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(54) **METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR ARCHIVING AND VISUALIZING DIGITAL IMAGES**

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G06K 9/54 (2006.01)
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(52) **U.S. Cl.** **382/305**; 382/306; 382/307

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See application file for complete search history.

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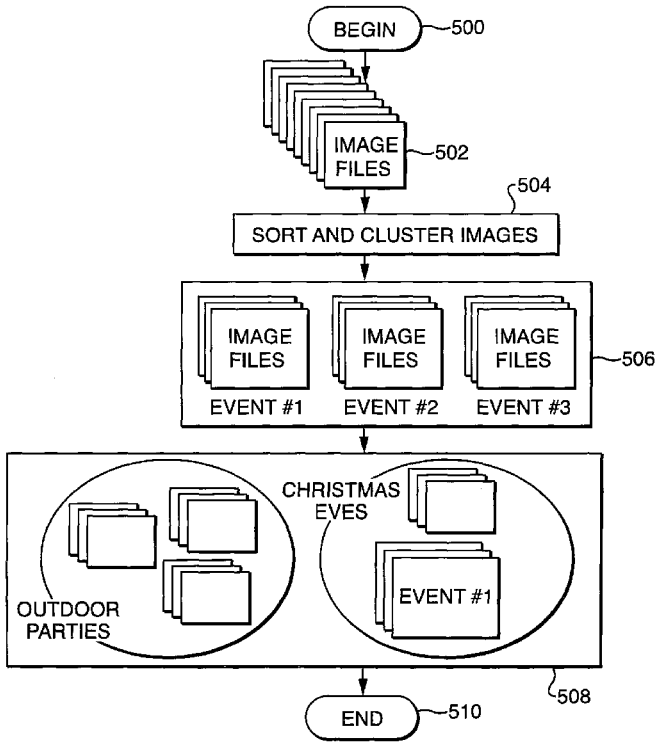
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A computer based, digital image management system that visually presents an entire archive in a manner that facilitates easy, non-textual, searching for specific images. The system consists of two main elements; a file management methodology, and a graphical user interface. The file management method utilizes reference files that contain multiple properties (metadata) relating to each image file. Image files are grouped into a multiplicity of collections based on user-defined associations of the properties. The graphical user interface visually represents the groups of image files on 2-dimensional or 3-dimensional graphic metaphors. In addition, the graphical interface uses multiple display variables such as icons, mnemonics, size, movement, color, and luminance to signify relationships between groups, and/or communicate key properties of individual or groups of images.

44 Claims, 20 Drawing Sheets