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**METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR  
TRACKING FUNCTIONAL STATES OF A  
WEB-SITE AND REPORTING RESULTS TO  
WEB DEVELOPERS**

**CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED  
DOCUMENTS**

The present invention is a continuation-in-part (CIP) to a U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/573,699 entitled "Method and Apparatus for Cobranding Portal Services and Normalizing Advertisements Delivered to Cobrand Subscribers", Filed on May 19, 2000, which is a CIP to a U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/208,740 now U.S. Pat. No. 6,412,073 entitled "Method and Apparatus for Providing and Maintaining a User-Interactive Portal System Accessible Via Internet or Other Switched-Packet-Network", Filed on Dec. 8, 1998, disclosures of which are incorporated herein in their entirety by reference.

**FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

The present invention is in the field of Internet navigation and data communication, and pertains more particularly to methods and apparatus for tracking Web sites, their error rates and their status and reporting the information back to Web-site engineers.

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

The information network known as the World Wide Web (WWW), which is a subset of the well-known Internet, is arguably the most complete source of publicly accessible information available. Anyone with a suitable Internet appliance such as a personal computer with a standard Internet connection may access (go on-line) and navigate to information pages (termed web pages) stored on Internet-connected servers for the purpose of garnering information and initiating transactions with hosts of such servers and pages.

Many companies offer various subscription services accessible via the Internet. For example, many people now do their banking, stock trading, shopping, and so forth from the comfort of their own homes via Internet access. Typically, a user, through subscription, has access to personalized and secure WEB pages for such functions. By typing in a user name and a password or other personal identification code, a user may obtain information, initiate transactions, buy stock, and accomplish a myriad of other tasks.

One problem that is encountered by an individual who has several or many such subscriptions to Internet-brokered services is that there are invariably many passwords and/or log-in codes to be used. Often a same password or code cannot be used for every service, as the password or code may already be taken by another user. A user may not wish to supply a code unique to the user such as perhaps a social security number because of security issues, including quality of security, that may vary from service to service. Additionally, many users at their own volition may choose different passwords for different sites so as to have increased security, which in fact also increases the number of passwords a user may have.

Another issue that can plague a user who has many passworded subscriptions is the fact that they must bookmark many WEB pages in a computer cache so that they may quickly find and access the various services. For example, in order to reserve and pay for airline travel, a user

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must connect to the Internet, go to his/her book-marks file and select an airline page. The user then has to enter a user name and password, and follow on-screen instructions once the page is delivered. If the user wishes to purchase tickets from the WEB site, and wishes to transfer funds from an on-line banking service, the user must also look for and select the personal bank or account page to initiate a funds transfer for the tickets. Different user names and passwords may be required to access these other pages, and things get quite complicated.

Although this preceding example is merely exemplary, it is generally known that much work related to finding WEB pages, logging in with passwords, and the like is required to successfully do business on the WEB.

A system known to the inventor and described in the cross-reference section above provides an interactive Internet portal that enables users to store their WEB pages, user names, passwords, and a system that performs pre-defined tasks such as navigation and interaction between WEB servers based on user pre-programming (user profiles). Such a system greatly simplifies on-line or network-based business transactions.

It is known in the art that certain providers of Web services often work with partners representing other companies offering similar services. These partnerships are termed cobrand partnerships in the art.

An example of a cobrand relationship would be that of a company A offering services through a company B to subscribers of company B as if the added services were provided and maintained by company B, but in reality are provided by company A. In a typical case of cobranding, subscribers to the cobrand partner are not aware that the added services are actually provided by a company other than the cobrand partner, or in this case, company A.

A problem with cobranding services in prior art involves the amount of cooperation, engineering, configuration, and so on that must be performed by both the service-providing company and the cobrand partner. For example, knowledge workers from both companies must interface and cooperate in order to provide a functional interface and mechanism for subscribers of the cobrand partner to utilize in order to receive the extra value-added services.

A software utility is known to the inventor for creating and configuring a cobrand service package. Such a utility is taught in the correlated application entitled "Method and Apparatus for Cobranding Portal Services and Normalizing Advertisements Delivered to Cobrand Subscribers, listed in the cross-reference section. This software utility comprises a function for installation and execution of the utility, a function for importing external data for use in the utility, a function for browsing and selecting functional services offered from within the utility, a function for constructing information pages, the information pages containing the imported external data and hyperlinks to the selected functional services, and a function for saving and submitting a configured utility to an entity for installation. The software utility is a self-contained utility, which upon completion functions as a service installation template for installing a cobrand service. By using the utility described above cobranded services may be efficiently implemented at Web-sites allowing added interaction capability and other services to existing Web-sites.

In addition to cobrand relationships, there exists on the Internet many popular service sites maintained by service-providing companies that are patronized by many users, thus indicating a wide popularity among users. Providing access