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(54) Title: ELECTRONIC CONTENT DISTRIBUTION AND EXCHANGE SYSTEM

(57) Abstract: An electronic content distribution and exchange system provides authenticated, reliable content downloads and tracking capabilities. Content is distributed to users through the invention's architecture. A user registers for the purchase of content through an interface on a client system or via a Web site. The purchase is for a license to the content, not for the content itself. A list of available content is displayed to the user through the client system or the Web site. The invention's central servers log the purchase of the content into a licnese database. The electronic copy of the song may be already resident on the client system in a hidden area, carouseled in a protected broadcast channel, in the central database ready to be sent out in slices, or resident on a secure server on the Internet. The user accesses content through the client system's user interface where the user plays the content and controls its playback. The invention's service provides an exchange capability similar to stock trading whereby owners offer licenses to various electronic for sale. A seller places his license for a particular content up for a particular content up for sale on the central server where a buyer that is interested in teh license places a bid. When a price is agreed to, the inventio's central server transfers license ownership in the license database to the new owner.