confirmation for a delivery method and/or time. Such confirmation may include a change to one or more elements of the information, such as an adjustment to the delivery time. Such confirmation may include entry of a code, navigation of a menu, pressing of a confirmation button, and so on. Various examples of confirmation that may apply are desired elsewhere herein.

[0082] As indicated at block 709, some embodiments may include transmitting confirmation information. Such transmitting may be performed by a payment processing device of a merchant. Such transmitting may be in response to the input received by the payment processing device. Such transmitting may be using the established connection of block 701. Such transmitting may include transmitting in a desired format and/or formatting to that format. Such transmitting may include transmitting to a payment processing service, a system 101, a user, and so on. Various examples of transmitting that may apply are desired elsewhere herein.

[0083] In some embodiments, if a confirmation includes change to an order item, such as a change to a time and/or price is entered, such information may be communicated to a payment processing service and/or any other entity and reported to the user, the delivery agent, a credit card, and so on. Such a recipient may properly any timing and/or expectations as desired.

[0084] Various other examples of confirmation that may be used in some embodiments and that may not involve transmitting, such as using an automated telephone system, are described elsewhere herein.

[0085] Some embodiments may include transmitting additional information, such as cancellation of and order, non-confirmation information, order change information, and so on. Such information may be transmitting in response to input form a merchant, in response to receiving information from a payment processing service, unilaterally by the merchant, and so on.

[0086] Some embodiments may include making food and/or other items, delivering such items to a user, processing payment, performing a service for a user, and so on.

[0087] It should be recognized that while Figure 7 illustrate one non-limiting example method, other embodiments may include any method desired which may include same or different actions in any desired order and/or number. It should be recognized that while the above description is given in terms of order information, that similar methods may be used to provide any desired non-payment information, such as reservation information, shipping of goods (e.g., wines, ingredients, and so on) information, and/or any other desired non-payment information. It should be recognized that while non-payment information may be communicated in some embodiments, payment information may be communicated in addition to such non-payment

information to and/or form the merchant at any desired step in any method (e.g., a payment method and/or authorization may be transmitted to the merchant along with the order and/or in response to a confirmation by the merchant). Some embodiments of Figure 7 may be performed by a payment processing device. Some embodiments may be performed by any desired entity. It should be recognized that action of such a process may be performed by any entity as desired in various embodiments.

[0088] In some embodiments, to facilitate entry of information using a payment processing device, some embodiments may include ea menu. Such a menu may change in response to key presses, touch screen touches, and/or any other input. Display menus for entry of the information in response to key presses. Some example menu prompts and interactions that may be used in some embodiments are shown in Figure 8.

[0089] It should be recognized that while some embodiments are described in terms of a restaurant, some embodiments may include a retail store, a service provider, and/or any other desired merchant and/or entity.

[0090] In some embodiments, various entities may be paid for performance of one or more actions. For example, a delivery agent may be paid for delivering an item, a payment processing service may be paid for processing a payment, a payment processing service may be paid for transmitting non-payment communication, a referral service may be paid for providing a referral. In some embodiments, such payment may come from a merchant, and/or money received by a merchant.

[0091] Some embodiments may include various methods and/or systems that may facilitate order submission. For example, such orders may be submitted through a user interface such as a website as described elsewhere herein. As another example, such orders may be submitted using an easy order interface. Such an easy order interface may allow a user to submit a favorite order, for example, with a single actuation (e.g., a single or double click on an icon on a desktop). Such an easy order interface may include a hyperlink, a computer program, a software widget, and so on.

[0092] It is recognized that a user may have a favorite and/or commonly made order. It is recognized that accessing a website in a traditional method may take more time than is needed to place such an order in some embodiments. In some embodiments, an easy order interface may be used to improve the speed and/or efficiency of order placement for example, for such favorite and/or commonly made orders compared to traditional website order entry.

[0093] Figure 9 illustrates one non-limiting example method that may be used in some embodiments. Such a process may be performed, for example by system 101, a user, and/or any

entity or combination of entities. Such a process may be performed by one or more servers and/or processors. Such a process may be used to implement an easy ordering interface in some embodiments.

[0094] As indicated at block 901, some embodiments may include establishing an easy ordering interface for an order. In some embodiments, an easy order interface may enable a user to place an order in a non-traditional manner. In some embodiments, an easy order interface may enable a user to place an order through a single actuation (e.g., a single click on an icon, a single click on a link, a double click on an icon, a double click on a link, a press of a button, and so on). In some embodiments, establishing an easy ordering interface may include establishing one or more orders to be placed using the easy ordering interface, establishing a payment method for the one or more orders, establishing an interface for the easy ordering interface, and/or establishing any desired information to place an order may be performed such as establishing a user account and/or information. Such actions may be performed, for example, by a user, by a system 101 and/or by any other desired entity. Such an interface may include an icon (e.g., on a desktop, start menu, etc.). Establishing may include placing an icon on a computing device.

[0095] In some embodiments, establishing one or more orders to be placed using the easy ordering interface may include receiving a selection of item(s) and/or merchant(s) from a user. Such items and/or merchant may be selected and/or otherwise entered by a user through a user interface, for example. Such a selection may be received by a program and/or processor of a user device. Such a selection may be received by a system 101. Such a selection may indicate one or more items to be ordered using the easy order interface from one or more merchants. Establishing one or more orders may include storing information about the orders. Such information may be stored locally on a user's device, remotely on a system 101, remotely at a merchant, and/or by any desired entity. For example, in some embodiments, such an order may be stored by a computer program operating on a user's computer device, may be embedded in a hyperlink (e.g., as a code, in plaintext, etc.), may be stored at system 101, and so on.

[0096] In some embodiments, establishing a payment method may include receiving information about a payment from the user. Such information may be selected and/or otherwise entered by the user through a user interface. Such information may include, for example, a credit card number, a debit card number, a corporate account number, a selection of cash payment, and so on. Such information may be received by a program and/or processor of a user device. Such information may be received by a system 101. Such information may be used as a payment method for orders placed using the easy order interface. Establishing the payment method may include storing payment information. Such information may be stored locally on a

user's device, remotely on a system 101, remotely at a merchant, and/or by any desired entity. For example, in some embodiments, such information may be stored by a computer program operating on a user's computer device, may be embedded in a hyperlink (e.g., as a code, in plaintext, etc.), may be stored at system 101, and so on

[0097] In some embodiments, establishing an interface for the easy ordering interface may include storing information on a computing device. Such information may include, for example, computer code, order information, payment information, merchant information, item information, a hyperlink, xml code, user information, a software program, and/or another desired information, Such information may be stored on system 101, by a merchant, on a user computing device, and/or by any otter desired entity. For example, in some embodiments, an icon on a desktop, a start menu, a quick launch menu, and so on by be created that activates a program and/or hyperlink. The hyperlink or program associated therewith may store the information in a plain text and/or code version. For example, clicking on the icon may cause the information to be transmitted from a user to a system 101. In some embodiments clicking on such an icon may cause an indication of the order to be sent to system 101. System 101 may interpret the indication to retrieve the actual order. For example, a code identifying the order may be sent and the system may interpret the code by looking up the stored information at the system 101.

[0098] As indicated at block 903, some embodiments may include receiving an actuation of an easy ordering interface. Such actions may be performed, for example, by a user, by a system 101 and/or by any other desired entity. Such an actuation may include, for example, clicking on a link, double clicking an icon, pressing a button, and so on. An actuation may be performed by a user when the user desires to place the order. A user, for example, may double click on an icon on a desktop corresponding to the easy ordering interface. The user computer may receive an indication that the user made such an actuation.

[0099] As indicated at block 905, some embodiments may include transmitting information about the order. Such actions may be performed, for example, by a user, by a system 101 and/or by any other desired entity. Such an action may be performed in response to receiving the actuation. Such transmitting may include transmitting to system 101 from a user computing device. The information transmitted may include actual items for an order, a code identifying an order, and so on. In some embodiments, payment information may be transmitted, information identifying a user may be transmitted, any information desired to complete an order may be transmitted, and so on. In some embodiments, such a transmitting may be performed in response only to receiving an actuation. For example, no further input may be needed and/or

requested to may such a transmission. Such a transmission may be made without requesting and/or receiving any and/or additional input from a user (e.g., no request for payment information, no request for password, and so on).

[00100] As indicated at block 907, some embodiments may include receiving information about the order. Such actions may be performed, for example, by a user, by a system 101 and/or by any other desired entity. Such an action may be performed in response to the transmitting of the information.

[00101] As indicated at block 909, some embodiments may include processing the order information. Such actions may be performed, for example, by a user, by a system 101 and/or by any other desired entity. Such an action may be performed in response to the receiving of the information. Such processing may include determining items, a user, a payment and so on for the order, such as by using a look up table keyed with the information (e.g., a code). Such processing may include authorizing a charge, such a through a payment processing service. Such processing may include arranging fulfillment of the order, such as by transmitting information to a merchant and/or delivery agent as described elsewhere herein.

[00102] In some embodiments, processing an order may include facilitating delivery. Such delivery may include delivery of items of an order from a merchant. Such delivery may be facilitated in response to receiving an indication of the actuation, in response to receiving information about an order, and so on. In some embodiments, such facilitation may be performed without requesting input from a user.

[00103] In some embodiments, processing an order may include completion of a payment. Such a payment may be for items from a merchant. Such a completion may be performed in response to receiving an indication of the actuation, in response to receiving information about an order, and so on. In some embodiments, such completion may be performed without requesting input from a user. Such a payment may include a charge on a credit card.

[00104] In some embodiments, delivery may include delivery of a pre-established set of items from a merchant to a user. In some embodiments, completion of a payment may include completion of a pre-established payment for the items. Such pre-establishing may include establishing with the user interface, prior to receiving an indication of an actuation, prior to an actuation, and so on (e.g., by storing information at a system 101, at a user device, and so on).

[00105] In some embodiments, such a method may allow a user to have an order fulfilled with no further action on the user's part, such as no entry of information in an interface. Accordingly, a single actuation may allow a user to place an order. Some embodiments may include asking a user for confirmation to avoid accidental order placement. Some embodiments

may include notifying a user if the order cannot be fulfilled such as because a merchant is closed.

[00106] Although an example is given with a single order and/or merchant, it should be recognized that any number of orders and or merchants may be included in other embodiments. For example, an order may include a weekly shopping list from a plurality of merchants that the user would like placed each week. An order may include a series of orders that are run through in order before resetting (e.g., first click is order 1, second click is order 2, then repeat). In some embodiments, separate easy ordering interfaces may be established for different orders.

[00107] It should be recognized that although some examples are given in terms of a single transaction, some embodiments may include any number of transactions. For example, a plurality of orders may be placed using an easy ordering interface in response to a plurality of actuations of the easy ordering interface. A plurality of indications of actuation of an interface may be received by a system 101 and in response, respective orders may be fulfilled.

[00108] It should be recognized that while Figure 9 illustrate one non-limiting example method, other embodiments may include any method desired which may include same or different actions in any desired order and/or number. It should be recognized that action of such a process may be performed by any entity as desired in various embodiments.

[00109] In some embodiments, a service that provides referrals of orders to one or more merchants, such as some embodiments that may be described herein, may charge a fee to a merchant for such referrals. Such a fee may include a flat dollar amount, a percentage, a fee based on a service level, a fee based on a number of orders referred, and so on. For example, in some embodiments, a merchant may pay a base fee for a high level of service that includes an unlimited number of orders free of charge after the base fee is paid. In some embodiments, a merchant may pay no base fee, but may be charged a higher amount per order referred. In some embodiments, a merchant may pay, for example, about 10% of a purchase price associated with an order to a referral service and/or delivery service that refers the order to the merchant and/or provides delivery service for the order.

[00110] In some embodiments, a merchant, referral service, delivery service, and/or one or more service providers may be separate entities acting to provide a delivery and/or other service to a customer. Some embodiments may include allocating a payment for an order among the service providers. In some embodiments, each such service provider may agree to a allocation before performing a service (e.g., through a bidding process, through a contractual agreement, and so on). In some embodiments, a merchant, a referral service provider, and/or any other entity may receive the payment and provide a portion to each other service provider

according to the allocation. In some embodiments, the payment to the service providers may be taken from a payment to the merchant for the purchase price, from a portion due a referral provider (e.g., 10% cut), as a service fee charged to a customer, and so on.

[00111] Some embodiments may include various methods and/or systems that may facilitate delivery and/or providing/choosing any service provider. Some examples of choosing a service provider are given below in terms of a delivery agent, but it should be recognized that similar and/or alternative methods may be used for choosing any desired service provider. In some embodiments, facilitating delivery may include determining a delivery agent. Such a delivery agent may be a delivery agent of a merchant, a delivery agent of a user, a delivery agent of system 101, a third party delivery agent, and so on. In some embodiments, determining a delivery agent may include determining a delivery agent through an auction. In some embodiments, determining a delivery agent may include determining a delivery agent based on a price quote for the delivery by each of a plurality of delivery agents. In some embodiments, determining a delivery agent may include determining a delivery agent based on a time of delivery quote for each of a plurality of delivery agents. Some embodiments may use such a method to determine a most effective delivery agent for one or more orders. Some embodiments may include delivery agents bidding on an opportunity to make one or more deliveries. Some embodiments may include determining a delivery agent based on a rating of the delivery agent. Some embodiments may include determining a delivery agent based on a qualification of the delivery agent.

[00112] In some embodiments, third party delivery agents, proprietary delivery agents, customers to whom a delivery is to be made, merchants themselves, and/or any other desired entity may compete in such an auction. For example, a third party service may place a bid against a delivery agent that normally works with a merchant and/or is paid by a merchant in an attempt to undercut the merchants normal delivery service in some embodiments. In some embodiments, a customer may place a bid and/or maximum delivery charge above which the customer will pick up from the merchant himself. In some embodiments, if no delivery agent bids less than the customer's bid, delivery may not be provided. In some embodiments, the customer may receive the bid amount. In other embodiments, the customer may not receive the bid amount. In some embodiments, third party delivery agents (e.g., cab drivers, truck drivers, college students with cars, and so on) may bid against one another.

[00113] It is recognized that a merchant may desire to provide delivery services to a user. It is recognized that a plurality of individuals may act as delivery agents independent and/or in connection with one or more merchants. In some embodiments, an auction may be used to

determine an effective delivery agent for an order from a particular merchant. Such auction system may be used to determine an effective service provider for any desired service (e.g., a packer, a receiver, a merchant itself, and so on).

[00114] Figure 10 illustrates one non-limiting example method that may be used in some embodiments. Such a process may be performed, for example by system 101, a user, a merchant, and/or any entity or combination of entities. Such a process may be performed by one or more servers and/or processors. Such a process may be used to determine a delivery agent for one or more orders.

[00115] As indicated at block 1001, some embodiments may include receiving information about one or more orders. Such information may include a location for delivery, a location for pickup, information about a merchant, information about items, a delivery time and/or time period, and so on. When location is referenced, it may include a location of a user, a location of a delivery, a location of a merchant, a location of a pickup, a location of a delivery agent, and/or any desired location. Various examples of order information and receiving are described elsewhere herein. Such an action may be performed, for example, by a user device, a merchant, system 101, and so on.

[00116] Some embodiments may include determining that an auction process for determining a delivery agent and/or any desired service provider should be performed. Such a determination may include determining that no other delivery agent has already been contracted to perform the delivery. Such a determination may include determining that a merchant does not have their own delivery service. Such an auction process may include part of the method in Figure 10. Such an auction process for example, may include receiving bids, and determining that a delivery agent should perform a delivery based on the bids.

[00117] In some embodiments, such a determination may include making a determination that a auction should be used to determine a merchant from a set of merchants that may provide a good, a packer that may pack goods at a merchant, a picker that may pick goods from a set of goods at a merchant (e.g., pick fruit from a grocery store), a receiver that may receive goods at a delivery location, a payment processor from a set of payment processors, a searcher from a set of possible searchers (e.g., a person that searches for a good at a plurality of merchants), and/or any desired service provider such as one that may be involved in a placement, fulfillment, delivery, payment, and so on of a good from one location to another location.

[00118] As indicated at block 1003, some embodiments may include transmitting order information to one or more delivery agents and/or other service providers. Such information may be transmitted to a plurality of delivery agents that are part of an auction system for a

particular geographical area. Some embodiments may include providing order information to one or more delivery agents in any manner including transmission. Such information may and/or may not include all information about an order (e.g., some information such as identities may be kept hidden for privacy reasons). Such information may include a next and/or prior service provider in a chain of service providers (e.g., a packer from whom receipt of goods is made, a receiver to whom goods are delivered). Delivery agents may register with such a service and indicate what types of orders to receive, when they operate, where they operate, a form to receive information in, and so on. Such transmitting may include transmitting via a central website that displays such information to delivery agents such as those that sign in. Such transmitting may include sending an email, a text message, a website, an electronic message, and so on. Such transmitting may include transmitting to a software program run by a delivery agent. Such transmitting may be performed in response to receiving the order information, may be performed in response to determining that an auction for a delivery agent should be performed, in response to determining that a merchant does not have a proprietary delivery agent, and so on.

[00119] In some embodiments, such transmitted information may include a desired level of specificity. For example such information may include exact information and/or inexact information regarding time, locations, and so on. For example, an indication of a location may include an exact location (e.g., an address), an approximate location (e.g., a cross street, a region, a distance (e.g., exact, approximate) from another location, and so on).

[00120] Some embodiments may include filtering transmission of such information to service providers with desired characteristics. For example, such information may only be transmitted to a service provider that is determined to possess a desired characteristic. Some example characteristics may include, an insurance amount, a rating by other customers, a rating by people in a social network (e.g., a social network of the customer, a social network of a merchant, etc.), a license to perform an action (e.g., a license to transport a particular good), location of agent, source, destination, etc., equipment required and/or desired to perform a service (e.g., a truck large enough to carry a good, a refrigerated vehicle for transportation of refrigerated goods), a desired bonding method fulfilled (e.g., social security number provided, address provided, money provided, insurance obtained, university ID provided, a background check performed, and so on),availability during a desired time, and/or any desired characteristic. In some embodiments, an originator of order information may submit such filtering characteristics (e.g., a customer submitting an order, a merchant that submits information about an order for delivery to a customer). In some embodiments, a default set of filtering criteria may be used.

[00121] As indicated at block 1005, some embodiments may include receiving the transmitted order information. Such information may be receiving by one or more delivery agents. Such information may be received, for example, by a program run by a delivery agent and displayed to the delivery agent through a user interface. Such information may be received by a delivery agent through a website or other such interface. In some embodiments, filtering ma take place at a receipt end. For example, in some embodiments received and/or transmitted information may indicate a desired characteristic and a receiving entity may determine if an associated entity meets such a characteristic before acting on the received information to initiate a possible bid.

[00122] In some embodiments, a delivery agent may determine a bid to be placed regarding the delivery of the order. Such a bid may include a cost for making the delivery. Such a bid may include a time and/or time frame for making the delivery. The time and/or time frame may match and/or not match the time and/or time frame associated with an order. Such a bid may be made based on an availability of a delivery agent. For example, if a delivery service has one of a group of deliverers available at a time, the delivery service may place a bid on making the delivery. A cost of the bid may be based on a cost of performing the service, such as distance traveled by the agent to perform the service, risk taken to perform the service, and so on. A time may be based on an availability of a delivery agent and/or a distance to travel for the order. A computer program may be configured to calculate such information and determine the bid and place the bid in response to receiving such information and/or information about other obligation of a delivery service. A delivery agent may refer to an individual and/or a plurality of agents working together. Some embodiments may include entering information about a bid in a user interface, through an API, and so on.

[00123] In some embodiments, a portion of a bid may be based on a location. In some embodiments, for example, a portion of a bid may be based on a location of a delivery agent and/or employee of a delivery service (e.g., an employee that may perform the delivery). For example, in some embodiments, a price for a bid may be based on a distance that a employee may need to travel from a current location to a merchant location and then to a user location to perform a delivery. As another example, a time and/or time frame may be based on a location. For example, a time may be based on a distance that an employee may need to travel from a current location to a merchant location and then to a user location.

[00124] In some embodiments, a price may be based on any desired characteristic of an order and/or service to be provided. For example, such a price may be based on a quantity of food items, a weight of items, a cost of items, a risk of providing delivery (e.g., risk of being

late, danger of a neighborhood, risk of being caught in traffic, and so on). It should be recognized that although examples are given in which a bid is based on cost, location, and other characteristics that a bid may be based on anything as desired.

[00125] As indicated at block 1007, some embodiments may include may include receiving an indication of a bid for delivery of the order. Such an indication may be received by a device of a delivery agent. Such an indication may be received in response to receiving information about the order. Such a bid may include a cost of performing a delivery, a time for completion of the delivery, and so on.

[00126] As indicated at block 1009, some embodiments may include transmitting the bid. Such transmitting may be performed in response to receiving the indication of the bid. Such transmitting may include transmitting from a delivery agent. Such transmitting may include transmitting to a user, a merchant, a system 101, and so on.

[00127] As indicated at block 1011, some embodiments may include receiving a plurality of bids to make a delivery. Such bids may be received in response to transmissions of the bids. Such bids may be received from delivery agents. Such bids may be received through a website. Such bids may include information about costs, times and/or time frames, and so on.

[00128] It should be recognized that any number of bids may be received from any number of delivery agents and/or service providers, that any number of delivery agents and/or service providers may determine, receive, transmit bids in any manner as desired in any embodiment.

[00129] In some embodiments, one or more bids may include an indication of a price. Such a price may include a price to be paid to the delivery agent if the bid is accepted and the delivery is performed. Such a price may include a percentage of a referral fee, a percentage of a price for goods, a flat fee, and so on. For example, in some embodiments such a price may include a percentage (e.g., 25%) of a fee paid to a referral service for referral of an order to a merchant.

[00130] In some embodiments, one or more bids may include an indication of a time and/or time frame. Such a time and/or time frame may include a time and/or time frame that a delivery agent agreed to perform the delivery if the bid is accepted.

[00131] As indicated at block 1013, some embodiments may include selecting a delivery agent based on the plurality of bids. Such a selection may be performed at an end of a time period for bidding. Such a selection may be performed when a bid with a desired property is received. Such a selection may be performed in response to receiving one or more bids. Such a selection may be performed by a system 101, a user, a merchant, and so on. Such a selection

may be based on a cost associated with the bid. For example, a lowest cost bid may be selected. Such a selection may be based on a reputation of delivery agent. For example, a bid from an agent with a better reputation may be selected over a bid from an agent with a lower reputation. Such a selection may be based on a time and/or time frame associated with a bid. For example, a bid with a time and/or time frame that most closely matches a time and/or time frame associated with an order may be selected. In some embodiments any desired property may be used to base a selection. In some embodiments any combination of properties may be used to selected a delivery agent based on bids. For example, a formula that weighs various characteristics may be used to select a bid that results in the highest overall weight output by the formula when the various properties are input into the formula. Any method of determination may be used in any embodiment, including selection. Such selection may be based on one or more of the bids.

[00132] In some embodiments, bids associated with service providers that have and/or do not have one or more characteristics may be filtered out. Such filtered out bids may not be used to determine which service provider to select. For example, in some embodiments, bids from delivery agents that do not have a minimum rating, a desired equipment, a desired bonding, and so on may be filtered out.

[00133] In some embodiments, such filtered out bids may be used nonetheless if no other bids are received, and/or if the other bids that are received are determined to be inadequate. For example, in some embodiments, if the other bids are too high, then the filtered out bids may be used (e.g., if they are 25% higher, 50% higher, 50$ higher, 10$ higher, and so on). As another example, if there are not enough other bids, then one or more of the filtered out bids may be used. In some embodiments, using the filtered out bids may include using the filtered out bids in an order based on price, in an order based on another characteristic, and so on. For example, in some embodiments if the filtered out bids are filtered out based on a lack of a characteristic (e.g., rating), then the bids with the closest characteristic to the desired characteristic may be used before other bids (e.g., filtered out bids with highest rating may be used before those with lowest rating). For example, if a 4 star rating is required, but no bids with 4 star ratings are received, then bids with 3 stars may be used instead.

[00134] In some embodiments, such selection may include selecting a lowest priced bid. For example such selecting may include determining that a price associated with a selected delivery agent is lower than one or more other bids. In some embodiments, such selection may include selecting a bid that matches a time and/or time frame associated with an order. For example, such a selection may include determining that a time and/or time frame associated with

a selected delivery agent matches a time and/.or time frame of an order. It should be recognized that such examples of selection are given as examples only and that any desired method may be used. For example, some embodiments may include using an algorithm that includes at least one of a time and/or time frame associated with an order, a time and/or time frame associated with one or more bids, and/or a price associated with one or more bids. For example, such an algorithm may include a formula. For example, such an algorithm may weigh time differences and cost to determine a lowest cost delivery agent that may delivery near a desired time.

[00135] As indicated at block 1015, some embodiments may include facilitating delivery using the selected delivery agent. Such an action may be performed in response to selecting the agent. Such an action may be performed by a merchant, a user, system 101, and so on. Facilitating delivery may include transmitting information about the delivery to the delivery agent, arranging payment, making a payment, and so on. Such information may include additional information to that transmitted to elicit a bid, such as order details, location information, and so on. Such facilitating may include transmitting a request to perform the delivery. A delivery service provider pay receive such information and facilitate delivery, for example by performing the delivery, by notifying an employee, and so on.

[00136] It should be recognized that although various example are given in terms of determining a delivery agent after an single order is placed, that some embodiments may include determining a delivery agent before an order is placed and/or for more than one order. For example, an auction may be used for a next order, for orders in a time period in the future, for a next set of orders, for orders in a geographic area, for orders in a slice of time in the future, for orders on particular days, for orders in a month, for a series of orders, for a group of orders, and so on.

[00137] It should be recognized that when a delivery agent is referenced herein that such a reference is given as a non-limiting example only. Some embodiments may include a delivery service provider with any number of employees. Some embodiments may include a delivery service provider that acts as an agent. Some embodiments may include a delivery service provider that acts as a principle.

[00138] It should be recognized that although various examples are given in which a delivery agent places one bid, that some embodiments may include any desired auction system. For example, a traditional auction may be used, a reverse auction may be used, a silent auction may be used, a secret auction may be used, an open auction may be used, and so on. In some embodiments, an auction may have a reserve price and/or time. In some embodiments, an auction may have a limited period of time. In some embodiments, a delivery agent may submit

changes to a bid and/or updated bids. In some embodiments a delivery agent may be able to see information about competing bids. In some embodiments, information about other delivery agent bids may be provided to a delivery agent. In some embodiments more than one bid may be received from a delivery agent.

[00139] In some embodiments, for example, a delivery agent may receive an indication of a bid by another delivery agent. In response to receiving such an indication, the delivery agent may determine a bid to be placed. Such a bid may be a second bid by the delivery agent. Such a bid may be for a lower price than a first bid by the delivery agent. Such a bid may be for a better time than the first bid. Such a bid may be for a lower price and/or better time than the bid by the other delivery agent. Such a bid may be based on cost of providing the service. In response to determining such a bid, an indication may be transmitted.

[00140] It should be recognized that while Figure 10 illustrate one non-limiting example method, other embodiments may include any method desired which may include same or different actions in any desired order and/or number. It should be recognized that action of such a process may be performed by any entity as desired in various embodiments.

[00141] It should be recognized that although various examples are given with multiple entities acting as intermediaries, that some embodiments may include no such intermediaries, more such intermediaries, ad/or different such intermediary. For example, some embodiments may include a distributed system. Some embodiments may include a system where a user, a payment processing service, and/or a system a system 101, and/or payment processing device perform any role that may have been performed by one of the others. For example, a user may directly communicate with a payment processing device, may perform payment processing, and so on. Such actions and/or other actions may be performed by any entity in any combination.

[00142] Various examples may refer to a system such as system 101. It should be recognized that such references are given as examples only and that system 101 and Figure 1 are both given as examples only. Various embodiments may include any system(s) in any configuration and/or no system that may or may not include any characteristics similar to system 101 and any reference to system 101 may refer to any other system with or without such characteristics.

[00143] It should be recognized that although various embodiments are given in terms of a good being delivery and/or otherwise provided, that some embodiments may relate to providing a service rather than a good. For example, selection of a service provider of any sort may be made in some embodiments, selection of goods to be used by a service provider may be made in some embodiments, selection of sub-contractor(s) to a service provider may be made in some embodiments, providing any such selected item may be made in some embodiments, and so on.

Multiple Agent Examples

[00144] Some embodiments may have been described in terms of a single delivery agent and/or other service provider performing a delivery or other service from a single and/or multiple merchants to a single and/or multiple customers. In some embodiments, multiple delivery agents and/or other service providers may be used to make a single and/or multiple deliveries and/or perform any desired service involving a single and/or multiple sources, and/or a single and/or multiple customers and/or destinations. Some embodiments may include facilitating using multiple service providers to provide a service as desired. Figure 11 illustrates an example process that may be performed in some embodiments.

One to One with Multiple Agents Examples

[00145] In some embodiments, multiple service providers may perform a similar function to facilitate providing a service that involves a single source and a single customer. For example, one or more goods may be delivered from a single source to a single destination by multiple delivery agents. As another example, multiple pickers and/or packers may pick and/or pack goods at a single merchant for delivery to and/or pickup by a single customer. Some embodiments may include determining that multiple service agents should be used, selecting the service agents, coordinating the service agents, facilitating the service being provided, and so on.

[00146] Some embodiments may include receiving information about an order as indicated at block 1101. Such information for example may indicate any desired parameters that may define an order (e.g., source, destination, goods, etc.). Receiving information about an order is described elsewhere herein.

[00147] Some embodiments may include determining that multiple service agents are to be used to fulfill an order as indicated at block 1103. Such a determination may be based on one or more characteristics of an order, one or more bids received for the order, availability of one or more service agents, locations of one or more service agents, locations of one or more of a source and a destination, information received from one or more service agents, and so on.

[00148] For example such a determination may be based on a combination of bids by two separate service agents to complete parts of an order that sum to a completion of the order being lower than other bids.

[00149] As an example, a determination may be made based on a size of an order and/or a capacity of a service agent to perform a service. For example, in some embodiments, a determination may be made that two or more delivery agents may be used to fulfill an order based on a size of the order and a carrying capacity of each of the delivery agents. A single

merchant may otherwise be required to make multiple rips to fulfill the order. In some embodiments such a determination may be made even if there is an option to fulfill the order with a single merchant that has a larger carrying capacity. For example, if bids in an auction process are received and the plurality of delivery agents result in a lower cost than the single larger carrying capacity delivery agent, it may be determined that a plurality of delivery agents should be used to fulfill the order.

[00150] As an example, a determination may be based on an availability of one or more service agents to perform a service. For example, in some embodiments, a determination may be made that two or more delivery agents may be used to fulfill an order based on an availability of the two or more delivery agents to perform a portion of a transit for the delivery. For example, in some embodiments, each of two or more delivery agents may be available to perform a portion of a delivery but not the entire delivery. In some embodiments, when combined (e.g., if an order is passed from a first to a second agent to complete delivery), such portions may sum to a complete delivery. Determining that such two or more delivery agents should be used to complete portions of transit that may sum to a whole delivery may be made based on cost (e.g., to minimize cost of delivery), based on availability (e.g., because no agent is available to make a complete delivery), to maximize agent utilization (e.g., because the two or more agents were unoccupied, because the two or more agents were headed in a direction for the delivery anyways, etc.), and so on.

[00151] Some embodiments may include selecting two or more service agents to fulfill an order as indicated at block 1105. Such selection may be made based on bids for performing one or more portions of an order. For example, such delivery agents may be selected to minimize a cost of delivery while fulfilling desired characteristics of the delivery (e.g., time, place, rating, etc.). Such a selection may be made based on availability of delivery agents, locations of delivery agents, routes to make a delivery, and so on. For example, such selection may be made to maximize utilization of delivery agents, rearrange positions of delivery agents so that they are more evenly distributed and/or distributed in a more ideal and/or desired pattern, minimize unused delivery agents, minimize time for a delivery to take place, and so on. Such selection may take place as a part of the determination of block 1103, in connection with such determination, as a single action and/or set of actions as block 1103, separate from such determination, and/or with or without any desired relationship to such determination.

[00152] For example, in some embodiments, a delivery agent that is proximate to a source and headed towards a destination already may be selected to perform a first part of a delivery. A second delivery agent that is going proximate to the destination and going to pass near the first

delivery agent as the first delivery agent heads towards the destination may be selected to finish the delivery. The two may meet and pass good(s) for an order from the first to the second delivery agent for delivery. A first and second picker that are at and/or near a merchant may be selected for performing picking functions at the merchant. The pickers may meet to combine picked goods into one order and/or may meet with a delivery agent to pass the goods to the delivery agent separately. Such a picker may include a delivery agent and/or a merchant. Some embodiments may include facilitating meetings of such agents (e.g., communicating times and/or locations to the agents, communicating location identities to the agents, and so on).

[00153] In some embodiments, service agents and/or other sources may provide information to a service to allow such selection of a plurality of delivery agents. For example, delivery agents may provide GPS location information, route information, carrying capacity information, and so on. In some embodiments, cab drivers may act as delivery agents, truck drivers may act as delivery agents, people on their way home from work and/or running errands may act as delivery agents. Such agents may individually send information through a cell phone application, through an email, through text message, and so on to a referral service provider. In some embodiments, a central hub, such as a taxi cab service provider, a truck driver dispatch, a website that monitors GPS locations of individuals (e.g., a website such as facebook.com that may include location tags of updated messages indicating a location when the update is made) and so on may report such information to a referral service provider.

[00154] Some embodiments may include coordinating and/or facilitating a fulfillment of an order using a plurality of service agents as indicated at block 1107. For example, information may be communicated to each of the plurality of service agents identifying how to fulfill an order. For example, a first delivery agent may be given a time and place to be to meet a second delivery agent to relay a good, a first delivery agent may be given contact information for the second delivery agent, and so on. Any desired information that may allow an agent to help fulfill the order may be provided to the agent. Such providing may include transmitting, sending via email, texting, providing to a central communicator(e.g., a cab dispatch), and so on.

[00155] Some embodiments may include additional service providers that may help facilitate two or more service providers provide a service. For example, in some embodiments, a middle man may act to hold goods at a meeting point. For example, a first agent may drop off goods at a second merchant, and the second delivery agent may pick up the goods from the second merchant. Any person and/or location may be used as a middleman between two delivery agents. Such a middle man may be provided with a fee for services. Such a middle man may be contacted by a referral service to make an offer for such services in response to determining that

such a middle man may be desired for facilitating a delivery. Such a middle man may submit bids to act as a middle man through an auction system.

[00156] It should be recognized that various examples of using multiple agents to fulfill an order from one location to another location are given as examples only.

Multiple to One with Multiple Agents Examples

[00157] In some embodiments, multiple service providers may perform a similar function to facilitate providing a service that involves multiple sources and a single customer. For example, one or more respective goods may be delivered from a plurality of respective sources to a single destination by multiple delivery agents. As another example, multiple pickers and/or packers may pick and/or pack goods at a plurality of respective merchants for delivery to and/or pickup by a single customer. Some embodiments may include determining that multiple service agents should be used, selecting the service agents, coordinating the service agents, facilitating the service being provided, and so on.

[00158] Some embodiments may include, for example, a delivery from a plurality of sources to a single destination. In some embodiments, such delivery may involve the use of multiple delivery agents. For example, two or more sources may be serviced by respective delivery agents. In some embodiments, delivery from such multiple sources may be sped up by using multiple delivery agents when compared to a single delivery agent. For example, such multiple delivery agents may perform delivery work simultaneously rather than sequentially. A process similar to process 1100 may be used in some embodiments in which multiple delivery agents may be used to deliver from multiple sources to a single destination.

[00159] Some embodiments may include determining delivery agents for two or more sources of a plurality of sources (e.g., each source, some sources). In some embodiments, a single delivery agent may service more than one of source (e.g., sources that are geographically proximate, sources proximate to a route). Some embodiments may include a maximum number of sources that may be serviced per delivery agent (e.g., about 5). Some embodiments may include a maximum distance between sources before an additional delivery agent is added to servicing an order (e.g., 1 block, 5 miles). Some embodiments may not include distance in such a calculation if the distance is along a route to a destination. Some embodiments may reference a distance from a route (e.g., expected route, usual route, identified route, ideal route).

[00160] In some embodiments it may be desirous to have delivery at a single time rather than at multiple times even if multiple delivery agents are used. In some embodiments coordination and/or facilitating of delivery may include a plurality of delivery agents combining goods from

multiple sources for delivery by a single delivery agent. Information regarding such a combining may be provided to each delivery agent (e.g., time, location, contact information, and so on regarding a meet up for combining with one or more other delivery agents).

[00161] It should be recognized that various examples of using multiple delivery agents to fulfill an order from multiple sources to single location are given as examples only. Other embodiments may include multiple agents of any type to perform any desired service from multiple sources for any number of customers.

One to Many with Multiple Agents Examples

[00162] In some embodiments, multiple service providers may perform a similar function to facilitate providing a service that involves any number of sources (e.g., one or more) and multiple customers. For example, one or more goods may be delivered from a single source to a plurality of destinations by multiple delivery agents. As another example, multiple pickers and/or packers may pick and/or pack goods at a single location for delivery to and/or pickup by multiple customers. Some embodiments may include determining that multiple service agents should be used, selecting the service agents, coordinating the service agents, facilitating the service being provided, and so on.

[00163] Some embodiments may include a delivery from a single source to a plurality of destinations. In some embodiments, such delivery may involve the use of multiple delivery agents. For example, one source may be serviced by a single delivery agent that then delivers a first good to one destination and passes on a second good to a second delivery agent for delivery to a second destination. In some embodiments, delivery to multiple destinations may be sped up by using multiple delivery agents when compared to a single delivery agent. For example, such multiple delivery agents may perform delivery work simultaneously rather than sequentially. In some embodiments, using multiple delivery agents in such a way may minimize cost by reducing redundant travel time. A process similar to process 1100 may be used in some embodiments in which multiple delivery agents may be used to deliver from a single location to multiple destinations.

[00164] Some embodiments may include determining delivery agents for each destination of a plurality of destinations. In some embodiments, a single delivery agent may service more than one of destination (e.g., destinations that are geographically proximate). Some embodiments may include a maximum number of destinations that may be serviced per delivery agent (e.g., about 5). Some embodiments may include a maximum distance between destinations before an

additional delivery agent is added to servicing an order (e.g., 5 miles). Some embodiments may not include distance in such a calculation if the distance is along a route to a destination.

[00165] It should be recognized that various examples of using multiple delivery agents to fulfill an order from a single source to multiple destinations are given as examples only. Other embodiments may include any number of agents (e.g., 1 or more, 2 or more) of any type to perform any desired service from any number of sources (e.g., 1 or more, 2 or more) for any number of customers (e.g., 1 or more, 2 or more).

Payment and Multiple Agents Examples

[00166] In some embodiments in which multiple service agents are used, payments for one or more orders may be allocated among the agents according to one or more bids for services, pre-arranged fees, percentages of the service performed, and so on. In some embodiments, payments may be made and/or allocated at a later time to an agent for performing the service (e.g., at an end of a month when accounts are settled). In some embodiments, payments may be made and/or allocated before a service is performed, up completion of a service, and so on. In some embodiments, an agent may collect money from a customer and/or a source and may exchange money for payment with one or more other agents. In some embodiments, a delivery and/or referral service may mail checks, credit accounts, identify that a payment is due, and so on to facilitate making and/or allocating a payment. It should be recognized that any method of allocating and/or distributing payment may be used.

Correction of Service Errors Examples

[00167] In some embodiments, an error in providing a service may occur. Some embodiments may include determining that such an error occurred, is likely to occur, will occur, and/or so on. In response to such a determination, some embodiments may include taking one or more actions to correct and/or prevent the error.

[00168] Determining that such an error occurred, will occur, is likely to occur, and/or other such determinations may be made in response to received information. For example, such a determination may be made in response to, emailing, and so on to a referral/delivery service provider to identify that a service has not been performed. As another example, such a determination may be made in response to a service provider communicating that they will not be able to perform the service. As yet another example, such a determination may be made in response to location information identifying that a service provider is not in a location to

perform a service (e.g., GPS coordinates show that a picker is not at a merchant to pick when they should be).

[00169] In some embodiments, if an error occurs with respect to a service, a bidding process may be used to determine a new agent to take over the first agent's responsibility. In some embodiments, a first agent may be excluded from bidding on the service and/or any service for a period of time, a number of bids, forever, until restitution is made, and so on in response to the error occurring. In some embodiments, the first agent may be responsible for paying the chosen agent for any additional cost and/or to refund a customer for the first agent's failure. In some embodiments, a system may allocate payments to the second agent from the first agent accordingly, from the first agent to the customer accordingly, and so on.

Various Combination Examples

[00170] Various examples of multiple agents acting together to fulfill one or more orders are given as examples only. It should be recognized that any combinations of agent actions may be used in any embodiment. For example, a single delivery agent may act to deliver one order, relay a second order, pick a third order, and perform other desired action(s) for any desired order or otherwise (e.g., deliver a passenger somewhere if the agent is a cab driver, shop for groceries if the agent was going to do that anyways, return a book to a library if the library is along a route, etc.).

Device and/or Tracking Examples

[00171] Some embodiments may include one or more computing devices that may perform one or more desired actions to facilitate fulfillment of one or more orders by one or more agents. For example, some embodiments, may include a computing device that performs actions related to tracking of locations of one or more service providers, routes, locations of sources, locations of destinations, locations of merchants, locations of intermediaries, and so on. Such a system may receive GPS, address, and/or other location information identifying allocation of a service provider, a merchant, a source, a location, and so on from any desired source (e.g., a central dispatcher, a website that monitors locations, an agent, a customer, a merchant, and so on). One or more mapping techniques may be used to determine routes, distances, meeting points, and so on with respect to the locations. Monitoring such location information and/or using one or more mapping techniques may allow a system to determine if and when two agents meet (e.g., to relay a good), where a good meeting place may be, and so on.

[00172] A system monitoring such information may determine that an agent is not performing a service (e.g. if the agent is not going in a proper direction, not in a proper location, etc.). As

discussed above, in response to determining the agent location is not correct, the system may take a desired action to correct and/or prevent an error. For example, the system may find a replacement, may retransmit information, may request a verification that the service will be performed as desired, and so on. Location information may be received form GPS devices, a merchant, a computer system, a central GPS system (e.g., a cab driver dispatcher, New York City cab monitoring service, etc.).

[00173] In some embodiments, one or more computer devices may perform any desired actions to determine partial services, complete services, and/or facilitate bidding for such sub and complete services. For example, in some embodiments, a system may identify deliveries and/or tasks that need service through an interface. The system may receive bids to complete the services and/or parts of the services. The system may determine that a set of bids for a set of parts makes up a whole service. The system may treat that set of bids as a bid for a complete service. In some embodiments, a system may establish an auction for a part of a service if the system receives and/or otherwise determines that another part of the service has been bid on and/or assigned to another service agent. If a bid is received for the other auction, the combined set of bids may be treated as a bid for the complete service. It should be recognized that any method for determining a desire for bids on parts of a service, determining that a service agent should service part of n order, soliciting interest in performing part of a service, comparing costs of choosing multiple service agents over a single service agent, and so on may be used and/or performed by a computer device as desired.

Brick and Mortar Examples

[00174] Some embodiments may include facilitating delivery from a merchant based on actions of a customer. A customer may identify goods for an order, identify delivery desires, make payments, and so on proximate to the merchant. Information may be transmitted to and/or received by a delivery/referral service, and a delivery may be facilitated in response. Such an embodiment may allow a customer to establish delivery of goods from a merchant while proximate to a merchant (e.g., by using a delivery kiosk, by using a computing device, by interacting with an employee, and so on).

[00175] For example, in some embodiments, a customer may be at a store and arrange for delivery of one or more goods sold by the store. In some embodiments, arranging for such a delivery may include accessing a web page (e.g., from a smart phone, laptop, kiosk, etc.) to enter information about a delivery, interacting with an employee of the merchant who may enter delivery information through a POS terminal (e.g., a cash register, a credit card processing

interface), laptop, telephone, and/or other device, sending a text or other communication and so on. Some embodiments may include an identification of a set of goods for an order, an identification of delivery desires, a receipt and/or transmission of delivery information, a facilitation of delivery, an allocation of money, and/or any desired actions.

[00176] Some embodiments may include identifying one or more goods. Such identification may include a customer choosing one or more goods offered for sale by a merchant. Such a customer may bring the goods to a POS terminal for checkout, pay for goods, and so on as is known by shoppers. Such identifying may include entering information into a POS terminal (e.g., by an employee). Such identifying may include receiving UPC and/or other identification information (e.g., by a processor of a POS terminal, by a kiosk, by a referral and/or delivery service). In some embodiments, a POS terminal may identify the goods based on information entered (e.g., UPC scans, selections through a keypad). In some embodiments, such identifying may include identifying based on an order number, determining and order number that represents the goods, and so on. An order number may be used to identify the order (e.g., a receipt may be printed with an order number that may be used to identify the goods). Such identifying may be made by a POS terminal, a kiosk, a delivery/referral system, and so on.

[00177] Some embodiments may include identifying one or more delivery parameters. Such delivery parameters may include, for example, delivery times, delivery destinations, whether a customer must sign for delivery, names of allowed recipients, price for delivery, and/or any other information that may define a delivery. Such identification may be made by a customer, by a device, by an employee, and so on. For example, an employee may operate a POS terminal (e.g., an employee may ask a customer for such information and enter it into a POS terminal). Such identification may be made by a delivery/referral service system (e.g., such a system may receive information identifying delivery parameters). Such identification may be made by a computer system (e.g., a kiosk into which a customer may enter such information).

[00178] Some embodiments may include communication regarding delivery and/or order information. For example, in some embodiments, a delivery/referral system may receive information identifying one or more orders to fulfill (e.g., information that indicates that an order number is to be delivered from a location to another location, the identified goods and/or delivery parameters). In some embodiments, such information may be transmitted, for example, from a kiosk into which a customer or other user may have entered information related to the delivery, from a POS terminal into which an employee has entered information related to the delivery, from any device into which any entity has entered information related to the delivery (e.g., a smart phone, a telephone, a laptop, and so on). Such information may be communicated

in a form of an electronic message that may be interpreted in a desired manner. Such information may be communicated in response to identifying such information.

[00179] Some embodiments may include facilitating delivery of the goods from the merchant to the destination. Such facilitating may include the communication of information discussed above. Such facilitation may include communication any information, and/or performing any other actions that may aid in and/or perform the delivery of an order. Various examples of actions that may be performed to facilitate a delivery are given elsewhere herein. Such facilitating may be performed by a delivery and/or referral system as described herein.

[00180] Some embodiments may include allocating a payment. For example, in some embodiments, a portion of a payment for the order may be allocated to one or more service agents and/or a delivery/referral service (e.g., allocated to a delivery agent and/or a delivery/referral provider). In some embodiments, a customer may make a payment above the purchase price to pay for the delivery (e.g., as part of the sale transaction at a POS terminal, as part of a separate transaction through a kiosk or smart phone, etc.). In some embodiments no such extra payment may be made, but rather a portion of the price paid for the goods sold by the merchant may be allocated to pay for such services. Allocation may be performed by a POS terminal, a kiosk, a delivery/referral system, and so on. Some embodiments may include settling such an allocation by transferring money. Such allocation may be performed in response to determining that a service has been performed, in response to determining that a service has been requested, in response to a facilitating of a delivery, and so on.

[00181] In some embodiments, facilitating a delivery may include facilitating a pickup of one or more goods from a merchant. In some embodiments, a pickup may take place from a merchant where an order is placed. In some embodiments, a pickup may take place elsewhere. For example, in some embodiments, a pickup may take place at another merchant of a same chain that is located closer to the destination of the delivery (e.g., a different Best Buy store than where the customer places the order). In some embodiments, a pickup may take place from a warehouse rather than a store. Some embodiments may include communication regarding the pickup location (e.g., as discussed above such as to a delivery agent). Some embodiments may include determining such a location for pickup. Such a location may be determined based on a desired of a merchant, based on an inventory level, based on a distance of travel between source and destination, and so on. Some embodiments may include communicating an identity of a delivery agent to a merchant to authorize the agent to make the pickup. Some embodiments may include communicating a bonding information (e.g. a password, an ID, etc.) to one or more of the merchant and/or delivery agent to authorize the pickup. Some embodiments may include

determining such bonding information. Such communication and/or determining may take place in response to choosing a delivery agent to fulfill an order.

[00182] Some embodiments may include one or more computing devices that may act to facilitate such delivery. For example, in some embodiments, a POS terminal may take one or more actions (e.g., transmitting delivery information, identifying an order and/or delivery information, determining a location for pickup, receive entry by an employee, identify an order number, provide one or more interfaces for entry of information, allocate payment), a kiosk or other device operated by a customer may take one or more actions (e.g., receive order number information, receive goods information, receive delivery information, transmit information, provide one or more interfaces for entry of information, determine pickup location, allocate payment), a delivery and/or referral system may take one or more actions (e.g., facilitate delivery, auction a delivery route, receive order , good, and/or delivery information, arrange for delivery, transmit delivery information to delivery agents, allocate payment), and/or any computing device may take any desired action.

[00183] As another example such as one illustrated in Figure 12, some embodiments may include a point of sale terminal 1201 configured to receive information about one or more items purchased at a merchant by a customer, receive payment information for the purchase of the one or more items, receive information about a destination 1203 for a delivery of the one or more items, and transmit information about the delivery to a computing device 1205 of a delivery service to arrange for the one or more items to be delivered from the merchant to the customer; and a computing device of a delivery service configured to receive the information about the delivery from the point of sale terminal, initiate an auction to determine which of a plurality of delivery agents should deliver the items from the merchant to the customer, select a delivery agent 1207 based on the auction, and facilitate delivery of the items from the merchant to the customer using the selected delivery agent. Such a point of sale terminal may include a cash register.

Mobile Device Examples

[00184] Some embodiments may include identifying goods by a mobile device (e.g., a smartphone). For example, a customer may scan a UPC code of a good into a smartphone as an identification of the good. Such identification of the good may be used to facilitate delivery of the good.

[00185] In some embodiments, identification of goods for an order may be performed by and/or using a portable computing device. For example, in some embodiments, a smart phone

and/or cell phone having a camera may be used to identify goods for an order. For example, a customer may take a picture of a product and/or bar code, scan a bar code, enter information identifying a product, and so on. Such information may identify goods for an order. In some embodiments information transmitted about a good may include a picture of the good, a description of the good, a code (e.g., a UPC) identifying the good and so on. Such information may be sent to a delivery agent, merchant, picker, packer, and so on to facilitate delivery.

[00186] In some embodiments, information identifying goods for an order may be transmitted to a delivery/referral service. The delivery/referral service may facilitate delivery of the goods to the customer (e.g., a destination identified by the customer). Various examples of facilitating delivery are given herein. In some embodiments, facilitating delivery may include facilitating a picking and/or packing of the goods. Facilitating picking of the goods may include transmitting an indication to a delivery agent and/or picking agent of the goods to be picked (e.g., collected for the order). The agent may go to the store and pick the goods from the shelf. In some embodiments, a merchant may pick goods for themselves. For example, a fax or other indication of the goods may be sent to the merchant, the merchant may pick the goods identified. A picking agent and/or a separate packing agent may pack the goods for delivery (e.g., place them in condition for delivery). The picking and/or packing agent may pass the goods on to the delivery agent in embodiments in which the delivery agent does not perform picking and/or packing.

[00187] In some embodiments, a customer may pay for the goods and/or delivery to the merchant (e.g., by identifying the goods to an employee), may pay for the goods and/or delivery upon delivery (e.g., the delivery agent may accept the payment, the payment may be allocated to the merchant and so on from the received payment), may pay for the goods through the mobile device (e.g., entering credit card or other information before during and/or after placing the order through the mobile device. Payment may be allocated and/or distributed among parties as desired.

[00188] In some embodiments, any desired characteristics of a delivery may be entered through a mobile device interface and/or transmitted to a delivery/referral system. For example, a customer may identify quantities of a good, time for delivery, location for delivery, and so on through an interface of a mobile device. Such information may be transmitted for use in facilitating delivery of the goods.

[00189] In some embodiments, merchant information may be included in information identifying an order and/or goods. Such merchant information may identify a merchant. Merchant information may be entered by a user through an interface. In some embodiments,

merchant information may include GPS coordinates of the merchant. Such information may be transmitted based on the location of the mobile device at a time of scanning or other identification of a good. Such GPS information may include an averaging of GPS coordinates of a plurality of goods, a plurality of GPS coordinates corresponding to respective goods, and so on. For example, such GPS coordinates of a plurality of goods may be used by a picking agent to more quickly locate goods (e.g., by going to the GPS coordinates). Accordingly, such GPS information may be transmitted to a delivery agent, a picking agent, a merchant, and so on. Such GPS information may be used to identify a merchant to send payment and/or order information to (e.g., based on recorded GPS information of the location of the merchant in a database of merchant GPS information. For example, GPS coordinates may be matched in a database of merchant GPS coordinates by a delivery/referral system to determine a merchant to transmit order information to and/or allocate payments to. It should be recognized that although GPS coordinates are given as an example, any location information may be used in various embodiments, such as a triangulated location, an estimated location, a location based on wireless network signals, and so on.

[00190] Figure 13 illustrates an example method that may be used in some embodiments. As indicated at block 1301, such a method may include receiving a plurality of respective indications of items captured by a camera of a cellular telephone (e.g., barcodes, pictures). As indicated at block 1303, such a method may include receiving an indication of a payment for the items from the cellular telephone. As indicated at block 1305, such a method may include receiving an indication of a destination for a delivery of the items from the cellular telephone and/or any other order related information (e.g., merchant, location of scans, time of delivery). As indicated at block 1307, such a method may include facilitating delivery of the items to the destination using a selected delivery agent (e.g., selecting an agent to pick/pack, selecting a delivery agent, auctioning service providers, information)

[00191] Although some embodiments have been described with respect to delivery from one merchant, it should be recognized that a mobile device may be used to enter an order for goods from multiple merchants. Various examples of facilitating delivery from multiple merchants are given herein.

Suggestion Examples

[00192] Some embodiments may include making a suggestion based on locations (e.g., presenting information through a user interface). Such a suggestion may be made in response to an order from a first merchant being placed and/or received. Such a suggestion may include a suggestion related to a second merchant. Such a suggestion related to a second merchant that is

proximate to a location and/or route related to the first merchant and/or the customer (e.g., close to the first merchant, close to a route between the first merchant and the customer, close to the customer). Some embodiments may include determining that a second merchant is close to a location and/or route (e.g., within a threshold expected time frame, within a distance threshold). In some embodiments, making a suggestion may be performed in response to such a determination.

[00193] Some embodiments may include suggesting a merchant and/or goods to a customer. Such a suggestion may be made by a delivery/referral system, by a delivery agent, by a merchant, and so on. Such a suggestion may be made through an interface (e.g., a webpage) that may be used to place an order. In some embodiments, such a suggestion may include a suggestion based on a location (e.g., a location of a merchant, a location of a destination, a location of a service providing agent, a route between one location and another location). For example, some embodiments may include making a suggestion of a merchant and/or good sold by a merchant that is near the merchant for which an order is placed, a merchant that is along a route between the merchant for which an order is placed and a customer, a merchant within a threshold distance from a route between a merchant and a destination, a merchant that is along a route and/or within a threshold distance from a route between a service providing agent and a merchant (e.g., a picker, a deliver agent, a recipient agent, and so on), and so on. In some embodiments, such a suggestion may be based on ordered items and/or user profiles (e.g., a knowledge that a last time an order was placed a second order was also placed, a knowledge that a prior order may have been used such as an order of tissue paper, a knowledge that a favored merchant is near a route, and so on).

[00194] Some embodiments may include suggesting to a service provider. Such suggestion may include a suggestion based on a location ((e.g., a location of a merchant that the agent is performing a service with respect to, a location of a destination that the agent is performing a service with respect to, a location of a service providing agent, a route between one location and another location). For example, if a delivery agent is making a delivery from a first location to second location, a suggestion may be made that the merchant also make a delivery from a third location that is along the route from the first location to the second location to a fourth location (e.g., one that may be near the second location). Such a suggestion may include identifying an auction that is taking place with respect to a particular service. Some embodiments may include determining one or more locations and/or distances of merchant(s), customer(s), route(s), delivery agent(s), and so on such as by using one or more mapping techniques and/or received location information as discussed herein. Some embodiments may include determining that a

suggestion should be made based on such one or more locations and/or distances (e.g., based on a distance being below a threshold, based on an expected additional time being below a threshold, and so on).

[00195] Some embodiments may include one or more computer systems that may process location information and/or perform one or more actions based on location information. For example, a delivery/referral service may receive information about locations of one or more agents, source information for one or more orders, destination information for one or more orders, routes for one or more deliveries and/or other services, and so on. In some embodiments, such a system may determine a route based on a beginning and ending location (e.g., using a mapping technique, using an outside source such as Google maps, and so on). In some embodiments, locations may be determined based on GPS or other location information in a database (e.g., a location of a merchant may be determined based on location information for the merchant stored in the database). In some embodiments, locations may be determined based on location information received about an agent and/or destination (e.g., a GPS location of a cab, an address for a delivery). In some embodiments locations may be compared to one another and/or to routes to determine a distance and/or expected time. In some embodiments, a suggestion, assignment, etc. may be facilitated (e.g., information may be transmitted) based on such a comparison (e.g., if the comparison is less than a threshold such as 1 mile). In some embodiments, records regarding distances and/or times may be recorded and used in the future to determine expected times (e.g., through a lookup table of past times between locations).

[00196] In some embodiments, a referral/delivery service may provide a payment and/or determine a payment to a merchant, delivery agent, and/or other entity that makes a suggestion in response to a customer and/or service agent accepting the suggestion. In some embodiments, a delivery agent may accept a suggested route at a discounted price because the route does not add much time and/or expense to a delivery. Similar acceptance may be made for any service provider (e.g., a picker that is already at a store for another order). In some embodiments in which cost of service providing is passed on to a customer or merchant, an allocation of the cost of the two routes (e.g., or more routes as desired) may be made between the two routes based on the cost of both routes. For example, the cost may be reduced for the first route and increased for the second route such that the second route is not blessed with a lower fee because it was accepted second. In some embodiments, the cost may not be passed along to the costumer or merchant, so that the referral/delivery service may take the lowering in price as part of a payment.

Purchase Arbitrage Examples

[00197] Some embodiments may include adjusting a source of goods based on prices of the goods at other sources. Figure 14 illustrates an example method that may be performed in some embodiments. In some embodiments, a customer may choose one or more goods for delivery from a particular merchant. As indicated at block 1401, some embodiments may include receiving information about one or more goods for an order for a first merchant. In some embodiments, some or all of such goods may be a good offered for sale from a plurality of merchants. In some embodiments, a delivery/referral system may be aware of the location of each merchant and/or the prices for which the goods are offered by each merchant. As indicated at block 1403, some embodiments may include determining that a second merchant offers one or more goods for an order. Such determining may be performed in response to receiving information about an order. In some embodiments, in response to receiving an order for goods from a first merchant and/or determining that one or more goods of the order may be offered by a second merchant, a delivery/referral service may determine that fulfilling at least a part of the order form the second merchant would be advantageous as indicated at block 1405. Such a determination may be made based on a price of the goods offered by the first and second merchant, a location of the first and/or second merchant, a cost of providing delivery services for each of the first and second merchant and/or any desired information. As indicated at block 1407, some embodiments may include facilitating fulfilling at least a part of the order from the second merchant in response to such a determination (e.g., facilitating delivery).

[00198] For example, in some embodiments, if a good is offered for less money at a second merchant, then the good may be provided from the second merchant rather than the first merchant. In some embodiments, if a second merchant is closer to a destination and/or service provider (e.g., location of and/or route of) than the first merchant, the good may be provided from the second merchant rather than the first merchant. In some embodiments, if it is cheaper to provide a delivery from the second merchant than the first merchant, the good may be provided form the second merchant rather than the first merchant (e.g., if an auction for both deliveries result in delivery form the second merchant being cheaper, then the second merchant may be chosen and the first auction may be cancelled/invalidated). In some embodiments, such comparisons may require a threshold different (e.g., 1 dollar, 1 mile, 10%). Some embodiments may include allowing an auction between merchants to fulfill the order.

[00199] In some embodiments, a referral/delivery service may provide the customer with any price discrepancy and/or may keep the price discrepancy as a profit. In some embodiments, the service may become a point of returns, complaints, and/or exchanges of the goods. This may

place the service as what is viewed as the source of the goods such that the user is not aware of the change from one merchant to another merchant.

[00200] In some embodiments, the delivery/referral system receives a delivery order for a plurality of items. These items may include both durable goods and non-durable goods. In the exemplary example described herein, the plurality of items are products that are typically found in a grocery store. But the system is capable of handling any type of goods. Furthermore, as detailed later below, the system also may be used with services, such as laundry and lawn care services.

[00201] Each selected items may include an unique identifier, such as a barcode, a UPC label and/or a RFID chip. Since the brand and size of a product has a significant impact on its price, it is important for the system to accurate detect the products when comparing the prices. To this end, the unique identifier helps the system ensure that it is comparing the exact same product when performing the price analysis. For example, if a customer requests an 18-oz size of Jif® Creamy Peanut Butter, the UPC label helps ensure that the system accurately identifies this item. Each provider also may provide the system with the price of their delivery fee.

[00202] In some embodiments, the system identifies a list of providers that offer the requested products. The system then determines the price at which each product is being offered. In one embodiment, the system transmits the order request to all providers within its database. Providers that carry the requested items may respond with their prices for the items. In another embodiment, the system has a list of product prices saved in its database. This list may be updated on a regular basis by the various providers.

[00203] In some embodiments, the system also determines a location of the user . The system may use this location to determine which providers are within a radius of delivery. The location of the user may be identified via any number of methods. In one example, the user submits her order request on a computing device, such as an iPhone, which is integrated with a GPS device. The system uses the GPS coordinates to determine the user's location. In another example, the user inputs her exact location, such as by entering a zipcode or an address of her location. Once the location of the user has been determined, the system may calculate the distance between a provider and the user's location.

[00204] In one embodiment, the delivery/referral system calculates a total cost for delivery for each provider that offers the requested items. In some embodiments, the total cost for delivery includes both the price of the items and a delivery fee. This calculation is useful, since when dealing with multiple and disparate items, it is often difficult to gauge which provider will eventually offer the best total price. For example, a customer who is interested in purchasing a

number of disparate items, such as Jif® Creamy Peanut Butter, a bag of Hershey Kisses, Pampers diapers and a 12-pack of Diet Coke, may have a difficult time discerning which provider (e.g., grocery store) offers the best overall price. One grocery store may be selling the diapers at a higher price, but offering a sale on its diet cokes. Another grocery store may offer free delivery for purchases that exceed $25, which drastically affect the total overall price. In some embodiments, the system also reduces the total over price by one or more coupons submitted by the customer.

[00205] The delivery/referral system may display all of the results on a display. The system may lists the provider, the distance from the customer, the cost of the products, the delivery fee and the total cost to the customer. In one embodiment, the system also lists any specials or rewards that are being offered by the provider. As described above, the customer may select a particular provider for any number of reasons. For example, the customer may chose the provider that offers the least expensive overall price. However, the customer also may wish to choose a provider that is nearest to her location, perhaps on the theory that the delivery will be faster coming from a closer source. In another example, the customer may choose a provider solely based on loyalty or personal experience with the provider. For instance, the customer may prefer to pay a little more in order to give her business to a local Mom & Pop store.

[00206] In some embodiments, the system also displays customer reviews next to each provider. Customer who have previously received delivery items from the provider are permitted to post these reviews. As such, these reviews may affect the decision of a future customer. For instance, the customer may wish to avoid a provider who frequently delivers poor quality or damaged items.

[00207] Although the examples described above refer to grocery items, the system is capable of handling any number of other goods or services. In one embodiment, the system receives a request for dry cleaning/laundry services. The customer provides a list of items that need cleaning, such as 5 men's dress shirts, 1 silk dress, a wool coat and a down comforter. The system transmits the order request to all available providers who are within a radius of the customer. Similar to example with groceries, each dry cleaning provider may charge different prices for each of the requested services. For example, one dry cleaner may only charge $2 per shirt, but charge a very high price to clean the duvet comforter. In one embodiment, the providers offer a pick-up service, where they collect the items that require cleaning from the user's location. Similar to a delivery fee, the pick-up fee is added to the total cost for that provider. In another embodiment, the customer drops off the items at the provider's location.

[00208] In another example, the delivery/referral system is capable of handling lawn care services. Typically, a lawn care provider may offer any number of related services, such as cutting the lawn, trimming the edge, pruning of trees, removing debris, fertilizing the lawn, applying pesticides, etc.. The system is capable of receiving an order for these services and transmitting them to available providers. The providers then submit the prices for each of the desired services. The system then computes a total overall prices for each of the lawn care providers.

Wide Syndication Examples

[00209] It should be recognized that while various embodiments may be described in terms of a delivery agent, that various examples, methods, systems, embodiments, and so on may apply to any desired service provider may be used in various embodiments. For example pickers, packers, payment processors, merchants themselves, receivers, coordinators, intermediaries, and so on may be used in some embodiments. For example, some embodiments may include bids, auctions, filtering, selections, transmitting, receiving, facilitating, determining, selecting, and so on with respect to such service providers in similar and/or different manners than described with respect to delivery agents. For example, a packer at a grocery store and/or a picker at a grocery store may be selected based on an auction process, a merchant itself may be chosen based on such a process for a fungible and/or other good that may be available from more than one merchant, and so on.

[00210] A referral and/or delivery service may allocate a payment among any services providers that provide a service to fulfill an order. For example, a referral/delivery service may accept a flat fee based on an order amount (e.g., 10% of a fee charged by a merchant). A percentage of such a flat fee may be allocated and/or provided to each service provider that aids in fulfilling an order. The amount and/or percentage may be determined based on one or more auctions and/or set fees. In some embodiments, a referral/delivery service may charge a service fee to a merchant and/or customer to provide each service. Such service fee may be on top of and/or part of a fee for the delivery/referral service. It should be recognized that any method for distributing and/or allocating fees may be used.

Bonding Examples

[00211] Some embodiments may include bonding one or more service providers. Some examples of methods and/or systems that may be used for bonding are described in U.S. patent publication 2009/0083135 entitled Products and Processes for Revenue Sharing and Delivery, which is hereby incorporated herein by reference. In some embodiments, a referral/delivery

system may bond and/or request bonding information from a service providing agent before the service providing agent is tasked with performing a service (e.g., on demand in response to a request to perform the service, as part of a registration process for performing any services, and so on). In some embodiments, bonding may include determining that an amount of money is available to forfeit by or on behalf of the agent if the service is not performed. Such an amount may include an amount that is based on a value of a good or service being provided (e.g., a percentage value, an entire value, and so on). In some embodiments, a bonding may include a credential that may be indicative of trustworthiness.

[00212] In various embodiments, any desired method of bonding a service provider may be used. For example, in some embodiments, a rating of prior users may act as a bonding (e.g., from the service and/or another service such as Yelp), a driving record may act as a bonding, a background check may act as a bonding, a university ID may act as a bonding, a recommendation from a member of a social network may act as a bonding (e.g., of a customer, and/or merchant), and so on. In some embodiments bonding may be performed using a bonding agent. Similar to other service providers discussed herein, such a bonding agent may be chosen and/or bond may be facilitate through such a bonding agent using any desired process or system such as those discussed herein.

[00213] In some embodiments, indications of such bonding devices may be received by a delivery/referral service and used to determine that an agent is sufficiently bonded for a task. For example, a university ID image may be transmitted from an agent to a service, a driving record may be transmitted from a delivery agent to a service, a third party may transmit desired information (e.g., a state agency may transmit a driving record, a bank may transmit an indication of money available in an account, etc.), and so on. Such information may be processed to determine that an agent has a sufficient level of bonding. In response to such a determination, an agent may be included in an auction (e.g., may be allowed to bid in an auction, may be authorized to bid in an auction, may be notified of an auction, may not be prevented from bidding in an auction), may be chosen for performance of a service, may be transmitted information about a service to be provided, and so on. A customer and/or merchant may indicate a level of bonding desired through a user interface (e.g., a customer may indicate that a university student should be used, that an agent with a rating above 3.5 stars should be used, and so on).

[00214] For example, in some embodiments, a picker may be bonding based on a rating of people that have used the picker for the merchant. A delivery agent may be bonded based on a driving record received from a state agency. A receiver (e.g., a person that may receive and/or

unpacks delivered goods) may be bonded based on having a university ID. Such examples of bonding are given as non-limiting and may be used in any combination for any service provider as desired.

Interfacing Examples

[00215] Some embodiments may include providing an interface and/or API to one or more sources for ordering goods. Such source may include, for example, web pages, brick and mortar stores, POS terminals, mobile devices, and so on. Such an interface may be used to communicate with a referral/delivery service (e.g., to submit requests for delivery). For example, in some embodiments, a website that offers goods for sale may communicate with a referral/delivery service to provide delivery services for the goods, a brick and mortar store may include a POS terminal or other device that may interface with a referral/delivery service to provide delivery service for the store, and so on.

[00216] In some embodiments, a website that allows for ordering of goods and/or services may interface with a delivery/referral service. For example, some such websites may include Stubhub, Craigslist, Ebay, any merchant's website, Grubhub, and so on. In order to provide delivery or other services related to an order, such a website may transmit information to a delivery/referral service. In some embodiments, using such a delivery/referral service for delivery may be one option out of a plurality of options (e.g., a user may be able to select Fed Ex or a delivery service). For example, an interface of the website may allow a user to operate a control to select a delivery service, and/or enter any desired delivery information.

[00217] Commination between such a website and/or other source may be unidirectional and/or bi directions. For example, a delivery service may communicate a result to a website and/or customer of the website, may confirm information, and so on. In some embodiments, allocations and/or distributions of payments may be performed by the website, by the delivery service, by a delivery agent, and so on.

[00218] Some embodiments may allow a user to indicate a maximum cost of a delivery service. For example, if a user of a website selects to use the service and an auction is performed to determine a cost of the service, some embodiments may pass the cost of the auction to the customer. The customer may therefore not know the cost of the delivery until after the auction. The user may set a maximum cost such that a delivery may not be performed using the delivery service if the cost exceeds the maximum. In some embodiments such a maximum amount may be used in a reverse auction as a starting price. Another delivery method may be chosen instead (e.g., Fed Ex). In some embodiments, a flat rate may be charged for the delivery service and an auction may not be used, an auction may be used, but the delivery service may keep any

difference between the auctions price and the flat rate, and/or any desired method of charging a customer for delivery may be used.

Service within Service Examples

[00219] In some embodiments, a first referral/delivery service may allow other referral/delivery services to interact with the first referral/delivery service. For example, in some embodiments, another delivery/referral service may act as a pass through to the first delivery/referral service (e.g., may collect orders and pass them to the first delivery/referral service). In some embodiments, the other delivery/referral service may offload extra work the first delivery/referral service. In some embodiments, a first delivery/referral service may pay the other delivery/referral service for a referral of an order.

[00220] In some embodiments, a church, a community group, and so on may establish another referral/delivery service. For example, such other referral/delivery service may operate on a website that lists goods and/or allows for submission of orders. Orders submitted through the website may be communicated to the referral/delivery service from the other delivery/referral service. The other delivery/referral service may receive a payment and/or be allocated a payment for the referral and the referral/delivery service may make the delivery. Accordingly, the other referral/delivery service may make a profit by referring orders to the referral/delivery service.

Syndicate Enabling Technology Examples

[00221] Some embodiments may include providing a payment for a service of an enabling action. For example, in some embodiments, assigning a merchant up to a service may include an enabling service, maintaining a menu may include an enabling service, performing a binding may include an enabling service, maintaining a server may include an enabling service, updating inventories may be considered an enabling service (e.g., so that a delivery service may know where goods are in stock at various merchants to select a merchant to fulfill an order), and so on. Service providers for such enabling services may be syndicated (e.g., auctions, assigned, and so on) to third parties. Such enabling service providers may be provided with a payment (e.g., a portion of a fee earned because of the provided enabling service, a portion of a fee received for each merchant for which a menu is maintained, and so on). Such percentages may be auctioned to various bidders to select one that should provide the service in some embodiments.

[00222] Having thus described several aspects of at least one embodiment of this invention, it is to be appreciated various alterations, modifications, and improvements will readily occur to those skilled in the art. Such alterations, modifications, and improvements are intended to be

part of this disclosure, and are intended to be within the scope of the invention. Accordingly, the foregoing description and drawings are by way of example only.

XII. Embodiments

[00223] The following should be understood as embodiments, not as claims.

[00224] A. An apparatus comprising a non-transitory computer readable medium having stored thereon a plurality of instructions that when executed by a computing device, causes the computing device to perform a method comprising: receiving an order for a restaurant from a user of a delivery service, in which the order includes an order to deliver a set of food items from the restaurant to the user; transmitting an indication of the order to the restaurant; determining that a plurality of delivery agents should be used to perform delivery of the set of food items from the restaurant to the user; selecting a first delivery agent to transfer the set of food items from the restaurant to a first location; selecting a second delivery agent to transfer the set of food items the first location to the user; and facilitating delivery of the food items from the restaurant to the user using the first and second delivery agents.

[00225] A.1. The apparatus of claim A, in which facilitating delivery includes notifying the first and second delivery agents of the first location and a time to meet at the first location to transfer the set of food items from the first delivery agent to the second delivery agent. A.2. The apparatus of claim A, in which facilitating delivery includes arranging an intermediary at the first location to receive the set of food items from the first delivery agent, hold the set of food items for an amount of time, and provide the set of food items to the second delivery agent. A.2.1. The apparatus of claim A.2, in which the order includes an order for a food item from a second restaurant, in which the intermediary includes the second restaurant, and in which arranging includes arranging for the intermediary to add the food item to the set of food items provided to the second delivery agent. A.3. The apparatus of claim A, in which determining that the plurality of delivery agents should be used incudes initiating an auction for delivery of the set of food items and comparing costs submitted to the auction for complete deliveries to prices submitted to the auction for partial deliveries. A.3.1. The apparatus of claim A.3, in which selecting the first and second delivery agents includes selecting based on a most affordable combination of prices submitted to the auction.

[00226] A.4. The apparatus of claim A, in which the plurality of delivery agents includes cab drivers. A.5. The apparatus of claim A, in which selecting the first and second delivery agents includes selecting based on a comparison of a route of travel of the first and second delivery agents and the locations of the user, the first location, and the restaurant. A.5.1. The

apparatus of claim A.5, in which selecting the first delivery agent includes selecting based on a route of expected travel passing proximate to each of the restaurant and the first location. A.5.1.1. The apparatus of claim A.5.1, in which the method further comprises receiving an indication of GPS coordinates of the first delivery agent and an indication of a destination of the first delivery agent, and determining the route of expected travel based on the GPS coordinates and the indication of the destination. A.5.2. The apparatus of claim A.5, in which selecting the second delivery agent includes selecting based on a route of expected travel passing proximate to each of the first location and the user. A.5.2.1. The apparatus of claim A.5.2, in which the method further comprises receiving an indication of GPS coordinates of the second delivery agent and an indication of a destination of the second delivery agent, and determining the route of expected travel based on the GPS coordinates and the indication of the destination.

[00227] B. An apparatus comprising: a point of sale terminal configured to: receive information about one or more items purchased at a merchant by a customer, receive payment information for the purchase of the one or more items, receive information about a destination for a delivery of the one or more items, and transmit information about the delivery to a computing device of a delivery service to arrange for the one or more items to be delivered from the merchant to the customer; and the computing device of a delivery service configured to: receive the information about the delivery from the point of sale terminal, initiate an auction to determine which of a plurality of delivery agents should deliver the items from the merchant to the customer, selecting a delivery agent based on the auction, and facilitating delivery of the items from the merchant to the customer using the selected delivery agent.

[00228] B.1. The apparatus of claim B, in which facilitating the delivery includes transmitting information to the selected delivery agent identifying the order and transmitting information to the merchant identifying the selected delivery agent. B.2. The apparatus of claim B, in which the payment information includes payment information for the delivery. B.3. The apparatus of claim B, in which the pint of sale terminal includes a cash register. B.4. The apparatus of claim B, in which the auction includes a reverse auction. B.5. The apparatus of claim B, in which the information about the delivery includes a time for the delivery, and in which facilitating the delivery includes identifying the time to the selected delivery agent. B.6. The apparatus of claim B, in which the information about the delivery includes a destination for the delivery, and in which facilitating the delivery includes identifying the destination to the selected delivery agent.

[00229] C. An apparatus comprising a non-transitory computer readable medium having stored thereon a plurality of instructions that when executed by a computing device, causes the

computing device to perform a method comprising: receiving a plurality of respective indications of items captured by a camera of a cellular telephone; receiving an indication of a payment for the items from the cellular telephone; receiving an indication of a destination for a delivery of the items from the cellular telephone; initiating an auction to determine which of a plurality of delivery agents should deliver the items to the destination; selecting a delivery agent based on the auction; and facilitating delivery of the items to the destination using the selected delivery agent.

[00230] C.1. The apparatus of claim C, in which the indications of the items includes barcodes. C.2. The apparatus of claim C, in which the indications of the items include pictures. C.3. The apparatus of claim C, in which the method includes determining a source of the items based on a database of merchants proximate to the destination that sell the items. C.3.1. The apparatus of claim C.3, in which determining the source includes determining the source based on the lowest prices for which the goods are offered. C.4. The apparatus of claim C, in which the method includes receiving respective indications of respective locations corresponding to the captures of the indications of the items, and determining a merchant to supply the items based on the locations. C.4.1. The apparatus of claim C.4, in which determining the merchant includes comparing the locations with a database of merchant locations. C.4.2. The apparatus of claim C.4, in which the locations include GPS coordinates. C.4.3. The apparatus of claim C.4, in which the method includes: initiating an auction to determine which of a plurality of pickers should pick the items from the shelves of the merchant selecting the picker based on the auction, and facilitating picking of the items from the shelves of the merchant using the selected picker. C.5. The apparatus of claim C, in which the method includes receiving an indication of a merchant to supply the items from the cellular telephone. C.5.1. The apparatus of claim C, in which the method includes: initiating an auction to determine which of a plurality of pickers should pick the items from the shelves of the merchant selecting the picker based on the auction, and facilitating picking of the items from the shelves of the merchant using the selected picker.

[00231] D. A method comprising: receiving, via a processor from a user on a remote device, an order for delivery of a plurality of items, in which each item comprises an unique identifier, in which the processor and the remote device are in electronic communication over a network; determining a location of the user; identifying at least two providers located within a radius of the user, in which each provider is capable of delivering the requested items; computing for each provider a total cost of delivery of the requested items; receiving a request for a first provider to deliver the requested item; and facilitating delivery of the items.

[00232] D.1. The method of claim D, in which the at least two items comprise grocery

items. D.2. The method of claim D, in which the at least two items comprise general merchandising items. D.3. The method of claim D, in which the identifier is a barcode. D.4. The method of claim D, in which the identifier is a UPC label. D.5. The method of claim D, in which the identifier is a RFID chip. D.6. The method of claim D, in which the identifier is use to ensure that each provider is offering the same item. D.7. The method of D, in which at least one of the plurality of providers is a grocery store. D.8. The method of claim D, in which the remote device is a mobile device.

[00233] D.9. The method of claim D, in which determining the location of the user further comprising: receiving indication of a GPS coordinates of the user. D.8.1. The method of claim D.8., in which the GPS coordinates are transmitted by a GPS device that is integrated into the user's device. D.10. The method of claim D, in which determining the location of the user comprises: receiving user-input data indication the location of the user. D.11. The method of claim D, in which the radius is within a delivery region of each provider. D.12. The method of claim D, in which the total cost of delivery comprises: a cost of the plurality of items and a delivery fee. D.12.1. The method of claim D.12., in which the total cost of delivery is reduced by at least one coupon.

[00234] D.13. The method of claim D further comprising: computing a distance of each provider from the location of the user. D.14. The method of claim D further comprising: transmitting information about the at least two providers. D.14.1. The method of claim D.14. in which the information comprises: a distance of each provider from the location of the user. D.14.2. The method of claim D.14., in which the information comprises: a total cost of delivery for each provider. D.14.3. The method of claim D.14, in which the information comprises: a cost of a delivery fee that is charged by each provider.

CLAIMS:

1. A method for facilitating electronic communication over a network with interfaces of computing devices for delivery of items, the method comprising:

receiving, via an interface of a computing device, from an interface of a remote computing device of a user, data representing an order for delivery of a plurality of items, in which each item comprises an unique identifier, in which the computing device and the remote computing device are in electronic communication over a network;

determining a location of the user;

identifying at least two providers located within a radius of the user, in which each provider is capable of delivering the requested plurality of items;

after receiving the order, computing for each of the at least two providers a total cost of delivery of the requested plurality of items;

after identifying the at least two providers within a radius of the user, receiving a request for one of the at least two providers to deliver the requested plurality of items; and

facilitating delivery of the requested plurality of items pursuant to the order.

2. The method of claim 1, in which the at least two items comprise grocery items, and

in which the act of computing for each of the at least two providers a total cost of delivery of the requested plurality of items comprises:

determining a first total cost of delivery for the first provider based on a first delivery fee determined by the first provider; and

determining a second total cost of delivery for a second of the at least two providers based on a second delivery fee determined by the second of the plurality of providers.

3. The method of claim 1, in which the at least two items comprise general merchandising items.

4. The method of claim 1, in which the identifier is a barcode, and in which the request to deliver the requested plurality of items is received from the first provider.

5. The method of claim 1, in which the identifier is a UPC label,

in which, pursuant to the order, the requested plurality of items are purchased by the user and purchased from at least one retailer,

in which the at least two providers each comprise a delivery service provider separate from the at least one retailer,

in which the first provider does not own the requested plurality of items before they are delivered to the user.

6. The method of claim 1, in which the identifier is used to ensure that each provider is offering to deliver the same item.

7. The method of 1, in which at least one of the plurality of providers is a grocery store.

8. The method of claim 1, in which the remote device is a mobile device.

9. The method of claim 1, in which determining the location of the user further comprises receiving indication of a GPS coordinates of the user.

10. The method of claim 9, in which the GPS coordinates are transmitted by a GPS device that is integrated into the user's device.

11. The method of claim 1, in which determining the location of the user comprises: receiving user-input data indicating the location of the user.

12. The method of claim 1, in which the radius is within a delivery region of each provider.

13. The method of claim 1, in which the total cost of delivery comprises: a cost of the plurality of items and a delivery fee.

14. The method of claim 13, in which the total cost of delivery is reduced by at least one coupon.

15. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

computing a distance of each provider from the location of the user.

16. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

transmitting information about the at least two providers.

17. The method of claim 16, in which the information comprises:

a distance of each provider from the location of the user.

18. The method of claim 16, in which the information comprises:

a total cost of delivery for each provider.

19. The method of claim 16, in which the information comprises:

a cost of a delivery fee that is charged by each provider.

20. An apparatus for facilitating electronic communication over a network with interfaces of computing devices of users for delivery of items to users, the apparatus comprising:

a processor of a computing device; and

a memory, in which the memory stores instructions which, when executed by the processor of the computing device, direct the processor of the computing device to:

receive from an interface of a remote computing device of a user, data representing an order for delivery of a plurality of items, in which each item comprises an unique identifier;

determine a location of the user; identify at least two providers located within a radius of the user, in which each provider is capable of delivering the requested plurality of items;

after receiving the order, compute for each of the at least two providers a total cost of delivery of the requested plurality of items;

after identifying the at least two providers within a radius of the user, receive a request for one of the at least two providers to deliver the requested plurality of items; and

facilitate delivery of the requested plurality of items pursuant to the order.

21. An article of manufacture comprising:

a computer-readable medium that is non-transitory, in which the computer-readable medium stores instructions for facilitating electronic communication over a network with interfaces of computing devices for delivery of items, the instructions which, when executed by a processor of a computing device, direct the processor of the computing device to:

receive from an interface of a remote computing device of a user, data representing an order for delivery of a plurality of items, in which each item comprises an unique identifier;

determine a location of the user;

identify at least two providers located within a radius of the user, in which each provider is capable of delivering the requested plurality of items;

after receiving the order, compute for each of the at least two providers a total cost of delivery of the requested plurality of items;

after identifying the at least two providers within a radius of the user, receive a request for one of the at least two providers to deliver the requested plurality of items; and

facilitate delivery of the requested plurality of items pursuant to the order.