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# United States Patent [19]

**Saxton et al.**

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[54] **FORWARD EXTENSIBLE PROPERTY MODIFIERS FOR FORMATTING INFORMATION IN A PROGRAM MODULE**

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** ..... **707/100**

[58] **Field of Search** ..... 707/1–200

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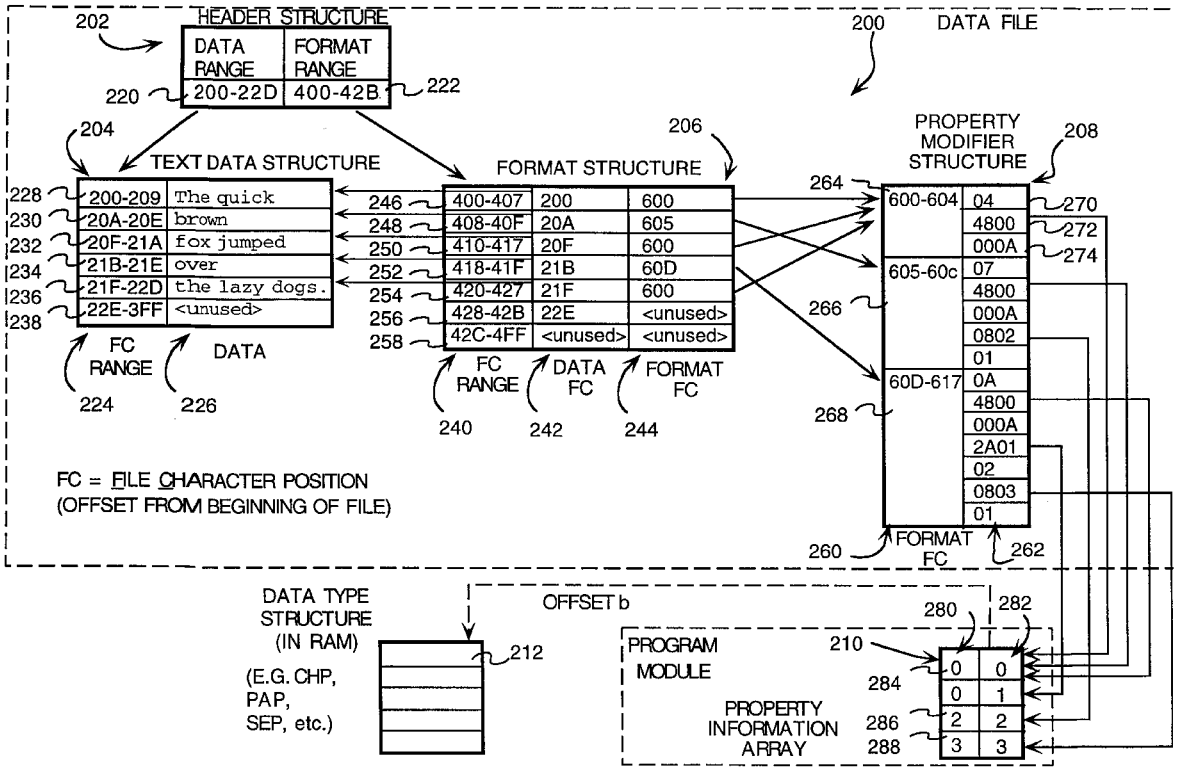
[57] **ABSTRACT**

Formatting information in a program module, particularly useful for word processing and similar text processing programs. A property information array stored in association with an executable program module contains formatting for applying to information in a document comprising a data structure and a property modifier structure. The data structure stores data elements corresponding to the information in the document to be formatted, e.g., a text file. The property modifier structure stores groups of data formatting property modifiers and their arguments that represent the appearance of the data elements, e.g., a character property, a paragraph property, a section property, etc. Each property modifier contains encoded format-related information and comprises an argument size field having information indicating the size of the property modifier argument and a unique identification field, i.e., an index into the property information array. A selected data element may be displayed, printed, etc. in accordance with the formatting information by accessing the property information array with the index of the property modifier associated with the selected data element. The property modifier argument size allows the program module to skip property modifiers that it does not understand or handle, by using the argument size information to move ahead in the group of data formatting property modifiers to the next property modifier.

**8 Claims, 6 Drawing Sheets**