US 20120321098A1

(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication**

Myers et al.

(10) **Pub. No.: US 2012/0321098 A1**

(43) **Pub. Date: Dec. 20, 2012**

(54) **PROVIDING BROADCAST LISTENER PARTICIPATION**

(75) Inventors: **Theodore A. Myers**, Fort Collins, CO (US); **Kevin R. Lockhart**, Ogallala, NE (US); **Jeffrey D. Zigler**, Omaha, NE (US); **Alan L. Sledge**, Scottsdale, AZ (US); **Richard D. Wooden**, Ogallala, NE (US); **Jacqueline J. Lockhart**, Poway, CA (US)

(73) Assignee: **Clear Channel Management Services, Inc.**, San Antonio, TX (US)

(21) Appl. No.: **13/600,552**

(22) Filed: **Aug. 31, 2012**

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation of application No. 12/231,069, filed on Aug. 28, 2008.

(60) Provisional application No. 60/968,710, filed on Aug. 29, 2007.

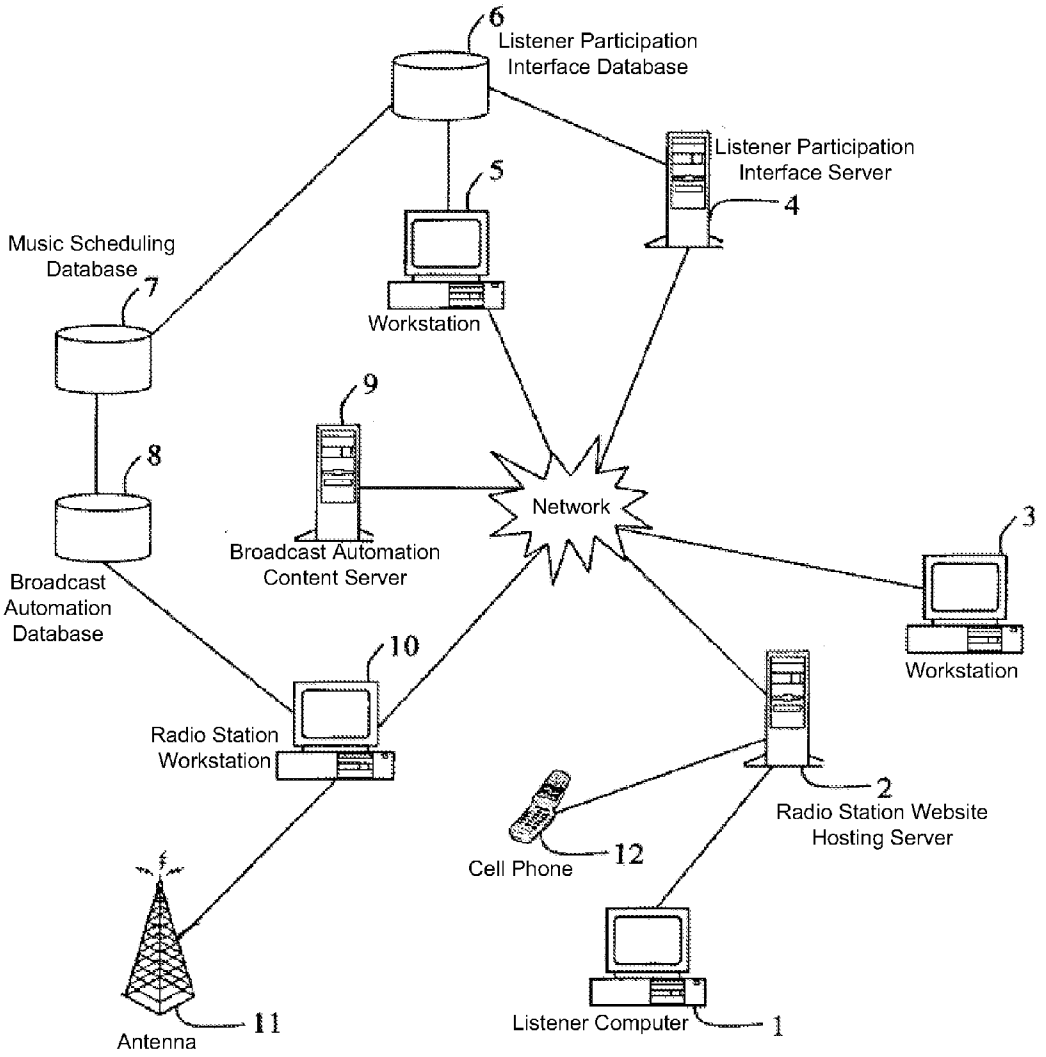
Publication Classification

(51) **Int. Cl.**
H04B 7/00 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **381/77**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A listener participation interface allows listeners to generate playlists that include media elements selected from a library of available media elements. The playlists generated by the listener participation interface are automatically compatible with broadcast automation software used by a broadcaster, so that little, if any, modification of listener-submitted playlists is required before the broadcast automation software incorporates the playlists into an actual broadcast schedule.



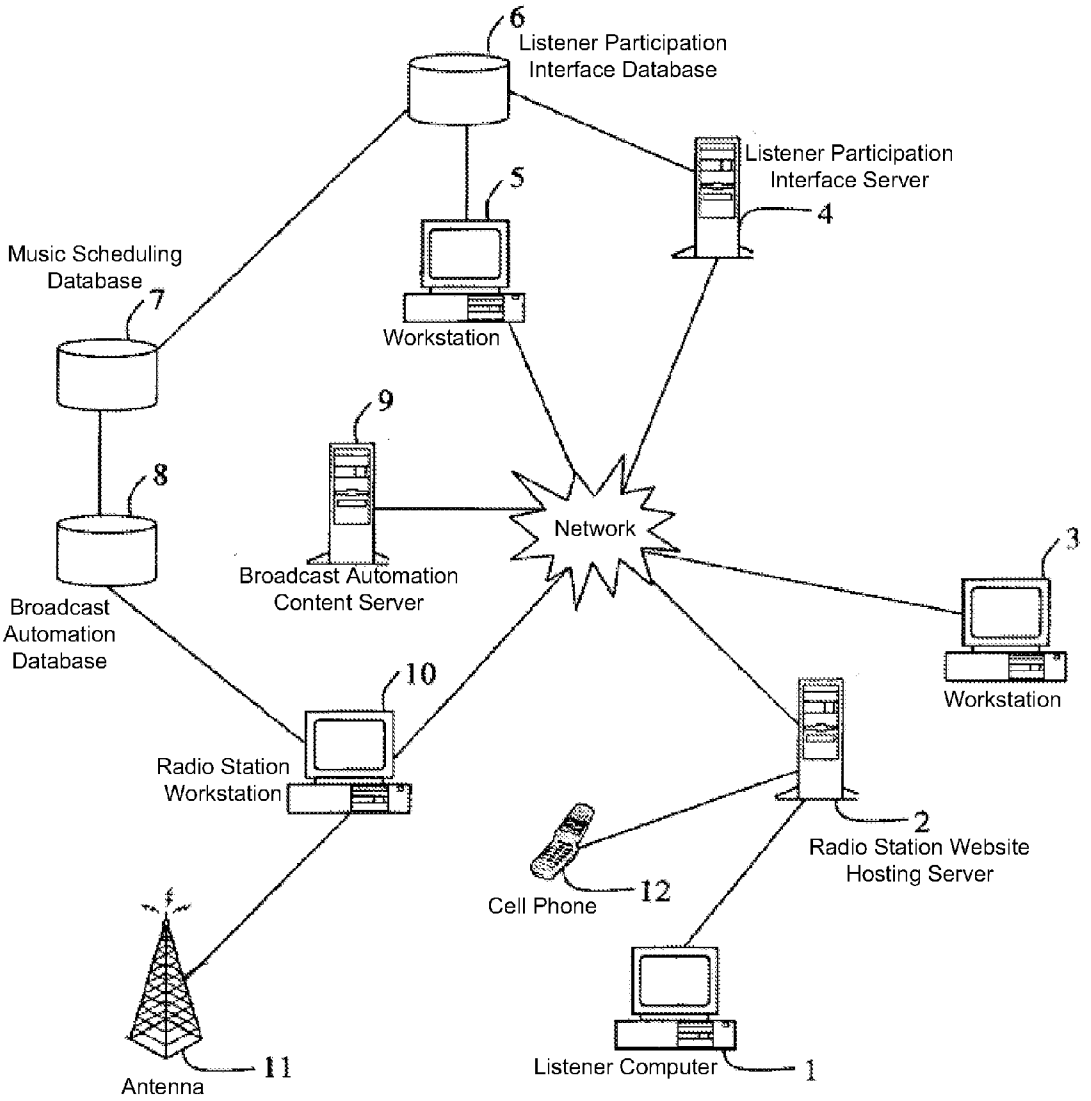

6
Listener Participation Interface Database
Listener Participation Interface Server
4
5
Workstation
Music Scheduling Database
7
9
Broadcast Automation Content Server
Network
8
Broadcast Automation Database
3
Workstation
10
Radio Station Workstation
2
Radio Station Website Hosting Server
Cell Phone
12
Antenna
11
Listener Computer
1

Fig. 1

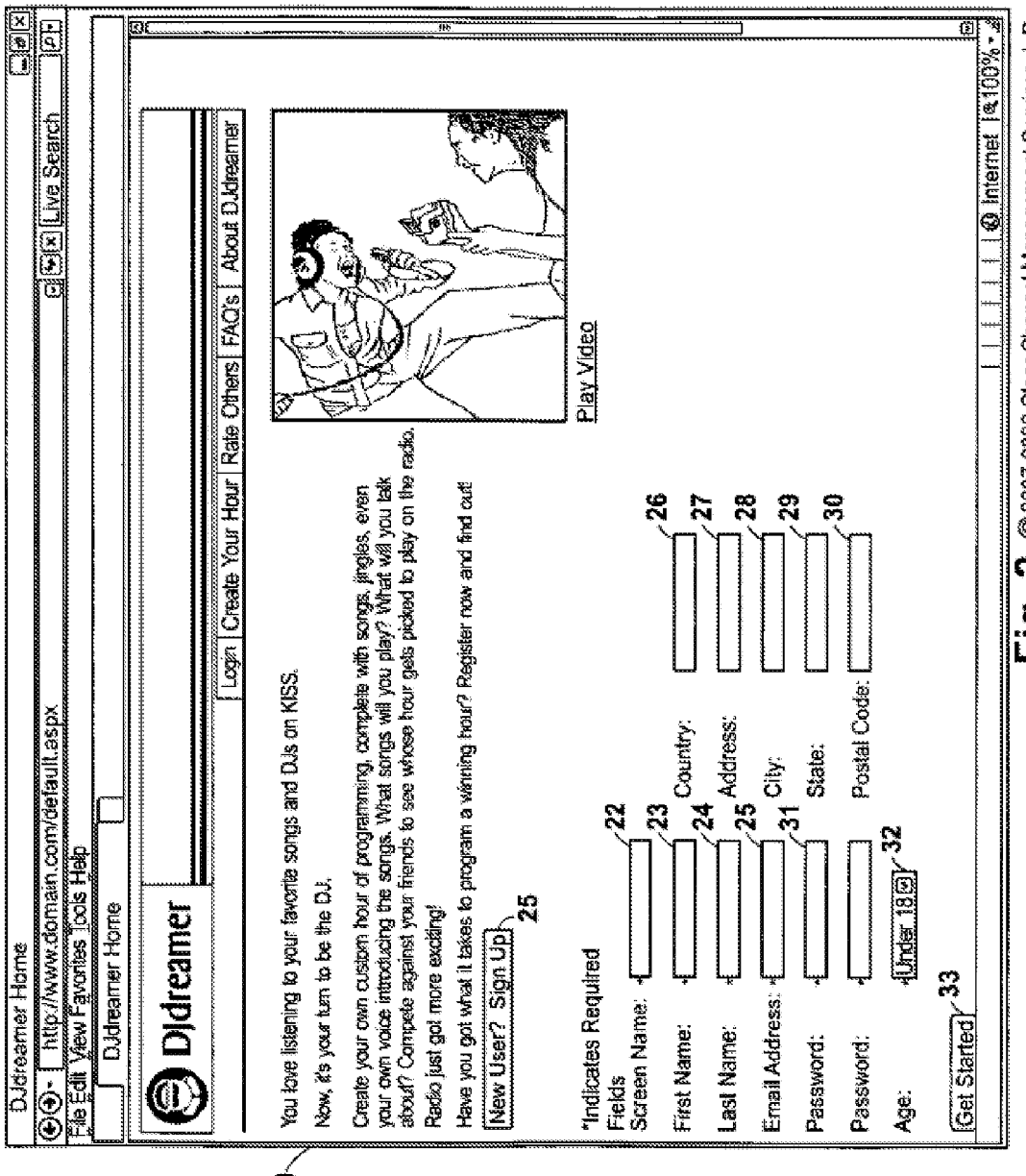


Fig. 2 © 2007-2008 Clear Channel Management Services, L.P.

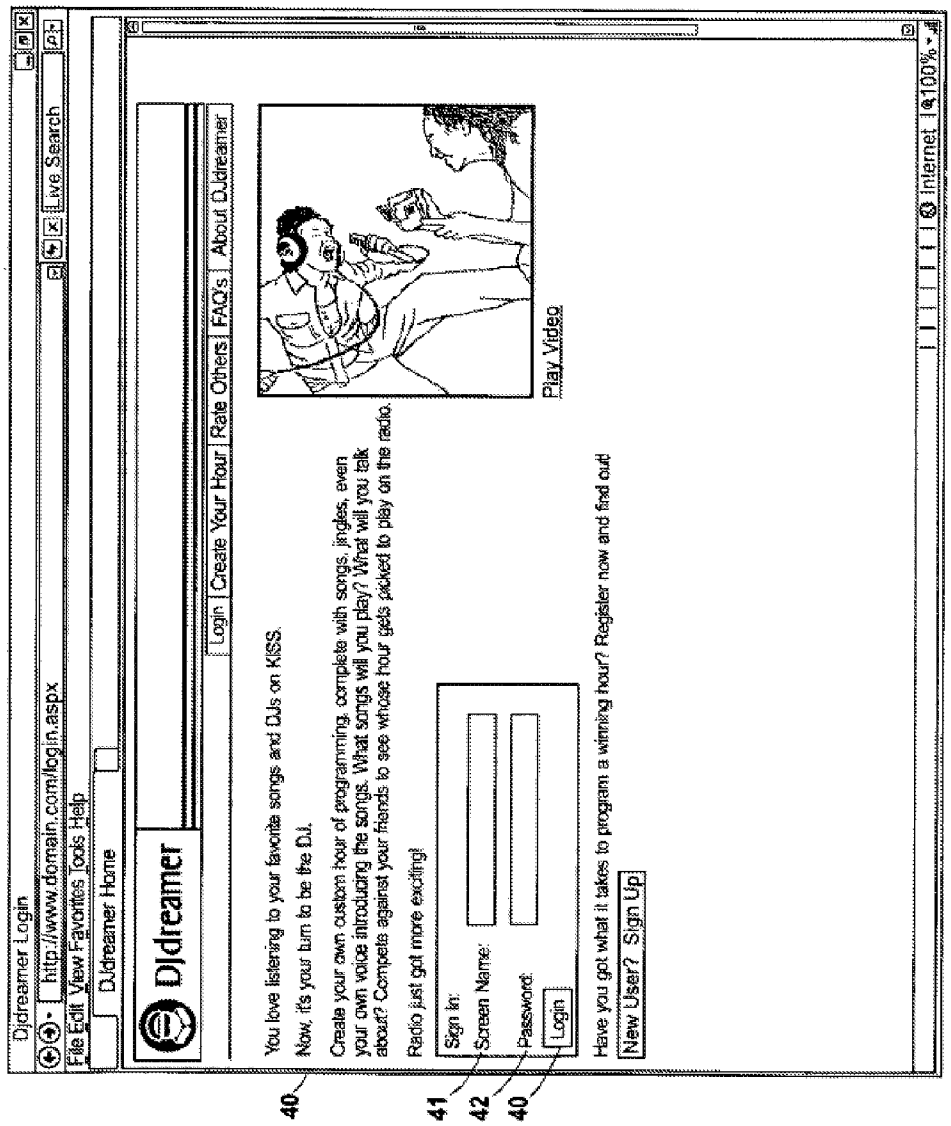

Djdreamer Login
http://www.domain.com/login.aspx
File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
Djdreamer Home
Djdreamer
Login | Create Your Hour | Rate Others | FAQ's | About Djdreamer
You love listening to your favorite songs and DJs on KISS.
Now, it's your turn to be the D.J.
Create your own custom hour of programming, complete with songs, jingles, even your own voice introducing the songs. What songs will you play? What will you talk about? Compete against your friends to see whose hour gets picked to play on the radio.
Radio just got more exciting!
Sign In:
Screen Name:
Password:
Login
Have you got what it takes to program a winning hour? Register now and find out!
New User? Sign Up
Play Video
40
41
42
40
Internet
100%
© 2007-2008 Clear Channel Management Services, L.P.

Fig. 3

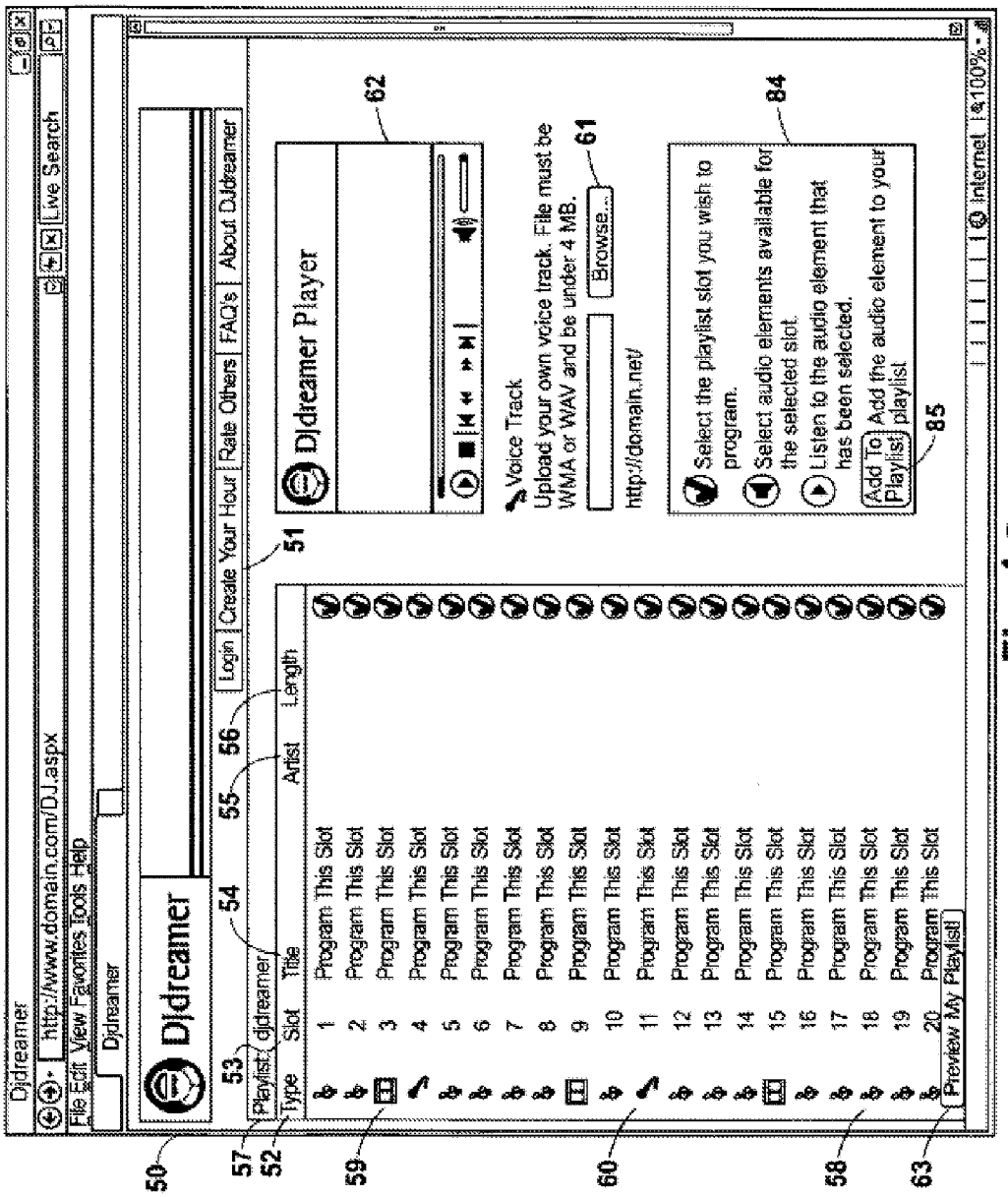


Fig. 4 © 2007-2008 Clear Channel Management Services, L.P.

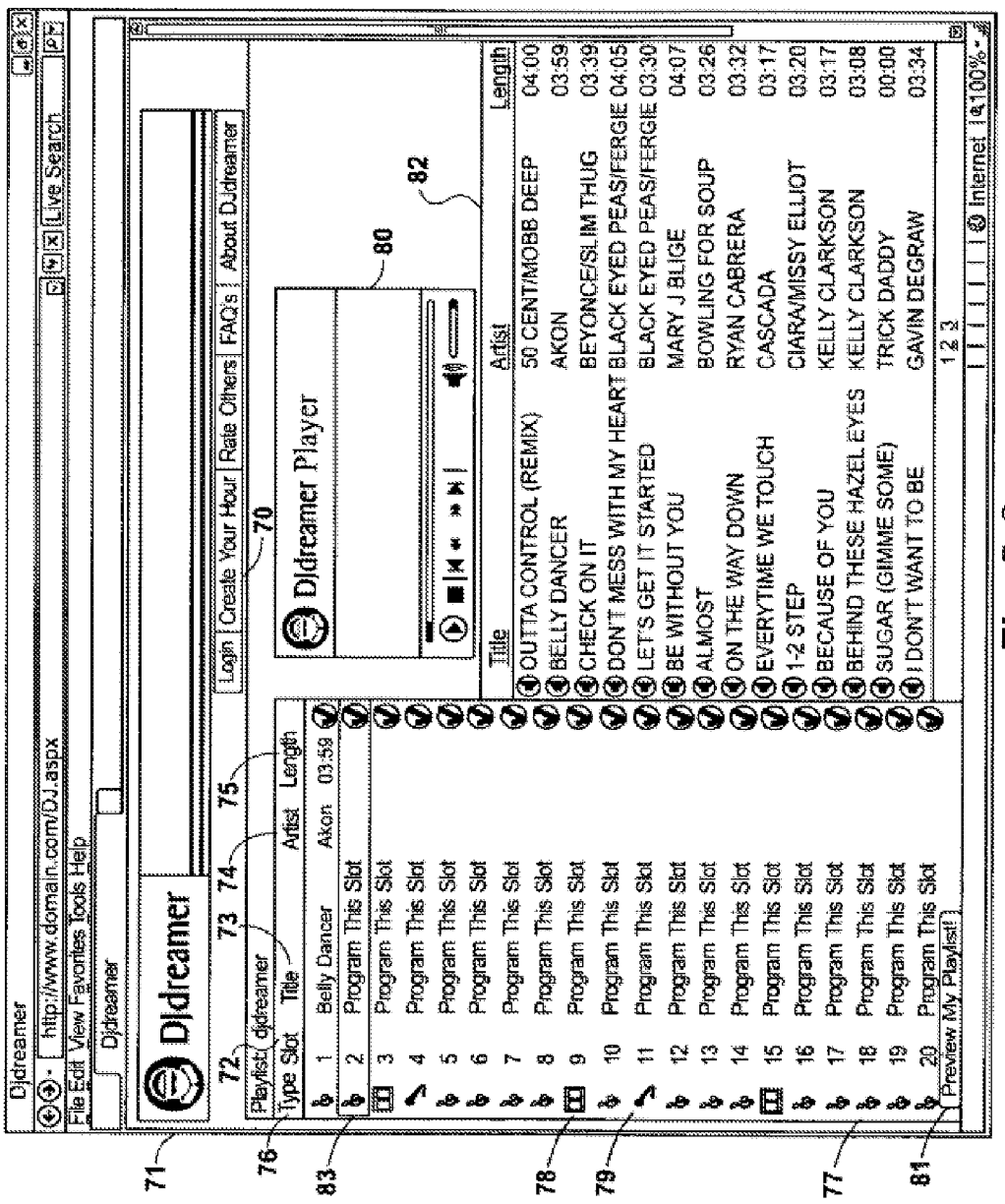


Fig. 5 © 2007-2008 Clear Channel Management Services, L.P.

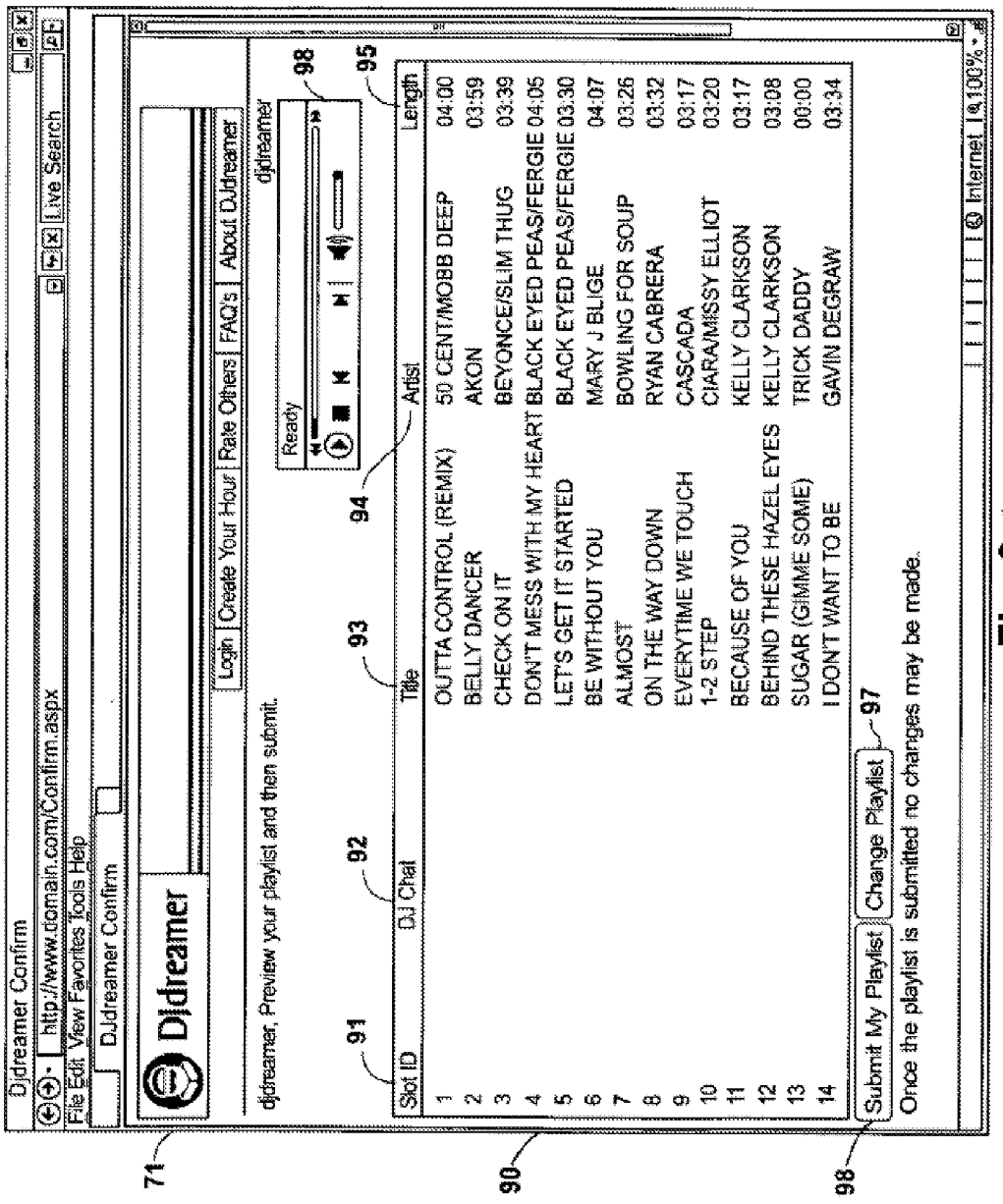


Fig. 6 ©2007-2008 Clear Channel Management Services, L.P.

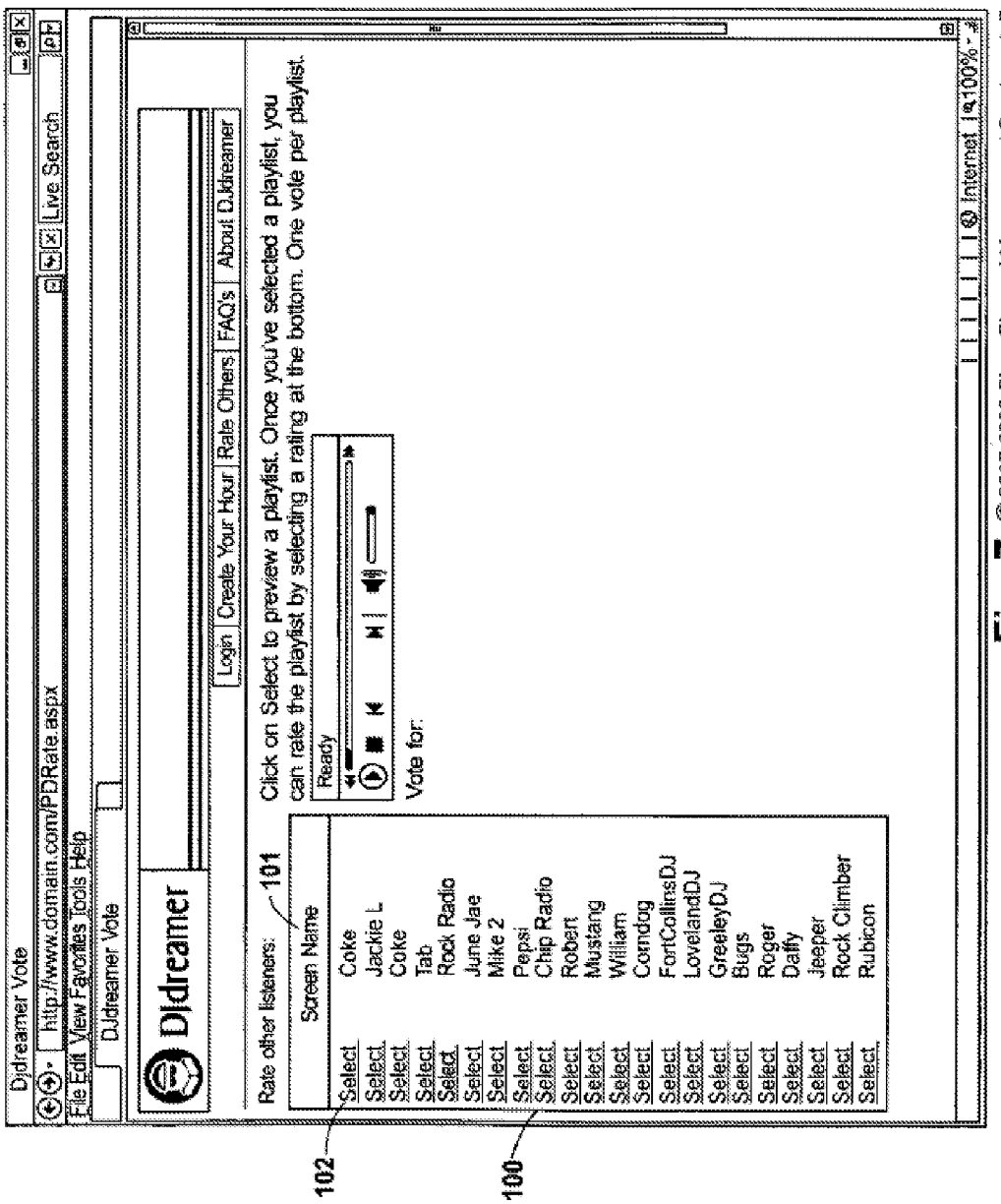


Fig. 7 ©2007-2008 Clear Channel Management Services, L.P.

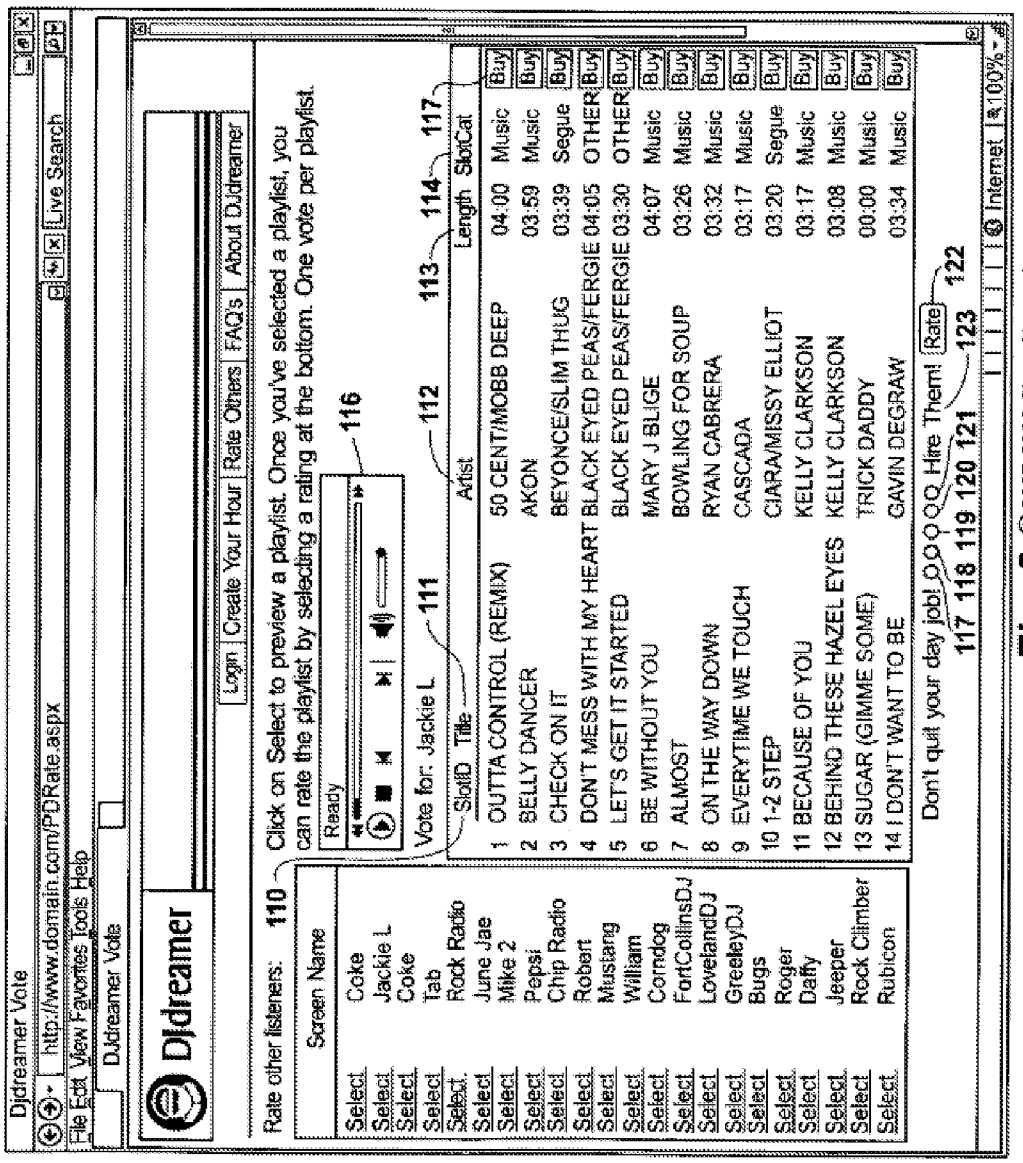

Djdreamer Vote
http://www.domain.com/PDRate.aspx
File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
DJdreamer Vote
DJdreamer
Login Create Your Hour Rate Others FAQ's About DJdreamer
Rate other listeners: 110
Click on Select to preview a playlist. Once you've selected a playlist, you can rate the playlist by selecting a rating at the bottom. One vote per playlist.
Screen Name
Ready
116
Vote for: Jackie L 111 112 113 114 117
SlotID Title Artist Length SlotCat
1 OUTTA CONTROL (REMIX) 50 CENT/MOBB DEEP 04:00 Music
2 BELLY DANCER AKON 03:59 Music
3 CHECK ON IT BEYONCE/SLIM THUG 03:39 Segue
4 DON'T MESS WITH MY HEART BLACK EYED PEAS/FERGIE 04:05 OTHER
5 LET'S GET IT STARTED BLACK EYED PEAS/FERGIE 03:30 OTHER
6 BE WITHOUT YOU MARY J BLIGE 04:07 Music
7 ALMOST BOWLING FOR SOUP 03:26 Music
8 ON THE WAY DOWN RYAN CABRERA 03:32 Music
9 EVERYTIME WE TOUCH CASCADA 03:17 Music
10 1-2 STEP CIARA/MISSY ELLIOT 03:20 Segue
11 BECAUSE OF YOU KELLY CLARKSON 03:17 Music
12 BEHIND THESE HAZEL EYES KELLY CLARKSON 03:08 Music
13 SUGAR (GIMME SOME) TRICK DADDY 00:00 Music
14 I DON'T WANT TO BE GAVIN DEGRAW 03:34 Music
Buy
Select Coke
Select Jackie L
Select Coke
Select Tab
Select Rock Radio
Select June Jae
Select Mike 2
Select Pepsi
Select Chip Radio
Select Robert
Select Mustang
Select William
Select Corndog
Select FortCollinsDJ
Select LovelandDJ
Select GreeleyDJ
Select Bugs
Select Roger
Select Daffy
Select Jeeper
Select Rock Climber
Select Rubicon
Don't quit your day job! Hire Them! Rate
117 118 119 120 121 123 122
Internet 100%
© 2007-2008 Clear Channel Management Services, L.P.

Fig. 8

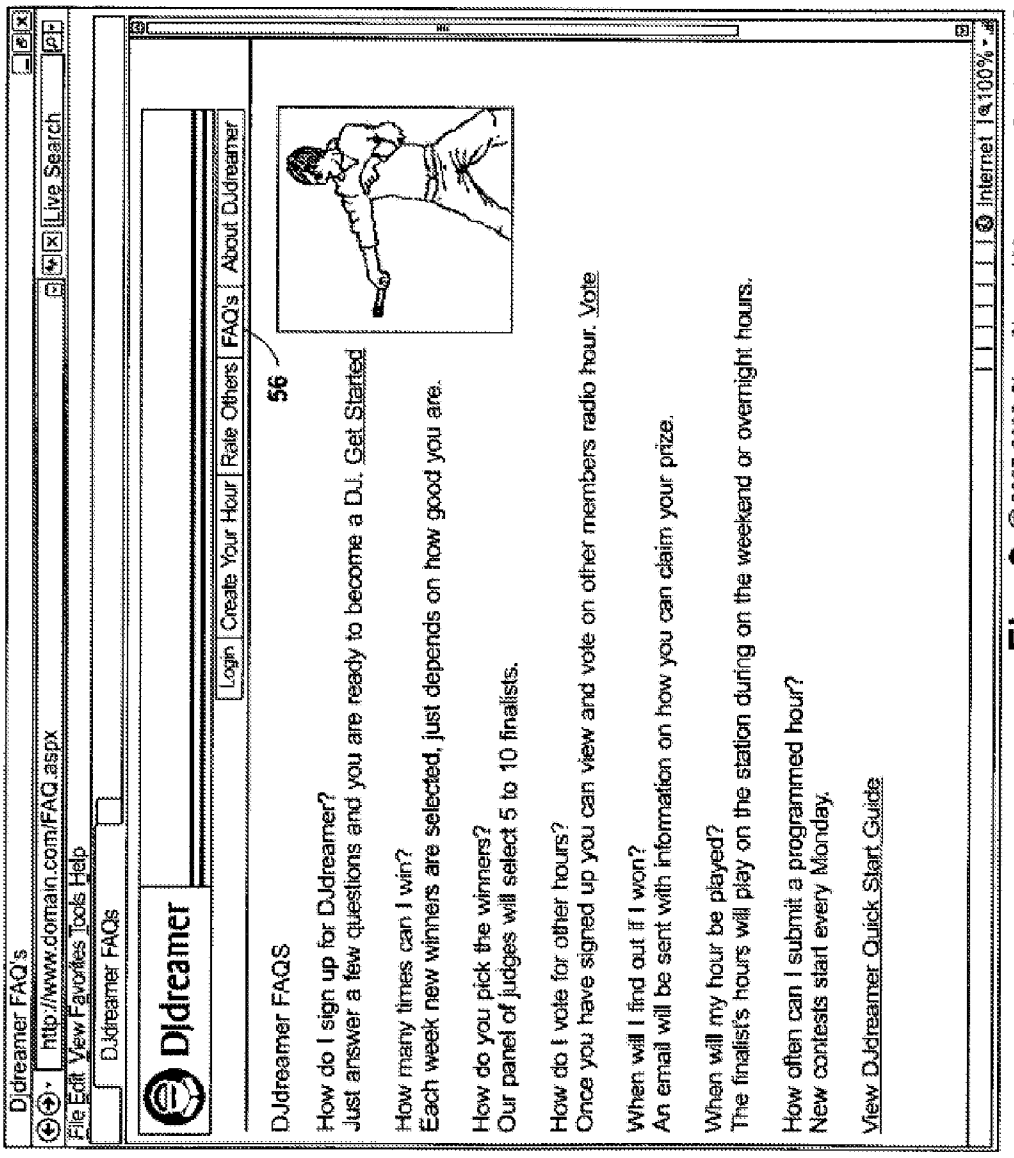

Djdreamer FAQ's
http://www.domain.com/FAQ.aspx
File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
DJdreamer FAQs
Djdreamer
Login | Create Your Hour | Rate Others | FAQ's | About DJdreamer
56
DJdreamer FAQS
How do I sign up for DJdreamer?
Just answer a few questions and you are ready to become a DJ. Get Started
How many times can I win?
Each week new winners are selected, just depends on how good you are.
How do you pick the winners?
Our panel of judges will select 5 to 10 finalists.
How do I vote for other hours?
Once you have signed up you can view and vote on other members radio hour. Vote
When will I find out if I won?
An email will be sent with information on how you can claim your prize.
When will my hour be played?
The finalist's hours will play on the station during on the weekend or overnight hours.
How often can I submit a programmed hour?
New contests start every Monday.
View DJdreamer Quick Start Guide
Internet
100%
©2007-2008 Clear Channel Management Services, L.P.

Fig. 9

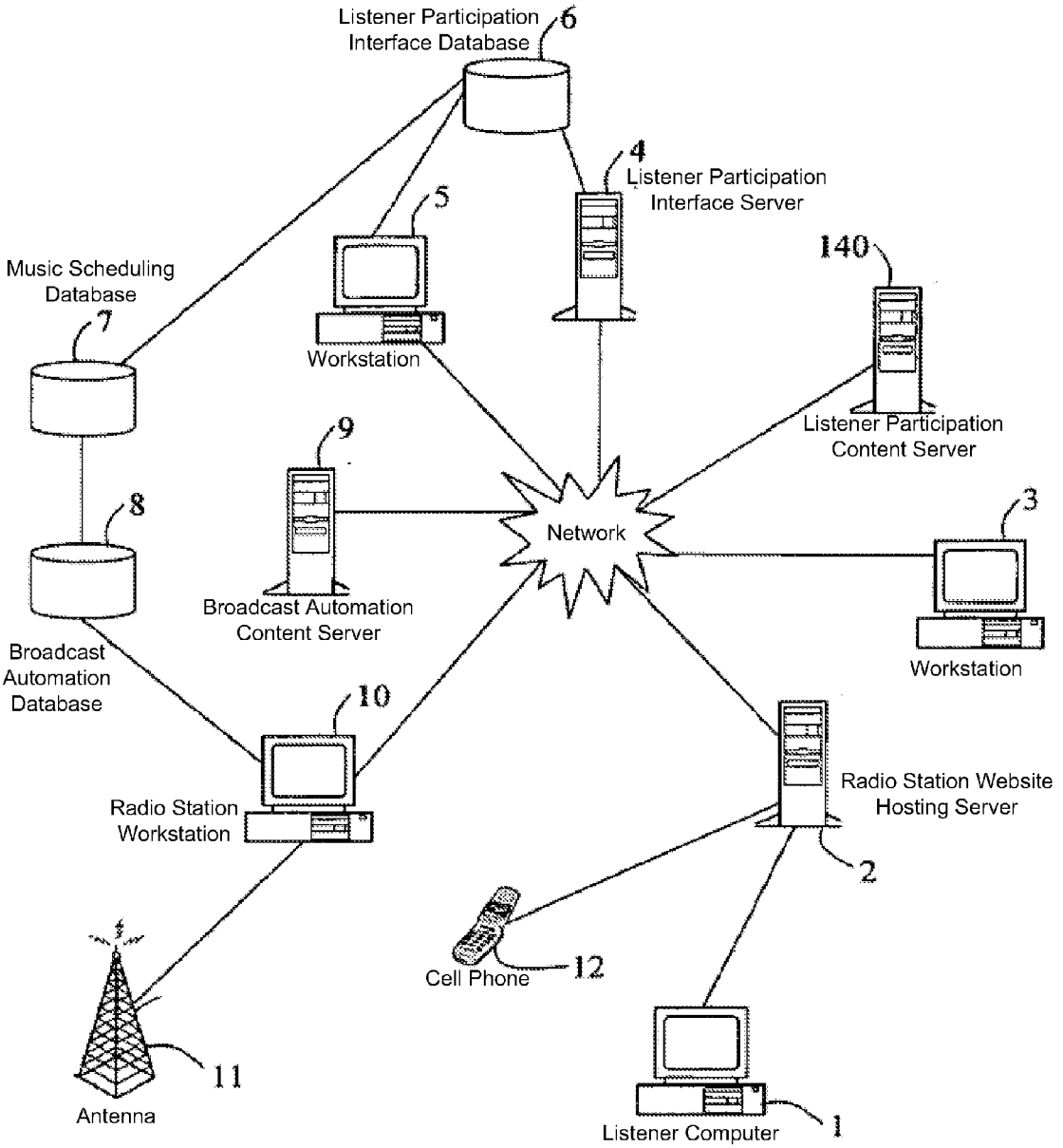

Listener Participation Interface Database
6
4
Listener Participation Interface Server
5
Workstation
140
Listener Participation Content Server
Music Scheduling Database
7
8
9
Broadcast Automation Content Server
Network
3
Workstation
Broadcast Automation Database
10
Radio Station Workstation
Radio Station Website Hosting Server
2
Cell Phone
12
11
Antenna
Listener Computer
1

Fig. 10

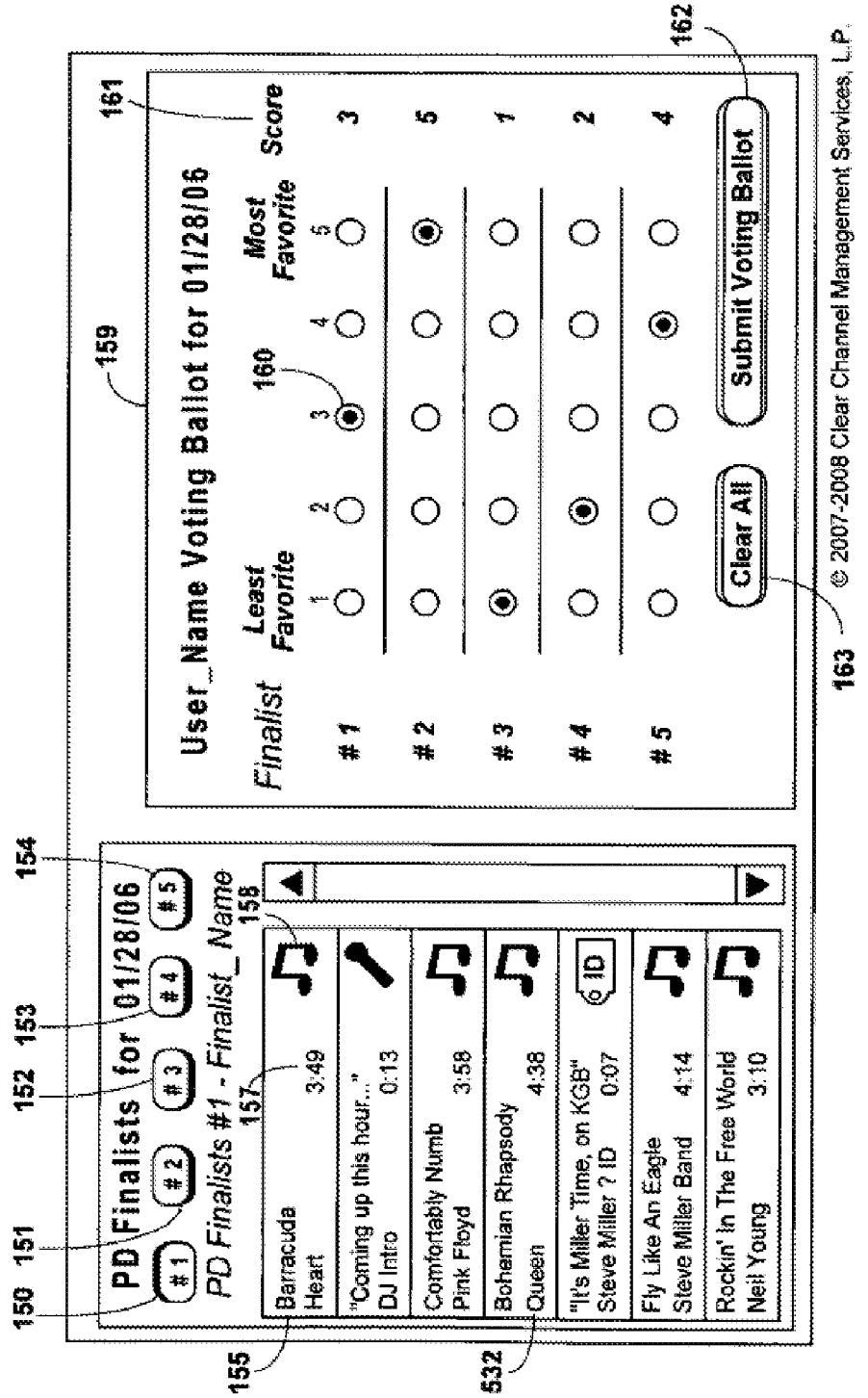

PD Finalists for 01/28/06
#1
#2
#3
#4
#5
PD Finalists #1 - Finalist_Name
Barracuda
Heart
3:49
"Coming up this hour..."
DJ Intro
0:13
Comfortably Numb
Pink Floyd
3:58
Bohemian Rhapsody
Queen
4:38
"It's Miller Time, on KGB"
Steve Miller ? ID
0:07
ID
Fly Like An Eagle
Steve Miller Band
4:14
Rockin' In The Free World
Neil Young
3:10
User_Name Voting Ballot for 01/28/06
Finalist
Least Favorite
Most Favorite
Score
#1
#2
#3
#4
#5
Clear All
Submit Voting Ballot
© 2007-2008 Clear Channel Management Services, L.P.
150
151
152
153
154
155
157
158
159
160
161
162
163
532

Fig. 11

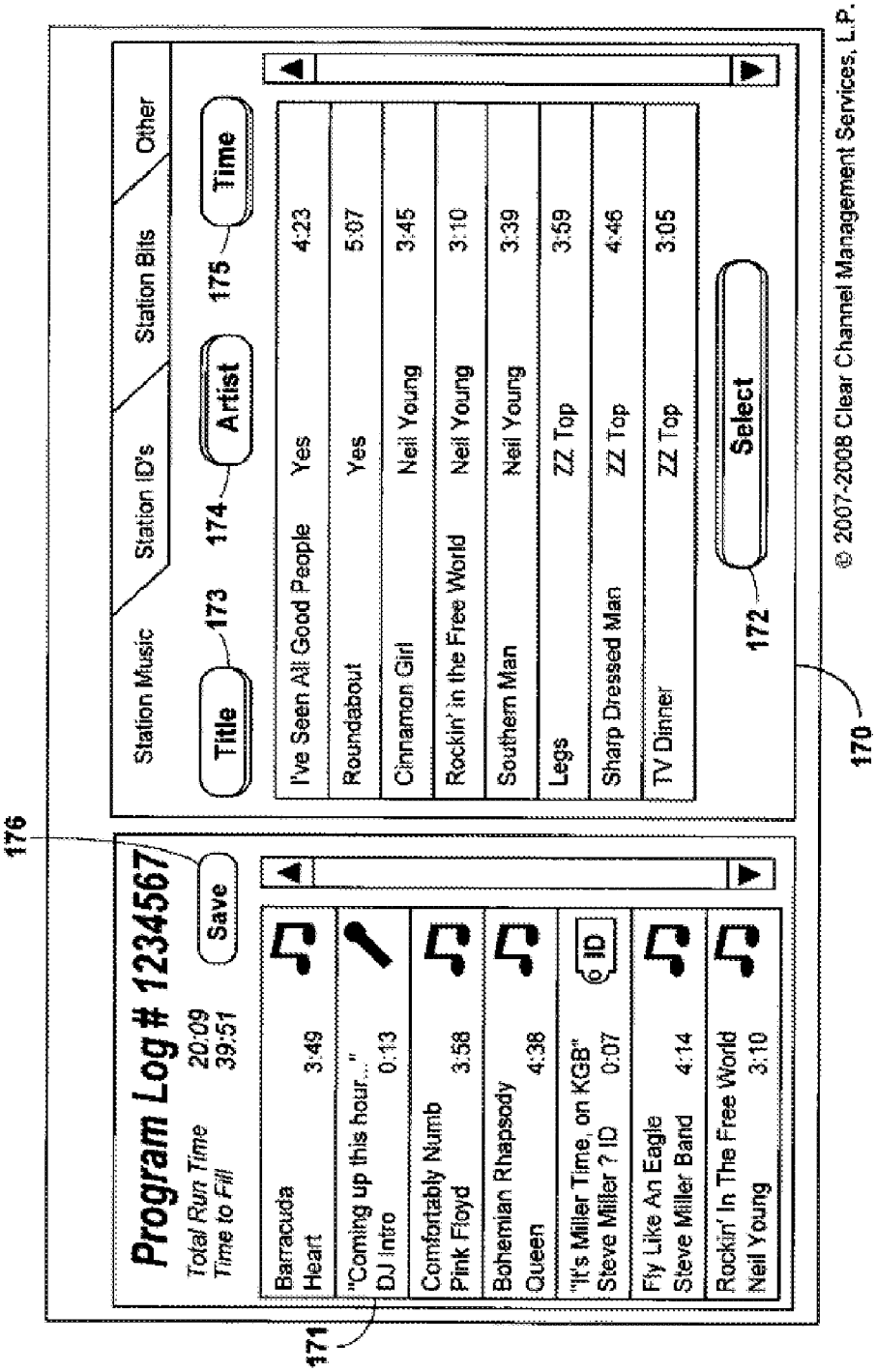

Program Log # 1234567
Total Run Time 20:09
Time to Fill 39:51
Save
Barracuda
Heart 3:49
"Coming up this hour..."
DJ intro 0:13
Comfortably Numb
Pink Floyd 3:58
Bohemian Rhapsody
Queen 4:38
"It's Miller Time, on KGB"
Steve Miller ? ID 0:07
Fly Like An Eagle
Steve Miller Band 4:14
Rockin' In The Free World
Neil Young 3:10
Station Music
Station ID's
Station Bits
Other
Title
Artist
Time
I've Seen All Good People Yes 4:23
Roundabout Yes 5:07
Cinnamon Girl Neil Young 3:45
Rockin' in the Free World Neil Young 3:10
Southern Man Neil Young 3:39
Legs ZZ Top 3:59
Sharp Dressed Man ZZ Top 4:46
TV Dinner ZZ Top 3:05
Select
© 2007-2008 Clear Channel Management Services, L.P.
176
173
174
175
171
172
170

Fig. 12

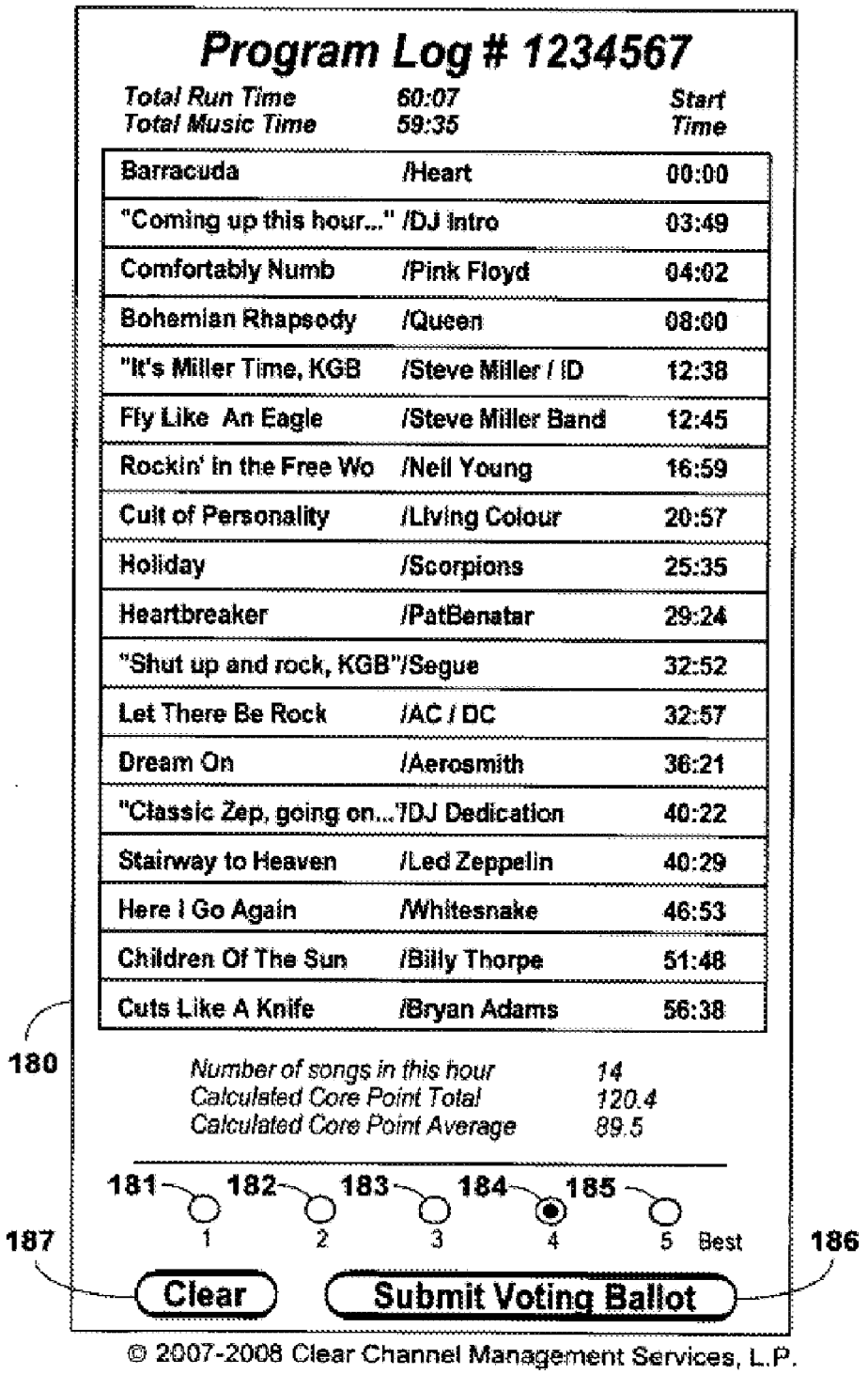

Program Log # 1234567
Total Run Time 60:07
Total Music Time 59:35
Start Time
Barracuda /Heart 00:00
"Coming up this hour..." /DJ Intro 03:49
Comfortably Numb /Pink Floyd 04:02
Bohemian Rhapsody /Queen 08:00
"It's Miller Time, KGB /Steve Miller / ID 12:38
Fly Like An Eagle /Steve Miller Band 12:45
Rockin' In the Free Wo /Neil Young 16:59
Cult of Personality /Living Colour 20:57
Holiday /Scorpions 25:35
Heartbreaker /PatBenatar 29:24
"Shut up and rock, KGB"/Segue 32:52
Let There Be Rock /AC / DC 32:57
Dream On /Aerosmith 36:21
"Classic Zep, going on... /DJ Dedication 40:22
Stairway to Heaven /Led Zeppelin 40:29
Here I Go Again /Whitesnake 46:53
Children Of The Sun /Billy Thorpe 51:48
Cuts Like A Knife /Bryan Adams 56:38
180
Number of songs in this hour 14
Calculated Core Point Total 120.4
Calculated Core Point Average 89.5
181 182 183 184 185
1 2 3 4 5 Best
187
186
Clear
Submit Voting Ballot
© 2007-2008 Clear Channel Management Services, L.P.

Fig. 13

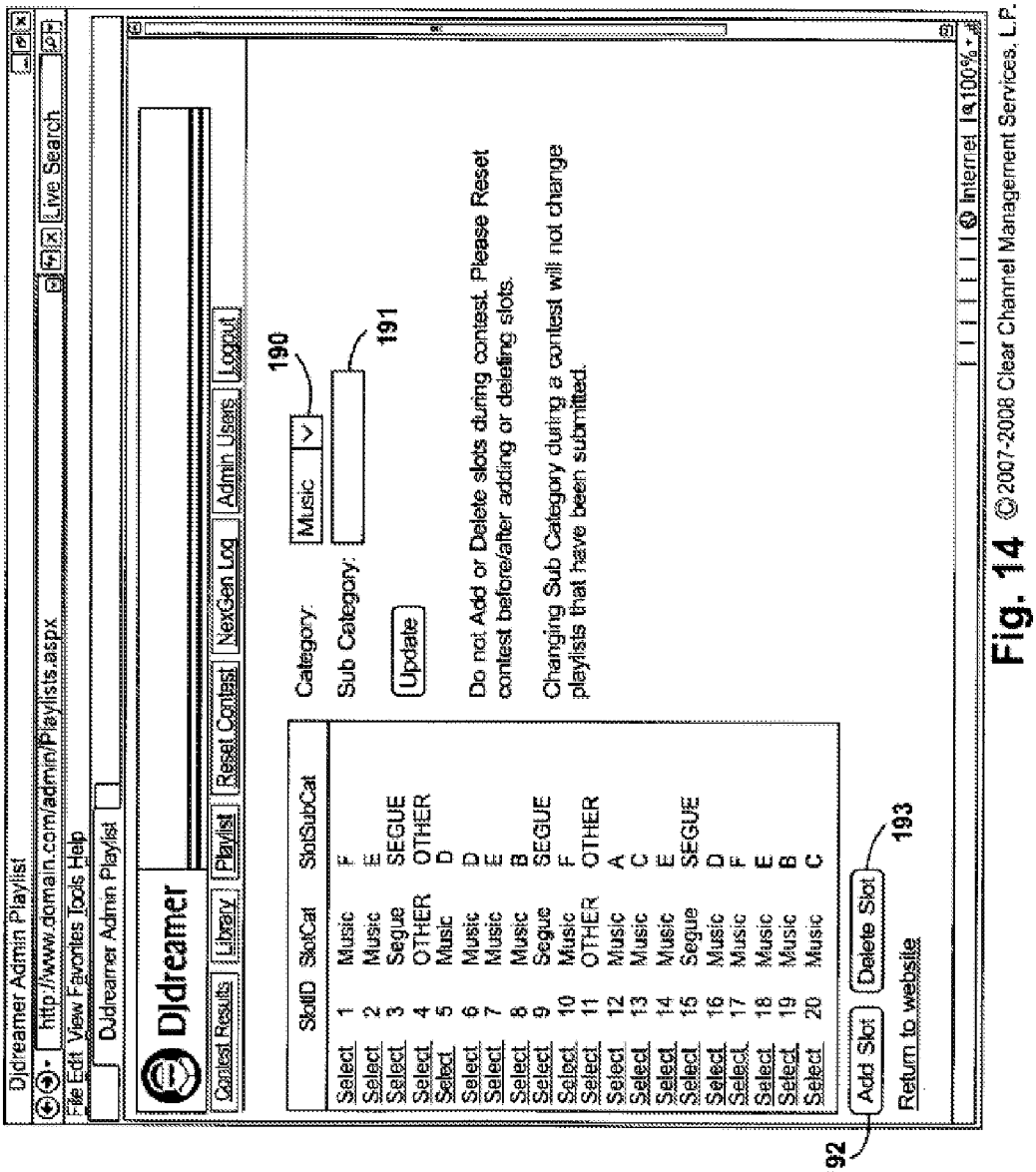

Djdreamer Admin Playlist
http://www.domain.com/admin/Playlists.aspx
Live Search
File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
Djdreamer Admin Playlist
Djdreamer
Contest Results
Library
Playlist
Reset Contest
NextGen Log
Admin Users
Logout
190
Category:
Music
191
Sub Category:
Update
Do not Add or Delete slots during contest. Please Reset contest before/after adding or deleting slots.
Changing Sub Category during a contest will not change playlists that have been submitted.
SlotID SlotCat SlotSubCat
Select 1 Music F
Select 2 Music E
Select 3 Segue SEGUE
Select 4 OTHER OTHER
Select 5 Music D
Select 6 Music D
Select 7 Music E
Select 8 Music B
Select 9 Segue SEGUE
Select 10 Music F
Select 11 OTHER OTHER
Select 12 Music A
Select 13 Music C
Select 14 Music E
Select 15 Segue SEGUE
Select 16 Music D
Select 17 Music F
Select 18 Music E
Select 19 Music B
Select 20 Music C
192
Add Slot
Delete Slot
193
Return to website
Internet
100%
©2007-2008 Clear Channel Management Services, L.P.

Fig. 14

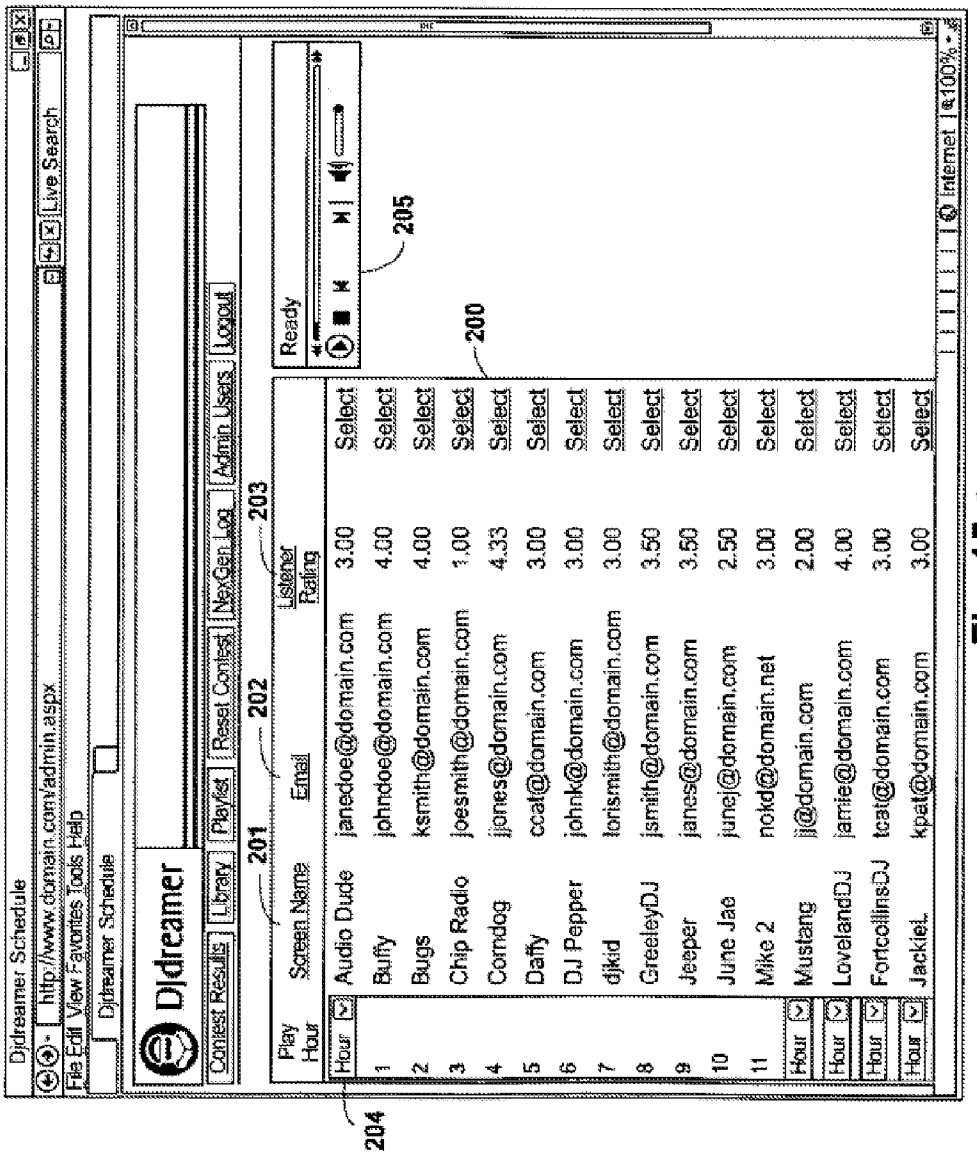


Fig. 15 © 2007-2008 Clear Channel Management Services, L.P.

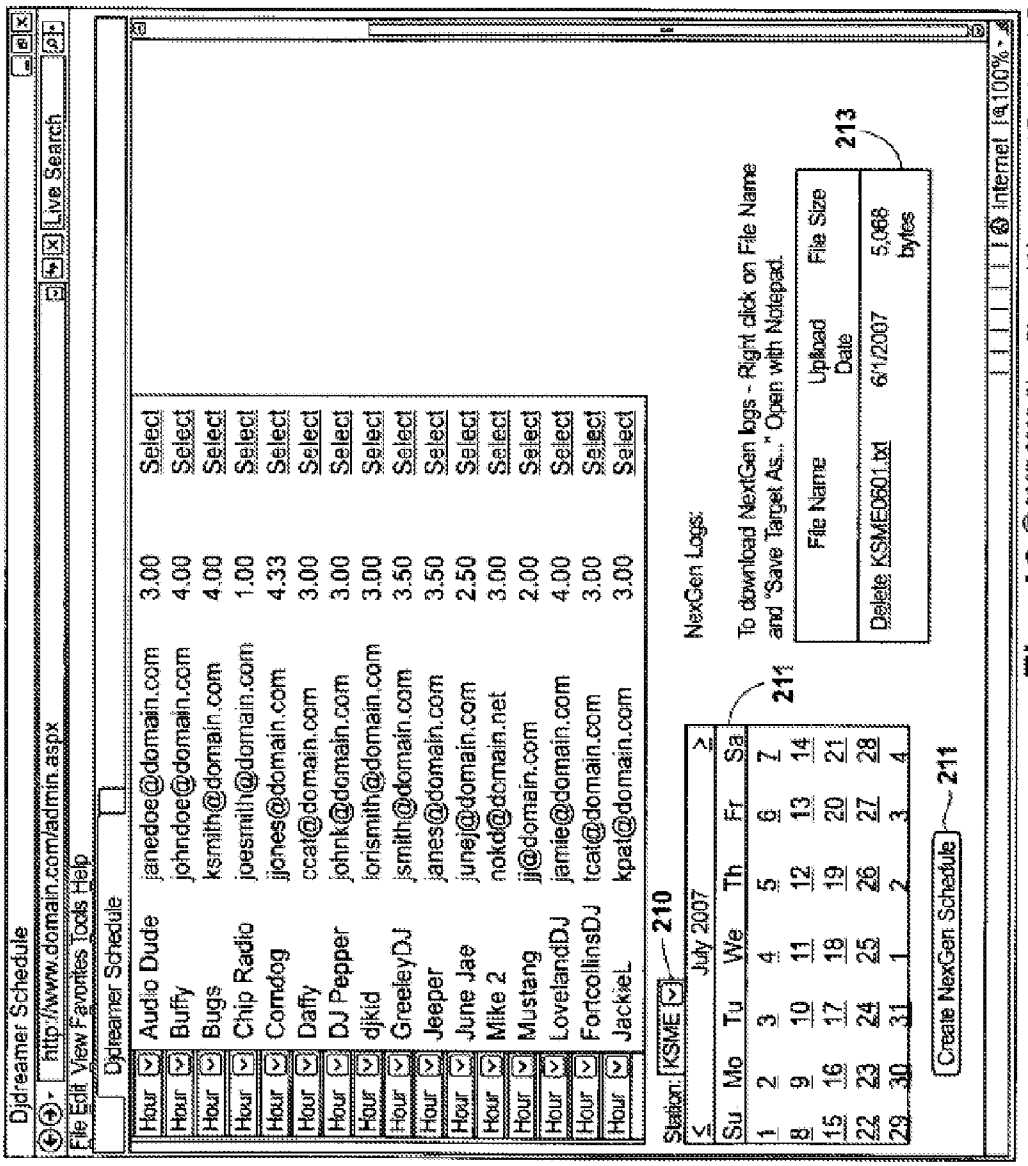

Djdreamer Schedule
http://www.domain.com/admin.aspx
Live Search
File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
Djdreamer Schedule
Audio Dude janedoe@domain.com 3.00 Select
Buffy johndoe@domain.com 4.00 Select
Bugs ksmith@domain.com 4.00 Select
Chip Radio joesmith@domain.com 1.00 Select
Corndog jjones@domain.com 4.33 Select
Daffy ccat@domain.com 3.00 Select
DJ Pepper johnk@domain.com 3.00 Select
djkid lorismith@domain.com 3.00 Select
GreeleyDJ jsmith@domain.com 3.50 Select
Jeeper janes@domain.com 3.50 Select
June Jae junej@domain.com 2.50 Select
Mike 2 nokd@domain.net 3.00 Select
Mustang jj@domain.com 2.00 Select
LovelandDJ jamie@domain.com 4.00 Select
FortcollinsDJ tcat@domain.com 3.00 Select
JackieL kpat@domain.com 3.00 Select
210
Station: KSME
July 2007
Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa
211
NexGen Logs:
To download NextGen logs - Right click on File Name and "Save Target As.." Open with Notepad.
File Name Upload Date File Size
Delete KSME0601.txt 6/1/2007 5,068 bytes
213
Create NexGen Schedule
211
Internet
100%
© 2007-2008 Clear Channel Management Services, L.P.

Fig. 16

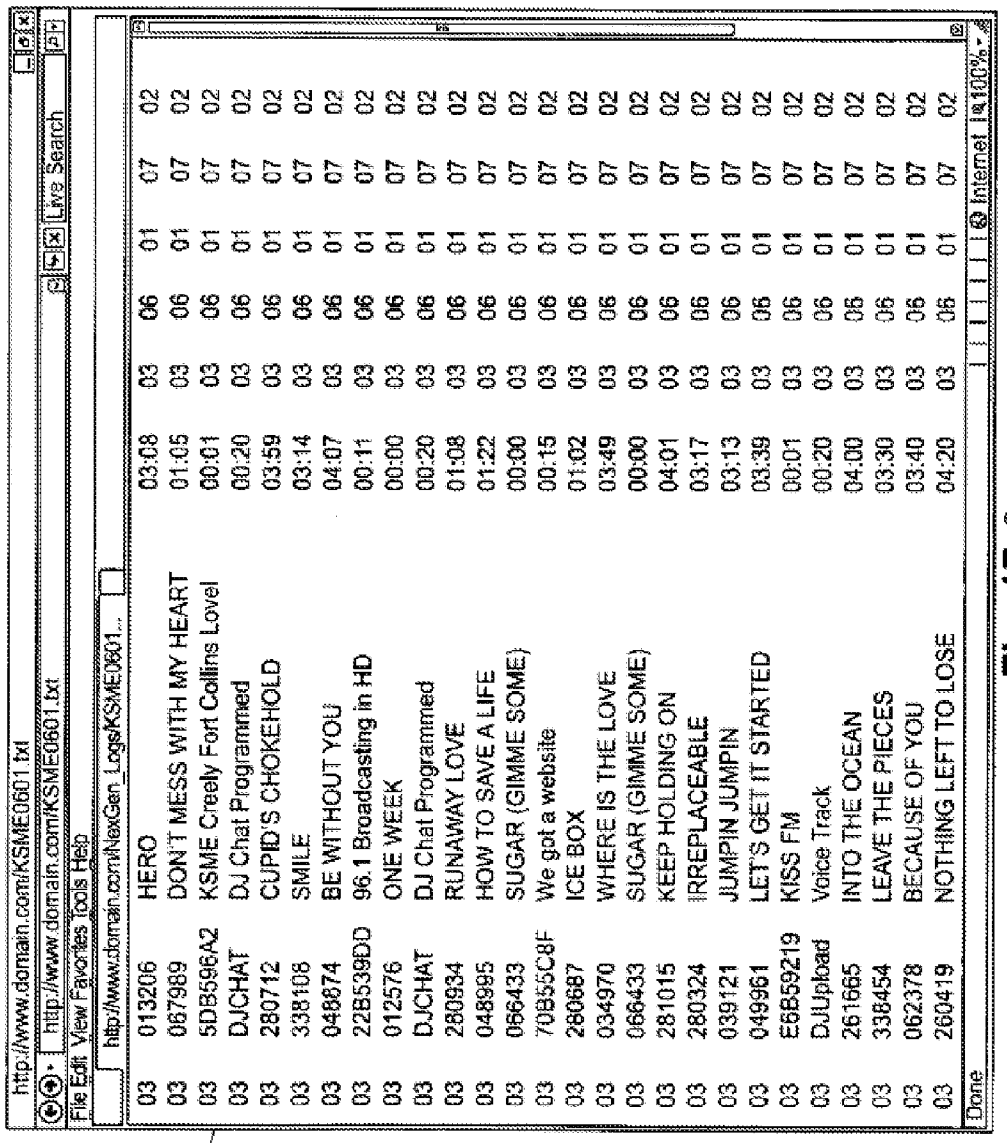

http://www.domain.com/KSME0601.txt
http://www.domain.com/KSME0601.txt
Live Search
File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
http://www.domain.com/NexGen_Logs/KSME0601...
220
03 013206 HERO 03:08 03 06 01 07 02
03 067989 DON'T MESS WITH MY HEART 01:05 03 06 01 07 02
03 5DB596A2 KSME Creely Fort Collins Love! 00:01 03 06 01 07 02
03 DJCHAT DJ Chat Programmed 00:20 03 06 01 07 02
03 280712 CUPID'S CHOKEHOLD 03:59 03 06 01 07 02
03 338108 SMILE 03:14 03 06 01 07 02
03 048874 BE WITHOUT YOU 04:07 03 06 01 07 02
03 22B539DD 96.1 Broadcasting in HD 00:11 03 06 01 07 02
03 012576 ONE WEEK 00:00 03 06 01 07 02
03 DJCHAT DJ Chat Programmed 00:20 03 06 01 07 02
03 280934 RUNAWAY LOVE 01:08 03 06 01 07 02
03 048995 HOW TO SAVE A LIFE 01:22 03 06 01 07 02
03 066433 SUGAR (GIMME SOME) 00:00 03 06 01 07 02
03 70B55C8F We got a website 00:15 03 06 01 07 02
03 280687 ICE BOX 01:02 03 06 01 07 02
03 034970 WHERE IS THE LOVE 03:49 03 06 01 07 02
03 066433 SUGAR (GIMME SOME) 00:00 03 06 01 07 02
03 281015 KEEP HOLDING ON 04:01 03 06 01 07 02
03 280324 IRREPLACEABLE 03:17 03 06 01 07 02
03 039121 JUMPIN JUMPIN 03:13 03 06 01 07 02
03 049961 LET'S GET IT STARTED 03:39 03 06 01 07 02
03 E6B59219 KISS FM 00:01 03 06 01 07 02
03 DJUpload Voice Track 00:20 03 06 01 07 02
03 261665 INTO THE OCEAN 04:00 03 06 01 07 02
03 338454 LEAVE THE PIECES 03:30 03 06 01 07 02
03 062378 BECAUSE OF YOU 03:40 03 06 01 07 02
03 260419 NOTHING LEFT TO LOSE 04:20 03 06 01 07 02
Done
Internet | 100%
© 2007-2008 Clear Channel Management Services, L.P.

Fig. 17

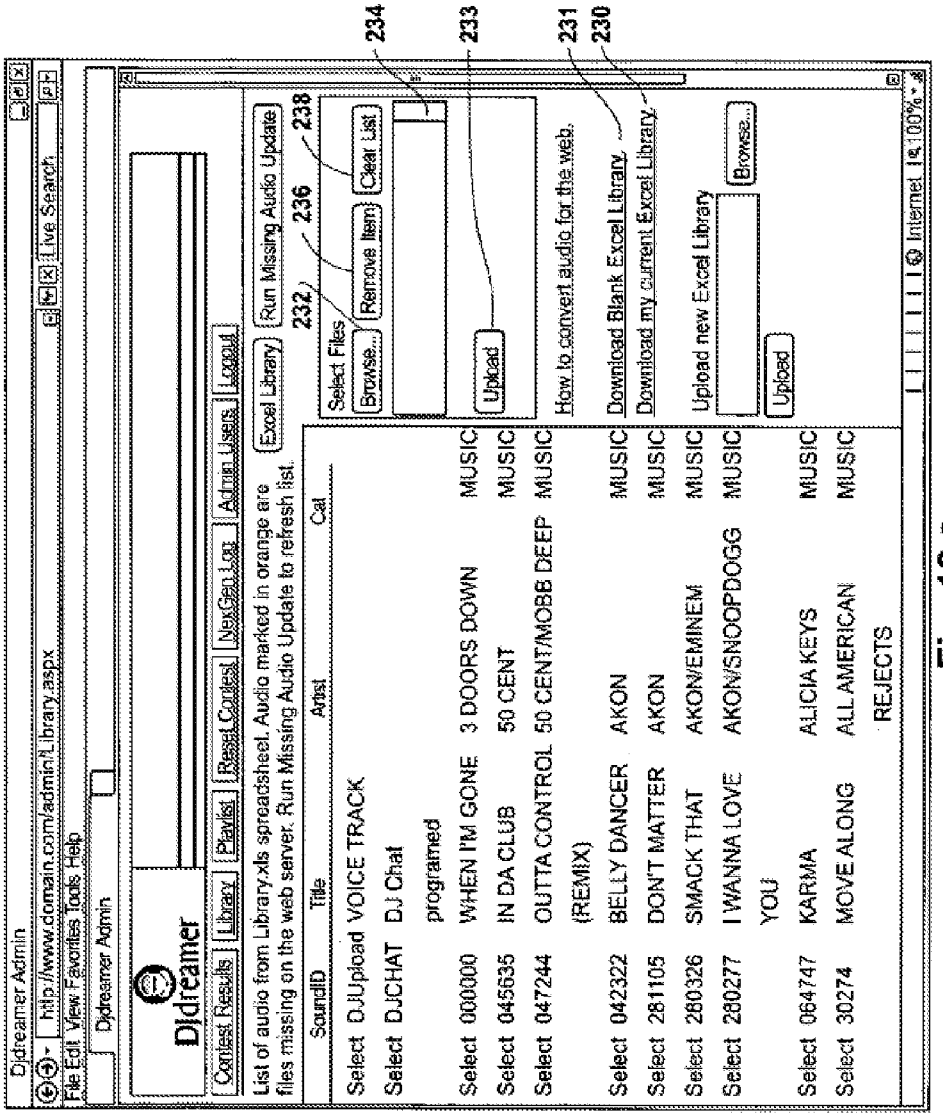


Fig. 18 ©2007-2008 Clear Channel Management Services, L.P.

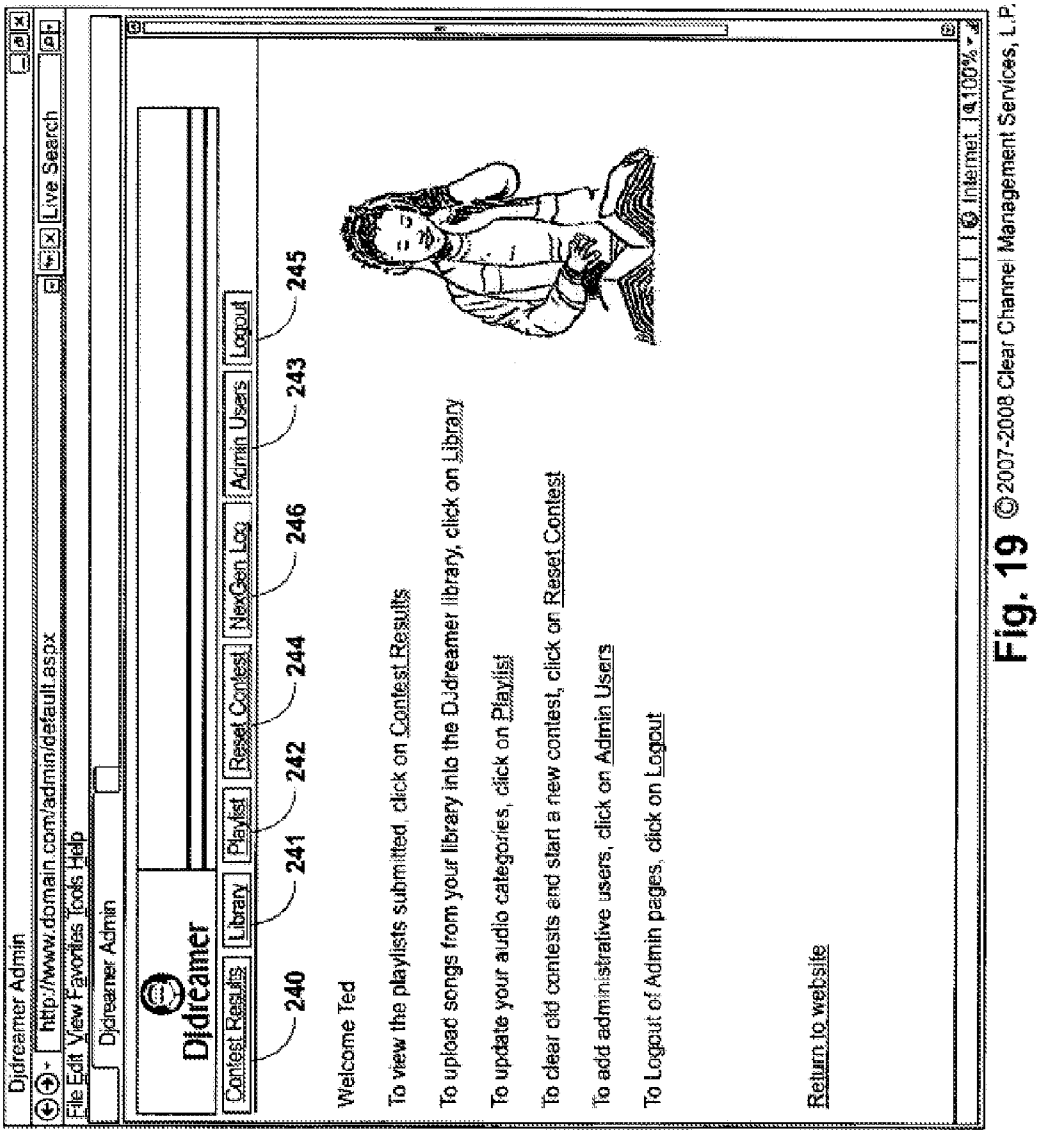

Djdreamer Admin
http://www.domain.com/admin/default.aspx
File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
Djdreamer Admin
Djdreamer
Contest Results
Library
Playlist
Reset Contest
NexGen Log
Admin Users
Logout
240
241
242
244
246
243
245
Welcome Ted
To view the playlists submitted, click on Contest Results
To upload songs from your library into the Djdreamer library, click on Library
To update your audio categories, click on Playlist
To clear old contests and start a new contest, click on Reset Contest
To add administrative users, click on Admin Users
To Logout of Admin pages, click on Logout
Return to website
© 2007-2008 Clear Channel Management Services, L.P.

Fig. 19

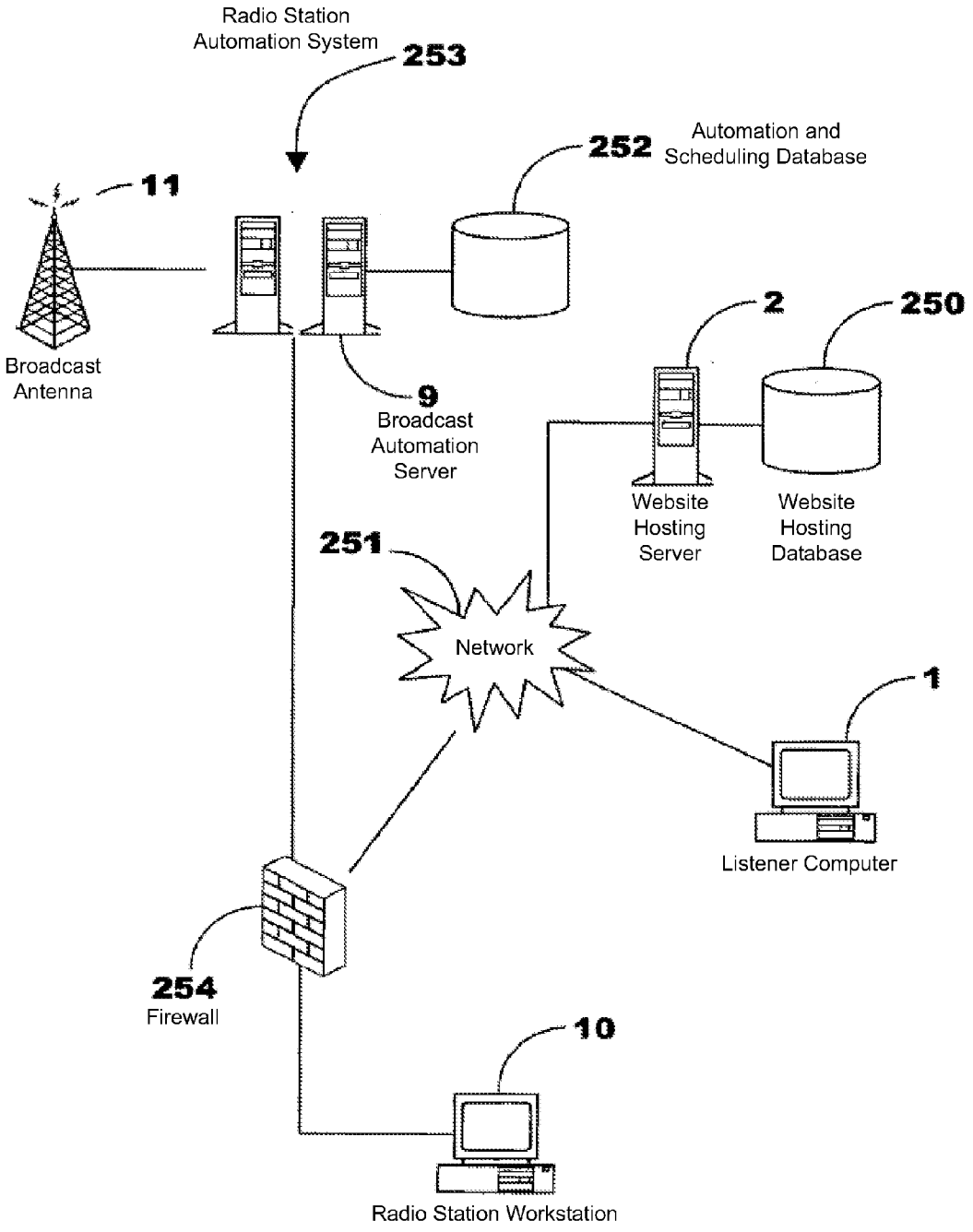

Radio Station
Automation System
253
252
Automation and
Scheduling Database
11
Broadcast
Antenna
9
Broadcast
Automation
Server
2
250
Website
Hosting
Server
Website
Hosting
Database
251
Network
1
Listener Computer
254
Firewall
10
Radio Station Workstation

Fig. 20

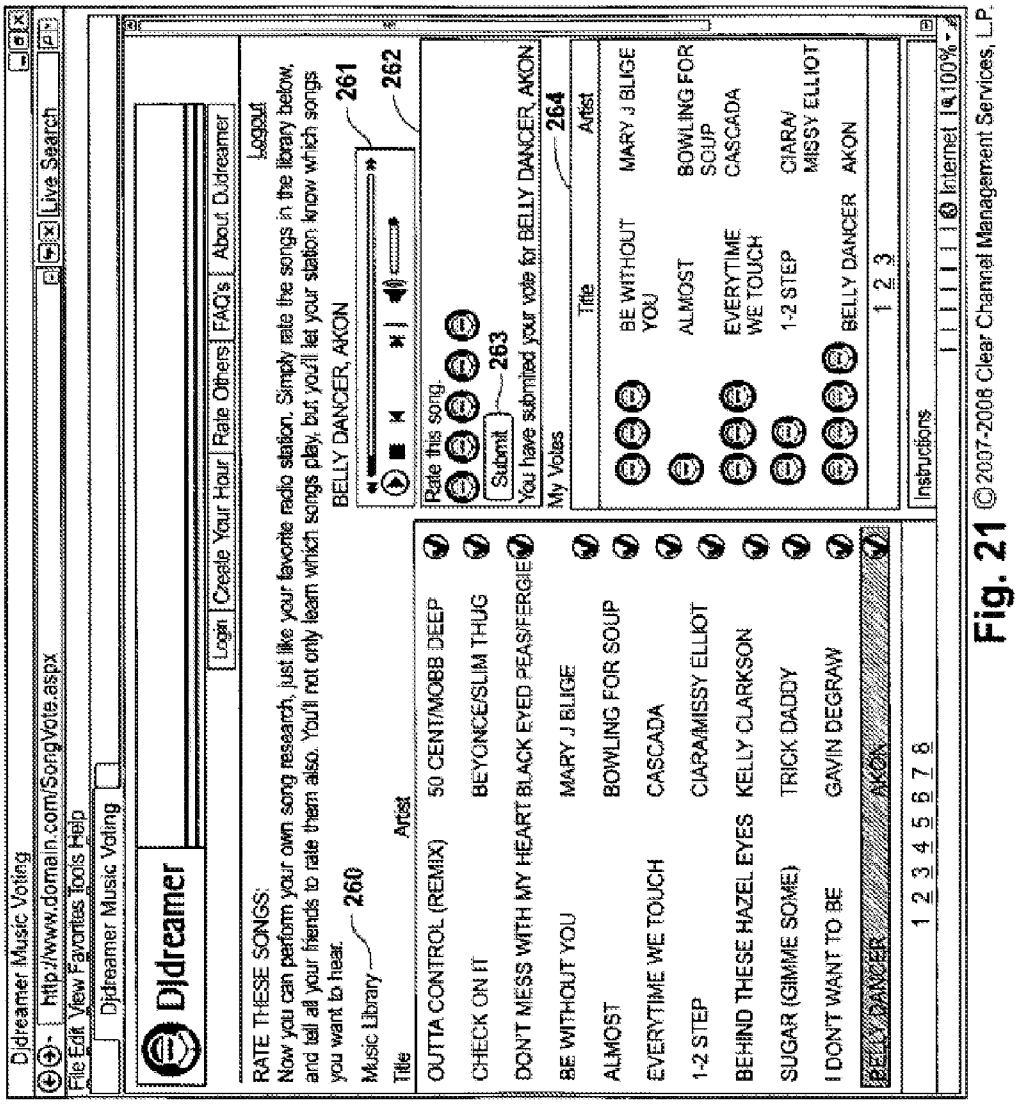

Djdreamer Music Voting
http://www.domain.com/SongVote.aspx
File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
Djdreamer Music Voting
Djdreamer
Login
Create Your Hour
Rate Others
FAQ's
About Djdreamer
Logout
RATE THESE SONGS:
Now you can perform your own song research, just like your favorite radio station. Simply rate the songs in the library below, and tell all your friends to rate them also. You'll not only learn which songs play, but you'll let your station know which songs you want to hear.
260
Music Library
Title
Artist
OUTTA CONTROL (REMIX) 50 CENT/MOBB DEEP
CHECK ON IT BEYONCE/SLIM THUG
DON'T MESS WITH MY HEART BLACK EYED PEAS/FERGIE
BE WITHOUT YOU MARY J BLIGE
ALMOST BOWLING FOR SOUP
EVERYTIME WE TOUCH CASCADA
1-2 STEP CIARA/MISSY ELLIOT
BEHIND THESE HAZEL EYES KELLY CLARKSON
SUGAR (GIMME SOME) TRICK DADDY
I DON'T WANT TO BE GAVIN DEGRAW
BELLY DANCER AKON
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
BELLY DANCER, AKON
261
262
Rate this song.
263
Submit
You have submitted your vote for BELLY DANCER, AKON
My Votes
264
Title
Artist
BE WITHOUT YOU MARY J BLIGE
ALMOST BOWLING FOR SOUP
EVERYTIME WE TOUCH CASCADA
1-2 STEP CIARA/MISSY ELLIOT
BELLY DANCER AKON
1 2 3
Instructions
Internet
100%
© 2007-2008 Clear Channel Management Services, L.P.

Fig. 21

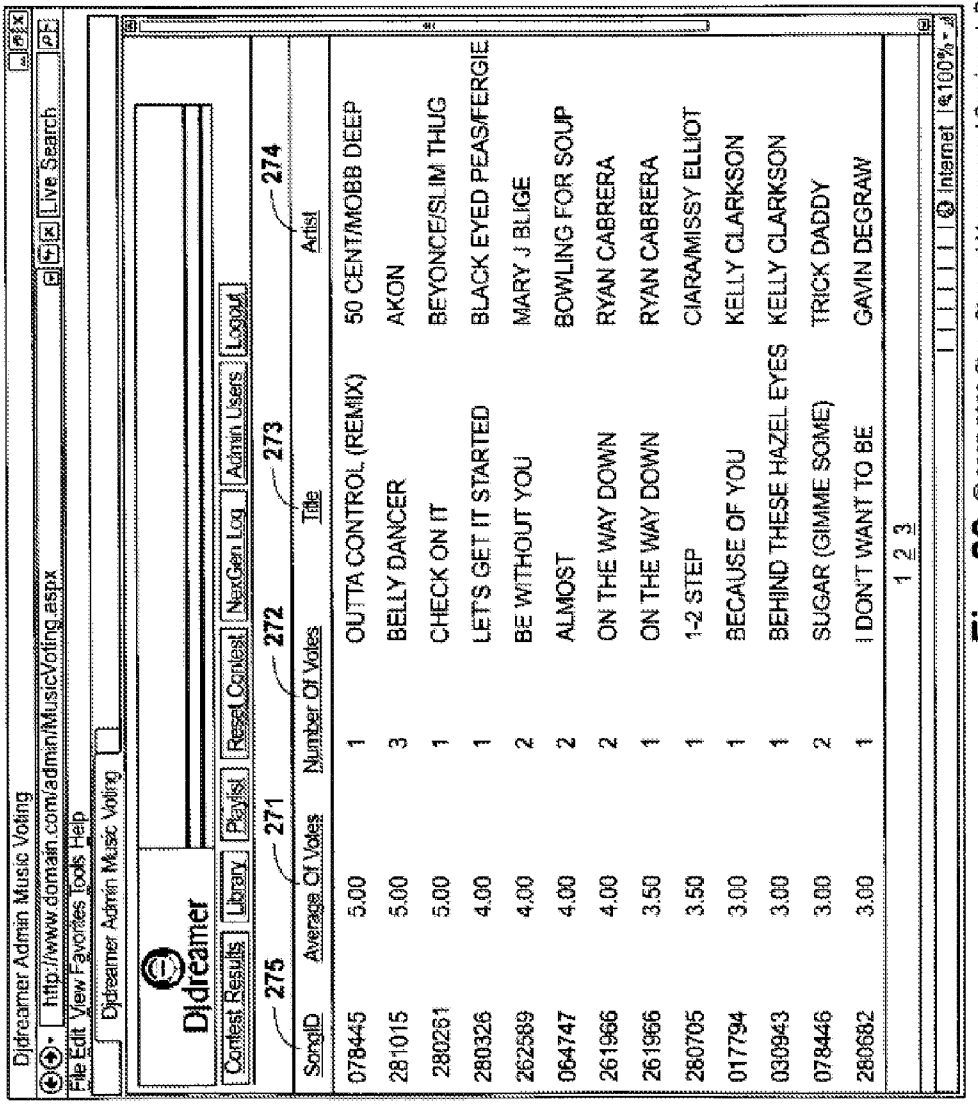

Djdreamer Admin Music Voting
http://www.domain.com/admin/MusicVoting.aspx
Live Search
File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
Djdreamer Admin Music Voting
Djdreamer
Contest Results
Library
Playlist
Reset Contest
NextGen Log
Admin Users
Logout
271
272
273
274
275
SongID
Average Of Votes
Number Of Votes
Title
Artist
078445 5.00 1 OUTTA CONTROL (REMIX) 50 CENT/MOBB DEEP
281015 5.00 3 BELLY DANCER AKON
280261 5.00 1 CHECK ON IT BEYONCE/SLIM THUG
280326 4.00 1 LETS GET IT STARTED BLACK EYED PEAS/FERGIE
262589 4.00 2 BE WITHOUT YOU MARY J BLIGE
064747 4.00 2 ALMOST BOWLING FOR SOUP
261966 4.00 2 ON THE WAY DOWN RYAN CABRERA
261966 3.50 1 ON THE WAY DOWN RYAN CABRERA
260705 3.50 1 1-2 STEP CIARA/MISSY ELLIOT
017794 3.00 1 BECAUSE OF YOU KELLY CLARKSON
030943 3.00 1 BEHIND THESE HAZEL EYES KELLY CLARKSON
078446 3.00 2 SUGAR (GIMME SOME) TRICK DADDY
280682 3.00 1 I DON'T WANT TO BE GAVIN DEGRAW
1 2 3
Internet
100%
© 2007-2008 Clear Channel Management Services, L.P.

Fig. 22

PROVIDING BROADCAST LISTENER PARTICIPATION

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED PATENTS

[0001] This application claims priority pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §120, as a continuation, to the following U.S. Utility patent application which is hereby incorporated herein by reference in its entirety and made part of the present U.S. Utility patent application for all purposes:

[0002] 1. U.S. application Ser. No. 12/231,069, filed Aug. 28, 2008, and entitled "SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR PROVIDING BROADCAST LISTENER PARTICIPATION", which claims priority pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §119(e) to the following U.S. Provisional patent application which is hereby incorporated herein by reference in its entirety and made part of the present U.S. Utility patent application for all purposes:

[0003] 1.1 U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 60/968,710, entitled "System and Method for Providing Broadcast Listener Participation", filed Aug. 29, 2007, now expired.

COPYRIGHT NOTICE

[0004] This application contains material that is subject to copyright protection. Such material may be reproduced by any person exactly as it appears in the Patent and Trademark Office patent files or records. The copyright owner otherwise reserves all rights to such material.

FIELD

[0005] This application generally relates to information technology in the field of radio broadcasting, and more particularly to interactive radio broadcasting.

BACKGROUND

[0006] In the field of radio broadcasting, present broadcast scheduling technology is not utilized to its full potential. For example, listeners are not able to interact with broadcasters to create, hear and rate broadcasting playlists. Therefore, there is a need in the art for a system and method for providing listener participation of that sort.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0007] FIG. **1** is depicts an embodiment of a system that may be used for providing a listener participation interface.

[0008] FIG. **2** depicts an embodiment of a screen for a listener to register for access to a listener participation interface that may be provided by the exemplary listener participation software.

[0009] FIG. **3** depicts an embodiment of an interface for a listener to log into a listener participation interface that may be provided by the exemplary listener participation software.

[0010] FIG. **4** is an embodiment of an interface for defining and creating a playlist of media elements that may be provided by the exemplary listener participation software.

[0011] FIG. **5** is an embodiment of an interface having a selection of media elements that may be assembled into a playlist which may be provided by the exemplary listener participation software.

[0012] FIG. **6** depicts a display that may be provided by the exemplary listener participation software of a playlist that may be created by use of the interfaces of FIGS. **4-5**.

[0013] FIG. **7** depicts one embodiment of an interface that may be provided by the exemplary listener participation software for viewing and listening to a playlist that may be rated.

[0014] FIG. **8** depicts an embodiment of an interface that may be provided by the exemplary listener participation software for a listener to rate a plurality of playlists that have been created and submitted.

[0015] FIG. **9** depicts one embodiment of an interface that may be provided by the exemplary listener participation software for providing frequently asked questions and answers regarding a playlist contest.

[0016] FIG. **10** is a schematic diagram of an alternative embodiment of a system that may provide a listener participation interface.

[0017] FIG. **11** depicts another embodiment of an interface that may be provided by the exemplary listener participation software for previewing, listening to, and rating one or more playlists.

[0018] FIG. **12** depicts another embodiment of an interface that may be provided by the exemplary listener participation software for defining and creating a playlist from a selection of media elements.

[0019] FIG. **13** depicts another alternative embodiment of an interface that may be provided by the exemplary listener participation software for a listener to rate and preview a playlist that has been created and submitted.

[0020] FIG. **14** depicts an embodiment of an interface that may be provided by the exemplary listener participation software for a radio broadcaster to manage and edit a playlist that has been submitted.

[0021] FIG. **15** depicts an embodiment of an interface that may be provided by the exemplary listener participation software for a radio broadcaster to incorporate a plurality of playlists into a radio broadcast.

[0022] FIG. **16** depicts another embodiment of an interface that may be provided by the exemplary listener participation software for a radio broadcaster to incorporate a plurality of playlists into a radio broadcast and export that information into its broadcast automation software.

[0023] FIG. **17** depicts a time-based log of media elements that have been created by incorporating one or more playlists created by listeners into a radio broadcast.

[0024] FIG. **18** depicts an interface that may be provided by the exemplary listener participation software for a radio broadcaster to manage and edit media elements that have been or will be populated onto a listener participation interface database.

[0025] FIG. **19** depicts an interface that may be provided by the exemplary listener participation software for a radio broadcaster to create and manage one or more playlist contests.

[0026] FIG. **20** is a schematic diagram of yet another alternative embodiment of a system that may provide a listener participation interface.

[0027] FIG. **21** depicts an embodiment of an interface that may be provided by the exemplary listener participation software for viewing, listening to, and rating a plurality of songs.

[0028] FIG. **22** depicts an embodiment of an interface that may be provided by the exemplary listener participation software for a radio broadcaster to access the ratings submitted through the interface of FIG. **21**.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0029] In one embodiment, a system and method is described in connection with radio station broadcasting for providing a listener participation interface. Such a listener participation interface may be provided to allow listeners to organize media elements into a playlist and to facilitate the judging of playlists by listeners and/or by radio broadcasters. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the system and method described herein may alternatively be provided in connection with television or other media broadcasting. Accordingly, a "listener" may refer to a consumer of audible media, visible media, data media, or some combination thereof, and may also refer to, e.g., more general users and to evaluators of such media.

[0030] In one embodiment, a listener participation interface may allow listeners to use the same or similar technology as that used by radio broadcasters to create playlists from media elements provided by a radio broadcaster, allow secure access to broadcast data or media elements stored on a radio broadcaster's database, and allow playlists to be judged in a contest by listeners and by radio broadcasters. In one embodiment, once playlist finalists have been determined by the radio broadcaster, playlists may be imported into the broadcaster's broadcast scheduling computer and database for broad transmission, e.g., over-the-air or via the Internet. Listeners may then hear the playlists on the radio broadcast and have the opportunity through the listener participation interface to rate and judge the playlists. The timing and order of broadcasting listener playlists may be based on the playlist impact amongst the listeners who have submitted the playlists, as well as how the listener playlists pertain and relate to the other programming scheduled in the day. A broadcaster may examine when to best air playlists such that the playlists do not appear to repeat other listener playlists or the broadcaster's broadcast schedule. Historical data may be logged by the broadcaster's existing broadcast scheduling computer in order for future schedules to be based on what media elements were broadcast in listener playlists.

[0031] Radio broadcasters generally use playlist assembler software to create one or more playlists that may be incorporated into a given radio broadcast. Playlist assembler software may comprise computer instructions to assist in organizing a plurality of media elements to form a playlist for a given radio broadcast. For example, playlist assembler software may comprise the MusicGen.® or GSelector.® music scheduling software installed on a radio broadcasting station workstation. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that various embodiments of playlist assembler software may be used in connection with the system and method described herein. A media element may include, but is not limited to, a song, an advertisement, a radio host commentary, news, a segue, beds, a promotion, station identification, a traffic report, a time or temperature announcement, a sound effect, a show, and the like, and may include metadata associated with those media elements, such as artist, title, track and the like. Some embodiments of playlist assembler software may provide a segue editor that a listener may use to define the relationship between media elements such as cross-fades and voice-overs. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that assembling media elements in other contexts, such as assembling video and text files, may include video elements, text and other visual events, as well.

[0032] A playlist is generally a time-based collection or arrangement of media elements organized in playback order. For example and not by limitation, a broadcaster may define, over a 24-hour period, when various media elements will be played to create the radio (or television, etc., as the case may be) broadcast "experience," as is known to those skilled in the art. A playlist may be planned and created well in advance of actual broadcast, or may be created or modified "on the fly." A playlist may also include metadata associated with the media elements, such as song title, artist, radio station identification, macros (listener-defined sequences of media elements) and the like. As noted above, playlist assembler software may allow the relationship or transition between media elements to be defined through use of a segue editor to provide a particular listening experience.

[0033] As shown in FIG. **1**, one embodiment of a system and method of providing a listener participation interface may include a radio station workstation **10** running radio broadcast automation software, e.g., the NexGen Digital.® broadcast automation suite from Prophet Systems Inc. or Master Control.®. studio automation software from RCS, Inc., that relies on a broadcast automation content server **9** for broadcast program content and on a broadcast automation database **8** for broadcast program schedule data such as media elements. The radio station workstation **10** may broadcast a radio program over the air via antenna **11** or transmit the program to a radio station website hosting server **2** for transmission, such as by streaming or downloading, to a listener computer **1** and/or cell phone **12** or other mobile device. Optionally, a website hosting administrator may manage the radio station website hosting server **2** via workstation **3**. The radio station workstation **10** may further rely on music scheduling database **7** to supply music scheduling data for the radio program schedule. A listener may use a listener computer **1** to access a radio station's website at radio station website hosting server **2**. Generally, a listener may listen to that radio station's broadcast either over the air (if within the broadcast range of antenna **11**) or via network transmission, e.g., the Internet. Those having skill in the art will recognize that a broadcaster may operate multiple radio stations and may thus broadcast multiple media streams.

[0034] In one embodiment, a listener may interact with the radio broadcaster. A listener participation interface server **4** may provide a listener participation graphical user interface (GUI) to the radio station website hosting server **2** for access by the listener through listener computer **1**. The GUI may be populated with media elements retrieved from a listener participation interface database **6**. An administrator may manage the listener participation interface server **4** and listener participation interface database **6** via workstation **5**. Alternatively, the system may include one or more listener participation interface servers **4** and one or more listener participation interface databases **6**. The listener participation interface server **4** and listener participation interface database **6** may provide a more secure "layer" between a broadcaster's computer system and one or more listeners. A broadcaster's computer system may comprise, in this embodiment, radio station workstation **10**, broadcast automation content server **9**, broadcast automation content database **8** and music scheduling database **7**, all of which may be located at a single location or at multiple locations. As such, a broadcaster may protect any proprietary or confidential information and its systems of operation while still allowing one or more listeners to have access to certain media elements, playlists or software programs, including but not limited to listener participation software or playlist assembler software. Generally, a database

includes, but is not limited to, a collection of data embodied in at least one computer readable medium and organized in a suitable way to permit a computer to select one or more desired pieces of such data. For instance, listener participation interface database **6** may comprise a Structured Query Language (SQL) database or a Microsoft.® Access database. Of course, other suitable databases may be employed. The computers, workstations and servers include but are not limited to programmable machines capable of executing machine-readable instructions. The computers, workstations and servers may comprise one or more processors, which may comprise part of a single machine or multiple machines.

[0035] Each of listener participation interface server **4** and listener participation interface database **6** may comprise one or more units of hardware, which may or may not be located at the same geographic location. Listener participation interface database **6**, which may be integral to or separate from listener participation interface server **4**, may serve as a searchable repository for a large volume of media elements. Listener participation interface database **6** and listener participation interface server **4** may be accessible by one or more radio personnel, such as through workstations **10** or **5**, and one or more listeners through a network, which may include but is not limited to the Internet. Indeed, those skilled in the art will recognize that communication between the devices illustrated in FIG. **1** may be direct or indirect, wireless or otherwise, and through any suitable network, such as the Internet. Those skilled in the art will recognize that a listener may communicate with the radio station website hosting server via any suitable electronic device, including mobile devices such as cellular phones **12** and PDAs. Listener participation interface server **4** may be programmed with one or more computer programs containing instructions for receiving input signals representative of media elements, storing the media elements in listener participation interface database **6**, and providing or restricting access to media elements or listener participation software to one or more listeners, one or more radio broadcast personnel, or any other users.

[0036] In various embodiments, a radio broadcaster or radio station may create a contest by selecting a plurality of media elements available for incorporation into playlists by listeners and populating a listener participation interface database **6** with the selected media elements. For example, a listener participation interface database **6** may be populated with media elements chosen from media elements stored in the music scheduling database **7**. Also, listeners may create and submit media elements and playlists by utilizing a listener participation interface.

[0037] In some embodiments, at least one listener participation interface server **4** alone or in combination with at least one listener participation interface database **6** may serve to host a listener participation interface for a plurality of radio stations located at various geographic locations. Such a configuration would allow a radio station to incorporate a listener participation interface into the radio station's existing website without requiring additional computers or databases to be added to the radio station's existing computer system. In various embodiments, listener participation interface database **6** may populate media elements into a listener participation interface, and maintain the listener participation interface, voting, and analysis tools for tallying votes for various playlists or analysis of data for promotions or accounting purposes.

[0038] Broadcast automation content server **9** may be programmed with instructions to export media elements from broadcast automation database **8** to listener participation interface server **4** and in turn to listener participation interface database **6**. A broadcaster may selectively determine which media elements or playlists may populate listener participation interface database **6**. Broadcaster or radio station personnel may use an interface may be provided via radio station workstation **10** to build a library of media elements on listener participation interface database **6** that may be later accessed by one or more listeners. A radio broadcaster may periodically update the media elements on listener participation interface database **6**.

[0039] Media elements may be organized in various ways, such as by topic, music genre or by length of time. Also, media elements may be tagged with identifying metadata that allows a query to be employed to search for a certain type of media element on listener participation interface database **6**. For instance, media elements that comprise songs may be tagged as "country" or "rock" and a query could be run to retrieve all country or all rock song media elements. When media elements are exported from broadcast automation content server **9**, metadata associated with those media elements may also be exported, such as but not limited to metadata identifying artist, title, length, sound code, tempo, and core score.

[0040] Each of broadcast automation content server **9** and broadcast automation database **8** may comprise one or more units of hardware, which may be located at the same geographic location. Broadcast automation database **8**, which may be integral to or separate from broadcast automation content server **9**, may serve as a searchable repository for a large volume of media elements. Broadcast automation database **8** may be a relational database or any other suitable type of database. Broadcast automation content server **9** may be programmed with instructions, such as but not limited to playlist assembler software, for organizing media elements into one or more playlists and organizing one or more playlists in order to generate a radio broadcast that may be transmitted via broadcast antenna **11**. Broadcast automation content server **9** may also contain sufficient storage for maintaining a broadcast automation database **8**.

[0041] A broadcast antenna **11** may or may not be located at the same geographic location as broadcast automation content database **8** and broadcast automation content server **9**. Broadcast automation content server **9** may be accessible by one or more radio broadcast personnel through a workstation **10** that may communicate with broadcast automation content server **9** through a network, e.g., the Internet. One or more radio broadcast personnel may generate a playlist or radio broadcast via workstation **10**. A wide variety of media elements may be stored on broadcast automation content database **8** and may be accessible by radio broadcast personnel at one or more geographic locations.

[0042] Listener participation interface server **4** may be programmed with instructions to permit (or not) access by one or more listeners, radio broadcast personnel or other users to certain portions of media elements on listener participation interface database **6** and to permit (or not) access to various software, including but not limited to listener participation software, that may be run on broadcast automation content server **9** or listener participation interface server **4**. Listener participation software may comprise computer-readable instructions for providing a listener participation GUI acces-

sible over a network that allows media elements to be arranged into a playlist and for providing a listener participation GUI that allows playlists to be viewed, listened to and judged as part of a contest. In some embodiments, the instructions in listener participation software that allow media elements to be organized into a playlist may be similar to instructions provided by playlist assembler software typically used by a broadcaster. In some embodiments, playlists that are created by using the exemplary listener participation software may be automatically compatible with, and may be incorporated into an actual radio broadcast by a broadcaster's broadcast automation software. Listener participation software may provide a listener participation GUI for display on a listener computer **1** via a network, e.g., the Internet. Alternatively, listener participation software may display a GUI on any other suitable computer or electronic device, such as but not limited to a cell phone, PDA, or hand-held computer. Listener participation software may be provided as an interactive web-based application. Alternatively, such listener participation software may be distributed, for example, on CD or via internet download.

[0043] Data to be stored in the listener participation interface database **6** may include registration information of one or more listeners. For example, if a listener requests a password, or some other authorization key, to be able to access a listener participation interface, listener participation interface server **4** may be programmed with instructions to require certain particular listener participation data to be entered, such as legal name, screen name, home or mailing address, age, telephone number, e-mail address, and other information concerning the listener. Some or all of this listener registration data may be stored in listener participation interface database **6** and automatically associated with certain media elements, or with playlists related to that listener, without the need for the listener to re-enter the listener registration data each time one or more playlists or media elements are uploaded from listener computer **1** to listener participation interface database **6**. For example, whenever a listener logs on to listener participation interface server **4**, any media element or playlist transmitted to listener participation interface server **4** may be tagged or identified with the listener's registration data in listener participation interface database **6**.

[0044] In some embodiments of the listener participation interface, listeners may register for a playlist contest, wherein other listeners, and/or radio broadcast personnel may provide feedback regarding the playlists submitted for the contest. Feedback may include but is not limited to judging playlists against playlists submitted by other listeners. In this embodiment, the listener participation interface server **4** may be programmed with listener participation software that may comprise instructions for allowing access to playlists that have been submitted for contest to radio broadcast personnel through broadcast automation content server **9**, and/or workstation **10**. Depending on how the listener participation interface server **4** is programmed, a listener may need to install a client application on a listener computer **1** in order to access a listener participation interface. Alternatively, as noted above, a listener participation interface may be provided via a network "cloud," e.g., as a web-based application, such that no client application need be installed locally on a listener computer **1**. Those skilled in the art will recognize that other connections between devices (including connections not shown in the figures) may be provided as suitable for implementing various embodiments described herein.

[0045] A listener participation interface may provide access to a listener through one or more listener participation GUI screens. For example, FIG. **2** illustrates one embodiment of a registration or sign-up screen **20** may be provided by the exemplary listener participation software to allow a listener to register for a playlist contest. The sign-up screen **20** may be initiated by clicking on a New User button **21**. In the exemplary sign-up screen **20**, a variety of listener registration data may be entered into various registration fields, such as a screen name in field **22**, first name in field **23**, last name in field **24**, address in field **27**, city in field **28**, state in field **29**, postal code in field **30**, country in field **26**, e-mail address in field **25**, age as may be selected from a drop-down menu **32**, and password in fields **31**. After entering information into the registration fields, the listener may select a Get Started button **33** in order to complete the registration process with listener participation interface server **4**. Once a listener has registered, the listener participation interface server **4** may be programmed with instructions to generate a specific key associated with that listener's screen name and password. In addition, after a listener has registered, the listener may log in so as to gain access to information, including but not limited to media elements or playlists, through the listener participation interface by way of exemplary log-in screen **40**, as shown in FIG. **3**.

[0046] In the embodiment of FIG. **3**, a listener may log in by entering a screen name in field **41** and password in field **42** and clicking the Log-In button **43**. After the log in process is completed, the listener participation interface server **4** may retrieve a key specific to that listener. Of course, other suitable ways of establishing listener authorization through the listener participation interface may be used.

[0047] As mentioned above, in some embodiments a listener may log into the listener participation interface in order to create a playlist using media elements. Listener participation software may provide instructions for allowing a listener to define the relationship between media elements similar to playlist assembler software utilized by radio broadcasters.

[0048] FIG. **4** illustrates an exemplary Create Your Playlist screen **50** that a listener may use in order to organize or assemble media elements into a playlist, that may be provided by exemplary listener participation software. A Create Your Playlist screen **50** may appear in connection with a Create Your Hour tab **51**. A playlist table **52** may contain one or more columns **57**, **53**, **54**, **55**, and **56**, to identify various aspects of media elements in the slots (numbered 1-20 in the screen) of column **53** that make up a playlist. These aspects, such as whether the element is a song, advertisement, etc., the artist (column **55**), duration (column **56**) or volume of the media element, or any other identifying characteristic may be associated with the media element as metadata and stored accordingly in listener participation interface server **4** or listener participation interface database **6**. A listener may select a slot in column **53** to insert a media element for a playlist. A media element may be inserted into one or more of the slots in the Create Your Playlist screen **50** shown in FIG. **4**. The type of media element in a slot may be indicated in column **57** of table **52**. For example, music may be represented by a symbol **58**, a commercial may be represented by another symbol **59**, and an audio voice track may be represented by yet another symbol **60**. Of course, other symbols or representations may be used to identify other types of media elements.

[0049] In one embodiment, when a listener first opens the Create Your Playlist screen **50**, no media elements may have

been entered into or displayed in table **52**. For example, all slots may initially indicate in title column **54** the words "Program This Slot" or some similar words to indicate that media elements may be inserted into the slots. A slot **53** may be selected and filled with a media element in any order by selecting that particular slot. A media element may be uploaded from listener computer **1** and incorporated into a playlist. In some embodiments, a media element uploaded from a listener computer **1** may be stored on listener participation interface database **6**. In this embodiment, a listener may use the record options **61** to record, and the media player **62** to playback their own voice as a media element, such that the listener may emulate a radio disc jockey, and arrange the recorded voice track in conjunction with songs and other media elements to create a playlist "broadcast experience." This embodiment may allow a listener that may be interested in a career as a disk jockey to gain experience as a disc jockey or create a demo that may be used as a hiring or talent search tool for radio broadcasters to identify new talent for disc jockey positions. Alternatively, a listener may create or write scripts for a professional disc jockey to read, the recording of which may be incorporated as a media element into a playlist. Such an embodiment may facilitate the continuity of the radio station's identity during the airing of playlists that listeners have created.

[0050] FIG. **5** depicts an exemplary interface having a selection of media elements that may be assembled into a playlist that may be provided by the exemplary listener participation software. Media elements may be selected from the list of media elements **82**. Any media element in the list of media elements **82** may be previewed by use of a media player **80**. In this embodiment, a listener may listen to a media element before choosing to incorporate that media element into a playlist. A slot in column **72** in playlist table **71**, such as slot **83** (slot number **2** in the GUI), may be selected and a media element may be inserted by selecting the media element from a list of media elements **82** and then clicking a Add To Playlist button **85**. In some embodiments, instructions for how to assemble a playlist may be provided in text box **84**. In some embodiments, a listener may preview or listen to the playlist at any point during the process of assembling or creating a playlist by clicking on a Preview My Playlist button **81**.

[0051] FIG. **6** depicts an exemplary screen of a playlist preview instantiated by clicking on the Preview My Playlist button **81** shown in FIG. **5**. The playlist may be displayed on table **90**, showing for each media element columns for the slot number **91**, DJ chat **92**, title **93**, artist or author of the media element **94**, and the length **95** of the media element. In one embodiment, a listener participation interface may provide a media player **96** that the listener may use to play the playlist or any media element in the playlist. A listener may go back to the interface of FIG. **5** by clicking on the Change Playlist button **97**. In various embodiments, the listener may submit a playlist for a contest or to a broadcaster for an audition by clicking on the Submit My Playlist button **98**.

[0052] Once a playlist has been defined and tagged, the media elements selected from the listener participation interface database **6** and arranged into a playlist may be merged into a single composite file using the transitional information contained in the metadata. The file may be stored on the listener participation interface database **6**, or any other suitable database, and may be associated with the listener that created the playlist. The listener participation interface server **4** and listener participation interface database **6** may transmit listener-submitted playlists to broadcast automation content server **9** or to a broadcaster's or radio station's computer system. Such a playlist may be incorporated into a radio broadcast using typical broadcast scheduling software. In some embodiments, metadata exported with media elements may allow playlists to be seamlessly incorporated into and used with the scheduling software of the radio station because the media elements may be automatically compatible with such software.

[0053] FIG. **7** depicts an exemplary interface that may allow a listener to rate one or more playlists created and submitted by other listeners. A selection of playlists **100** may be available to be previewed and listed according to the screen name **101** of the listener that created each playlist and selected by clicking on the Select hyperlink **102** located to the left of the screen name of the listener that created the playlist.

[0054] Referring to FIGS. **7** and **8**, when a particular playlist is selected, the specific details of that playlist may be depicted (as shown in FIG. **8**) in an exemplary table **115** with columns displaying information pertaining to the media elements, such as the slot number **110**, the title **111**, the artist **112**, the length of the media element **113**, or the category **114**. Using a media player **116**, a listener may listen to the playlist depicted in table **115** either by individually listening to each media element or listening to the media elements as arranged in the playlist. A feedback system **123** may be provided that allows a listener to, for example, rate the playlist on a scale of 1-5 ranging from, e.g., "Don't quit your day job!" to "Hire Them!" A listener may click on one of the buttons **117**, **118**, **119**, **120**, or **121** along that scale, and then click the Rate button **122** to submit the rating. Of course, various other embodiments may be provided that allow for playlists to be judged or rated on various other scales such as, but not limited to, ranking playlists by number against other playlists or various other scaling methods. When a listener submits a rating by clicking on the Rate button **122**, that rating may be saved and submitted to the listener participation interface database **6**. In some embodiments, listener participation software may provide instructions for organizing the ratings submitted by listeners or analyzing ratings that have been submitted in order to determine one or more winners or losers.

[0055] FIG. **9** depicts an exemplary interface for providing answers to frequently asked questions regarding a playlist contest. Such a listing of answers may appear under a separate tab **56**, and may enable a listener participation interface, including a playlist contest, to be listener friendly or more easily navigated by a listener.

[0056] FIG. **10** depicts an alternative embodiment of a system and method of providing a listener participation interface. This embodiment includes the devices of FIG. **1**, and further includes a listener participation content server **140**. In this embodiment, broadcast automation server **9** may communicate a broad range of listener participation content to the listener participation content server **140** to populate the listener participation interface. As with FIG. **1**, those skilled in the art will recognize that other connections between devices (including connections not shown in the figures) may be provided as suitable for implementing various embodiments described herein.

[0057] FIG. **11** depicts an exemplary interface that a listener may use to view, listen, and rate to a playlist. In this embodiment, the playlists identified by buttons **150**, **151**, **152**, **153**, or **154** may be the finalists that have received the highest

rating as compared to a plurality of other playlists. A finalist playlist may be identified by one or more number buttons **150**, **151**, **152**, **153**, or **154**. For instance, upon clicking on the "#1" button **150**, the playlist associated with number **1** may be uploaded into window **155**. In window **155**, the media elements in the playlist may be identified by title **156**, length **157**, and type **158**. A ballot **159** may be provided to rate finalists 1-5 by submitting a score by clicking on a button **160** that represents a rated score between least favorite or most favorite as compared between each of the finalist playlists. The score that has been selected may be shown in column **161**. A ballot may be submitted by clicking on the Submit Voting Ballot button **162**. Alternatively the rated selections may be cleared by clicking on the Clear All button **163**.

[0058] FIG. **12** depicts another exemplary interface through which a listener may assemble a playlist. A selection of media elements **170** may be provided. A program log **171** may be provided as a template into which media elements may be inserted from a selection of media elements **170**. To select a media element, a listener may click on that element and then click the Select button **172**, which allows that media element to be inserted into the program log **171**. A program log may be saved by clicking on a Save button **176**. The selection of media elements **170** may be organized by title, artist, media element length or other identifying characteristics by clicking on the Title button **173**, the Artist button **174**, or the Time button **175**. Other types of media elements may be selected from lists provided under the tabs "Station IDs," "Station Bits" and "Other." Such other types of media elements may include without limitation jingles, sound effects, station identification and such other elements.

[0059] FIG. **13** depicts another exemplary interface that a listener may interact with to rate a playlist that has been created and submitted by other listeners. A program log **180** may identify the media elements in the playlist and the playlist may be rated by clicking on buttons **181**, **182**, **183**, **184**, or **185** on a scale of 1-5. The ballot may be submitted by clicking on a Submit Voting Ballot button **186** or, alternatively, the ballot may be cleared by clicking on a Clear button **187**.

[0060] FIG. **14** depicts an exemplary interface that may allow a radio broadcaster to manage and edit a playlist such as a playlist submitted by a listener. Media elements may be selected from a listener participation interface database **6** or a broadcast automation content database **8** by category **190** or subcategory **191**. For example, a playlist that has been submitted by a listener may be edited before incorporating the playlist into a radio broadcast such that it is more appropriate to a professional radio broadcast, such as by adding or deleting media elements. Slots may be added or deleted by clicking on Add Slot button **192** or Delete Slot button **193**. In this embodiment, each slot has a category and a subcategory that may assist a broadcaster in editing the playlist.

[0061] FIG. **15** depicts an exemplary interface that may allow a broadcaster to organize playlists submitted by listeners into a radio broadcast and coordinate such organization with, in some embodiments, broadcast automation software. Playlists may be depicted in playlist table **200** and identified by the screen name **201** and email address **202** of the listener that created the playlist. In some embodiments, the listener rating **203** may also be shown next to the screen name **201** and email address **202** of the listener that submitted the playlist. A playlist may be inserted into a particular time sequence of a radio broadcast by a drop down menu **204**, which in this embodiment allows a broadcaster to select an hour of the day in which a playlist may be broadcast. A drop down menu similar to **204** may be available next to each playlist such that each playlist can be placed into a particular time sequence in a radio broadcast. A playlist may be previewed by use of media player **205**.

[0062] FIG. **16** depicts another portion of that exemplary interface of FIG. **15**. As may be seen in FIG. **16**, a broadcaster may select a broadcast station through a drop down menu **210** and a day on which a playlist may be incorporated through calendar **211**, and submit the schedule by clicking on a Create NextGen Schedule button **212**. Selecting the Create NextGen Schedule button **212** creates a time-based log that may be imported into a broadcaster's broadcast automation software such as NextGen to create a daily log. Such importation may be accomplished through use of links provided in table **213**.

[0063] FIG. **17** depicts a time-based log **220** of media elements that has been downloaded to create the daily log by use of the links provided in table **213** of FIG. **16**. Such a time-based log **220** may be displayed and printed in order to provide a summary of the media elements to be played in the radio broadcast and that have been incorporated using broadcast automation software.

[0064] FIG. **18** depicts an exemplary interface for a broadcaster to manage a library of media elements exported to the listener participation interface database **6**. Media elements in listener participation interface database **6** may be downloaded and thus previewed in, for example, a Microsoft Excel.® spreadsheet by clicking on Download My Current Excel Library link **230**. A blank library that would enable a broadcaster to select media elements for exportation to the listener participation interface database **6** may be accessed via the Download Blank Excel Library link **231**. Files may be selected and inserted into a blank Excel library by clicking on the Browse button **232** and the Upload button **233**. One or more media elements may be inserted into field **234** by browsing the broadcaster's computer system, for instance a broadcast automation content database **8** and a broadcast automation content server **9**, and selecting the media element to insert into field **234**. An item may be removed by clicking on a Remove Item button **236** and the list may be cleared by clicking on the Clear List button **238**.

[0065] FIG. **19** depicts an exemplary administrative interface that may allow a radio broadcaster to create and manage a custom playlist contest. For example and not by way of limitation, a broadcaster may review contest results by clicking on a Contest Results link **240**. Playlists that have been submitted for a contest through a listener participation interface may be previewed by clicking on a Contest Results link **240**. In some embodiments, clicking on a Contest Results link **240** may cause finalist playlists to appear for review. A broadcaster may export media elements to the listener participation interface database **6** by clicking on a Library link **241**. A broadcaster may update the various audio categories associated with the media elements exported to listener participation interface database **6** by clicking on a Playlist link **242**. A broadcaster may initiate a new contest by clicking on a Reset Contest link **244**. A broadcaster may add other authorized radio broadcast personnel to have access to the listener participation interface by clicking on a Admin Users link **243**. In some embodiments, the broadcaster may access the broadcast automation software log by clicking on a Next Gen Log link **246**. A radio broadcaster may log out by clicking a Log Out link **245**.

[0066] After a contest is over, the broadcaster may reset the listener participation interface by clearing previous voting records and playlists, and provide a new contest in the manner described above.

[0067] FIG. **20** depicts yet another alternative embodiment of a system and method of providing a listener participation interface. This embodiment is provides the listener participation interface through a much "leaner" system than that of FIG. **1**, for example, yet does not limit the features and functionality of the listener participation interface and the listener and broadcaster's interaction therewith. In this embodiment, a radio station automation system **253** and a radio station workstation **10** may communicate with a website hosting server **2** and website hosting database **250**, and a listener computer **1** over a network **251**, such as the Internet. For added security, a firewall **254** may be used to shield the radio station automation system **253** and the radio station workstation **10** from network hazards. In this embodiment, the radio station automation system **253** includes a broadcast automation server **9** (shown in this embodiment as multiple servers), and an automation and scheduling database **252**. In this embodiment, broadcast antenna **11** transmits broadcast signals over the air. A radio broadcaster may facilitate listener participation by populating the listener participation interface software residing at website hosting database **250** with media elements from automation and scheduling database **252**. A listener may interact with the radio broadcaster through a GUI provided by website hosting server **2**. Here, as well, those skilled in the art will recognize that other connections between devices (including connections not shown in the figures) may be provided as suitable for implementing various embodiments described herein.

[0068] In the embodiment of FIG. **20**, a broadcaster at radio station workstation **10** may create a spreadsheet using, for example, Microsoft Excel, with a list of media elements to be loaded into the listener participation interface. As noted above, such media elements may include songs, bits, liners or other audio content. The broadcaster may then access the administrative section of the listener participation interface and upload the Excel spreadsheet to the listener participation interface at the website hosting database **250**. The broadcaster may then download the listed media elements from the radio station automation system **253**, convert the audio to an appropriate format such as WMA as may be necessary, and upload the media elements to the website hosting database **250**. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the broadcaster may alternatively cause the radio station automation system **253** to transmit media elements directly to the website hosting database **250**. The broadcaster may then create exemplary playlists for the listener participation interface by logging in, and selecting and arranging the media elements.

[0069] FIG. **21** depicts an exemplary interface that may be provided by the exemplary listener participation software for a listener to view, listen to, and rate media elements, including but not limited to a plurality of songs. In this embodiment, the interface may allow a listener to inform the radio broadcaster which songs the listener would like to have in a radio broadcast. One part of the interface, the Music Library **260**, may provide a list of songs that may be rated by title and artist. Listeners may listen to and rate each song by clicking on that song in the Music Library **260**. In some embodiments, a media player **261** may be provided and may automatically begin playing a song when a listener clicks on that song in the Music Library **260**. A listener may rate a song using a ballot **262**, and may submit the ballot **262** to the broadcaster by clicking on the Submit button **263**. A listener that is logged into the listener participation interface may view all votes that a particular listener has submitted for songs in the My Votes table **264**. A listener may change his or her vote for a song in the My Votes table **264** by selecting that song from the My Votes table **264**.

[0070] A radio broadcaster may research the popularity of media elements, including but not limited to songs, and create a radio broadcast accordingly by using the results obtained through the interface of FIG. **21**. The media elements that the radio broadcaster may allow to be rated by listeners may comprise the current media elements being played on air or new media elements the radio broadcaster is considering airing. As shown in FIG. **22**, an exemplary interface may be provided by the exemplary listener participation software to allow a radio broadcaster to view and access the results from the ratings submitted by listeners. In the embodiment shown in FIG. **22**, a radio broadcaster may view the average of all votes for a plurality of songs in column **271** and the total number of votes submitted for each song in column **272**. The title of the song and the artist may be displayed in columns **273** and **274** respectively. Finally, a song identification number may be displayed in column **275**. Of course, the results obtained from the interface of FIG. **21** may be displayed in various other formats.

[0071] A listener participation interface as described herein may provide a greater level of listener participation in a radio broadcast and thus increase the number of listeners for a radio broadcaster. There may be natural excitement and word of mouth publicity generated with respect to a radio broadcast or radio station if listeners tell their friends to listen and vote for their playlist. In some embodiments, a listener participation interface may provide a vehicle for new music and core music testing. Trends as to which media elements, such as music and jingles, are most commonly selected may allow a broadcaster or radio station to more selectively broadcast the most popular media elements.

[0072] Those skilled in the art will recognize that the various devices disclosed in FIGS. **1**, **10** and **20** may communicate via network. A network may be any type of electronically connected group of computers including, for instance, the following networks: Internet, Intranet, Local Area Networks (LAN), Wide Area Networks (WAN) or an interconnected combination of these network types. In addition, the connectivity within a network may be, for example, remote modem, Ethernet (IEEE 802.3), Token Ring (IEEE 802.5), Fiber Distributed Datalink Interface (FDDI), Wi-Fi (IEEE 802.11), Wi-Max (IEEE 802.16), Asynchronous Transfer Mode (ATM), or any other communication protocol. Those having skill in the art will recognize that the devices in FIGS. **1**, **10** and **20** may be any suitable device, such as a desktop computer, server, portable device, hand-held device, set-top box, personal digital assistant (PDA), a terminal, thin client, or a suitable device of any other desired type or configuration. Those having skill in the art will recognize that network-connected devices, and devices connected to each other, may vary widely in processing speed, internal memory, communication capability, and other performance aspects, as may be suitable for the various functionalities described herein. Such devices may also be geographically dispersed. Communications within the network and to or from the computing devices connected to the network or each other may be either wired or wireless, and may be established by physical, electronic, opti-

cal, or other means. Wireless communication may be especially advantageous for network connected portable or handheld devices. A network may include, at least in part, the world-wide public Internet which generally connects a plurality of users in accordance with a client-server model in accordance with the transmission control protocol/internet protocol (TCP/IP) specification. A client-server network may provide a dominant model for communicating between two computing devices. Using this relationship, a client computer (a "client") may issue one or more commands to a server computer (the "server"). The server may fulfill client commands by accessing available network resources and returning information to the client pursuant to client commands. During this process, client computer systems and network resources resident on the network servers may be assigned a network address for identification during communications between elements of the network. Communications from other network connected systems to the servers may include the network address of the relevant server/network resource as part of the communication so that the appropriate destination of the data/request may be identified as the recipient. If a network comprises the global Internet, the network address may be an IP address in the TCP/IP format which may, at least in part, route data to an e-mail account, a web-site, or other Internet tool resident on the server. Thus, information and services resident on the network servers may be available to the web browser of a client computer through a domain name which maps to the IP address of the network server.

[0073] Although the foregoing specific details describe certain embodiments of this invention, persons having ordinary skill in the art will recognize that various changes may be made in the details of this invention without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as defined in the appended claims. Those having skill in the art will recognize that a variety of GUIs, devices and connections may be provided according to the principles described herein. Therefore, it should be understood that this invention is not to be limited to the specific details shown and described herein.

What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising:

providing, via a listener participation interface, access to a library of media elements;

receiving a playlist created using the listener participation interface, and including at least one media element selected from the library of media elements, wherein the playlist created using the listener participation interface is received in a format compatible with a broadcaster's broadcast automation software; and

incorporating the playlist into a radio broadcast, using the broadcaster's broadcast automation software.

2. The method of claim **1**, further comprising:

wherein media elements included in the playlist are individually compatible with the broadcaster's broadcast automation software.

3. The method of claim **1**, further comprising:

receiving metadata associated with media elements included in the playlist; and

using the metadata to facilitate automatic incorporation of the playlist into the radio broadcast.

4. The method of claim **1**, further comprising:

incorporating the playlist into the radio broadcast in the format in which the playlist was received.

5. The method of claim **1**, further comprising:

providing, via the listener participation interface, access to a listener submitted playlist; and

receiving, from the listener participation interface, a modified playlist including at least one altered media element, wherein the modified playlist is compatible with the broadcaster's broadcast automation software.

6. The method of claim **1**, further comprising:

providing, via the listener participation interface, access to a plurality of playlists; and

receiving feedback relating to incorporating at least one of the plurality of playlists into a broadcast.

7. The method of claim **6**, wherein the feedback indicates a broadcast time of the at least one of the plurality of playlists.

8. A device configured to implement broadcast automation software, the device comprising:

a processor;

a network interface coupled to the processor and configured to communicate with a listener participation interface;

memory operably coupled to the processor;

a program of instructions to be stored in the memory and executed by the processor, the program of instructions including:

at least one instruction configured to provide, via the listener participation interface, access to a library of media elements;

at least one instruction configured to receive a playlist created using the listener participation interface, the playlist including at least one media element selected from the library of media elements, wherein the playlist is received in a format compatible with the broadcast automation software; and

at least one instruction configured to incorporate the playlist into a radio broadcast, using the broadcast automation software.

9. The device of claim **8**, wherein media elements included in the playlist are individually compatible with the broadcast automation software.

10. The device of claim **8**, further comprising:

at least one instruction configured to receive, via the network interface, metadata associated with media elements included in the playlist; and

at least one instruction configured to use the metadata to facilitate automatic incorporation of the playlist into the radio broadcast.

11. The device of claim **8**, wherein the at least one instruction configured to incorporate the playlist into the radio broadcast comprises:

at least one instruction configured to incorporate the playlist in the same format in which the playlist was received.

12. The device of claim **8**, further comprising:

at least one instruction configured to provide, from the listener participation interface via the network interface, access to a listener submitted playlist; and

at least one instruction configured to receive, from the listener participation interface via the network interface, a modified playlist including at least one altered media element, wherein the modified playlist is compatible with the broadcast automation software.

13. The device of claim **8**, further comprising:

at least one instruction configured to provide, to the listener participation interface, access to a plurality of playlists; and

at least one instruction configured to receive, from the listener participation interface via the network interface, feedback relating to incorporating at least one of the plurality of playlists into a broadcast.

14. The device of claim **13**, wherein the feedback indicates a broadcast time of the at least one of the plurality of playlists.

15. A method comprising:

providing, via a listener participation interface, access to a library of media elements;

receiving user input, via a listener participation interface, the user input indicating a selection of particular media elements from the library of media elements to be included in a playlist;

generating the playlist in a format compatible with broadcast automation software in use by a broadcaster; and

submitting the playlist to the broadcaster to be incorporated into a radio broadcast by the broadcast automation software.

16. The method of claim **15**, further comprising:

wherein media elements included in the playlist are individually compatible with the broadcast automation software.

17. The method of claim **15**, further comprising:

transmitting metadata associated with media elements included in the playlist; and

wherein

the broadcast automation software is configured to use the metadata to facilitate automatic incorporation of the playlist into the radio broadcast.

18. The method of claim **15**, further comprising:

providing, via the listener participation interface, access to a previous playlist previously transmitted to the broadcaster;

modifying the previous playlist to generate a modified playlist including at least one altered media element, wherein the modified playlist is compatible with the broadcast automation software; and

transmitting to the broadcaster, from the listener participation interface, the modified playlist.

19. The method of claim **15**, further comprising:

providing, via the listener participation interface, access to a plurality of playlists;

obtaining, via the listener participation interface, feedback relating to incorporating at least one of the plurality of playlists into a broadcast and

transmitting the feedback relating to the broadcaster.

20. The method of claim **19**, wherein the feedback indicates a broadcast time of the at least one of the plurality of playlists.

* * * * *