United States Patent [19]

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[54] **FLEXIBLE CONTEXT SEARCHABLE ON-LINE INFORMATION SYSTEM WITH HELP FILES AND MODULES FOR ON-LINE COMPUTER SYSTEM DOCUMENTATION**

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** **364/900**; 364/927.2; 364/974.6; 364/948.2; 364/962

[58] **Field of Search** 364/200, 900

[56] **References Cited**

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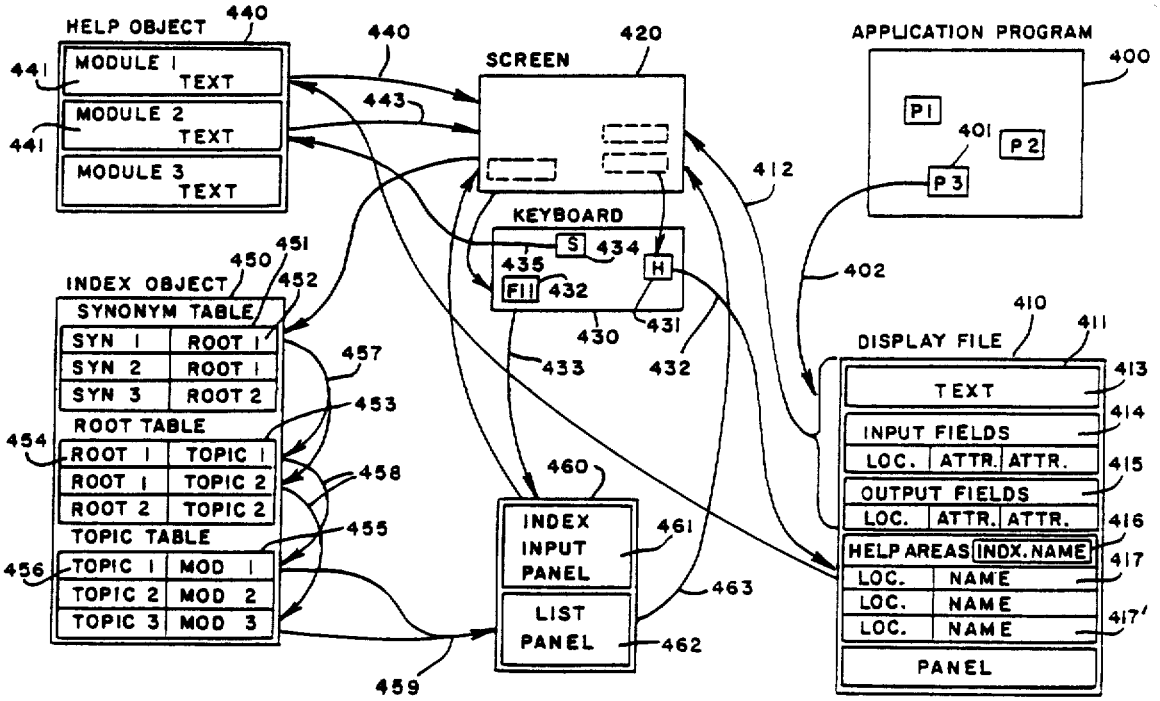
[57] **ABSTRACT**

On-line documentation for an application program resides in a number of help modules. A display file for the application program specifies command panels to be displayed. The command panel definition includes a mapping of screen areas to help modules as well as a designation of an index-sensitive search table. A user may access the on-line documentation either by pressing a function key for context-sensitive help (which displays the help module mapped to current cursor position) or by entering search words in an entry area for index-sensitive help. Index-sensitive help searches a table of synonyms, roots and topics which map to help modules, and lists the modules associated with the search word ordered by number of hits. Each command panel definition may specify a separate index-sensitive search table, permitting customization of the search to the application. The user then selects one or more of the listed modules for display.

6 Claims, 14 Drawing Sheets