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Ferraro et al.

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(45) **Date of Patent: *Mar. 7, 2017**

(54) **ANONYMOUS REPORTING SYSTEM**

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(73) Assignee: **Convercent, Inc.**, Littleton, CO (US)

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

This patent is subject to a terminal disclaimer.

(21) Appl. No.: **13/588,740**

(22) Filed: **Aug. 17, 2012**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2013/0159836 A1 Jun. 20, 2013

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation of application No. 12/317,809, filed on Dec. 29, 2008, now Pat. No. 8,250,025, which is a continuation of application No. 11/740,835, filed on Apr. 26, 2007, now abandoned, which is a continuation-in-part of application No. 10/288,835, filed on Nov. 5, 2002, now Pat. No. 9,135,598.

(60) Provisional application No. 60/795,600, filed on Apr. 26, 2006.

(51) **Int. Cl.**

G06F 17/30	(2006.01)
G06F 17/22	(2006.01)
G06F 21/62	(2013.01)
G06Q 10/00	(2012.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC ***G06F 17/2247*** (2013.01); ***G06F 17/30699*** (2013.01); ***G06F 21/6254*** (2013.01); ***G06Q 10/00*** (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC G06F 17/2247; G06F 17/30477; G06F 17/30011; G06F 17/30592; G06F 17/30637; G06F 17/3064
USPC 707/758, 803, 600, 603
See application file for complete search history.

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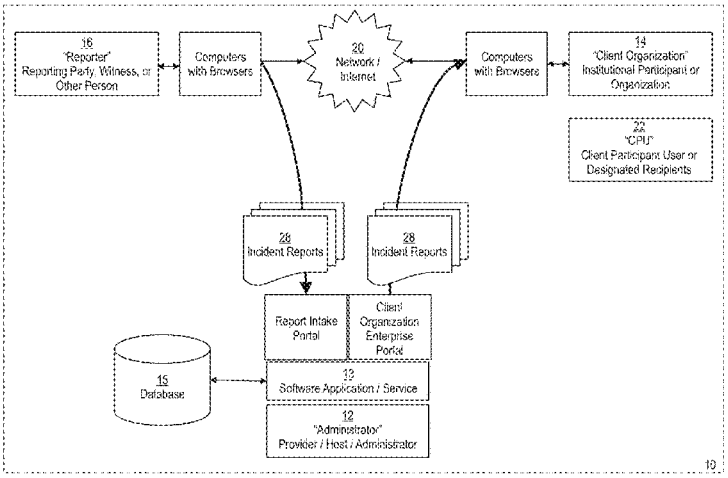
Primary Examiner — James Trujillo
Assistant Examiner — Fariborz Khoshnoodi
(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, LLP

(57) **ABSTRACT**

An anonymous reporting system for use in reporting and following up on incidents, accidents, and the like. The system may be accessed via an Internet website. A reporting individual may select a type of incident to report. In one example, the reporting individual may select a level on anonymity and some, none or all of the individual's personal identification is displayed to the organization according to the selected level.

13 Claims, 80 Drawing Sheets



(56) **References Cited**

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* cited by examiner

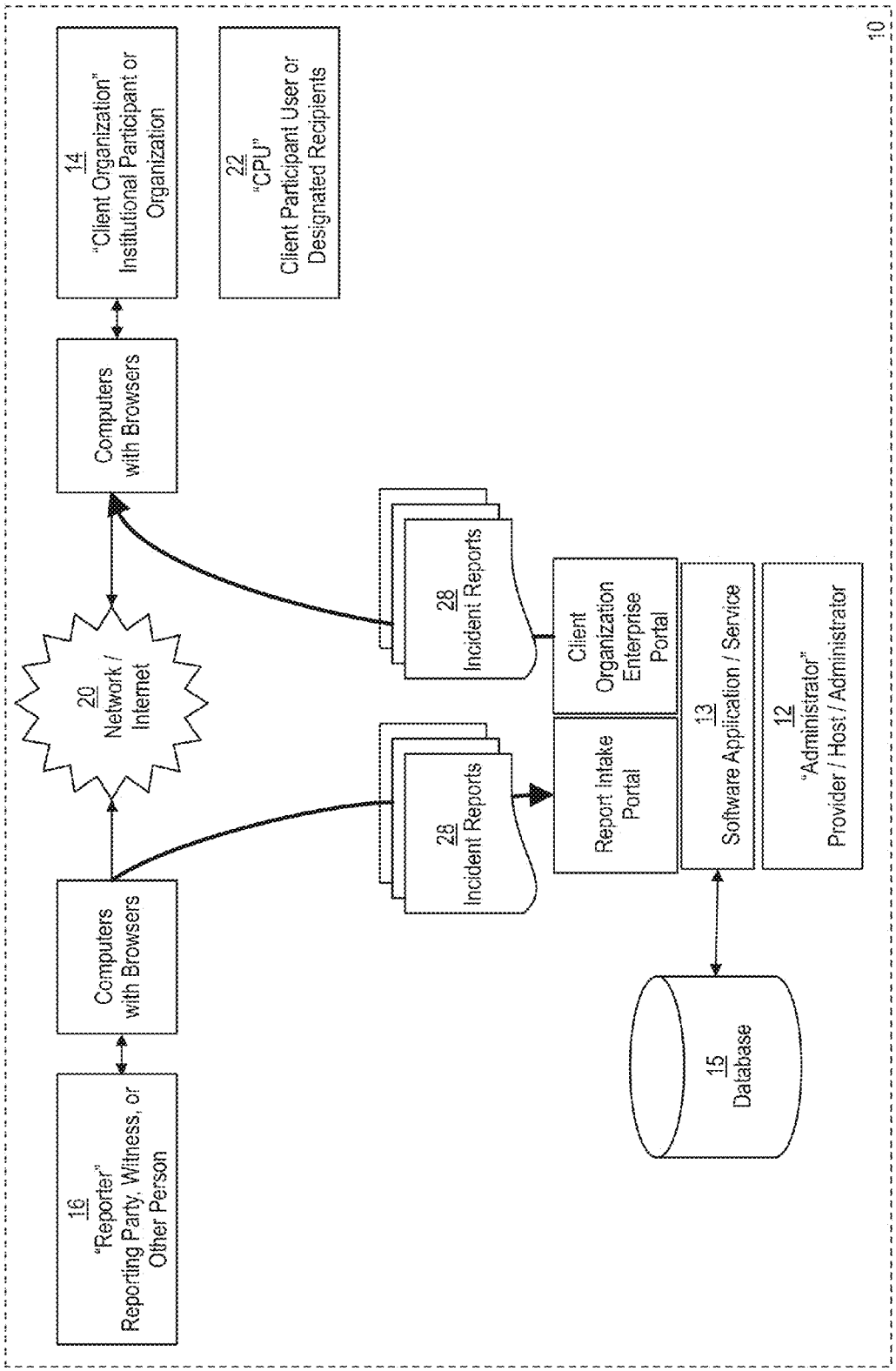

10
14
"Client Organization"
Institutional Participant or
Organization
22
"CPU"
Client Participant User or
Designated Recipients
Computers
with Browsers
20
Network /
Internet
28
Incident Reports
Client
Organization
Enterprise
Portal
13
Software Application / Service
12
"Administrator"
Provider / Host / Administrator
Computers
with Browsers
28
Incident Reports
Report Intake
Portal
15
Database
16
"Reporter"
Reporting Party, Witness, or
Other Person

FIG. 1

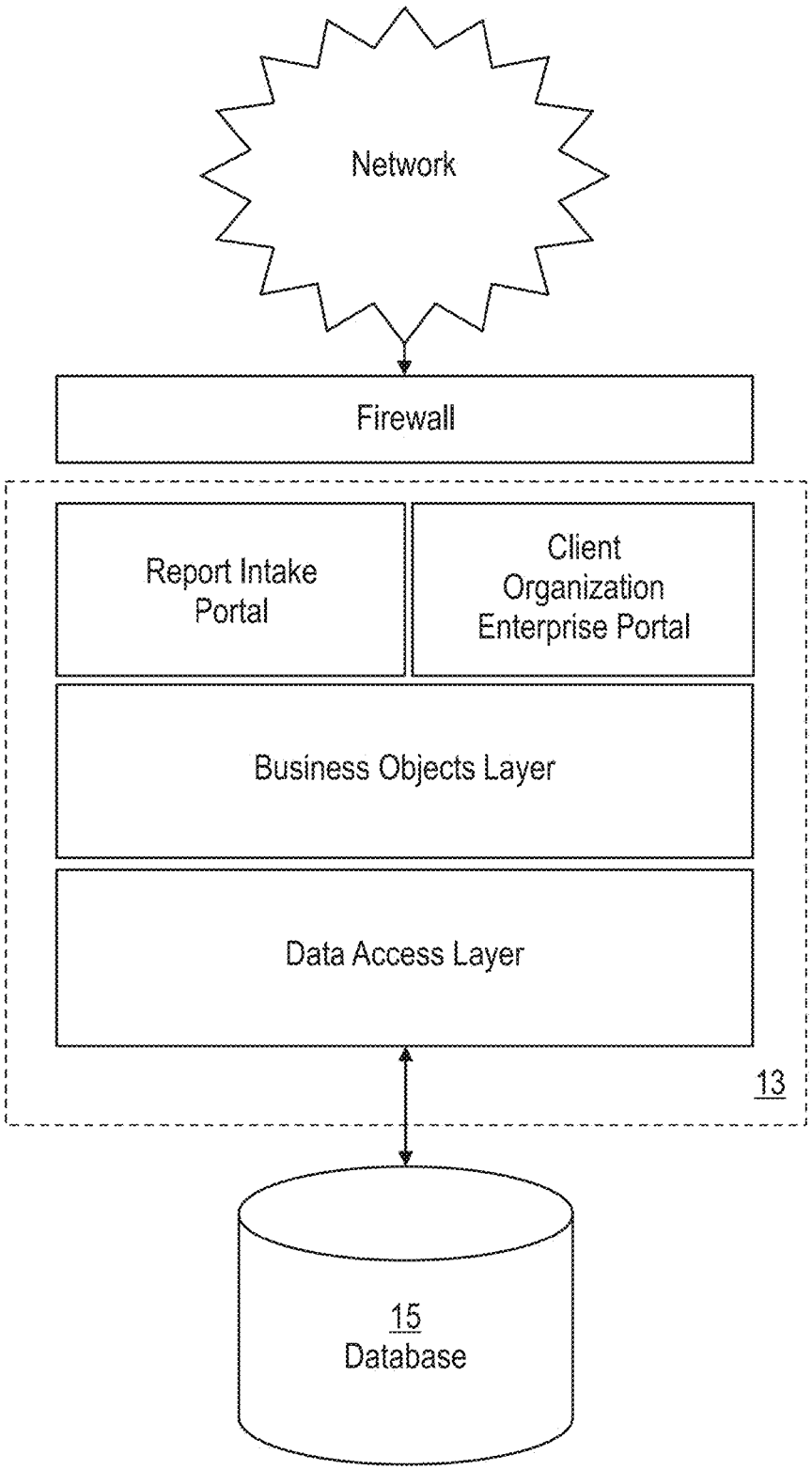

Network
Firewall
Report Intake Portal
Client Organization Enterprise Portal
Business Objects Layer
Data Access Layer
13
15
Database

FIG. 1A

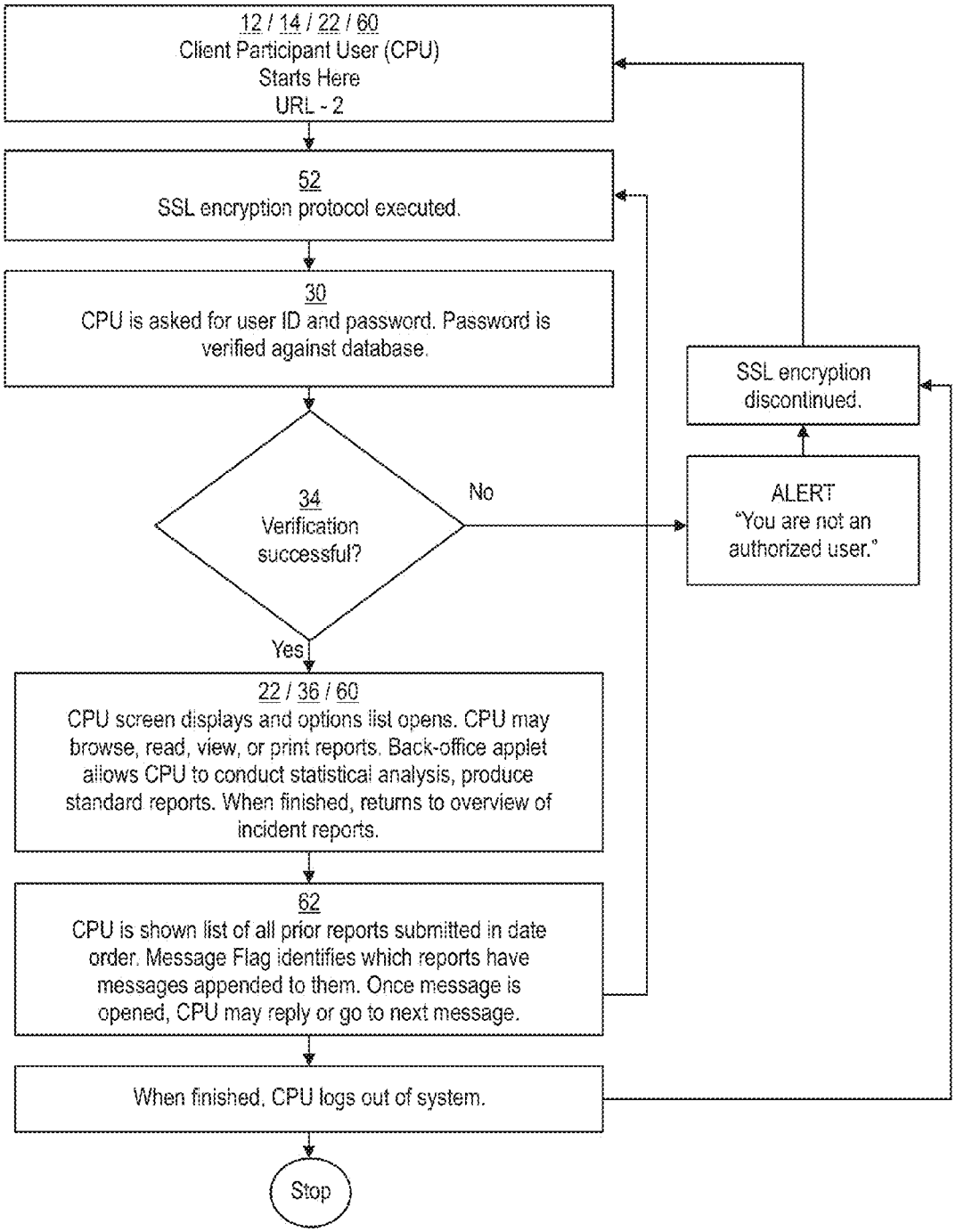

12 / 14 / 22 / 60
Client Participant User (CPU)
Starts Here
URL - 2
52
SSL encryption protocol executed.
30
CPU is asked for user ID and password. Password is verified against database.
34
Verification successful?
No
Yes
ALERT
"You are not an authorized user."
SSL encryption discontinued.
22 / 36 / 60
CPU screen displays and options list opens. CPU may browse, read, view, or print reports. Back-office applet allows CPU to conduct statistical analysis, produce standard reports. When finished, returns to overview of incident reports.
62
CPU is shown list of all prior reports submitted in date order. Message Flag identifies which reports have messages appended to them. Once message is opened, CPU may reply or go to next message.
When finished, CPU logs out of system.
Stop

FIG. 2A

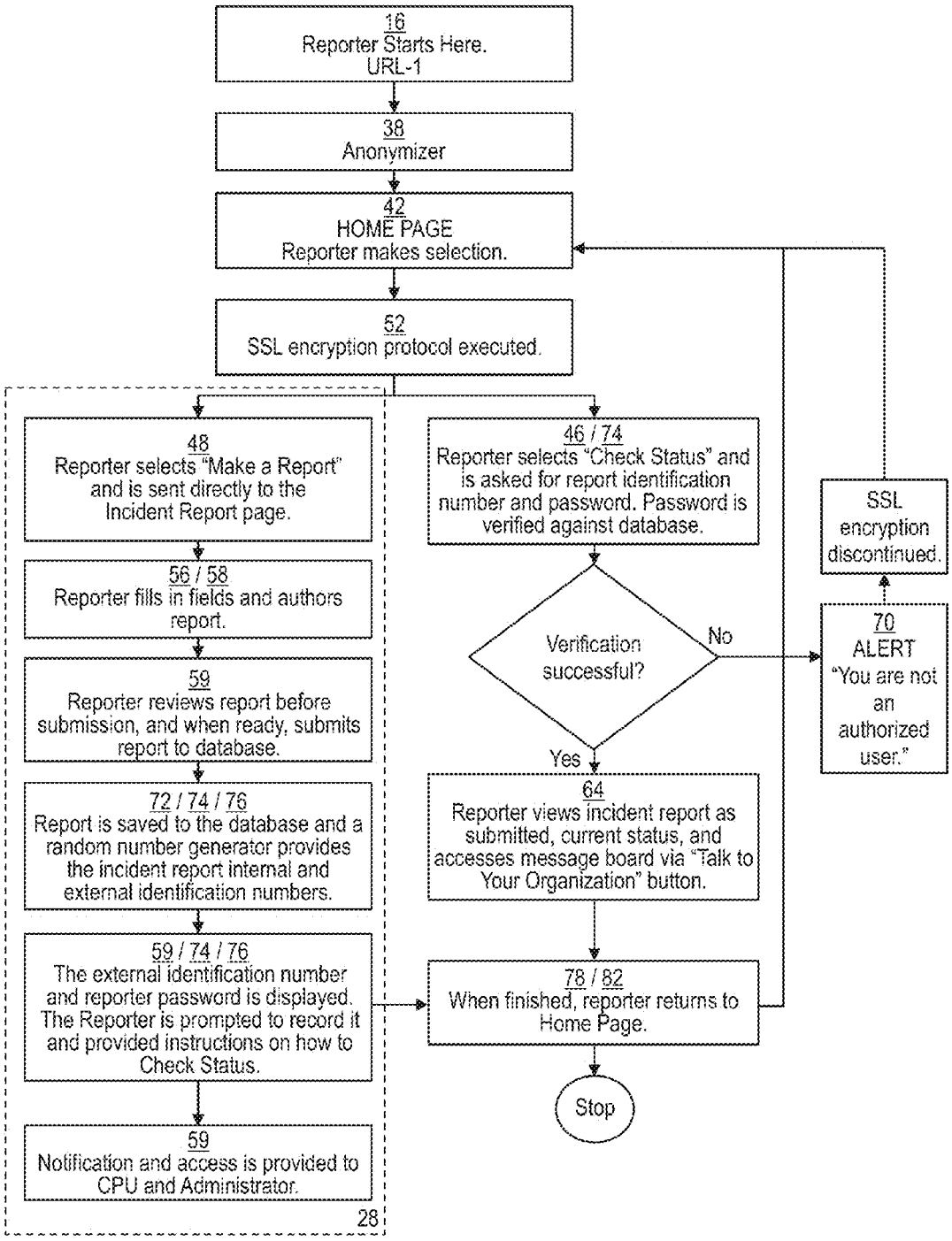

16
Reporter Starts Here.
URL-1
38
Anonymizer
42
HOME PAGE
Reporter makes selection.
52
SSL encryption protocol executed.
48
Reporter selects "Make a Report" and is sent directly to the Incident Report page.
56 / 58
Reporter fills in fields and authors report.
59
Reporter reviews report before submission, and when ready, submits report to database.
72 / 74 / 76
Report is saved to the database and a random number generator provides the incident report internal and external identification numbers.
59 / 74 / 76
The external identification number and reporter password is displayed. The Reporter is prompted to record it and provided instructions on how to Check Status.
59
Notification and access is provided to CPU and Administrator.
28
46 / 74
Reporter selects "Check Status" and is asked for report identification number and password. Password is verified against database.
Verification successful?
No
Yes
70
ALERT
"You are not an authorized user."
SSL encryption discontinued.
64
Reporter views incident report as submitted, current status, and accesses message board via "Talk to Your Organization" button.
78 / 82
When finished, reporter returns to Home Page.
Stop

FIG. 2B

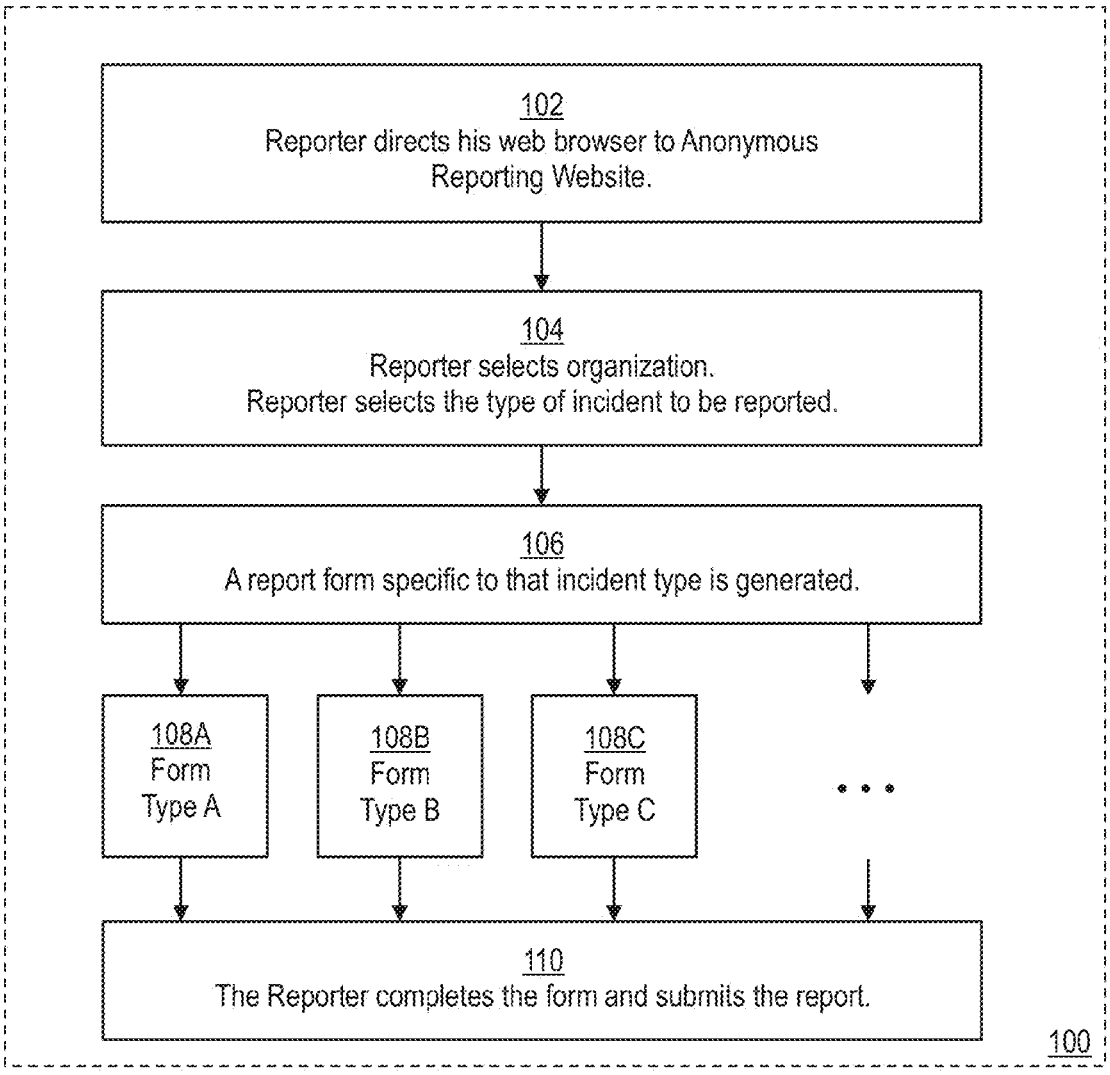

102
Reporter directs his web browser to Anonymous Reporting Website.
104
Reporter selects organization.
Reporter selects the type of incident to be reported.
106
A report form specific to that incident type is generated.
108A
Form
Type A
108B
Form
Type B
108C
Form
Type C
110
The Reporter completes the form and submits the report.
100

FIG. 3

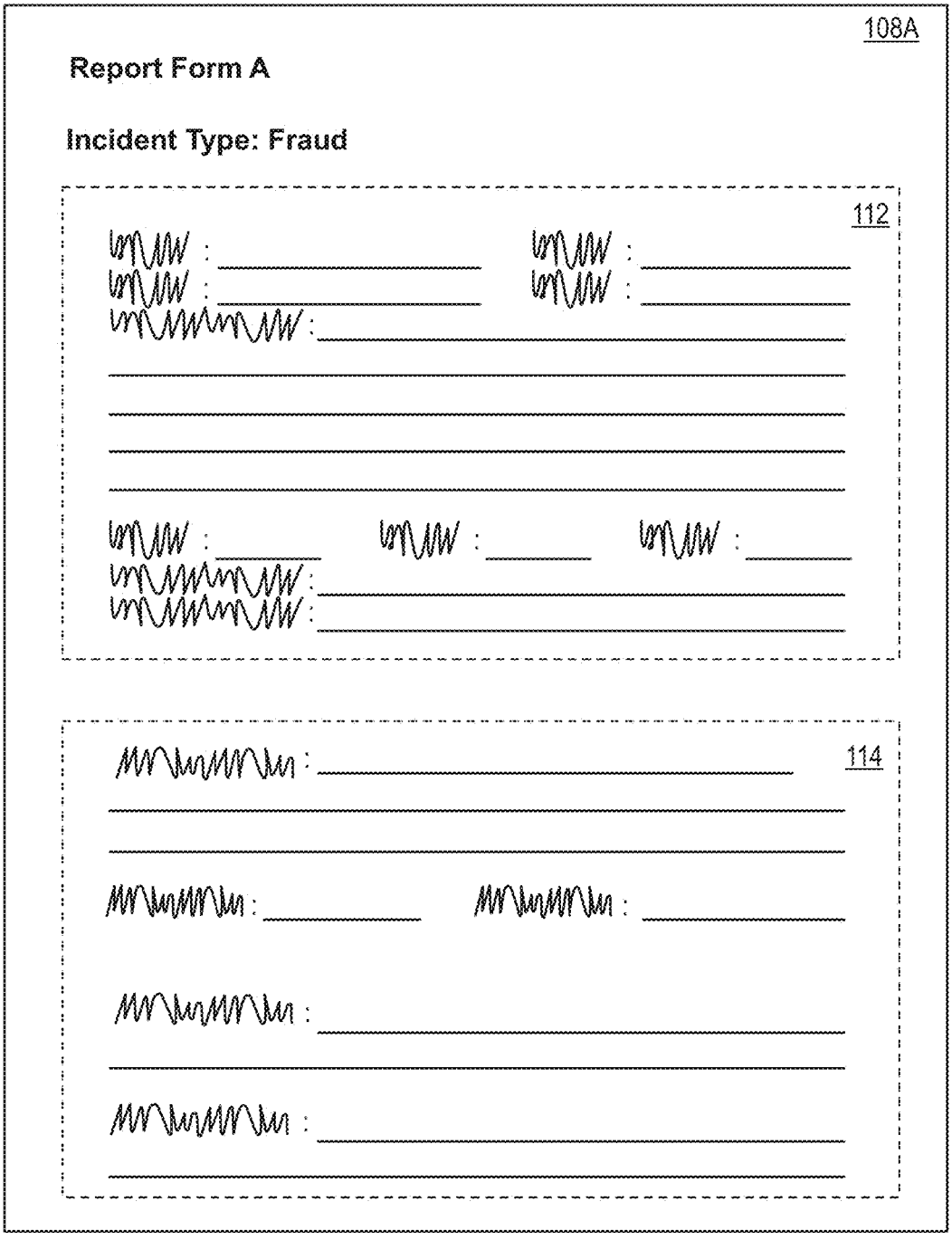


FIG. 4

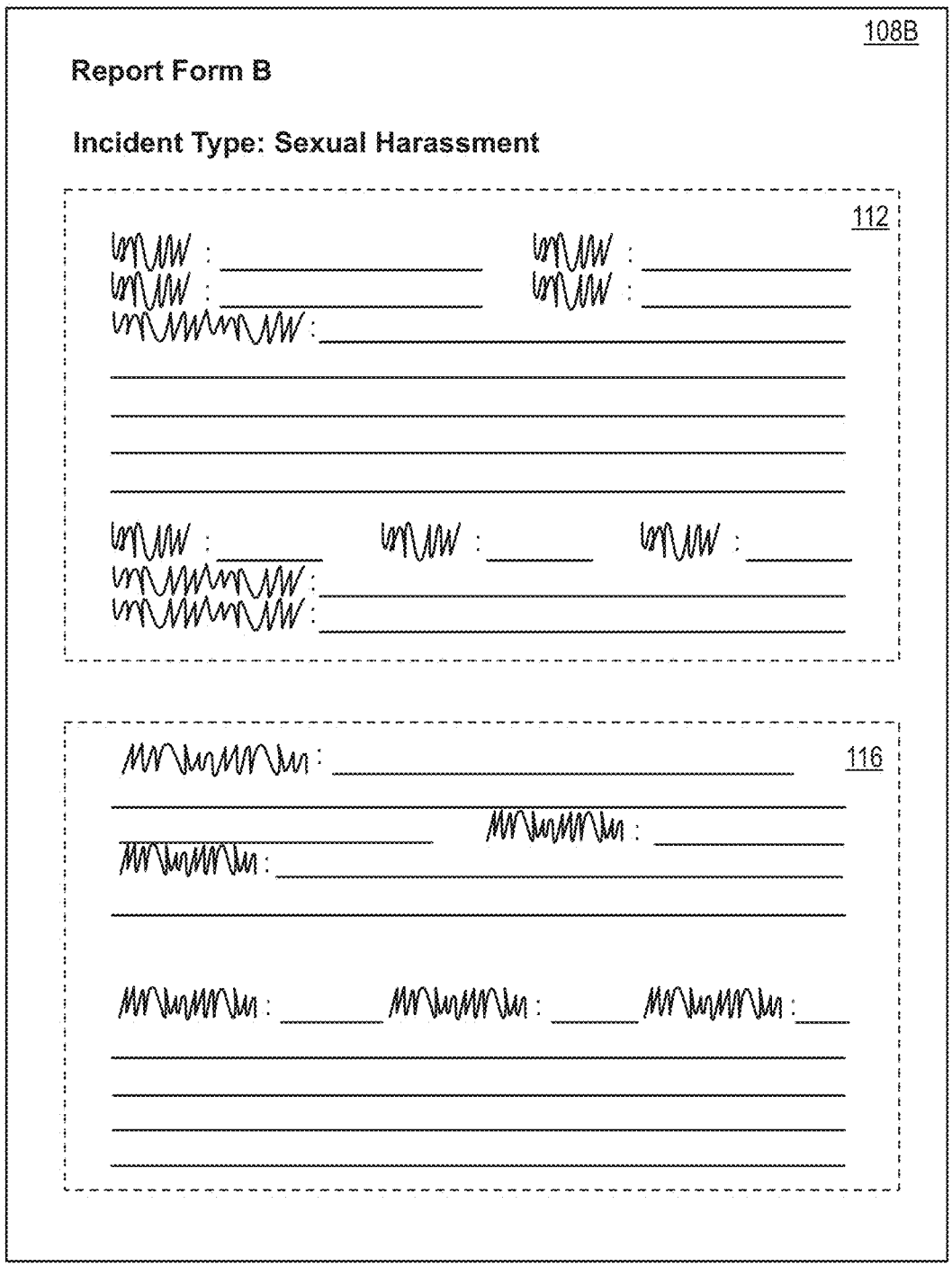


FIG. 5

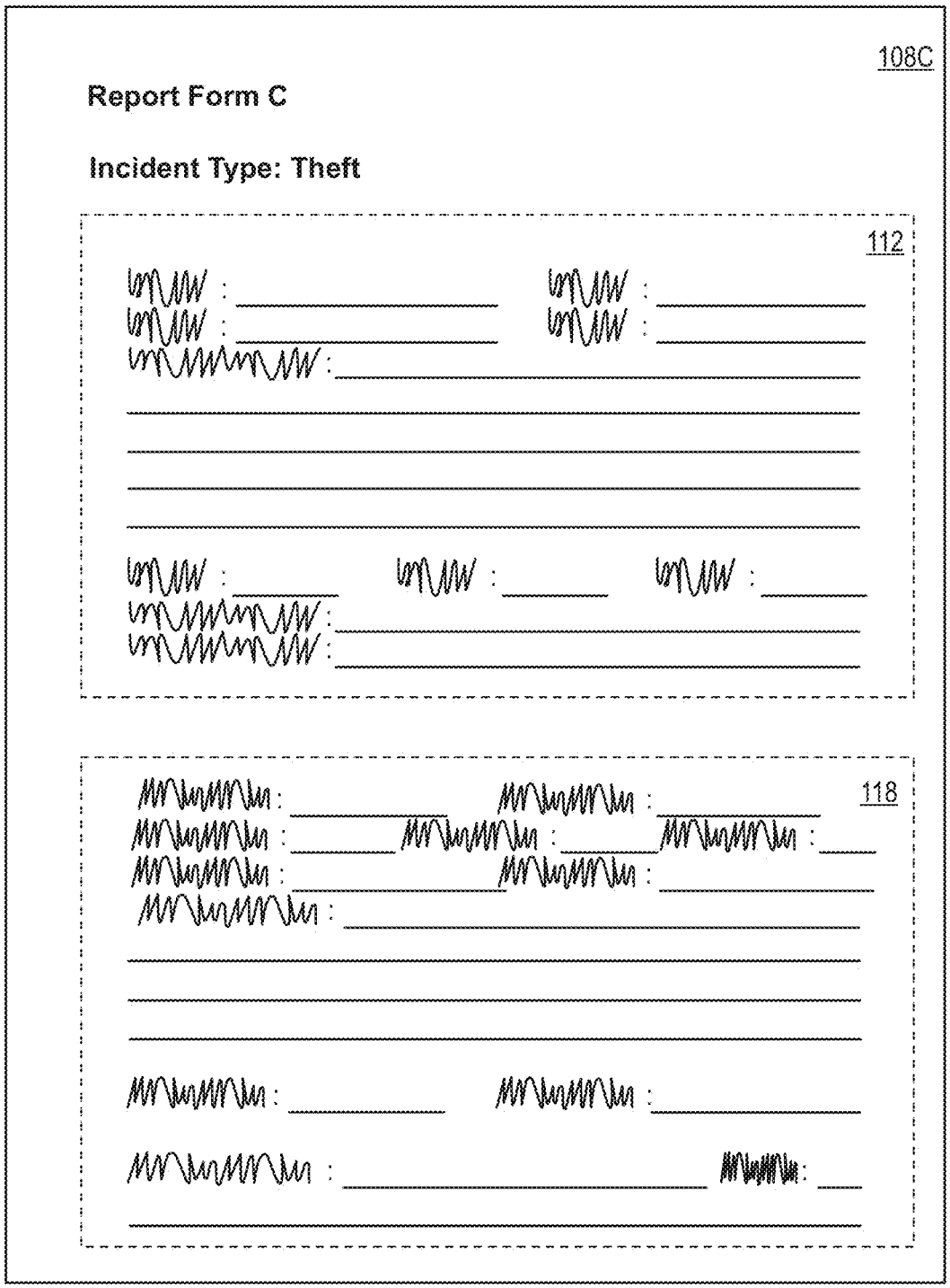


FIG. 6

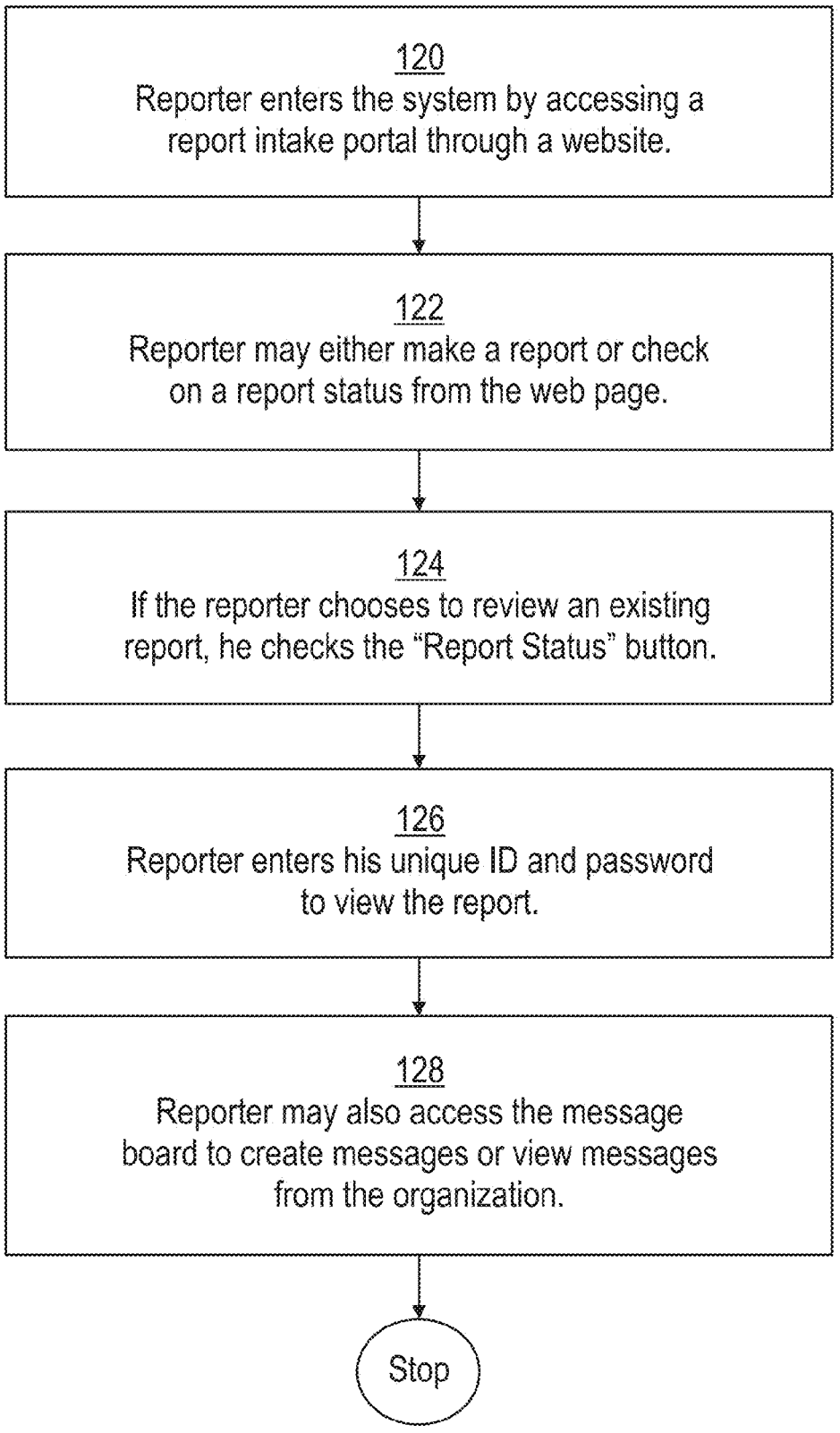

120
Reporter enters the system by accessing a report intake portal through a website.
122
Reporter may either make a report or check on a report status from the web page.
124
If the reporter chooses to review an existing report, he checks the "Report Status" button.
126
Reporter enters his unique ID and password to view the report.
128
Reporter may also access the message board to create messages or view messages from the organization.
Stop

FIG. 6A

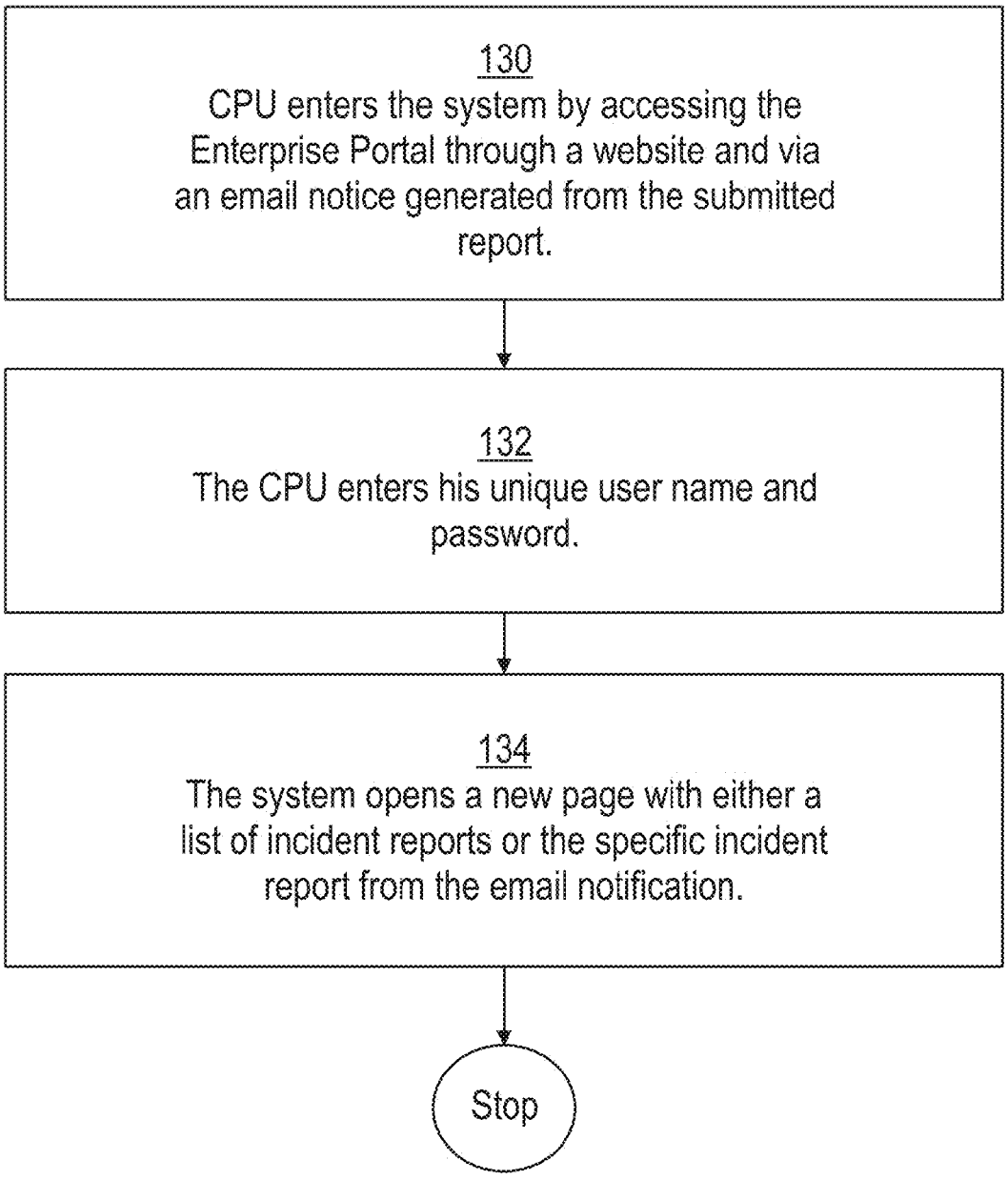

130
CPU enters the system by accessing the Enterprise Portal through a website and via an email notice generated from the submitted report.
132
The CPU enters his unique user name and password.
134
The system opens a new page with either a list of incident reports or the specific incident report from the email notification.
Stop

FIG. 6B

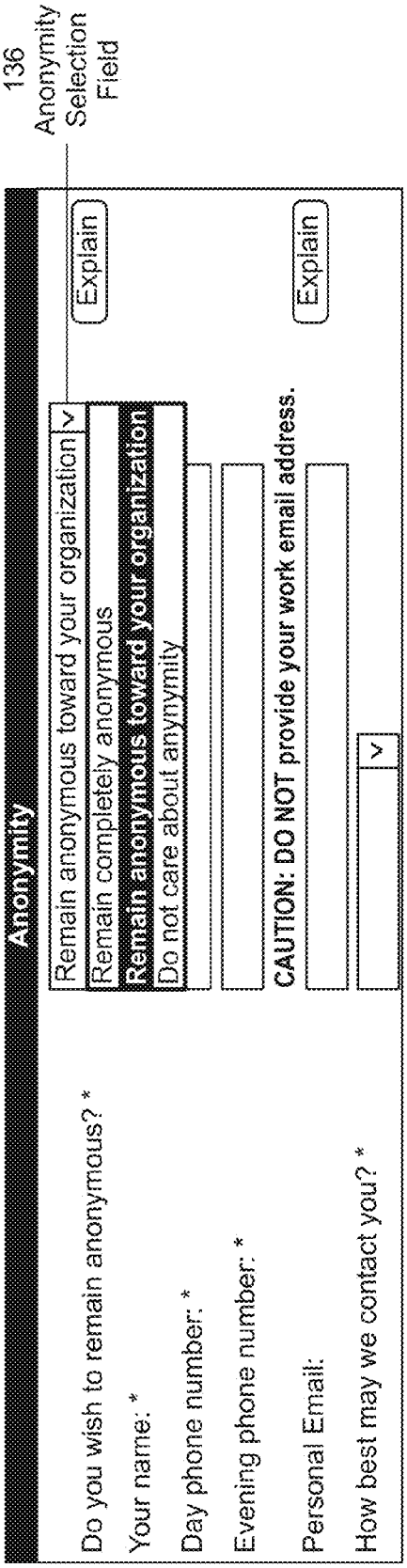

136
Anonymity
Selection
Field
Anonymity
Do you wish to remain anonymous? *
Remain anonymous toward your organization
Remain completely anonymous
Remain anonymous toward your organization
Do not care about anonymity
Explain
Your name: *
Day phone number: *
Evening phone number: *
CAUTION: DO NOT provide your work email address.
Explain
Personal Email:
How best may we contact you? *

FIG. 7

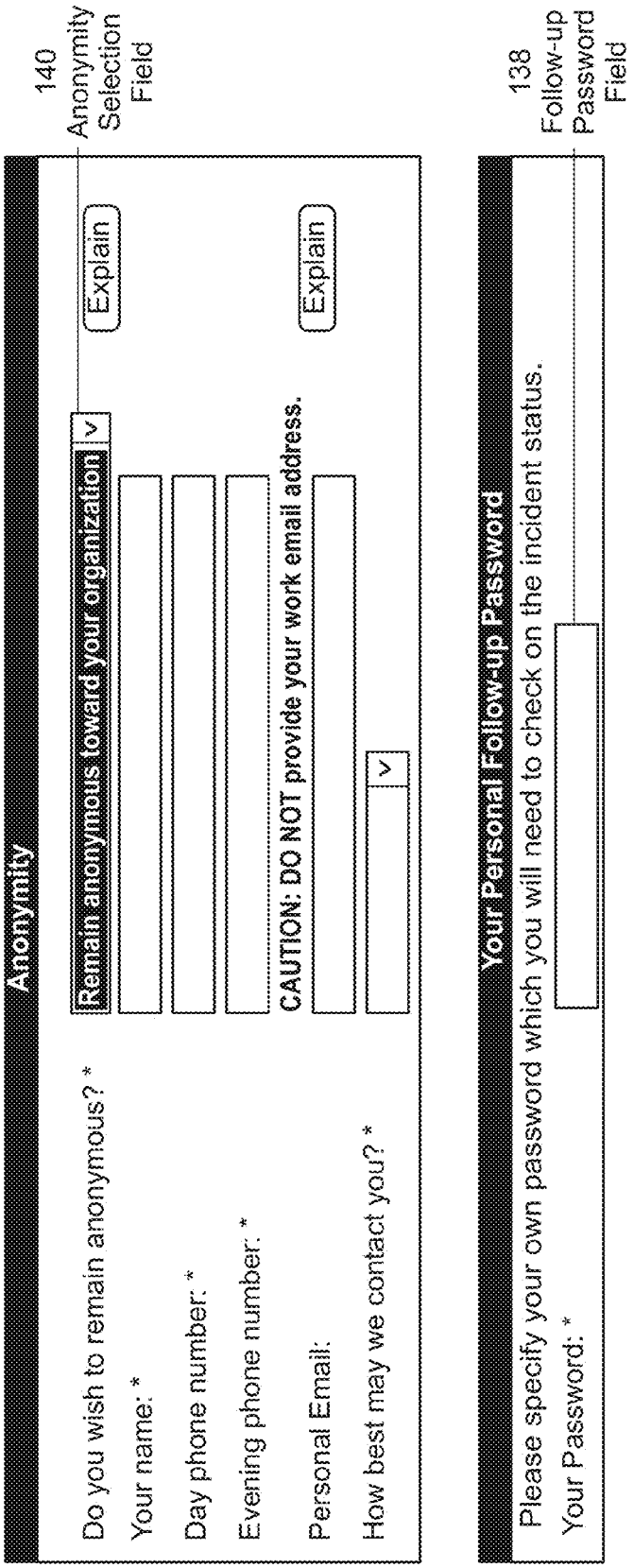

140
Anonymity
Selection
Field
Anonymity
Do you wish to remain anonymous? *
Remain anonymous (toward your organization)
Explain
Your name: *
Day phone number: *
Evening phone number: *
CAUTION: DO NOT provide your work email address.
Explain
Personal Email:
How best may we contact you? *
138
Follow-up
Password
Field
Your Personal Follow-up Password
Please specify your own password which you will need to check on the incident status.
Your Password: *

FIG. 8

YOUR INCIDENT HAS BEEN SUBMITTED

Thank you for filing an incident through MySafeWorkplace® .

Your incident has been assigned the following unique access number.

142
Unique Access Number / External Report Number

Your Access Number	Your Personal Password
MSW453127765	test

You should check the status of your incident report within 24-48 business hours after submission.

REMEMBER:
To follow up on your incident, you will need both your unique access number and your personal password. Please make sure you document both. You can print this page for your records.

You can check the status of your incident report in one of two ways:

1. Log on to www.mysafeworkplace.com and click "Report Status."
2. Call 800.461.9330 and a MySafeWorkplace® representative will gladly assist you.

Checking the status of your incident will allow you to receive messages and updates from your organization, submit additional comments, attach documents, and provide further information to your organization. Once in the report, the "Talk to Your Organization" button will allow you to post and review messages anonymously to your organization through a message board. You will need both your access number and personal password to check status.

FIG. 9

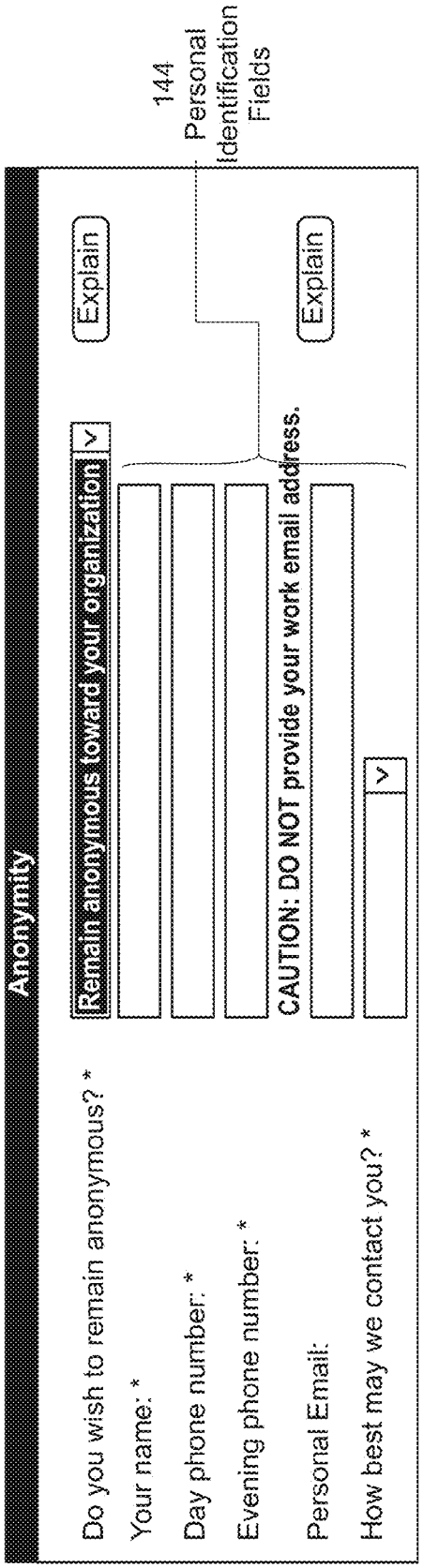
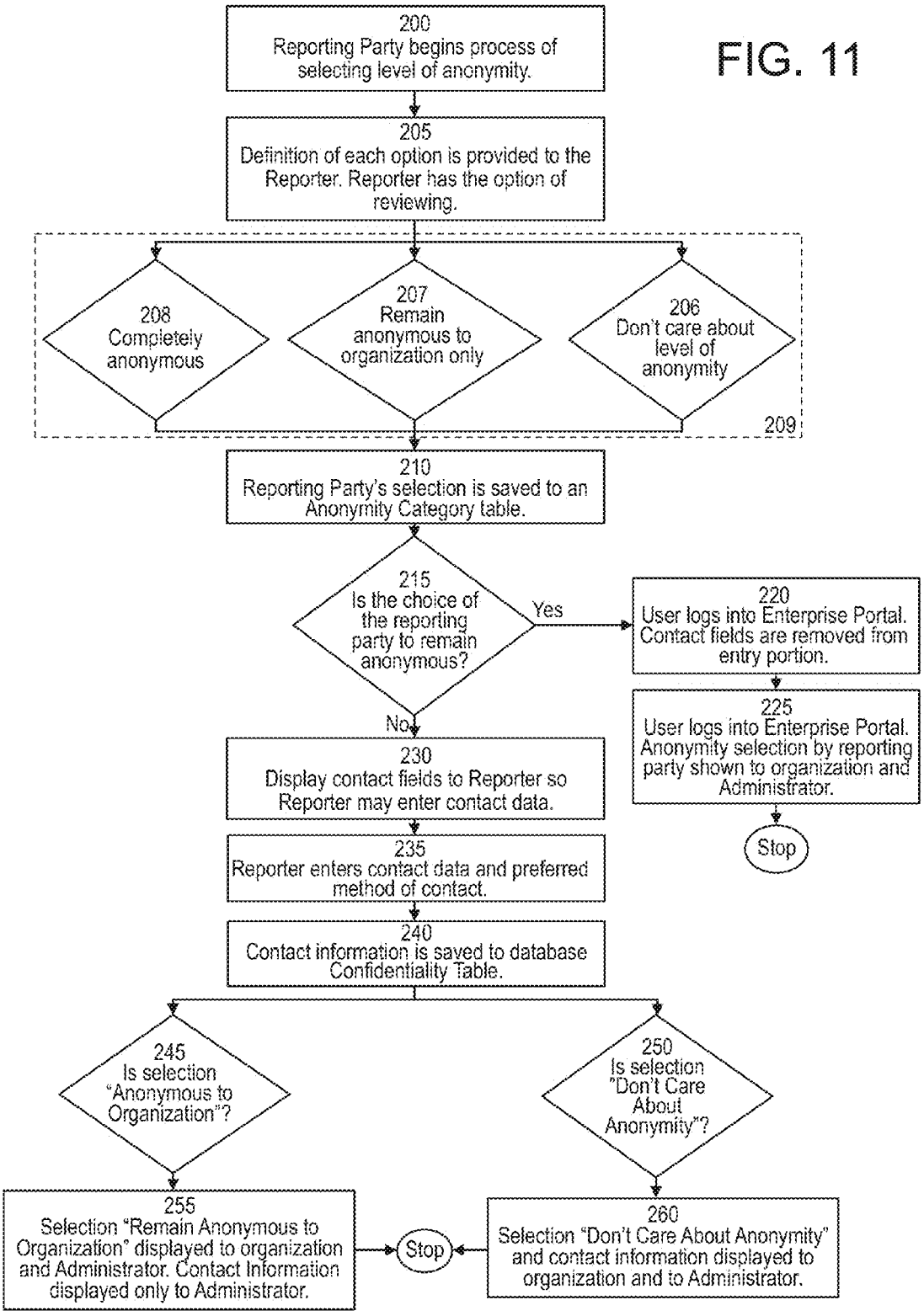

Anonymity
Do you wish to remain anonymous? *
Remain anonymous toward your organization
Explain
144
Personal
Identification
Fields
Your name: *
Day phone number: *
Evening phone number: *
CAUTION: DO NOT provide your work email address.
Personal Email:
Explain
How best may we contact you? *

FIG. 10

FIG. 11


200
Reporting Party begins process of selecting level of anonymity.
205
Definition of each option is provided to the Reporter. Reporter has the option of reviewing.
208
Completely anonymous
207
Remain anonymous to organization only
206
Don't care about level of anonymity
209
210
Reporting Party's selection is saved to an Anonymity Category table.
215
Is the choice of the reporting party to remain anonymous?
Yes
220
User logs into Enterprise Portal. Contact fields are removed from entry portion.
225
User logs into Enterprise Portal. Anonymity selection by reporting party shown to organization and Administrator.
Stop
No
230
Display contact fields to Reporter so Reporter may enter contact data.
235
Reporter enters contact data and preferred method of contact.
240
Contact information is saved to database Confidentiality Table.
245
Is selection "Anonymous to Organization"?
250
Is selection "Don't Care About Anonymity"?
255
Selection "Remain Anonymous to Organization" displayed to organization and Administrator. Contact Information displayed only to Administrator.
Stop
260
Selection "Don't Care About Anonymity" and contact information displayed to organization and to Administrator.

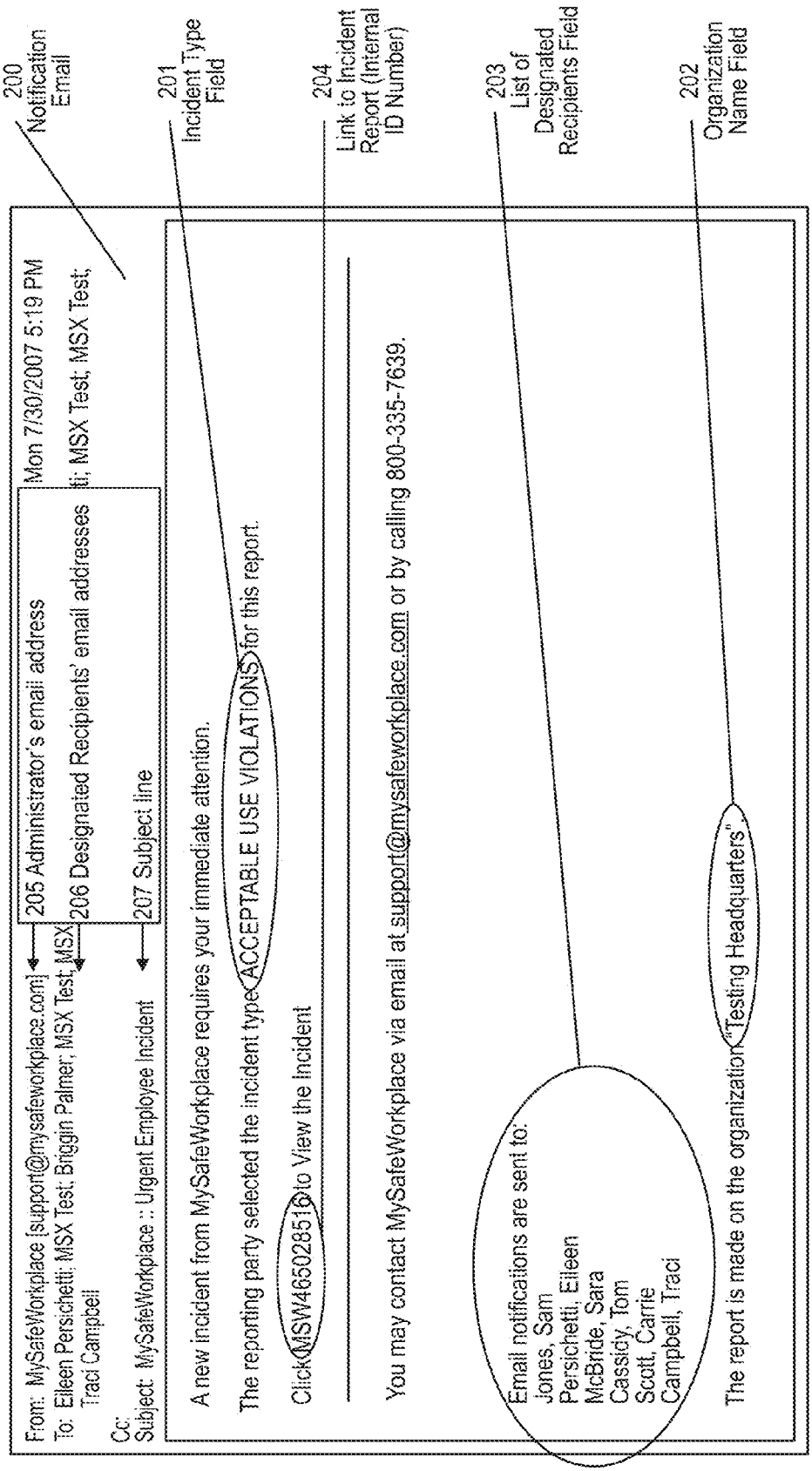

200
Notification Email
201
Incident Type Field
204
Link to Incident Report (Internal ID Number)
203
List of Designated Recipients Field
202
Organization Name Field
From: MySafeWorkplace [support@mysafeworkplace.com]
To: Eileen Persichetti; MSX Test; Briggin Palmer; MSX Test; MSX Traci Campbell
Cc:
Subject: MySafeWorkplace :: Urgent Employee Incident
205 Administrator's email address
206 Designated Recipients' email addresses
207 Subject line
Mon 7/30/2007 5:19 PM
ti; MSX Test; MSX Test;
A new incident from MySafeWorkplace requires your immediate attention.
The reporting party selected the incident type ACCEPTABLE USE VIOLATIONS for this report.
Click MSW465028516 to View the Incident
You may contact MySafeWorkplace via email at support@mysafeworkplace.com or by calling 800-335-7639.
Email notifications are sent to:
Jones, Sam
Persichetti, Eileen
McBride, Sara
Cassidy, Tom
Scott, Carrie
Campbell, Traci
The report is made on the organization "Testing Headquarters".

FIG. 12

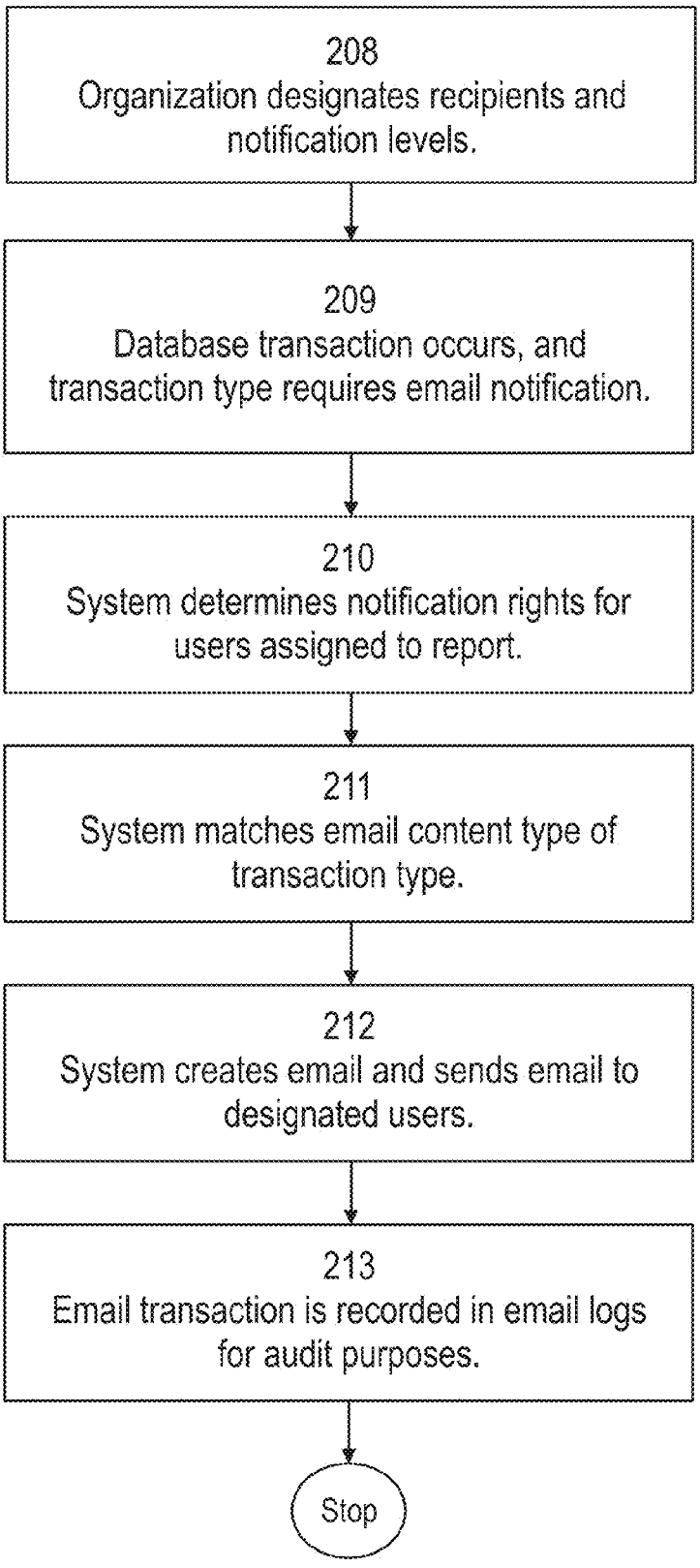
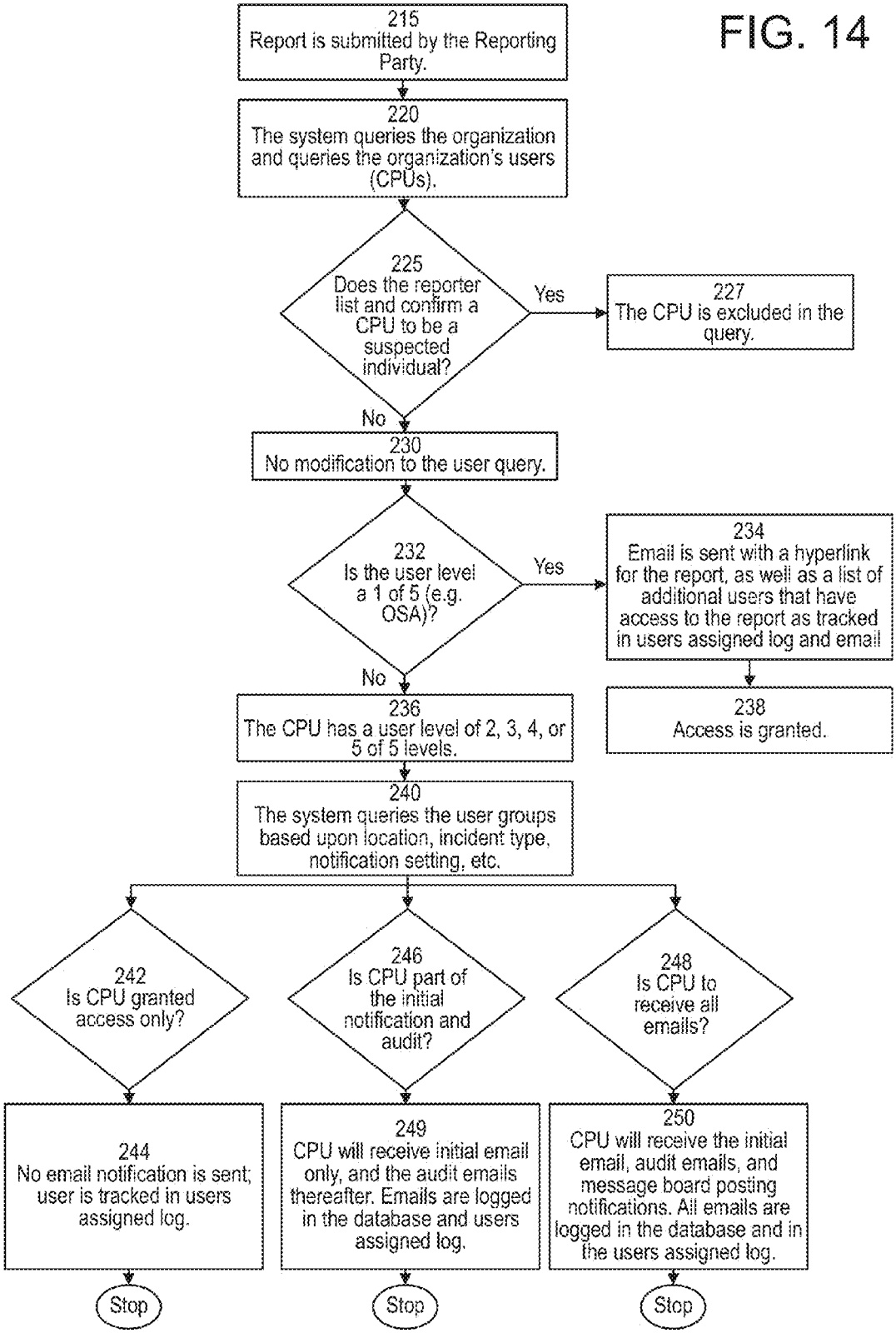

208
Organization designates recipients and notification levels.
209
Database transaction occurs, and transaction type requires email notification.
210
System determines notification rights for users assigned to report.
211
System matches email content type of transaction type.
212
System creates email and sends email to designated users.
213
Email transaction is recorded in email logs for audit purposes.
Stop

FIG. 13

FIG. 14


215
Report is submitted by the Reporting Party.
220
The system queries the organization and queries the organization's users (CPUs).
225
Does the reporter list and confirm a CPU to be a suspected individual?
Yes
227
The CPU is excluded in the query.
No
230
No modification to the user query.
232
Is the user level a 1 of 5 (e.g. OSA)?
Yes
234
Email is sent with a hyperlink for the report, as well as a list of additional users that have access to the report as tracked in users assigned log and email
238
Access is granted.
No
236
The CPU has a user level of 2, 3, 4, or 5 of 5 levels.
240
The system queries the user groups based upon location, incident type, notification setting, etc.
242
Is CPU granted access only?
246
Is CPU part of the initial notification and audit?
248
Is CPU to receive all emails?
244
No email notification is sent; user is tracked in users assigned log.
249
CPU will receive initial email only, and the audit emails thereafter. Emails are logged in the database and users assigned log.
250
CPU will receive the initial email, audit emails, and message board posting notifications. All emails are logged in the database and in the users assigned log.
Stop
Stop
Stop

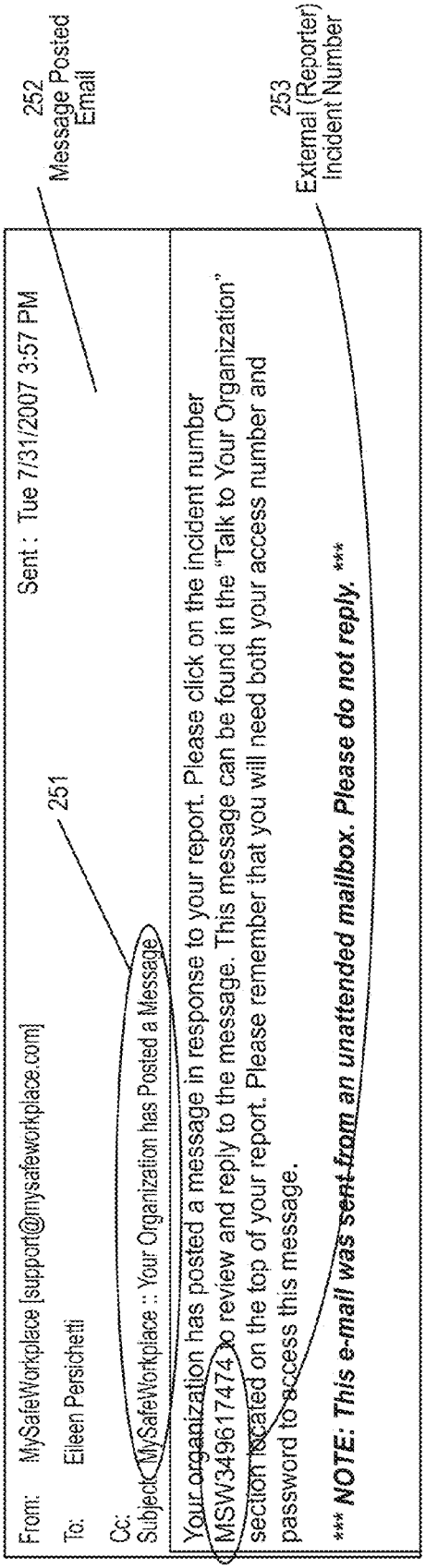

From: MySafeWorkplace [support@mysafeworkplace.com]
Sent : Tue 7/31/2007 3:57 PM
To: Eileen Persichetti
Cc:
Subject: MySafeWorkplace :: Your Organization has Posted a Message
Your organization has posted a message in response to your report. Please click on the incident number MSW349617474 to review and reply to the message. This message can be found in the "Talk to Your Organization" section located on the top of your report. Please remember that you will need both your access number and password to access this message.
*** NOTE: This e-mail was sent from an unattended mailbox. Please do not reply. ***
251
252
Message Posted Email
253
External (Reporter) Incident Number

FIG. 15

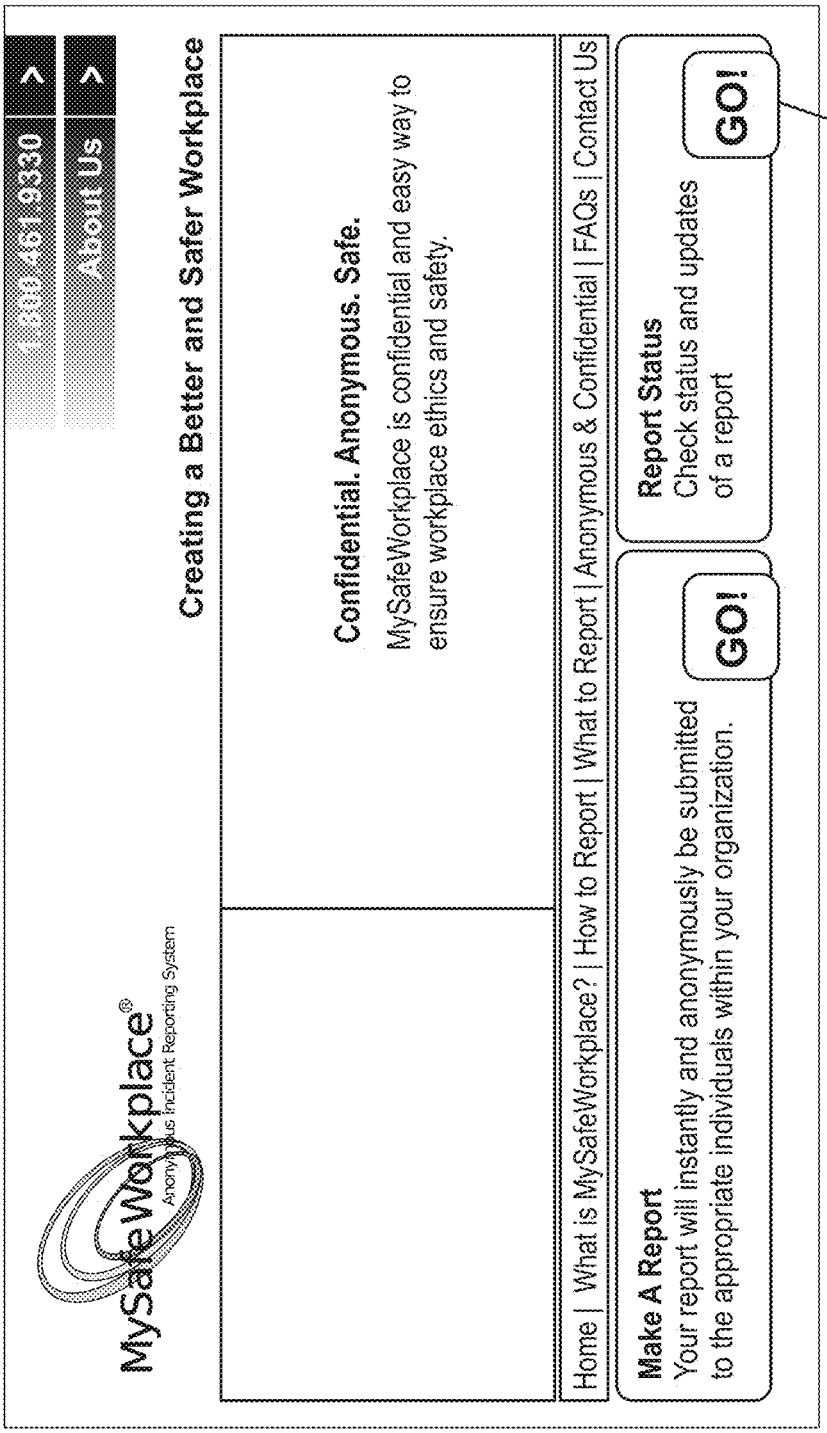

MySafeWorkplace®
Anonymous Incident Reporting System
1 800 461 9330
About Us
Creating a Better and Safer Workplace
Confidential. Anonymous. Safe.
MySafeWorkplace is confidential and easy way to ensure workplace ethics and safety.
Home | What is MySafeWorkplace? | How to Report | What to Report | Anonymous & Confidential | FAQs | Contact Us
Make A Report
Your report will instantly and anonymously be submitted to the appropriate individuals within your organization.
GO!
Report Status
Check status and updates of a report
GO!
255
Status Button

FIG. 16

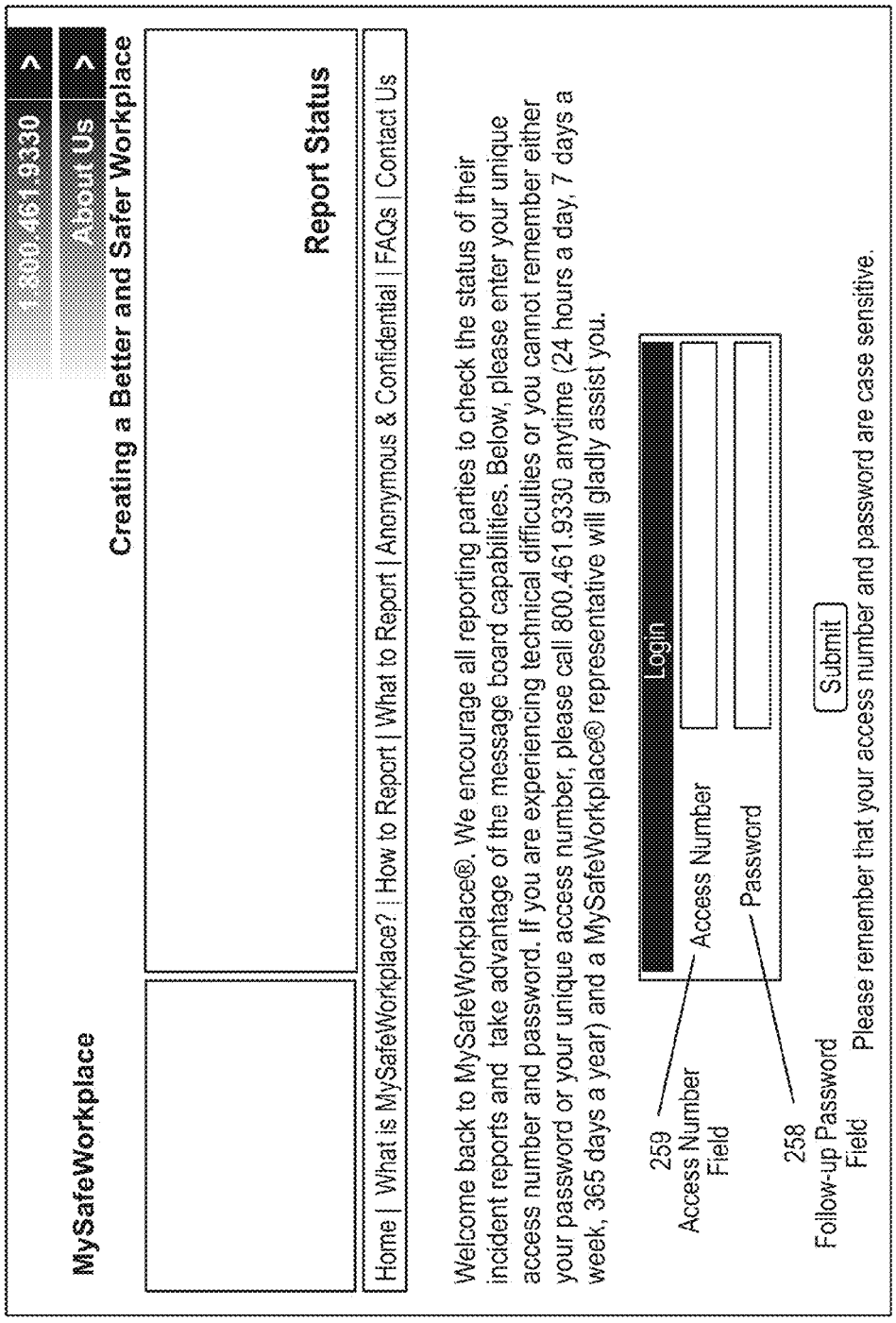

MySafeWorkplace
1.800.461.9330
About Us
Creating a Better and Safer Workplace
Report Status
Home | What is MySafeWorkplace? | How to Report | Anonymous & Confidential | FAQs | Contact Us
Welcome back to MySafeWorkplace®. We encourage all reporting parties to check the status of their incident reports and take advantage of the message board capabilities. Below, please enter your unique access number and password. If you are experiencing technical difficulties or you cannot remember either your password or your unique access number, please call 800.461.9330 anytime (24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year) and a MySafeWorkplace® representative will gladly assist you.
Login
Access Number
Password
Submit
259
Access Number Field
258
Follow-up Password Field
Please remember that your access number and password are case sensitive.

FIG. 17

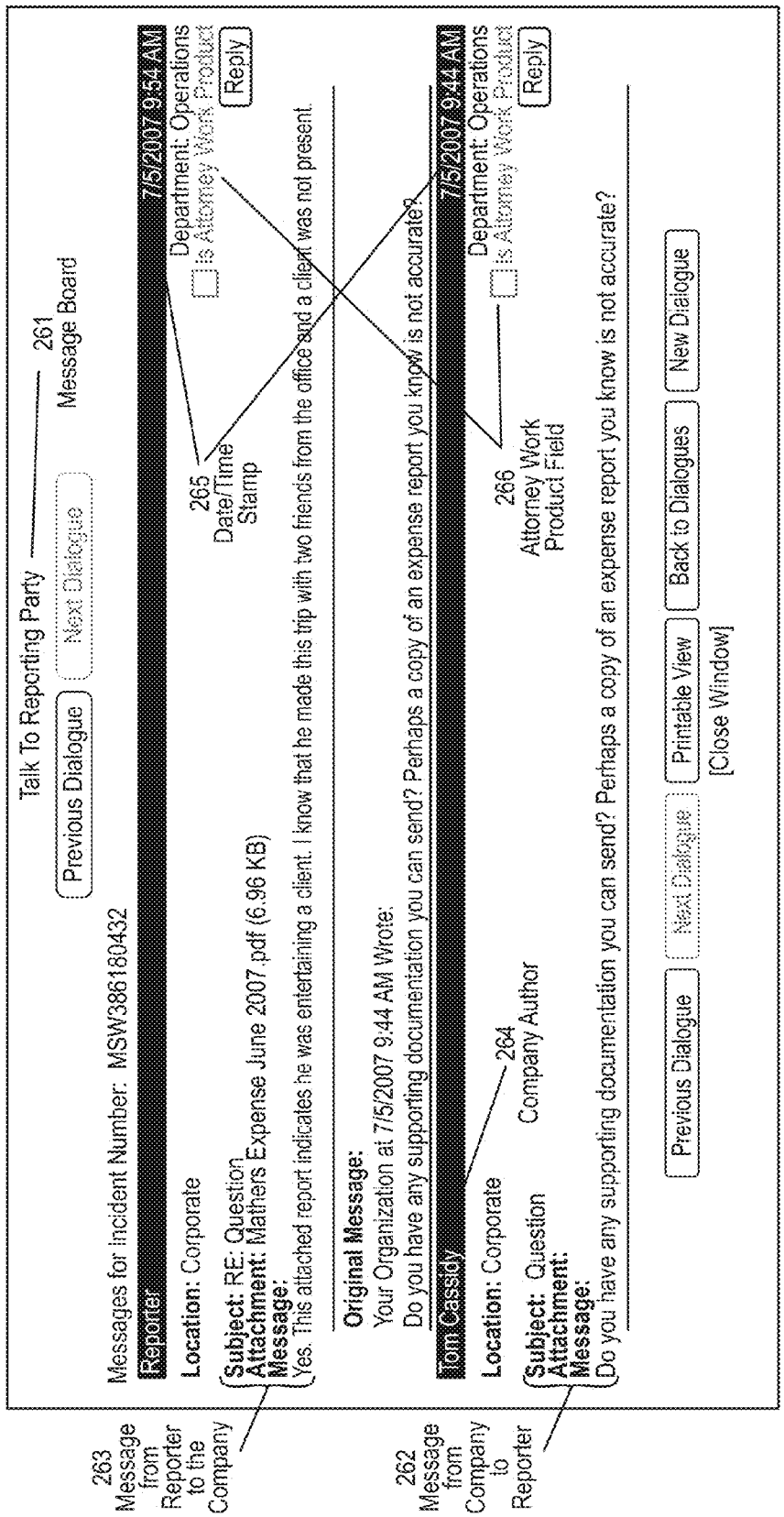

Talk To Reporting Party
261
Message Board
Previous Dialogue
Next Dialogue
Messages for incident Number: MSW386160432
Reporter
7/5/2007 9:54 AM
Location: Corporate
Department: Operations
is Attorney Work Product
Reply
265
Date/Time Stamp
Subject: RE: Question
Attachment: Mathers Expense June 2007.pdf (6.96 KB)
Message:
Yes. This attached report indicates he was entertaining a client. I know that he made this trip with two friends from the office and a client was not present.
Original Message:
Your Organization at 7/5/2007 9:44 AM Wrote:
Do you have any supporting documentation you can send? Perhaps a copy of an expense report you know is not accurate?
Tom Cassidy
7/5/2007 9:44 AM
Location: Corporate
264
Company Author
Department: Operations
is Attorney Work Product
Reply
266
Attorney Work Product Field
Subject: Question
Attachment:
Message:
Do you have any supporting documentation you can send? Perhaps a copy of an expense report you know is not accurate?
Previous Dialogue
Next Dialogue
Printable View
Back to Dialogues
New Dialogue
[Close Window]
263 Message from Reporter to the Company
262 Message from Company to Reporter

FIG. 18

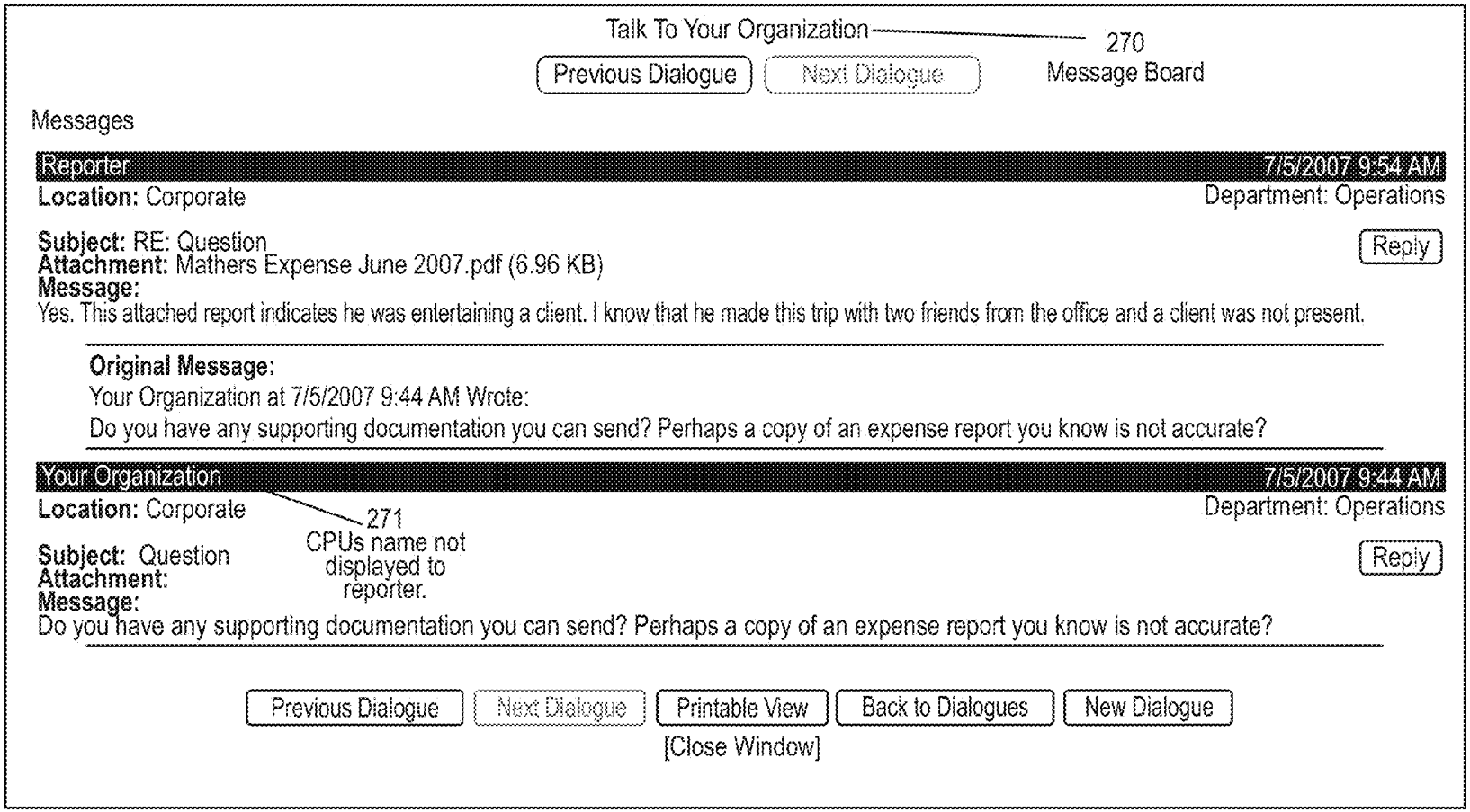

Talk To Your Organization
270
Message Board
Previous Dialogue
Next Dialogue
Messages
Reporter
7/5/2007 9:54 AM
Location: Corporate
Department: Operations
Subject: RE: Question
Attachment: Mathers Expense June 2007.pdf (6.96 KB)
Message:
Reply
Yes. This attached report indicates he was entertaining a client. I know that he made this trip with two friends from the office and a client was not present.
Original Message:
Your Organization at 7/5/2007 9:44 AM Wrote:
Do you have any supporting documentation you can send? Perhaps a copy of an expense report you know is not accurate?
Your Organization
7/5/2007 9:44 AM
Location: Corporate
271
CPUs name not displayed to reporter.
Department: Operations
Subject: Question
Attachment:
Message:
Reply
Do you have any supporting documentation you can send? Perhaps a copy of an expense report you know is not accurate?
Previous Dialogue
Next Dialogue
Printable View
Back to Dialogues
New Dialogue
[Close Window]

FIG. 19

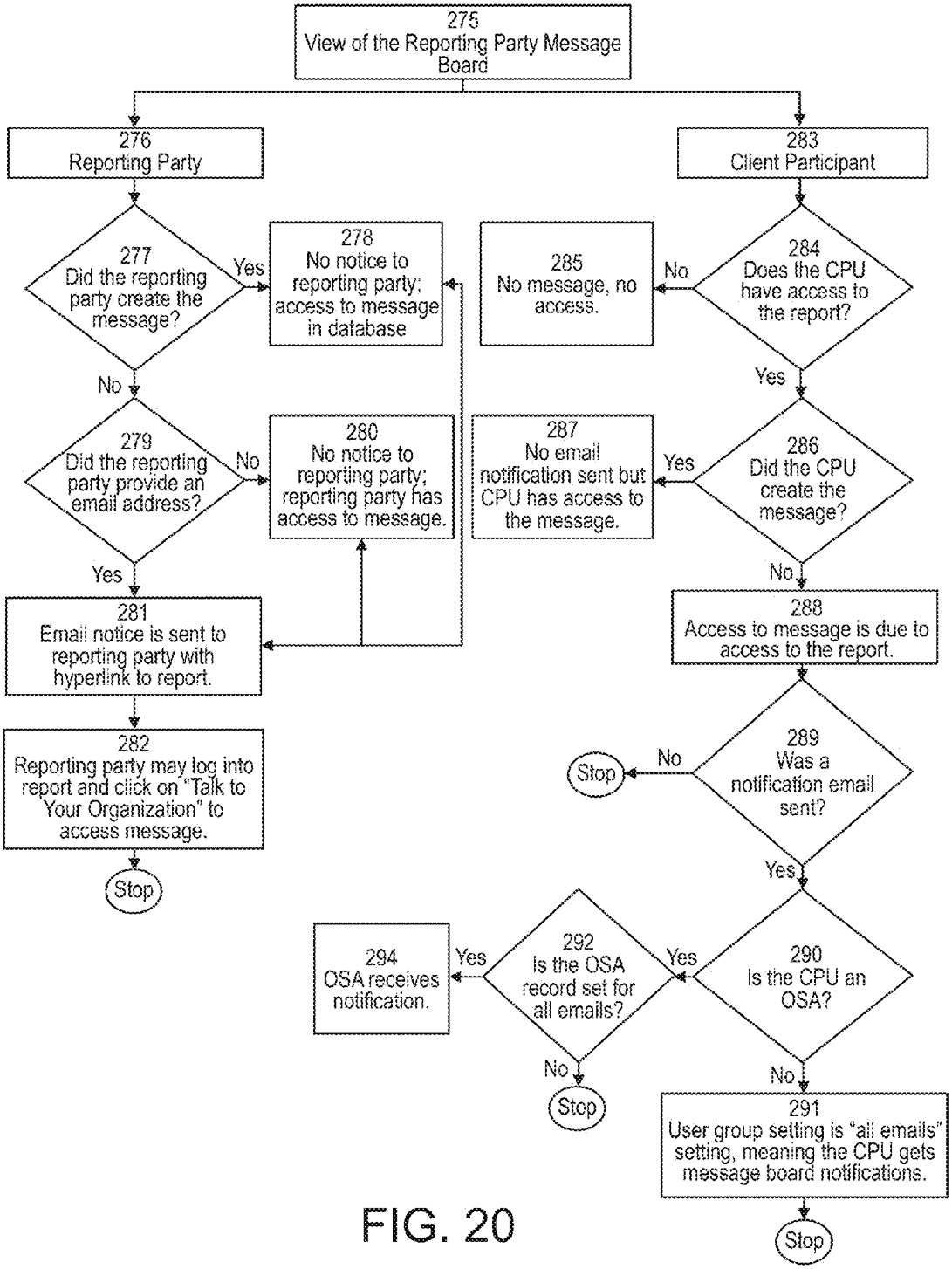

275
View of the Reporting Party Message Board
276
Reporting Party
283
Client Participant
277
Did the reporting party create the message?
Yes
278
No notice to reporting party; access to message in database
No
279
Did the reporting party provide an email address?
No
280
No notice to reporting party; reporting party has access to message.
Yes
281
Email notice is sent to reporting party with hyperlink to report.
282
Reporting party may log into report and click on "Talk to Your Organization" to access message.
Stop
285
No message, no access.
No
284
Does the CPU have access to the report?
Yes
287
No email notification sent but CPU has access to the message.
Yes
286
Did the CPU create the message?
No
288
Access to message is due to access to the report.
Stop
No
289
Was a notification email sent?
Yes
294
OSA receives notification.
Yes
292
Is the OSA record set for all emails?
Yes
290
Is the CPU an OSA?
No
Stop
No
291
User group setting is "all emails" setting, meaning the CPU gets message board notifications.
Stop

FIG. 20

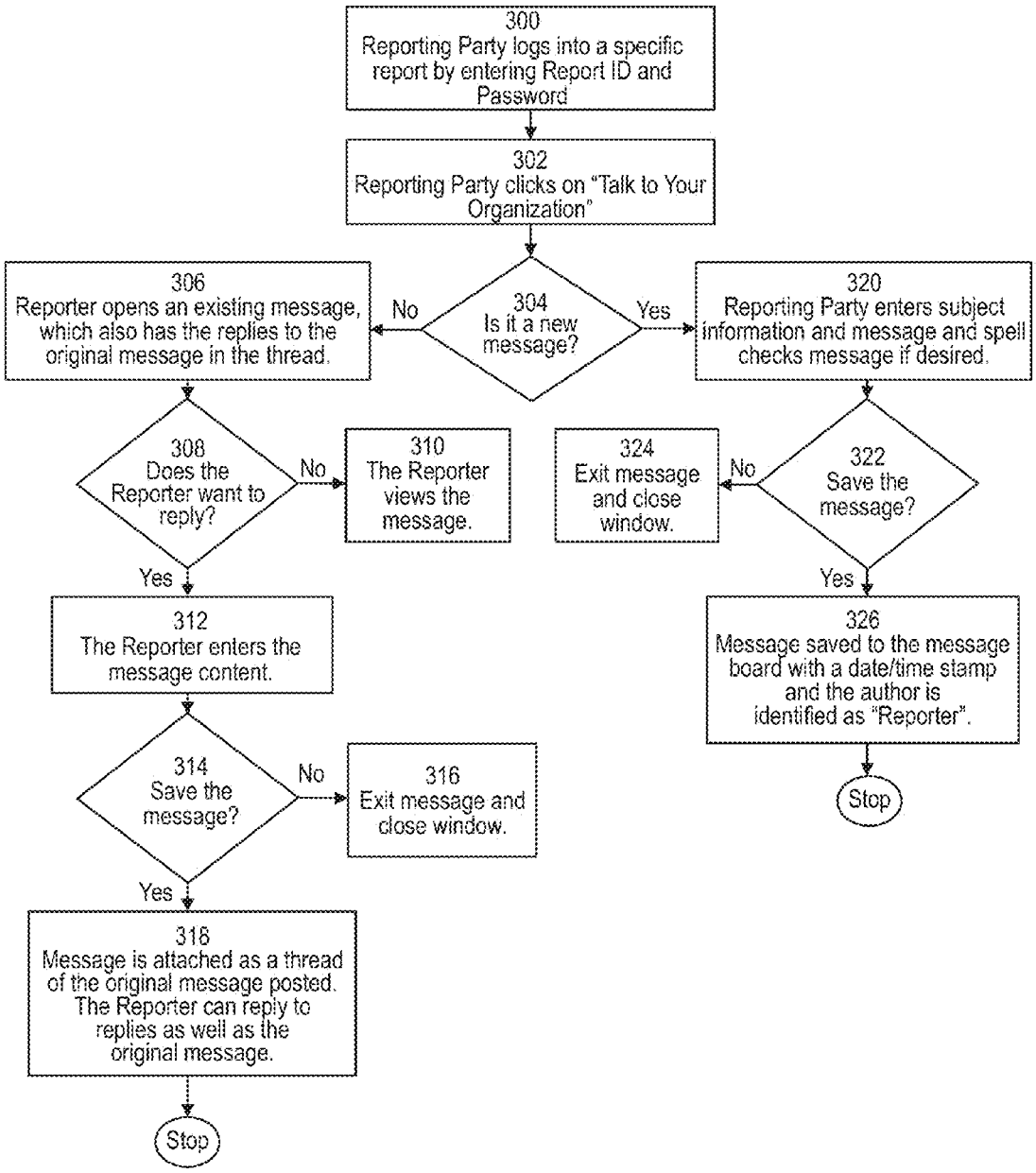

300
Reporting Party logs into a specific report by entering Report ID and Password
302
Reporting Party clicks on "Talk to Your Organization"
304
Is it a new message?
No
Yes
306
Reporter opens an existing message, which also has the replies to the original message in the thread.
320
Reporting Party enters subject information and message and spell checks message if desired.
308
Does the Reporter want to reply?
No
310
The Reporter views the message.
Yes
312
The Reporter enters the message content.
314
Save the message?
No
316
Exit message and close window.
Yes
318
Message is attached as a thread of the original message posted. The Reporter can reply to replies as well as the original message.
Stop
322
Save the message?
No
324
Exit message and close window.
Yes
326
Message saved to the message board with a date/time stamp and the author is identified as "Reporter".
Stop

FIG. 21

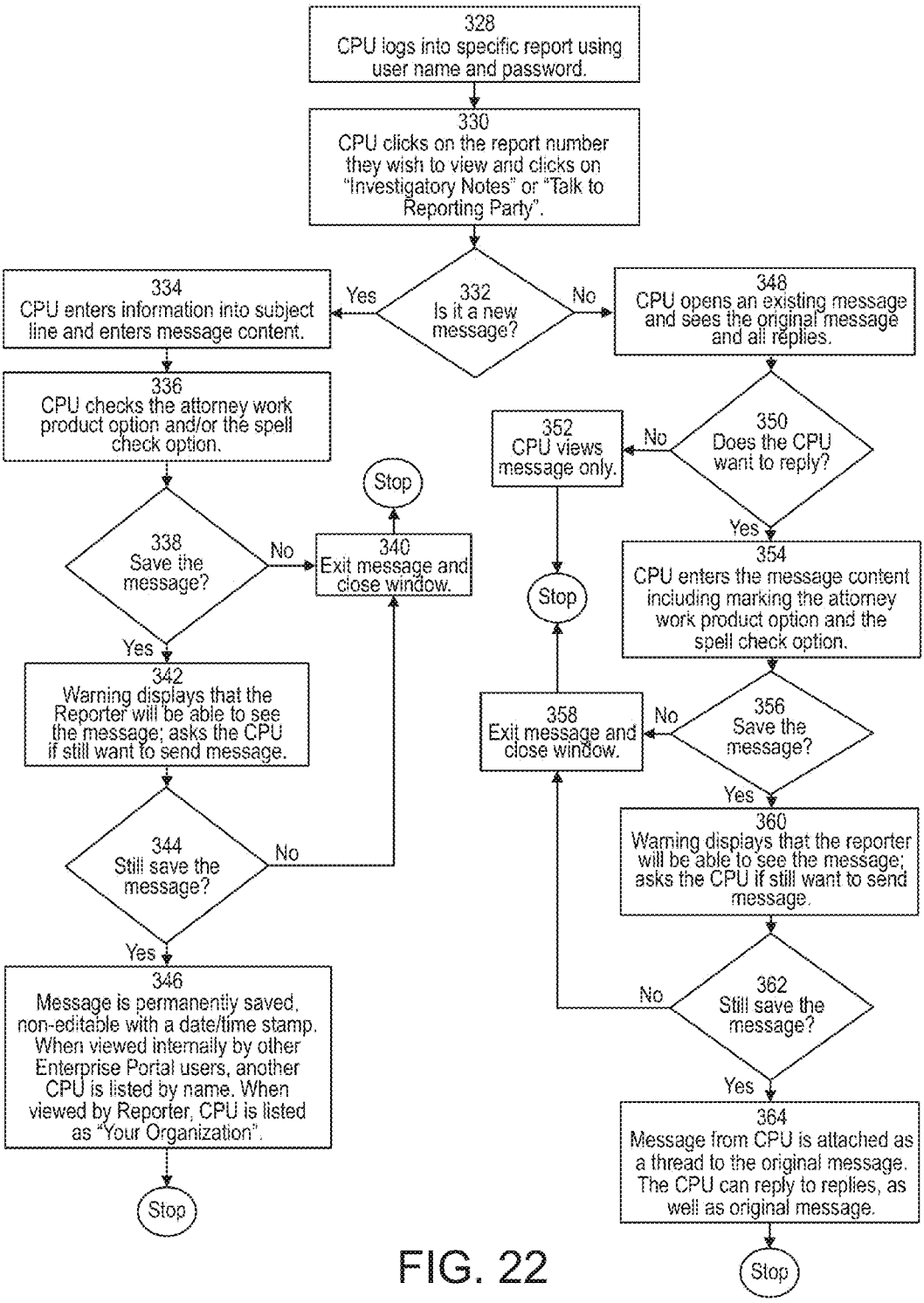

328
CPU logs into specific report using user name and password.
330
CPU clicks on the report number they wish to view and clicks on "Investigatory Notes" or "Talk to Reporting Party".
332
Is it a new message?
Yes
No
334
CPU enters information into subject line and enters message content.
336
CPU checks the attorney work product option and/or the spell check option.
338
Save the message?
No
340
Exit message and close window.
Stop
Yes
342
Warning displays that the Reporter will be able to see the message; asks the CPU if still want to send message.
344
Still save the message?
No
Yes
346
Message is permanently saved, non-editable with a date/time stamp. When viewed internally by other Enterprise Portal users, another CPU is listed by name. When viewed by Reporter, CPU is listed as "Your Organization".
Stop
348
CPU opens an existing message and sees the original message and all replies.
350
Does the CPU want to reply?
No
352
CPU views message only.
Stop
Yes
354
CPU enters the message content including marking the attorney work product option and the spell check option.
356
Save the message?
No
358
Exit message and close window.
Yes
360
Warning displays that the reporter will be able to see the message; asks the CPU if still want to send message.
362
Still save the message?
No
Yes
364
Message from CPU is attached as a thread to the original message. The CPU can reply to replies, as well as original message.
Stop

FIG. 22

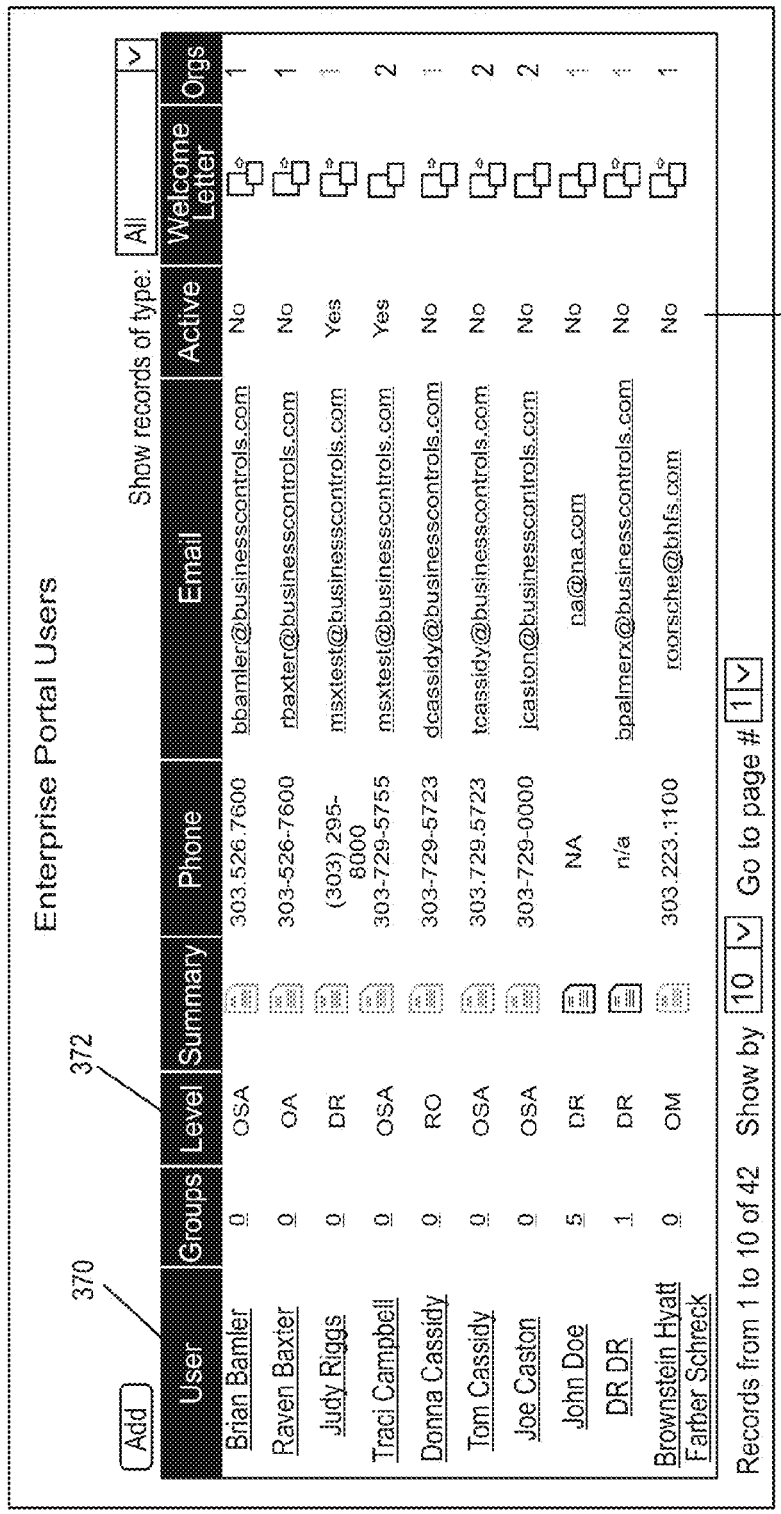

Enterprise Portal Users
Add
370
372
Show records of type: All
User
Groups
Level
Summary
Phone
Email
Active
Welcome Letter
Orgs
Brian Bamler 0 OSA 303.526.7600 bbamler@businesscontrols.com No 1
Raven Baxter 0 OA 303-526-7600 rbaxter@businesscontrols.com No 1
Judy Riggs 0 DR (303) 295-8000 msxtest@businesscontrols.com Yes 1
Traci Campbell 0 OSA 303-729-5755 msxtest@businesscontrols.com Yes 2
Donna Cassidy 0 RO 303-729-5723 dcassidy@businesscontrols.com No 1
Tom Cassidy 0 OSA 303.729.5723 tcassidy@businesscontrols.com No 2
Joe Caston 0 OSA 303-729-0000 jcaston@businesscontrols.com No 2
John Doe 5 DR NA na@na.com No 1
DR DR 1 DR n/a bpalmerx@businesscontrols.com No 1
Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck 0 OM 303.223.1100 roorsche@bhfs.com No 1
Records from 1 to 10 of 42 Show by 10 Go to page # 1
374
Active Display Field

FIG. 23

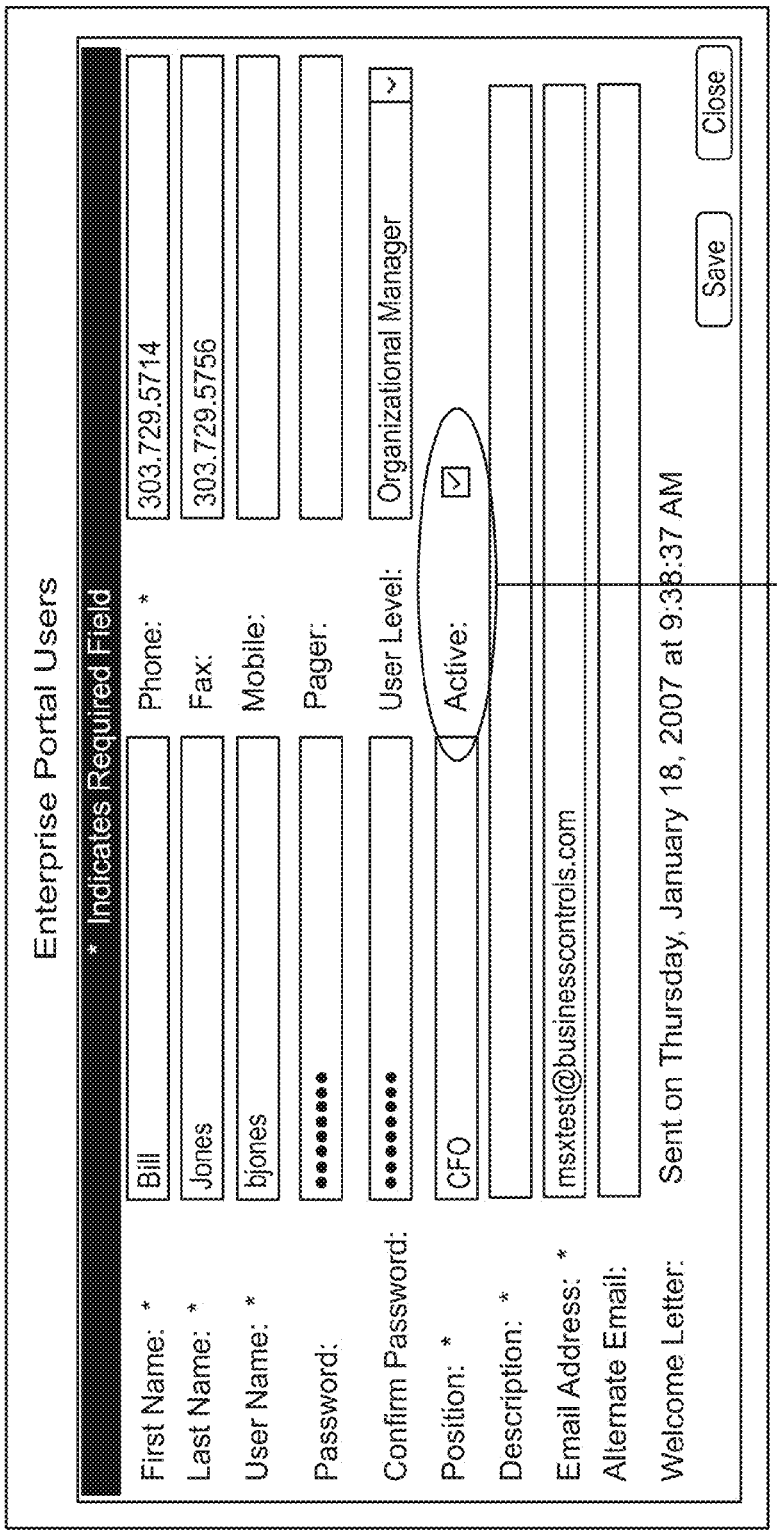

Enterprise Portal Users
* Indicates Required Field
First Name: *
Bill
Phone: *
303.729.5714
Last Name: *
Jones
Fax:
303.729.5756
User Name: *
bjones
Mobile:
Password:
Pager:
Confirm Password:
User Level:
Organizational Manager
Position: *
CFO
Active:
Description: *
Email Address: *
msxtest@businesscontrols.com
Alternate Email:
Welcome Letter:
Sent on Thursday, January 18, 2007 at 9:38:37 AM
Save
Close
376
Enable/Disable
User Control

FIG. 24

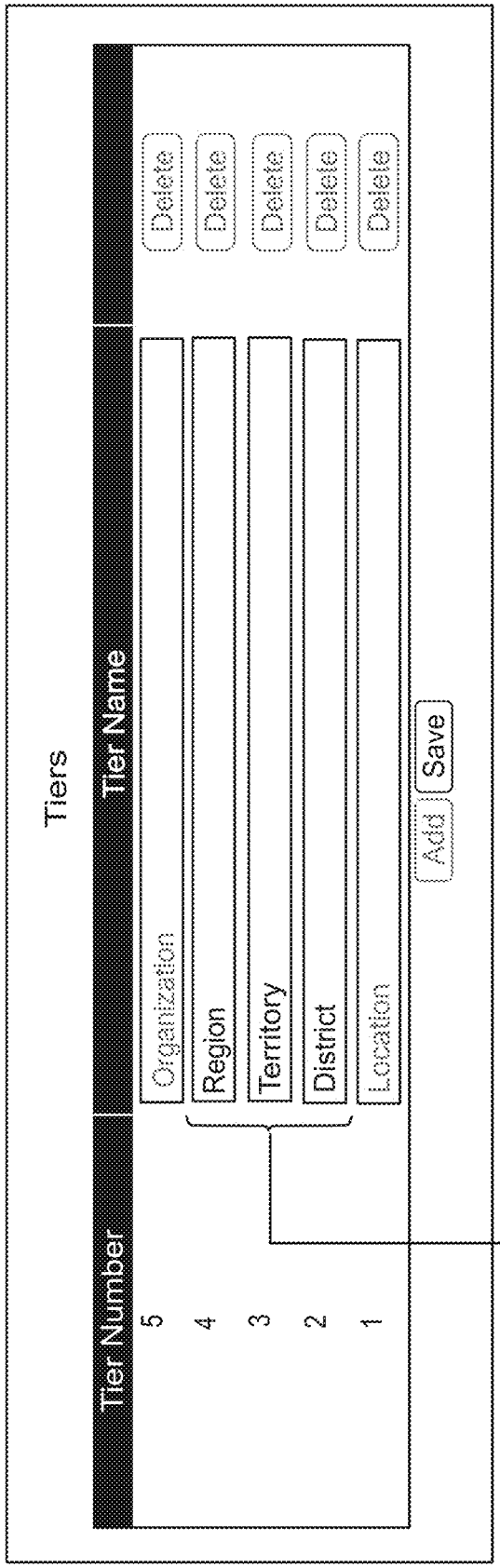

Tiers
Tier Number
Tier Name
5
4
3
2
1
Organization
Region
Territory
District
Location
Delete
Delete
Delete
Delete
Delete
Add
Save
378
Fields for creating tiers for incident report distribution

FIG. 25

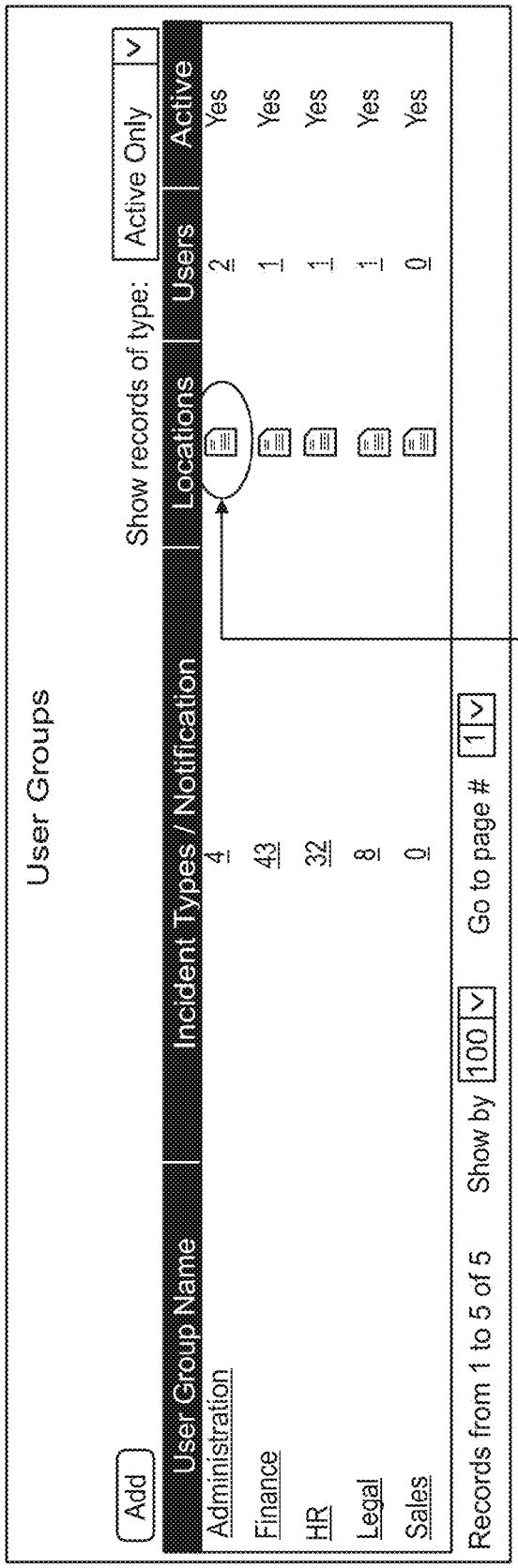

User Groups
Add
Show records of type: Active Only
User Group Name
Incident Types / Notification
Locations
Users
Active
Administration 4 2 Yes
Finance 43 1 Yes
HR 32 1 Yes
Legal 8 1 Yes
Sales 0 0 Yes
Records from 1 to 5 of 5 Show by 100 Go to page # 1
388
Distribution
Control Button

FIG. 26

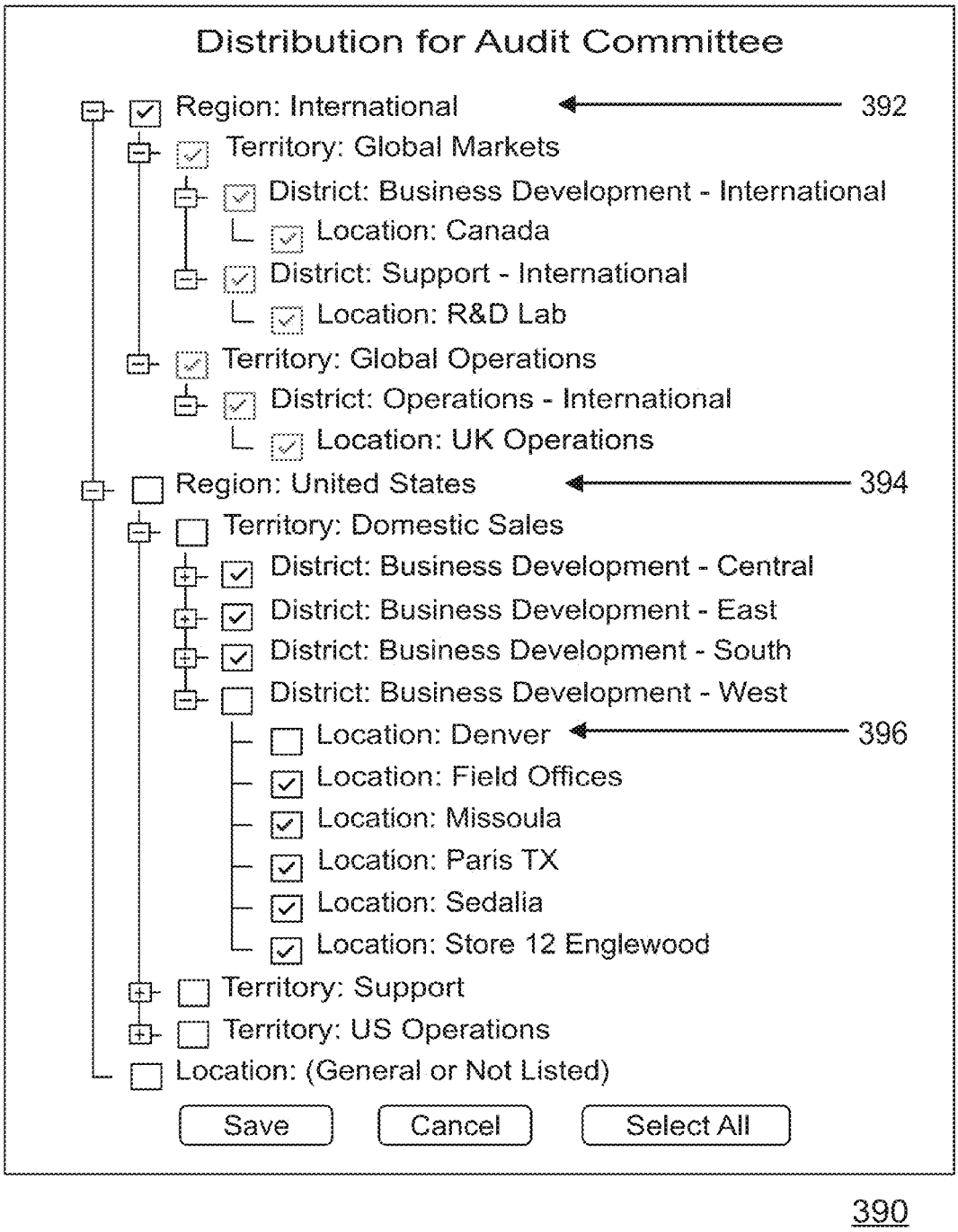

Distribution for Audit Committee
Region: International
392
Territory: Global Markets
District: Business Development - International
Location: Canada
District: Support - International
Location: R&D Lab
Territory: Global Operations
District: Operations - International
Location: UK Operations
Region: United States
394
Territory: Domestic Sales
District: Business Development - Central
District: Business Development - East
District: Business Development - South
District: Business Development - West
Location: Denver
396
Location: Field Offices
Location: Missoula
Location: Paris TX
Location: Sedalia
Location: Store 12 Englewood
Territory: Support
Territory: US Operations
Location: (General or Not Listed)
Save
Cancel
Select All
390

FIG. 27

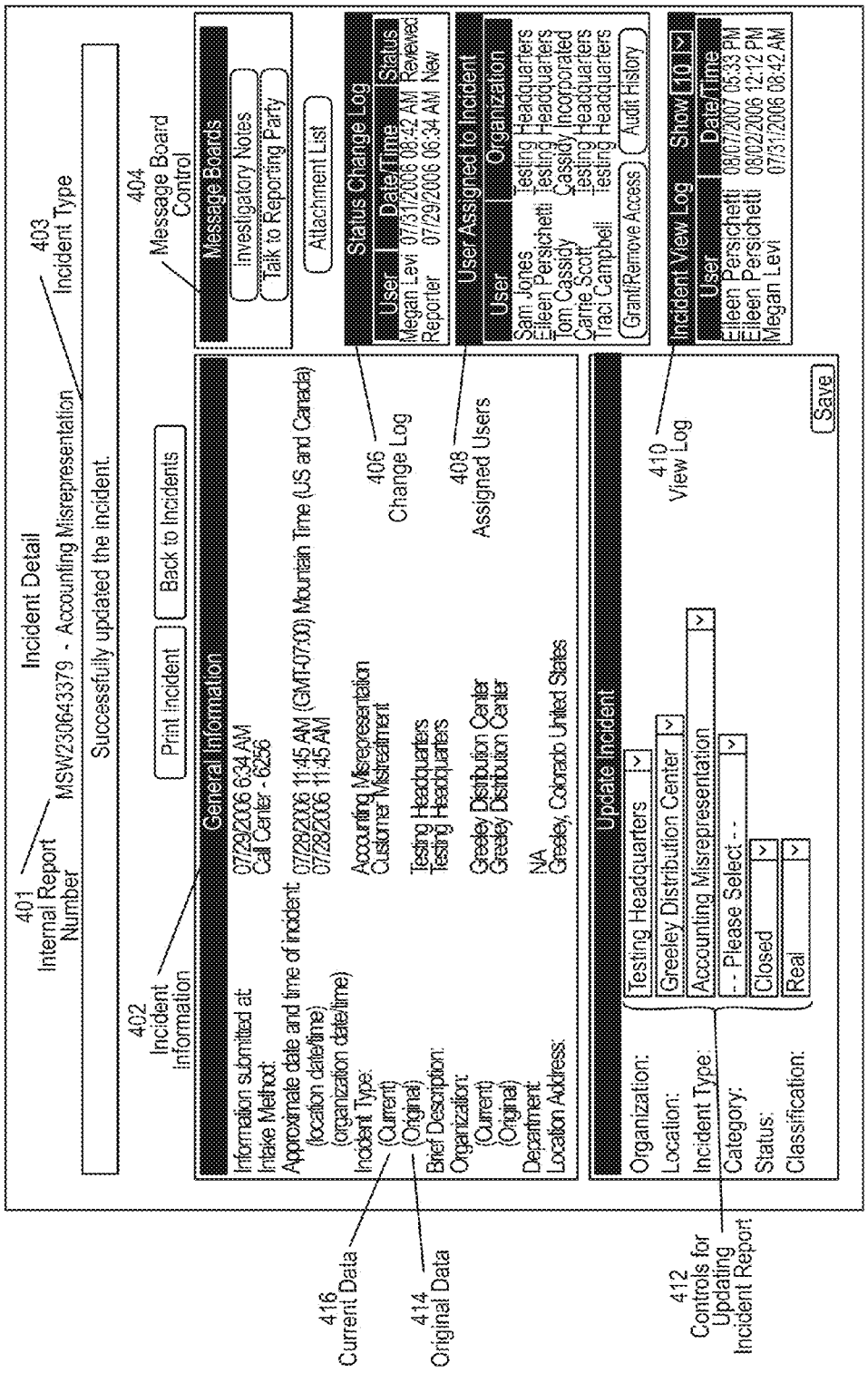

Incident Detail
401 Internal Report Number
MSW230643379 - Accounting Misrepresentation
403 Incident Type
Successfully updated the incident.
402 Incident Information
Print Incident
Back to Incidents
404 Message Board Control
Message Boards
Investigatory Notes
Talk to Reporting Party
Attachment List
General Information
Information submitted at: 07/29/2006 6:34 AM
Intake Method: Call Center - 6256
Approximate date and time of incident: 07/28/2006 11:45 AM (GMT-07:00) Mountain Time (US and Canada)
(location date/time) 07/28/2006 11:45 AM
(organization date/time)
Incident Type:
(Current) Accounting Misrepresentation
(Original) Customer Mistreatment
Brief Description: Testing Headquarters
Testing Headquarters
Organization:
(Current) Greeley Distribution Center
(Original) Greeley Distribution Center
Department: NA
Location Address: Greeley, Colorado United States
406 Change Log
Status Change Log
User | Date/Time | Status
Megan Levi 07/31/2006 08:42 AM Reviewed
Reporter 07/29/2006 06:34 AM New
408 Assigned Users
User Assigned to Incident
User | Organization
Sam Jones Testing Headquarters
Eileen Persichetti Testing Headquarters
Tom Cassidy Cassidy Incorporated
Carrie Scott Testing Headquarters
Traci Campbell Testing Headquarters
Grant/Remove Access
Audit History
410 View Log
Incident View Log
Show 10
User | Date/Time
Eileen Persichetti 08/07/2007 05:33 PM
Eileen Persichetti 08/02/2006 12:12 PM
Megan Levi 07/31/2006 08:42 AM
Update Incident
Organization: Testing Headquarters
Location: Greeley Distribution Center
Incident Type: Accounting Misrepresentation
Category: - - Please Select - -
Status: Closed
Classification: Real
Save
412 Controls for Updating Incident Report
414 Original Data
416 Current Data

FIG. 28

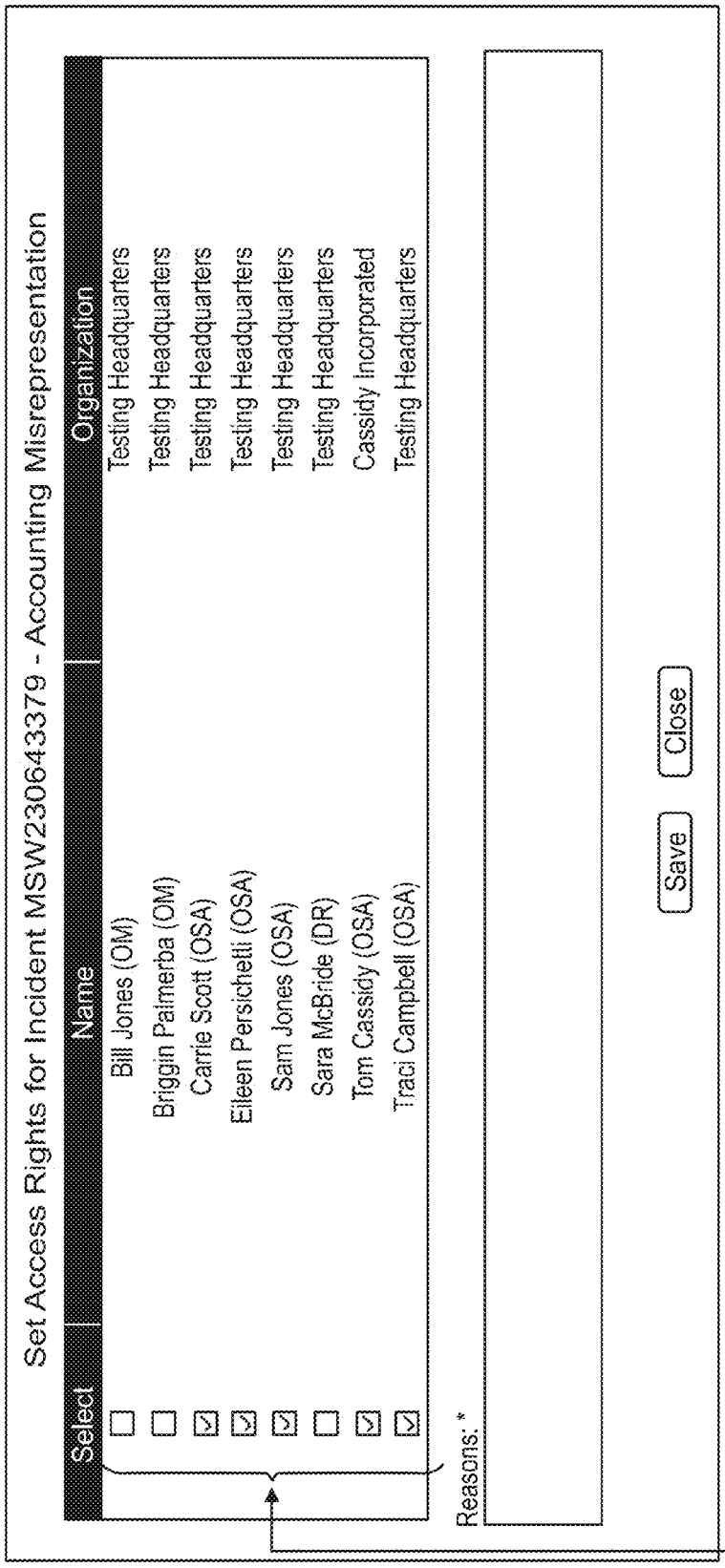

Set Access Rights for Incident MSW230643379 - Accounting Misrepresentation
Select
Name
Organization
Bill Jones (OM) Testing Headquarters
Briggin Palmerba (OM) Testing Headquarters
Carrie Scott (OSA) Testing Headquarters
Eileen Persichelli (OSA) Testing Headquarters
Sam Jones (OSA) Testing Headquarters
Sara McBride (DR) Testing Headquarters
Tom Cassidy (OSA) Cassidy Incorporated
Traci Campbell (OSA) Testing Headquarters
Reasons: *
Save
Close
418
Controls to add viewing rights for company representatives

FIG. 29

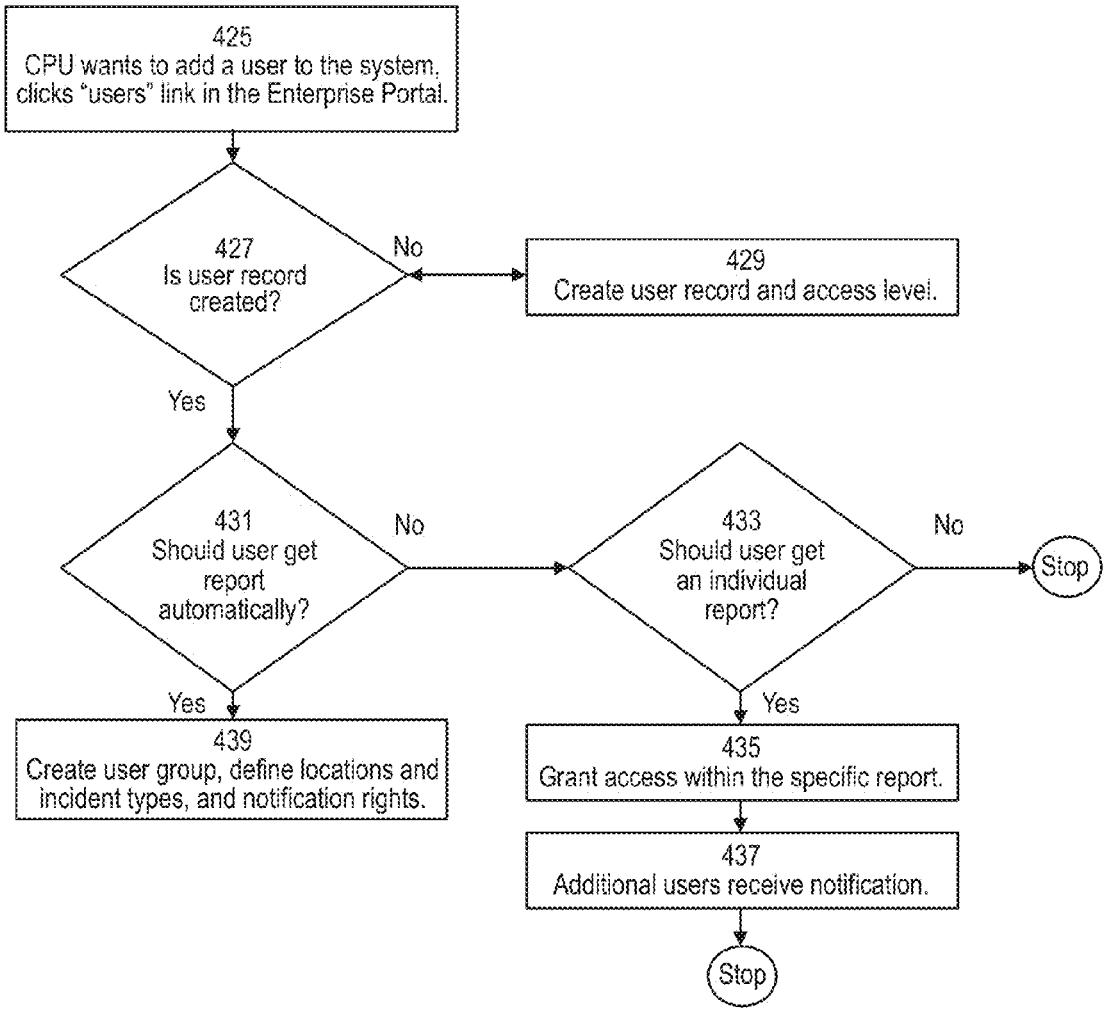

425
CPU wants to add a user to the system, clicks "users" link in the Enterprise Portal.
427
Is user record created?
No
429
Create user record and access level.
Yes
431
Should user get report automatically?
No
433
Should user get an individual report?
No
Stop
Yes
439
Create user group, define locations and incident types, and notification rights.
Yes
435
Grant access within the specific report.
437
Additional users receive notification.
Stop

FIG. 30

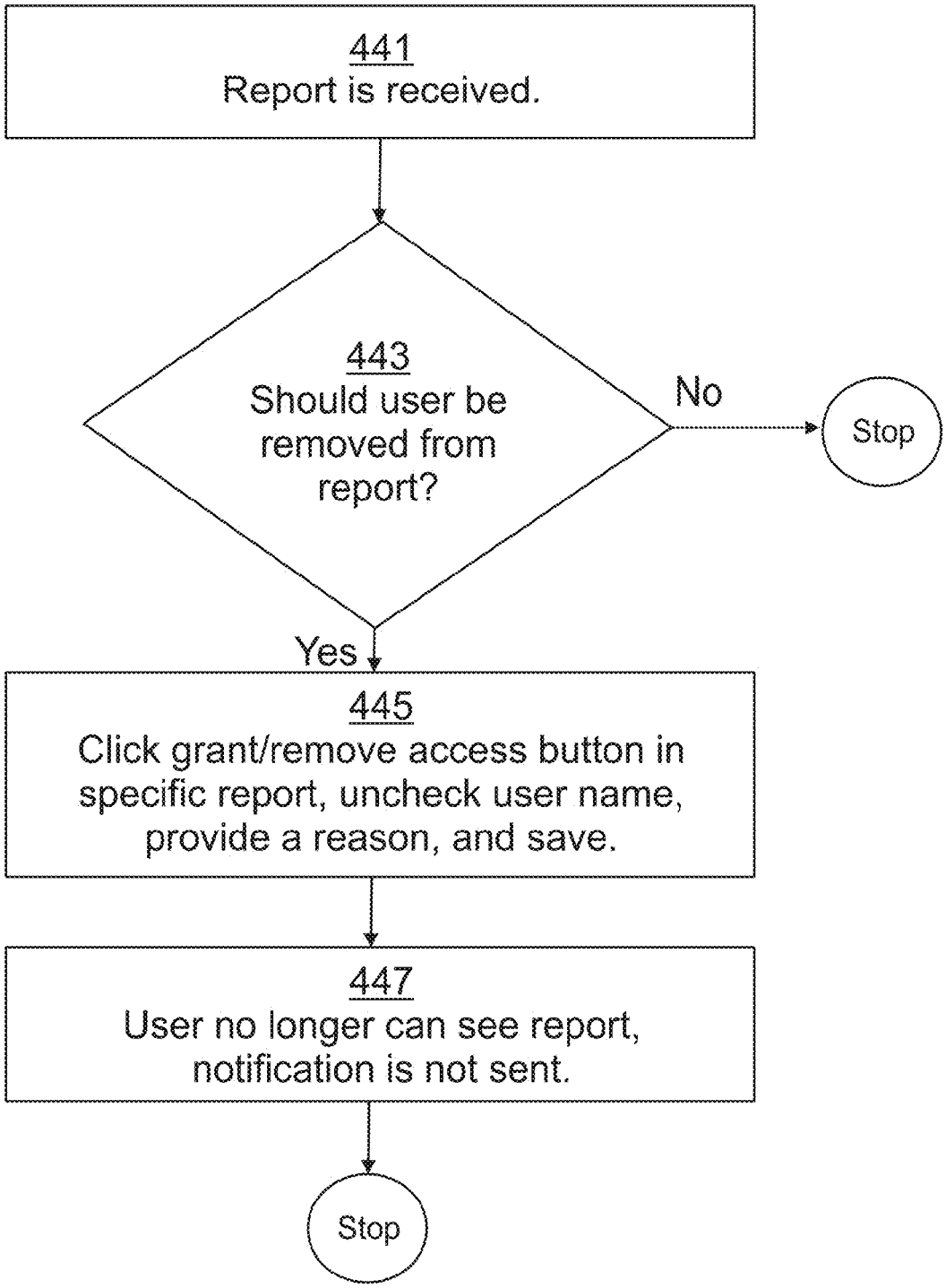

441
Report is received.
443
Should user be removed from report?
No
Stop
Yes
445
Click grant/remove access button in specific report, uncheck user name, provide a reason, and save.
447
User no longer can see report, notification is not sent.
Stop

FIG. 31

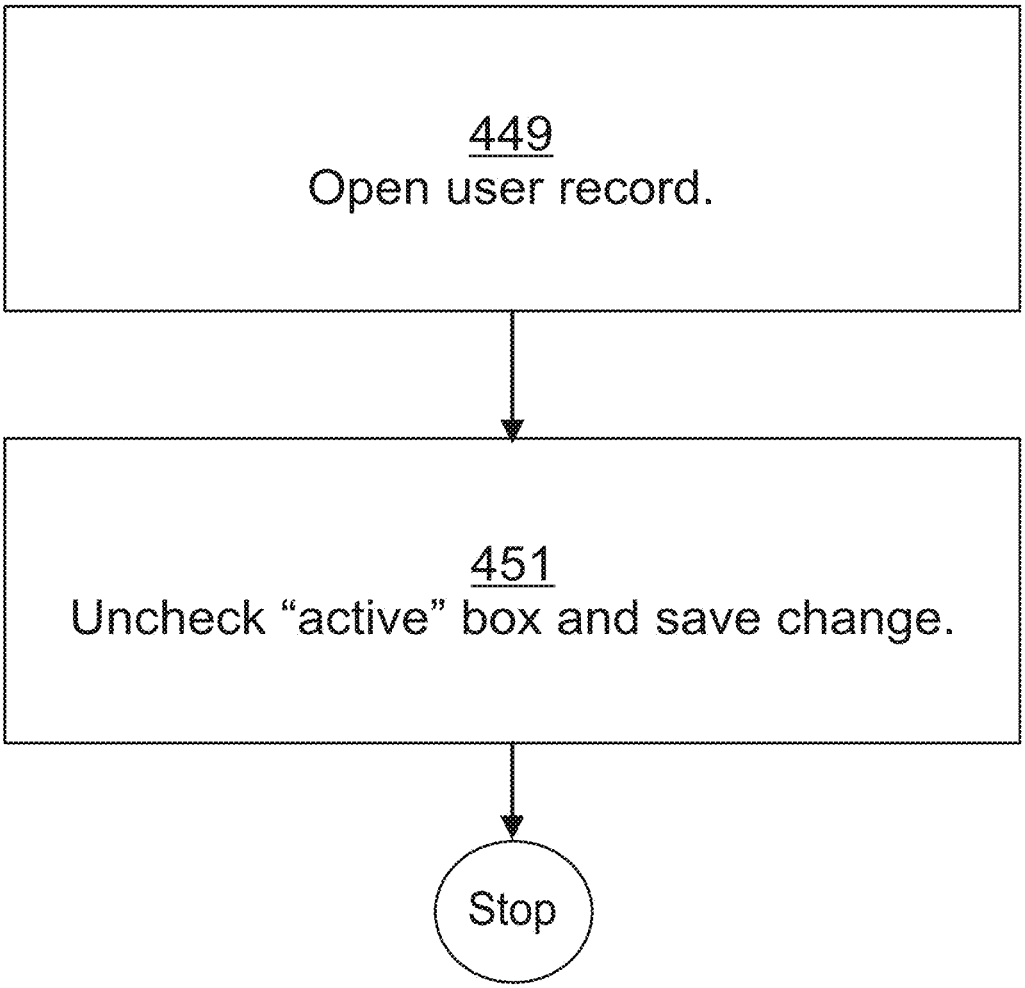

449
Open user record.
451
Uncheck “active” box and save change.
Stop

FIG. 32

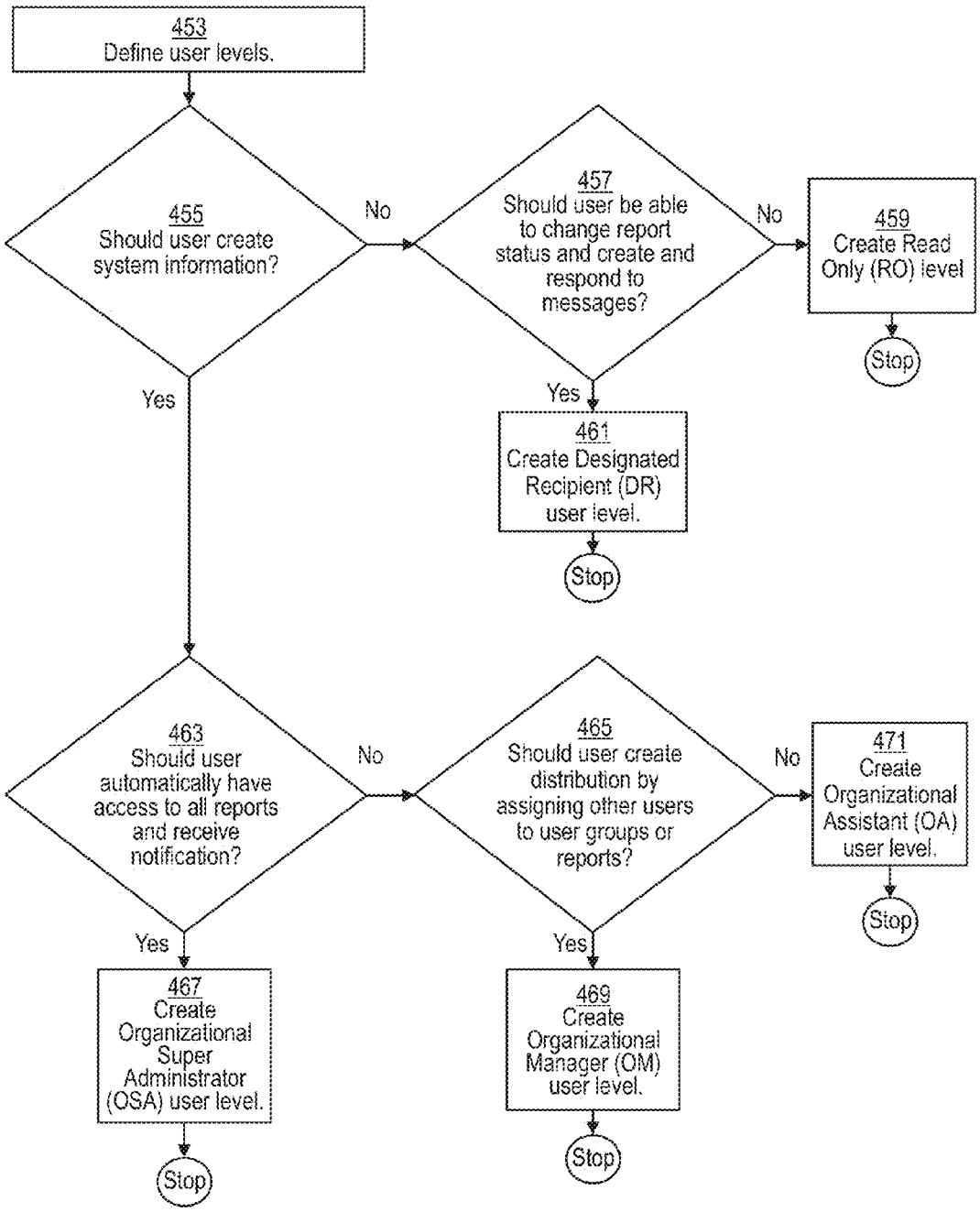

453
Define user levels.
455
Should user create system information?
No
457
Should user be able to change report status and create and respond to messages?
No
459
Create Read Only (RO) level
Stop
Yes
461
Create Designated Recipient (DR) user level.
Stop
Yes
463
Should user automatically have access to all reports and receive notification?
No
465
Should user create distribution by assigning other users to user groups or reports?
No
471
Create Organizational Assistant (OA) user level.
Stop
Yes
467
Create Organizational Super Administrator (OSA) user level.
Stop
Yes
469
Create Organizational Manager (OM) user level.
Stop

FIG. 33

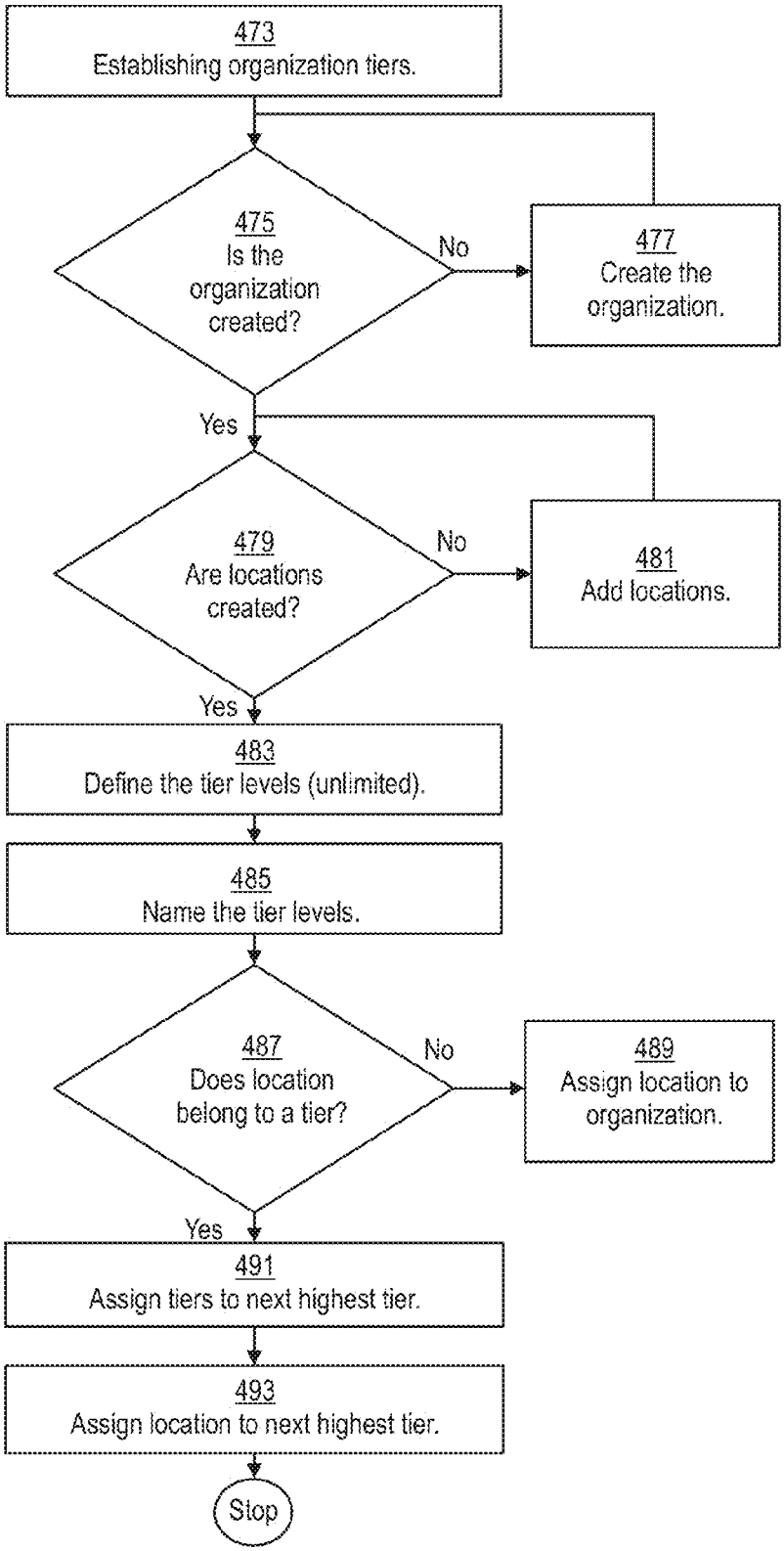

473
Establishing organization tiers.
475
Is the organization created?
No
477
Create the organization.
Yes
479
Are locations created?
No
481
Add locations.
Yes
483
Define the tier levels (unlimited).
485
Name the tier levels.
487
Does location belong to a tier?
No
489
Assign location to organization.
Yes
491
Assign tiers to next highest tier.
493
Assign location to next highest tier.
Stop

FIG. 34

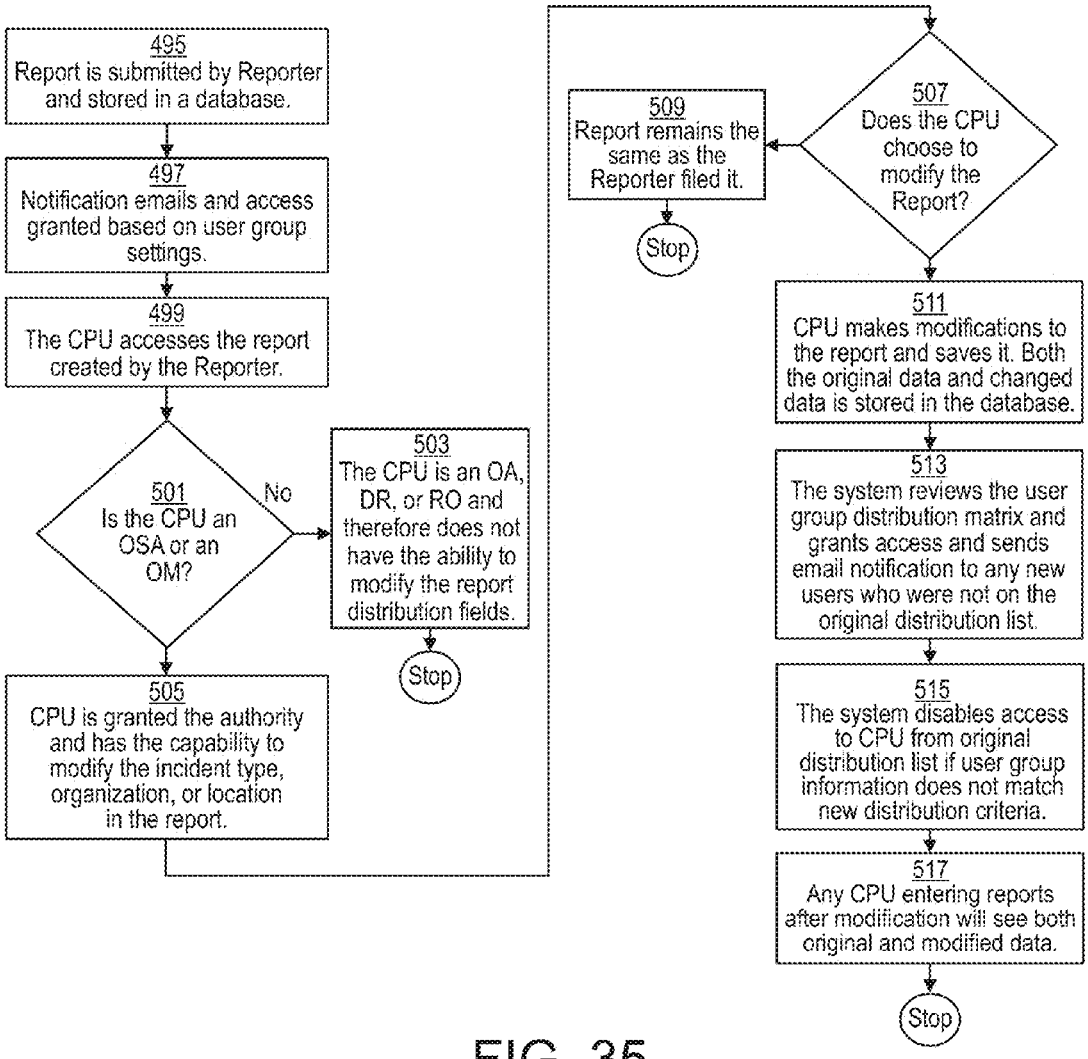

495
Report is submitted by Reporter and stored in a database.
497
Notification emails and access granted based on user group settings.
499
The CPU accesses the report created by the Reporter.
501
Is the CPU an OSA or an OM?
No
503
The CPU is an OA, DR, or RO and therefore does not have the ability to modify the report distribution fields.
Stop
505
CPU is granted the authority and has the capability to modify the incident type, organization, or location in the report.
507
Does the CPU choose to modify the Report?
509
Report remains the same as the Reporter filed it.
Stop
511
CPU makes modifications to the report and saves it. Both the original data and changed data is stored in the database.
513
The system reviews the user group distribution matrix and grants access and sends email notification to any new users who were not on the original distribution list.
515
The system disables access to CPU from original distribution list if user group information does not match new distribution criteria.
517
Any CPU entering reports after modification will see both original and modified data.
Stop

FIG. 35

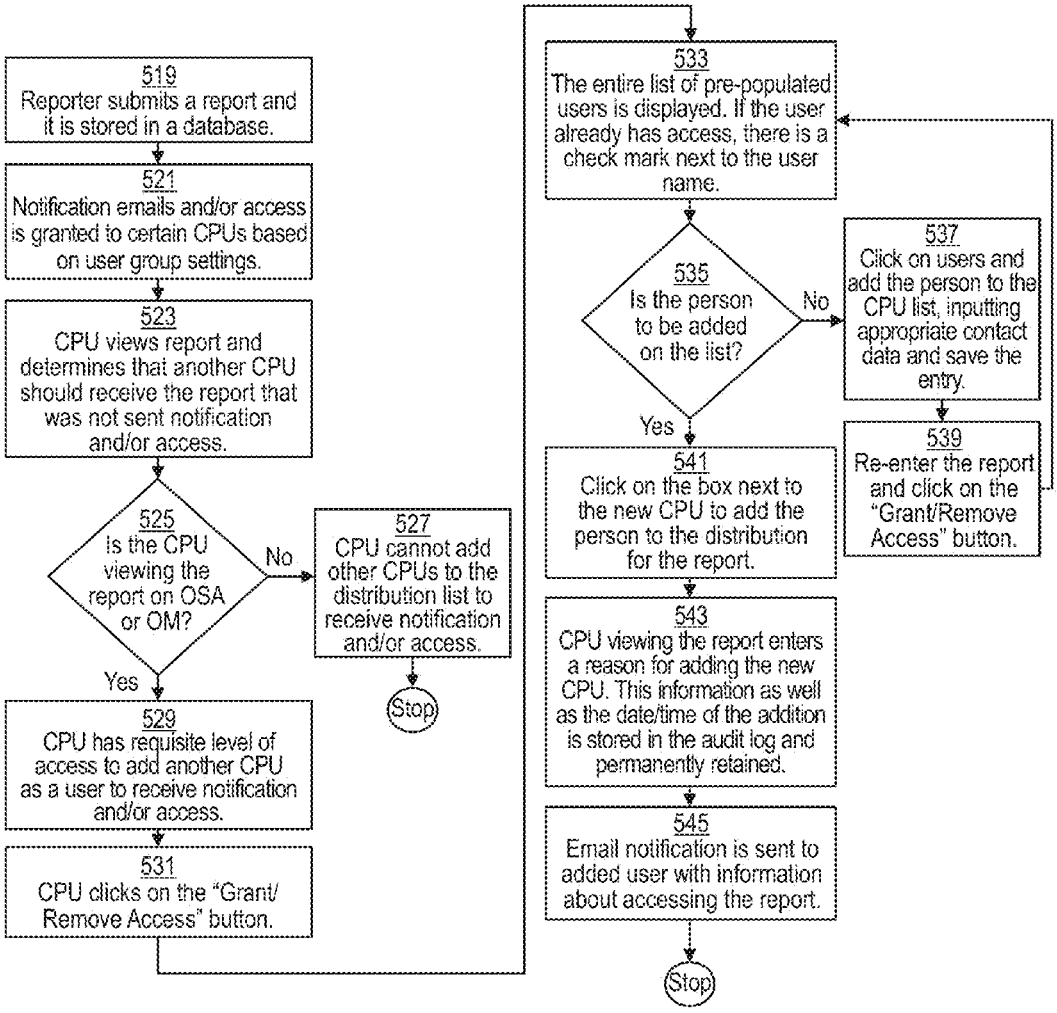

519
Reporter submits a report and it is stored in a database.
521
Notification emails and/or access is granted to certain CPUs based on user group settings.
523
CPU views report and determines that another CPU should receive the report that was not sent notification and/or access.
525
Is the CPU viewing the report on OSA or OM?
No
527
CPU cannot add other CPUs to the distribution list to receive notification and/or access.
Stop
Yes
529
CPU has requisite level of access to add another CPU as a user to receive notification and/or access.
531
CPU clicks on the "Grant/ Remove Access" button.
533
The entire list of pre-populated users is displayed. If the user already has access, there is a check mark next to the user name.
535
Is the person to be added on the list?
No
537
Click on users and add the person to the CPU list, inputting appropriate contact data and save the entry.
539
Re-enter the report and click on the "Grant/Remove Access" button.
Yes
541
Click on the box next to the new CPU to add the person to the distribution for the report.
543
CPU viewing the report enters a reason for adding the new CPU. This information as well as the date/time of the addition is stored in the audit log and permanently retained.
545
Email notification is sent to added user with information about accessing the report.
Stop

FIG. 36

Historical Reports (defaulted to last 12 months)

Click the link below for the specific report (or the "Saved Filter" link if you want to view that particular report using your saved filters) - and then click within the report to drill down to the actual Incident Report.

Note that you will only see those Incident Reports that you are entitled to view.

Report Name	Report Description	Use Saved Filters
All Incident Reports by Location	View all Incident Reports at any chosen tier or location in your organization structure (defaulted to those received in the last 12 months) with ability to modify Date Range, Incident Type, Status and Organization.	
Incident Report Volume/Reporting Frequency	Frequency of Incident Reports by time periods (defaulted to those received in the last 12 months) with ability to modify Date Range, Incident Type, Status and Organization. Note that date ranges less than a month will be displayed daily; less than 2 years, monthly; more than 2 years, annually.	
Key Word Search	Use up to 2 key words to search Incident Reports that you are entitled to view. The search will look through the Description, all Answers, Additional Comments, Suspected Individuals and Names of those Reporters who do not care about anonymity, to see if either key word is contained in them. There is also the ability to modify Date Range, Incident Type, Status and Organization.	
All Incident Reports by Incident Type	Incident Report Types (defaulted to those received in the last 12 months) with ability to modify Date Range, Incident Type, Status and Organization.	
All Incident Reports by Status	Incident Report Statuses (defaulted to those received in the last 12 months) with ability to modify Date Range, Incident Type, Status and Organization.	
All Active Non Re-Opened Incident Reports by Age	Age of Active Incident Reports (defaulted to those received in the last 12 months) that have NOT ever been re-opened, with ability to modify Date Range, Incident Type, Status and Organization.	
All Active Re-Opened Incident Reports by Age	Age of Active Incident Reports (defaulted to those received in the last 12 months) that HAVE been re-opened with ability to modify Date Range, Incident Type, Status and Organization.	
Closure Rate of Closed Incidents	Closure Rate of Closed Incident Reports (defaulted to those received in the last 12 months) that have NOT ever been reopened with ability to modify Date Range, Incident Type, Status and Organization.	
Closure Rate of Re-Opened Closed Incident Reports	Closure Rate of Closed Incident Reports (defaulted to those received in the last 12 months) that HAVE been re-opened with ability to modify Date Range, Incident Type, Status and Organization.	
Raw Data Extract	View the raw data for all Incident Reports (defaulted to those received in the last 12 months) with ability to modify Date Range, Incident Type, Status and Organization. This raw data can then be downloaded to Excel for further User Ad Hoc Reporting.	
Set Global Filters	Use this report to first modify the Date Range (defaulted to the last 12 months), Incident Type, Status and Organization Filters and then apply them as saved defaults for ALL the reports instead of applying saved defaults for each individual report. Note that this global Filter application will override all existing saved defaults. Also, each individual report contains the ability to override its own defaults. The individual settings will not overwrite the global settings, rather just those settings for that specific report.	600

[Close Window]

FIG. 37

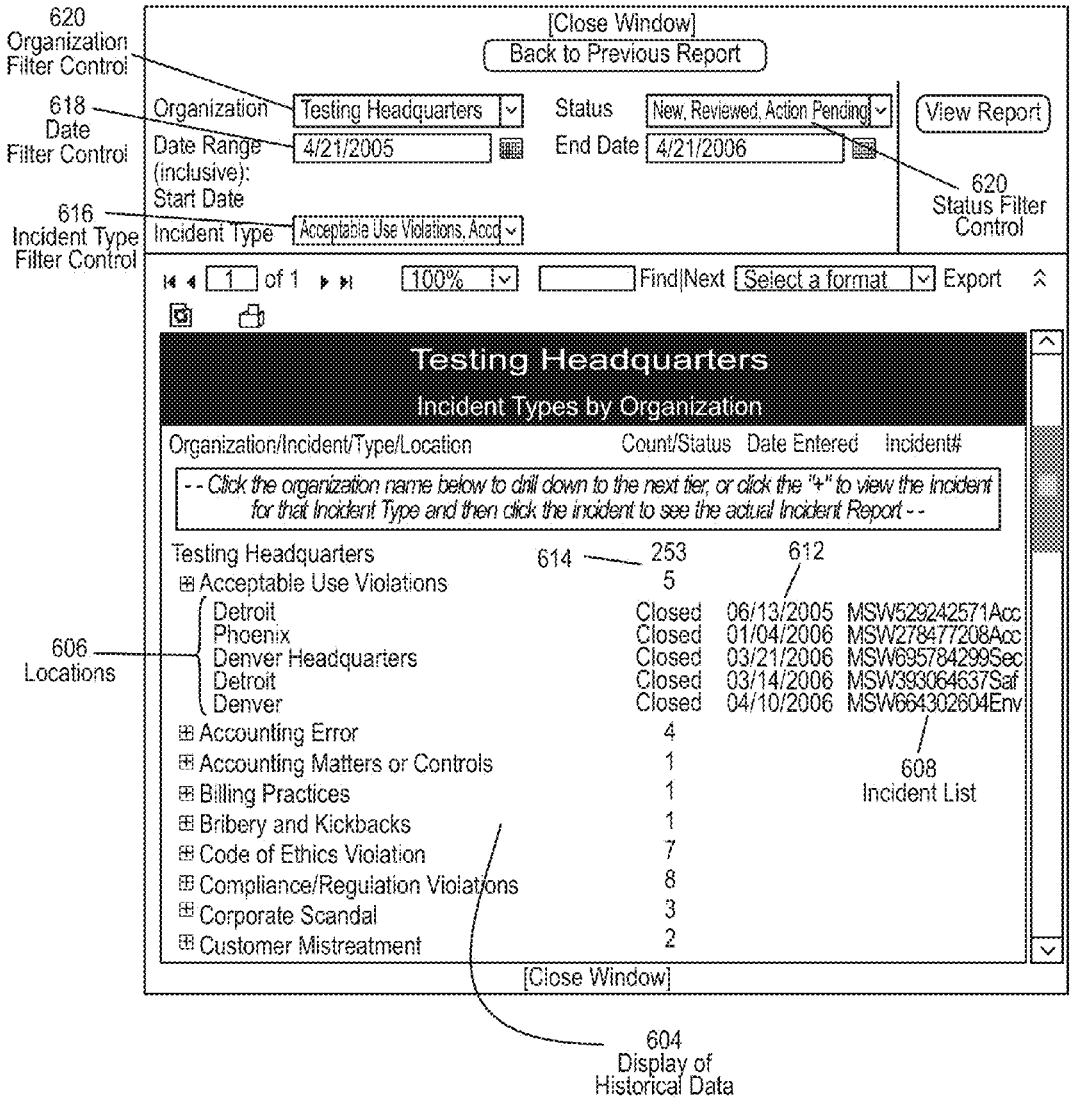

620
Organization
Filter Control
618
Date
Filter Control
616
Incident Type
Filter Control
[Close Window]
Back to Previous Report
Organization
Testing Headquarters
Status
New, Reviewed, Action Pending
View Report
Date Range
(inclusive):
Start Date
4/21/2005
End Date
4/21/2006
620
Status Filter
Control
Incident Type
Acceptable Use Violations, Accd
1
of 1
100%
Find|Next
Select a format
Export
Testing Headquarters
Incident Types by Organization
Organization/Incident/Type/Location
Count/Status
Date Entered
Incident#
-- Click the organization name below to drill down to the next tier, or click the "+" to view the incident for that Incident Type and then click the incident to see the actual Incident Report --
614
612
606
Locations
Testing Headquarters
253
Acceptable Use Violations
5
Detroit
Closed
06/13/2005
MSW529242571Acc
Phoenix
Closed
01/04/2006
MSW278477208Acc
Denver Headquarters
Closed
03/21/2006
MSW695784299Sec
Detroit
Closed
03/14/2006
MSW393064637Saf
Denver
Closed
04/10/2006
MSW664302604Env
Accounting Error
4
Accounting Matters or Controls
1
Billing Practices
1
Bribery and Kickbacks
1
Code of Ethics Violation
7
Compliance/Regulation Violations
8
Corporate Scandal
3
Customer Mistreatment
2
608
Incident List
[Close Window]
604
Display of
Historical Data

FIG. 38

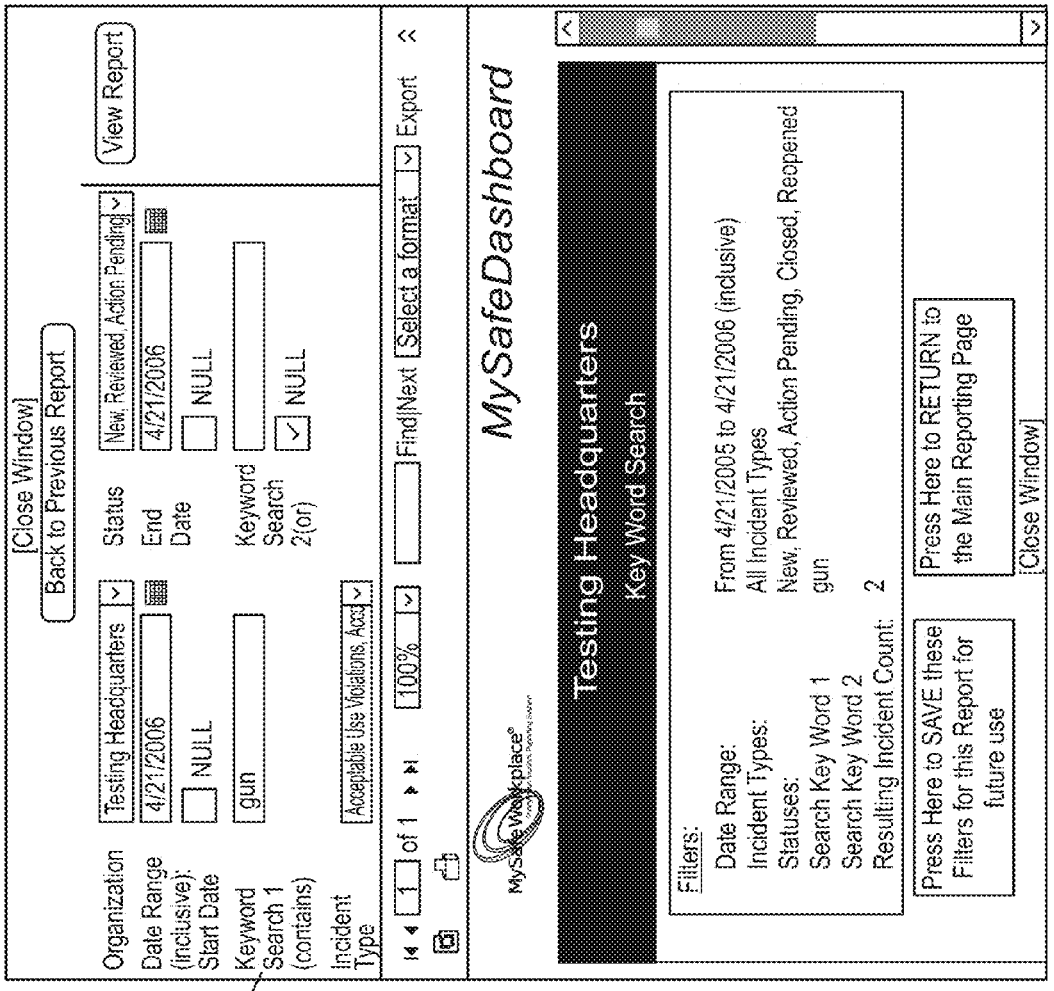

[Close Window]
Back to Previous Report
Organization
Testing Headquarters
Status
New, Reviewed, Action Pending
View Report
Date Range (inclusive): Start Date
4/21/2006
End Date
4/21/2006
NULL
NULL
Keyword Search 1 (contains)
gun
Keyword Search 2(or)
Incident Type
Acceptable Use Violations, Acc
1 of 1
100%
Find|Next
Select a format
Export
MySafeDashboard
MySafeWorkplace
Testing Headquarters
Key Word Search
Filters:
Date Range:
From 4/21/2005 to 4/21/2006 (inclusive)
Incident Types:
All Incident Types
Statuses:
New, Reviewed, Action Pending, Closed, Reopened
Search Key Word 1
gun
Search Key Word 2
Resulting Incident Count:
2
Press Here to SAVE these Filters for this Report for future use
Press Here to RETURN to the Main Reporting Page
[Close Window]
622
Keyword Filter

FIG. 39

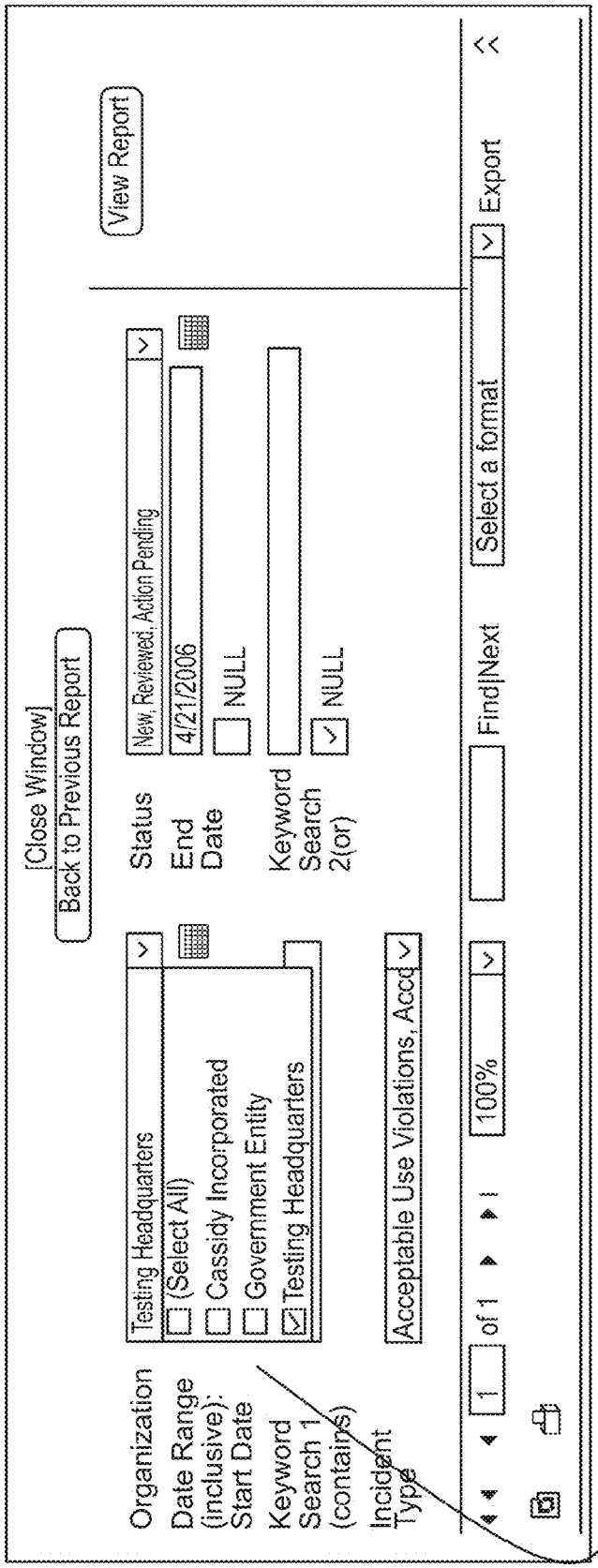

[Close Window]
Back to Previous Report
View Report
Organization
Testing Headquarters
Status
New, Reviewed, Action Pending
Date Range (inclusive): Start Date
End Date
4/21/2006
(Select All)
Cassidy Incorporated
Government Entity
Testing Headquarters
NULL
Keyword Search 1 (contains)
Keyword Search 2(or)
NULL
Incident Type
Acceptable Use Violations, Accd
1
of 1
100%
Find|Next
Select a format
Export
624
Entity Control

FIG. 40

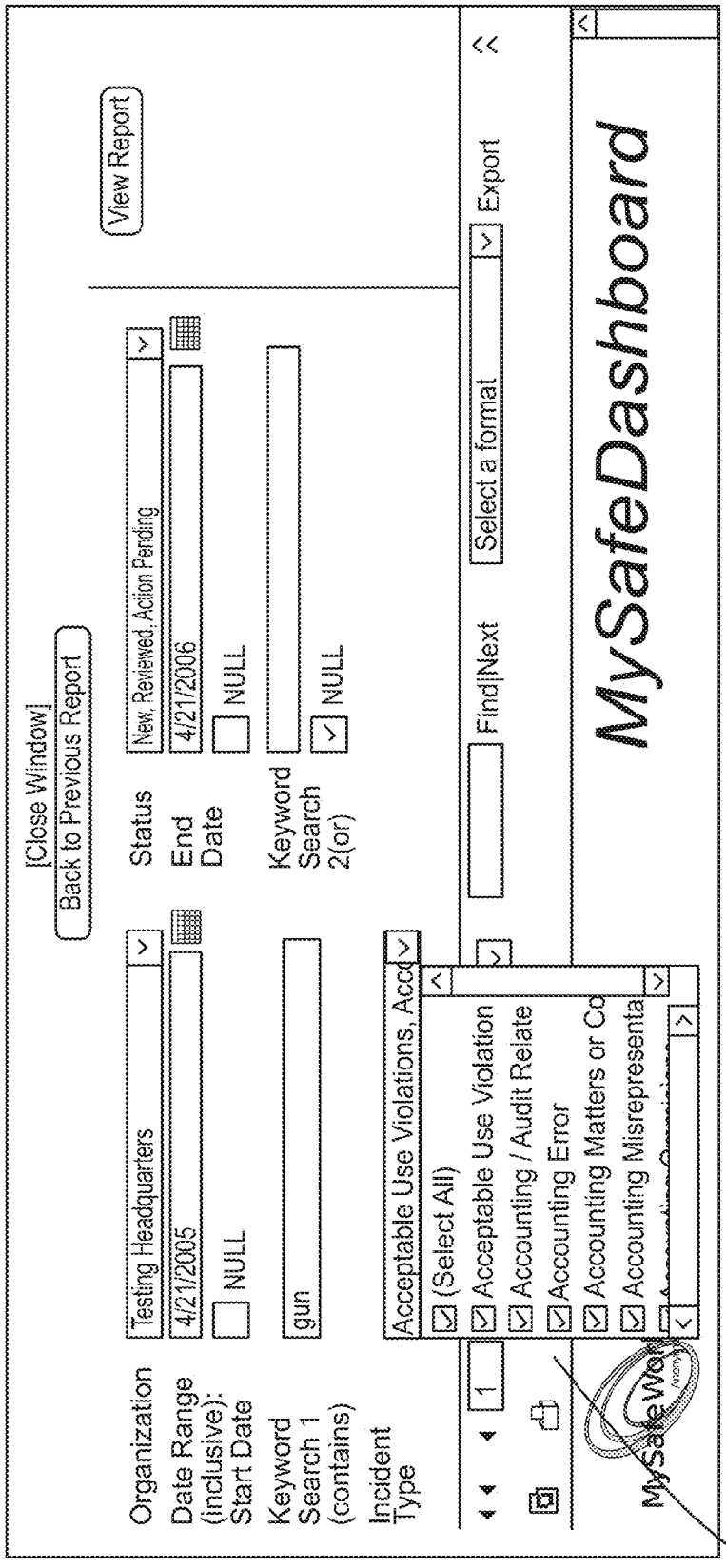

[Close Window]
Back to Previous Report
View Report
Organization
Testing Headquarters
Status
New, Reviewed, Action Pending
Date Range (inclusive): Start Date
4/21/2005
End Date
4/21/2006
NULL
NULL
Keyword Search 1 (contains)
gun
Keyword Search 2(or)
NULL
Incident Type
Acceptable Use Violations, Acc
(Select All)
Acceptable Use Violation
Accounting / Audit Relate
Accounting Error
Accounting Matters or Co
Accounting Misrepresenta
Find|Next
Select a format
Export
MySafeDashboard
626
Incident Type Filters

FIG. 41

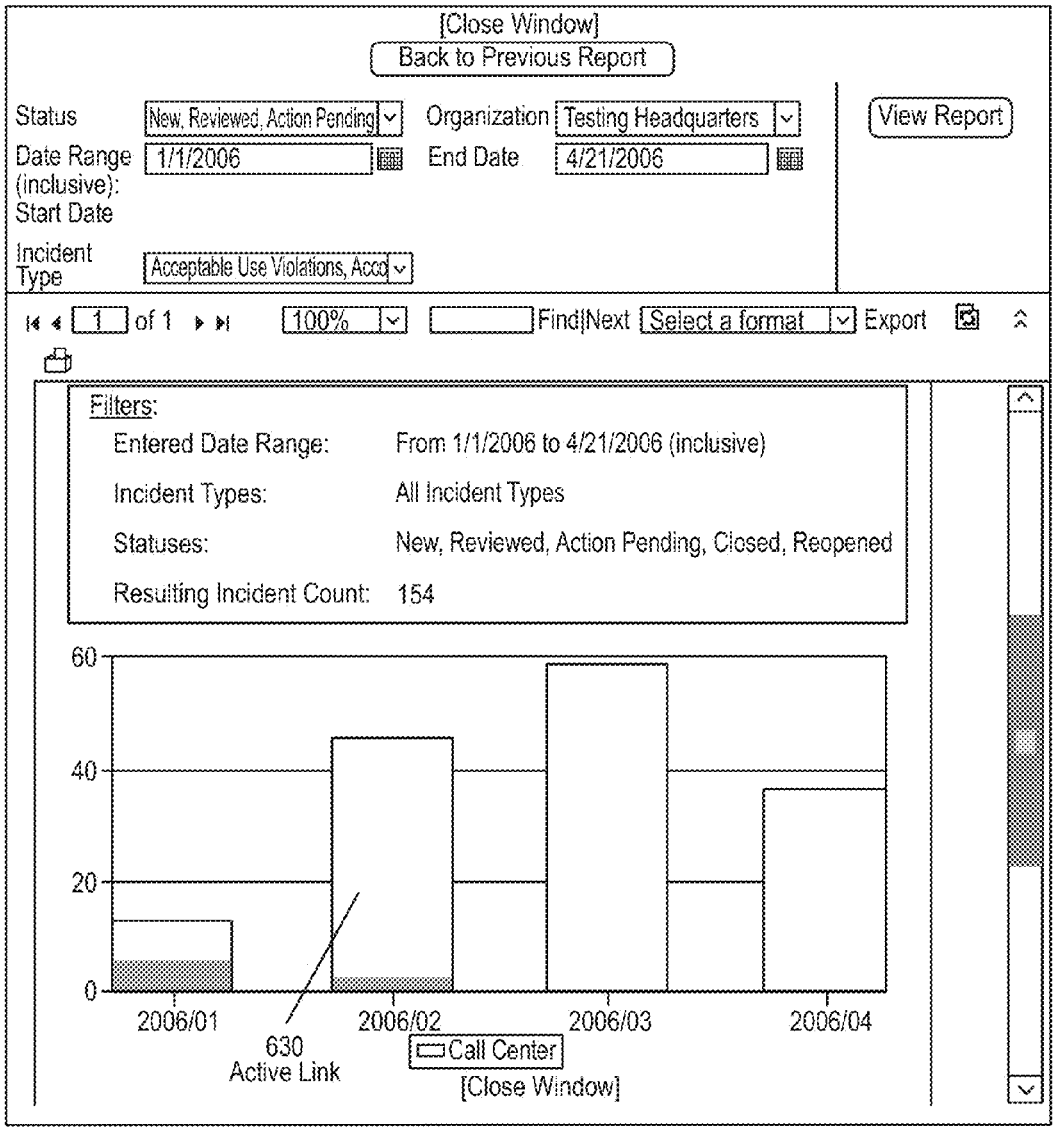

[Close Window]
Back to Previous Report
Status
New, Reviewed, Action Pending
Organization
Testing Headquarters
View Report
Date Range (inclusive): Start Date
1/1/2006
End Date
4/21/2006
Incident Type
Acceptable Use Violations, Acco
1 of 1
100%
Find|Next
Select a format
Export
Filters:
Entered Date Range: From 1/1/2006 to 4/21/2006 (inclusive)
Incident Types: All Incident Types
Statuses: New, Reviewed, Action Pending, Closed, Reopened
Resulting Incident Count: 154
60
40
20
0
2006/01
2006/02
2006/03
2006/04
630
Active Link
Call Center
[Close Window]

FIG. 42

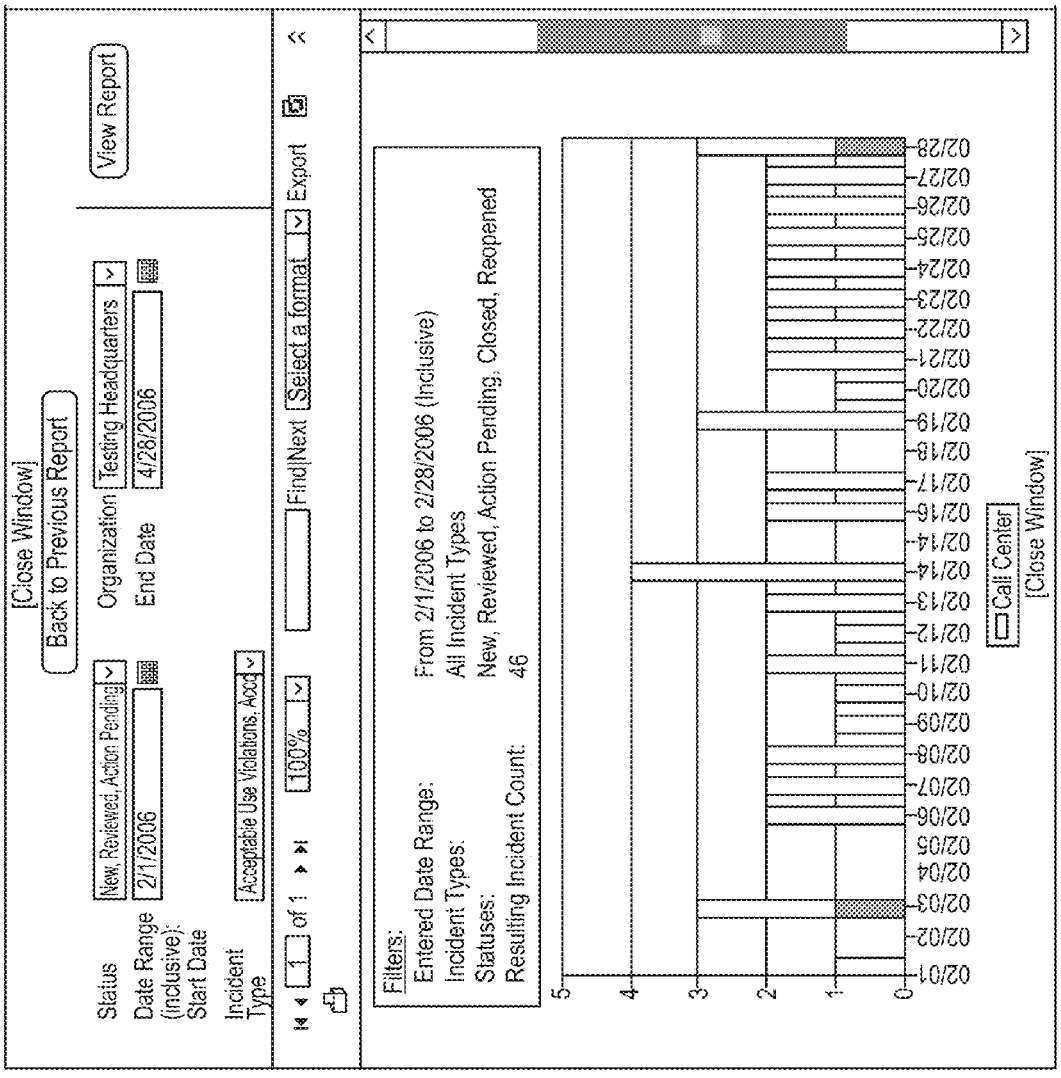

[Close Window]
Back to Previous Report
View Report
Status
New, Reviewed, Action Pending
Organization
Testing Headquarters
Date Range (inclusive): Start Date
2/1/2006
End Date
4/28/2006
Incident Type
Acceptable Use Violations, Accd
1 of 1
100%
Find|Next
Select a format
Export
Filters:
Entered Date Range: From 2/1/2006 to 2/28/2006 (Inclusive)
Incident Types: All Incident Types
Statuses: New, Reviewed, Action Pending, Closed, Reopened
Resulting Incident Count: 46
Call Center
[Close Window]

FIG. 43

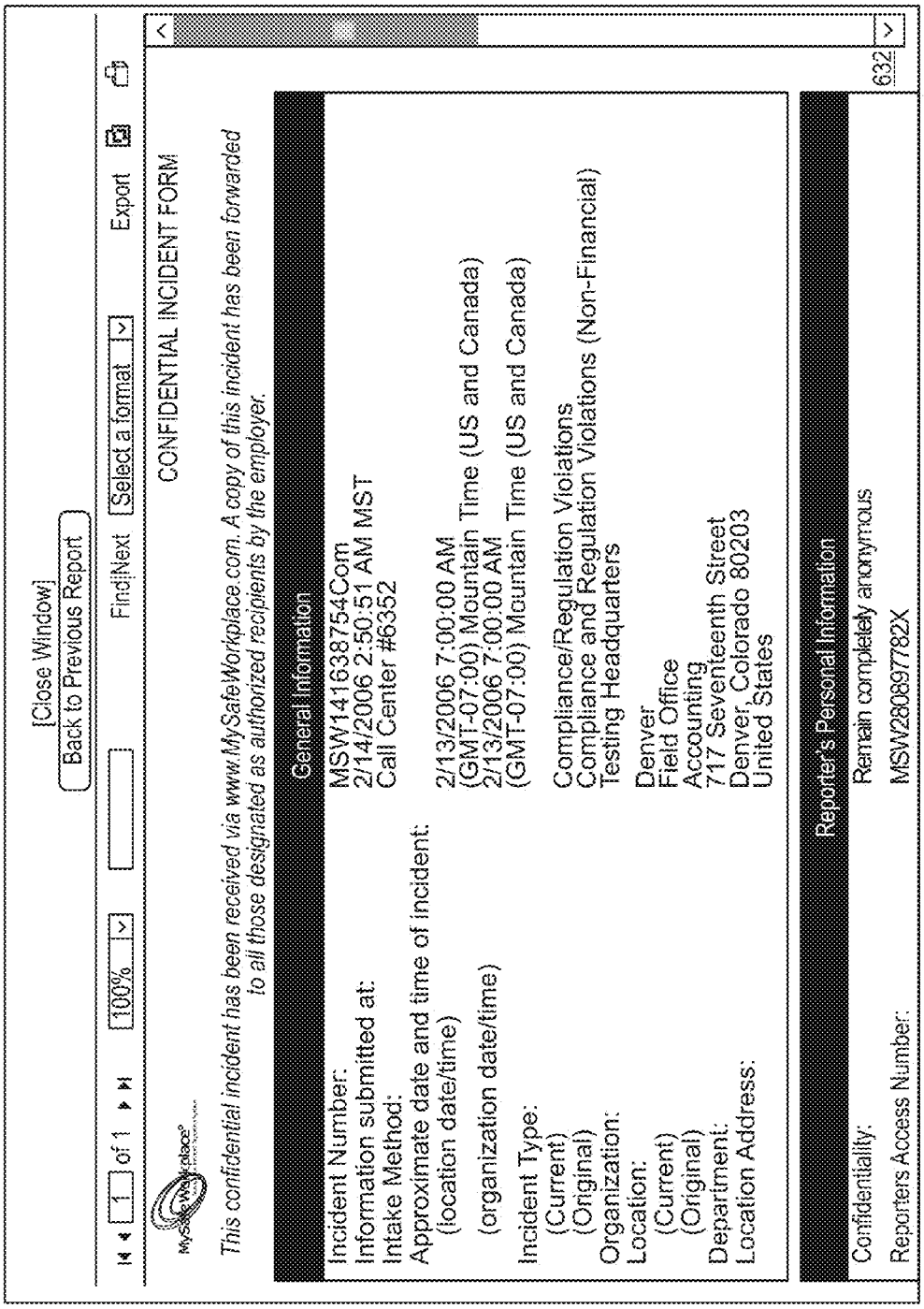

[Close Window]
Back to Previous Report
1 of 1
100%
Find|Next
Select a format
Export
CONFIDENTIAL INCIDENT FORM
This confidential incident has been received via www.MySafeWorkplace.com. A copy of this incident has been forwarded to all those designated as authorized recipients by the employer.
General Information
Incident Number: MSW1416387540m
Information submitted at: 2/14/2006 2:50:51 AM MST
Intake Method: Call Center #6352
Approximate date and time of incident:
(location date/time) 2/13/2006 7:00:00 AM (GMT-07:00) Mountain Time (US and Canada)
(organization date/time) 2/13/2006 7:00:00 AM (GMT-07:00) Mountain Time (US and Canada)
Incident Type:
(Current) Compliance/Regulation Violations
(Original) Compliance and Regulation Violations (Non-Financial)
Organization: Testing Headquarters
Location:
(Current) Denver
(Original) Field Office
Department: Accounting
Location Address: 717 Seventeenth Street
Denver, Colorado 80203
United States
Reporter's Personal Information
Confidentiality: Remain completely anonymous
Reporters Access Number: MSW28089782X
632

FIG. 44

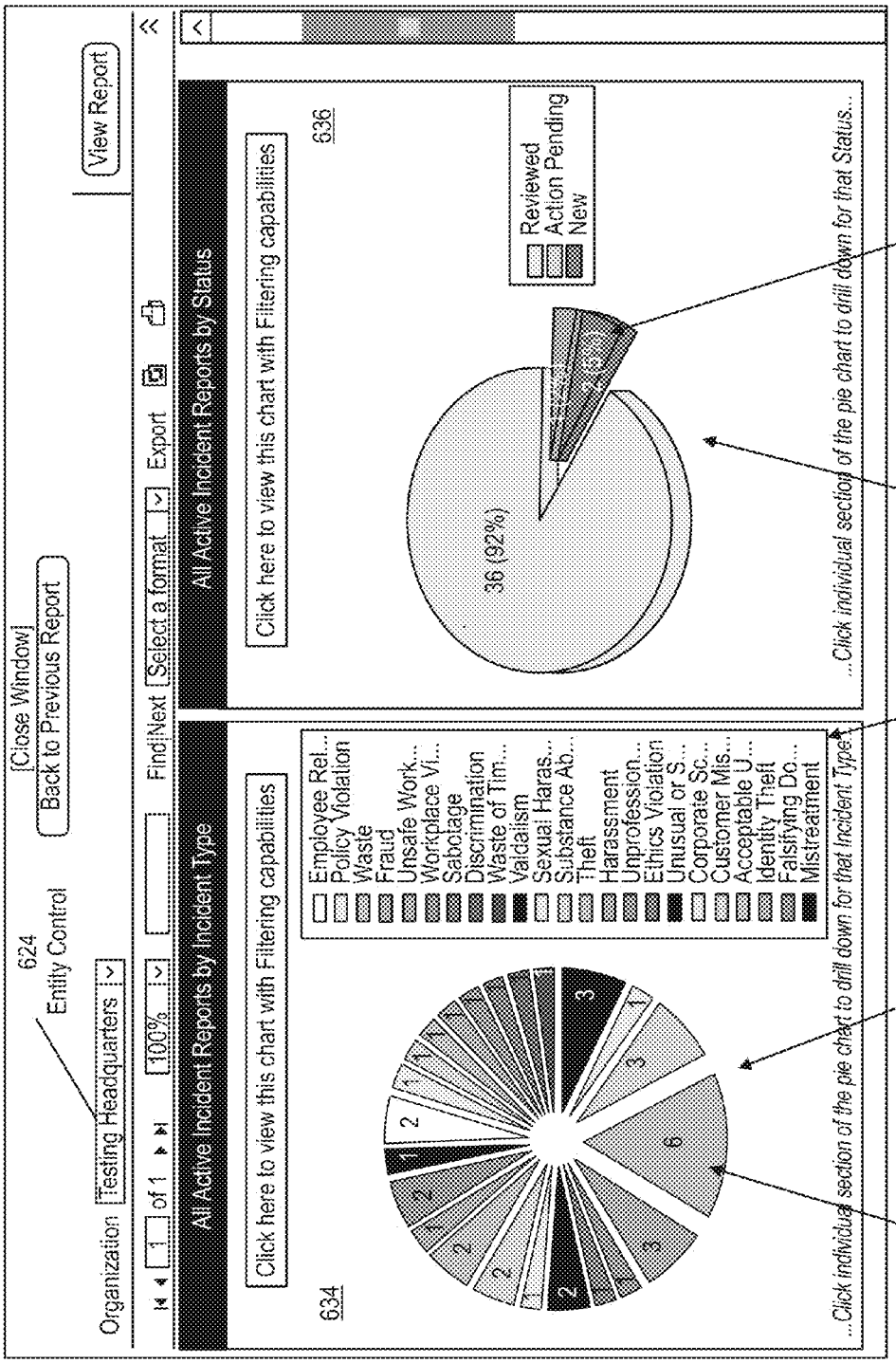

[Close Window]
624
Entity Control
Back to Previous Report
View Report
Organization
Testing Headquarters
of 1
100%
Find|Next
Select a format
Export
All Active Incident Reports by Incident Type
Click here to view this chart with Filtering capabilities
634
Employee Rel...
Policy Violation
Waste
Fraud
Unsafe Work...
Workplace Vi...
Sabotage
Discrimination
Waste of Tim...
Validaism
Sexual Haras...
Substance Ab...
Theft
Harassment
Unprofession...
Ethics Violation
Unusual or S...
Corporate Sc...
Customer Mis...
Acceptable U...
Identity Theft
Falsifying Do...
Mistreatment
...Click individual section of the pie chart to drill down for that Incident Type...
640
Active link to set on incidents
638
Pie chart by incident type
642
Incident type key
All Active Incident Reports by Status
Click here to view this chart with Filtering capabilities
636
Reviewed
Action Pending
New
36 (92%)
...Click individual section of the pie chart to drill down for that Status...
644
Pie chart by report status
646
Active link to set of incident reports

FIG. 45

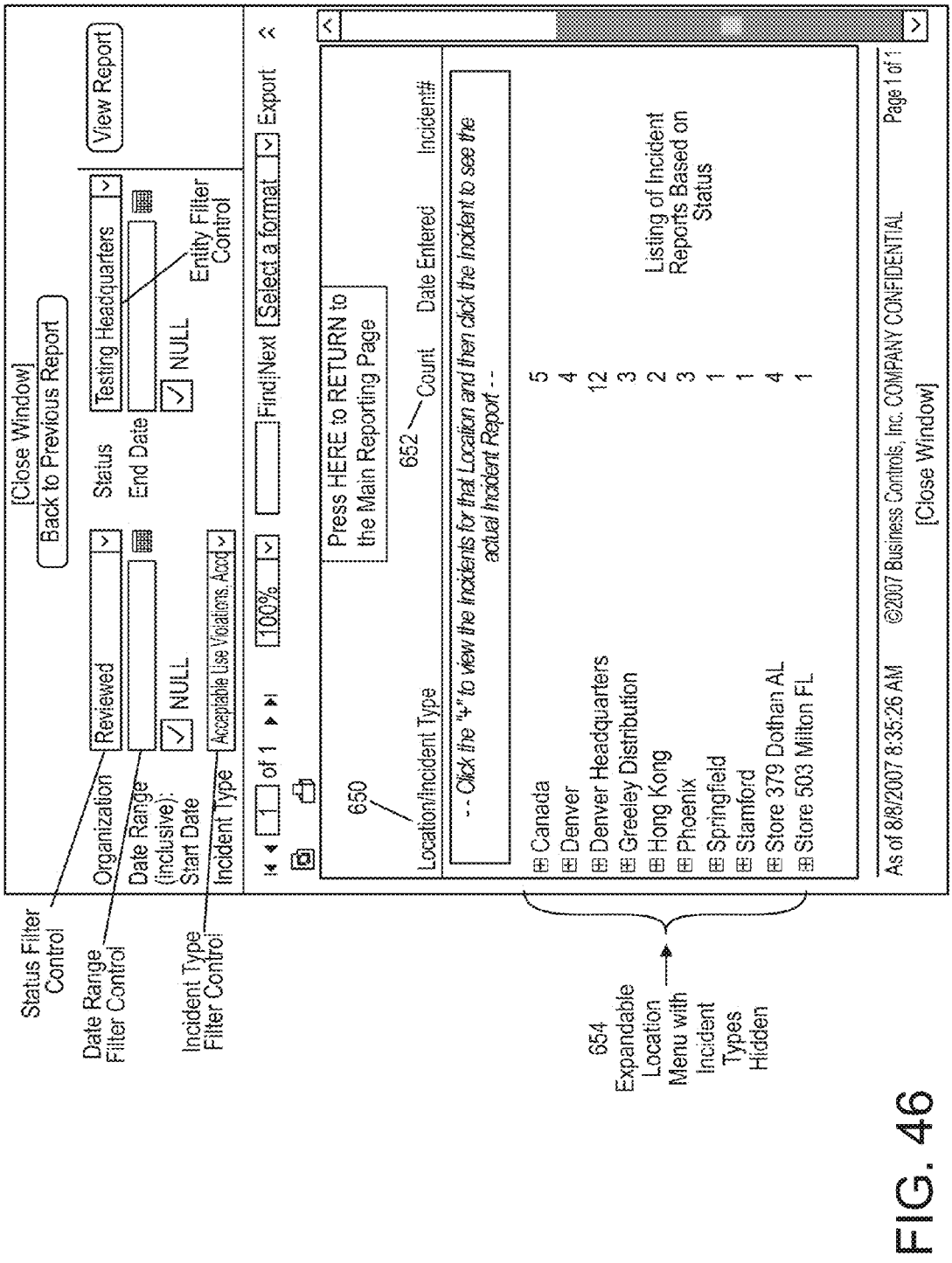

[Close Window]
Back to Previous Report
Organization
Reviewed
Status
Testing Headquarters
View Report
Date Range (inclusive):
Start Date
NULL
End Date
NULL
Entity Filter Control
Incident Type
Acceptable Use Violations, Acod
1 of 1
100%
Find|Next
Select a format
Export
Press HERE to RETURN to the Main Reporting Page
650
652
Location/Incident Type
Count
Date Entered
Incident#
-- Click the "+" to view the incidents for that Location and then click the Incident to see the actual Incident Report --
Canada 5
Denver 4
Denver Headquarters 12
Greeley Distribution 3
Hong Kong 2
Phoenix 3
Springfield 1
Stamford 1
Store 379 Dothan AL 4
Store 503 Milton FL 1
Listing of Incident Reports Based on Status
As of 8/8/2007 8:35:26 AM
©2007 Business Controls, Inc. COMPANY CONFIDENTIAL
Page 1 of 1
[Close Window]
Status Filter Control
Date Range Filter Control
Incident Type Filter Control
654 Expandable Location Menu with Incident Types Hidden

FIG. 46

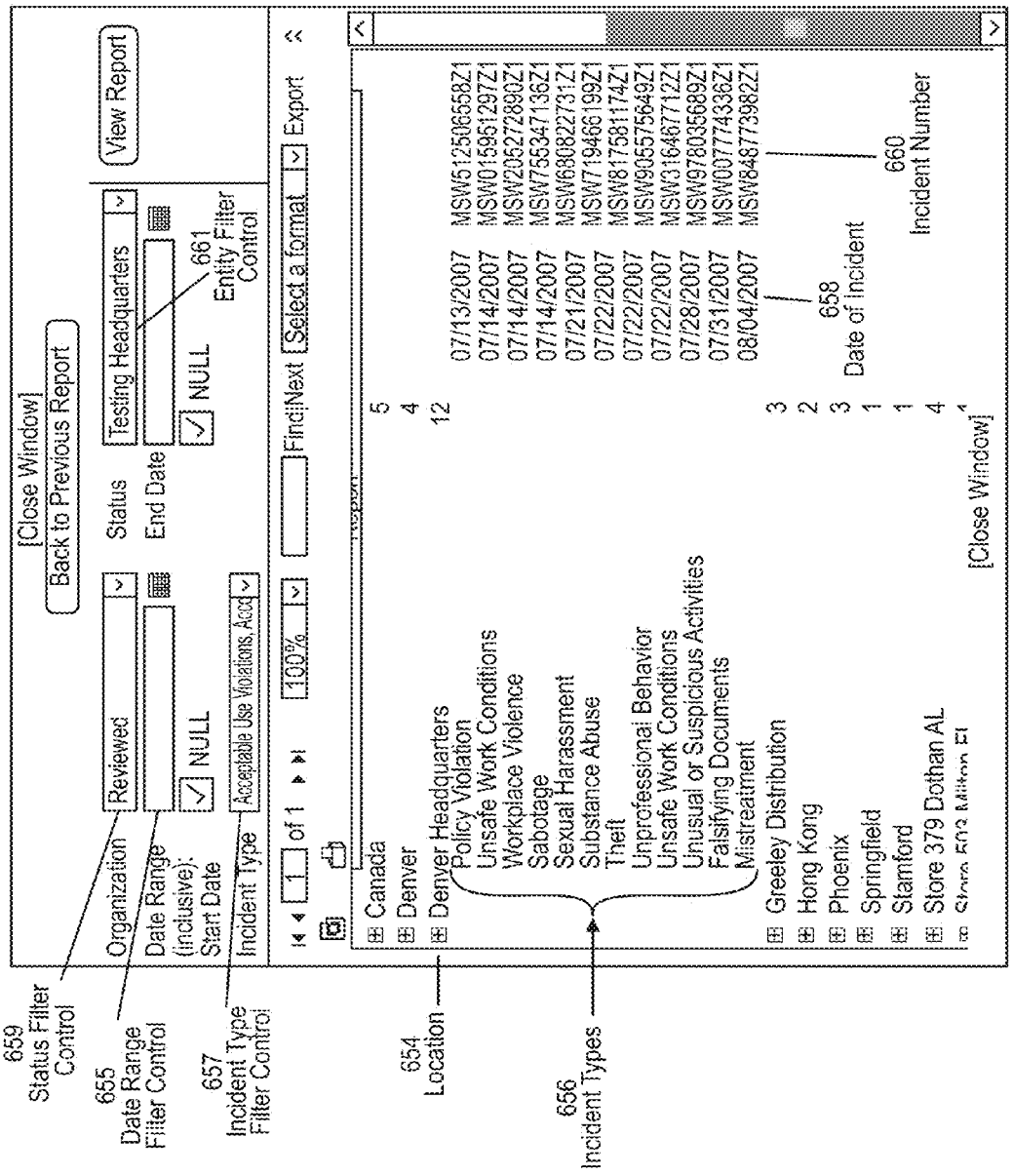

[Close Window]
Back to Previous Report
Organization
Reviewed
Status
Testing Headquarters
View Report
Date Range (inclusive):
Start Date
NULL
End Date
NULL
661
Entity Filter Control
Incident Type
Acceptable Use Violations, Accd
659
Status Filter Control
655
Date Range Filter Control
657
Incident Type Filter Control
Find
Next
Select a format
Export
100%
of 1
Canada 5
Denver 4
Denver Headquarters 12
Policy Violation
Unsafe Work Conditions
Workplace Violence
Sabotage
Sexual Harassment
Substance Abuse
Theft
Unprofessional Behavior
Unsafe Work Conditions
Unusual or Suspicious Activities
Falsifying Documents
Mistreatment
Greeley Distribution 3
Hong Kong 2
Phoenix 3
Springfield 1
Stamford 1
Store 379 Dothan AL 4
654
Location
656
Incident Types
658
Date of Incident
660
Incident Number
07/13/2007 MSW51250658Z1
07/14/2007 MSW01595129TZ1
07/14/2007 MSW20527280Z1
07/14/2007 MSW75534713GZ1
07/21/2007 MSW68082273IZ1
07/22/2007 MSW71946199Z1
07/22/2007 MSW81758117AZ1
07/22/2007 MSW90557564SZ1
07/22/2007 MSW31646771ZZ1
07/28/2007 MSW97803568SZ1
07/31/2007 MSW00777433GZ1
08/04/2007 MSW84877398ZZ1
[Close Window]

FIG. 47

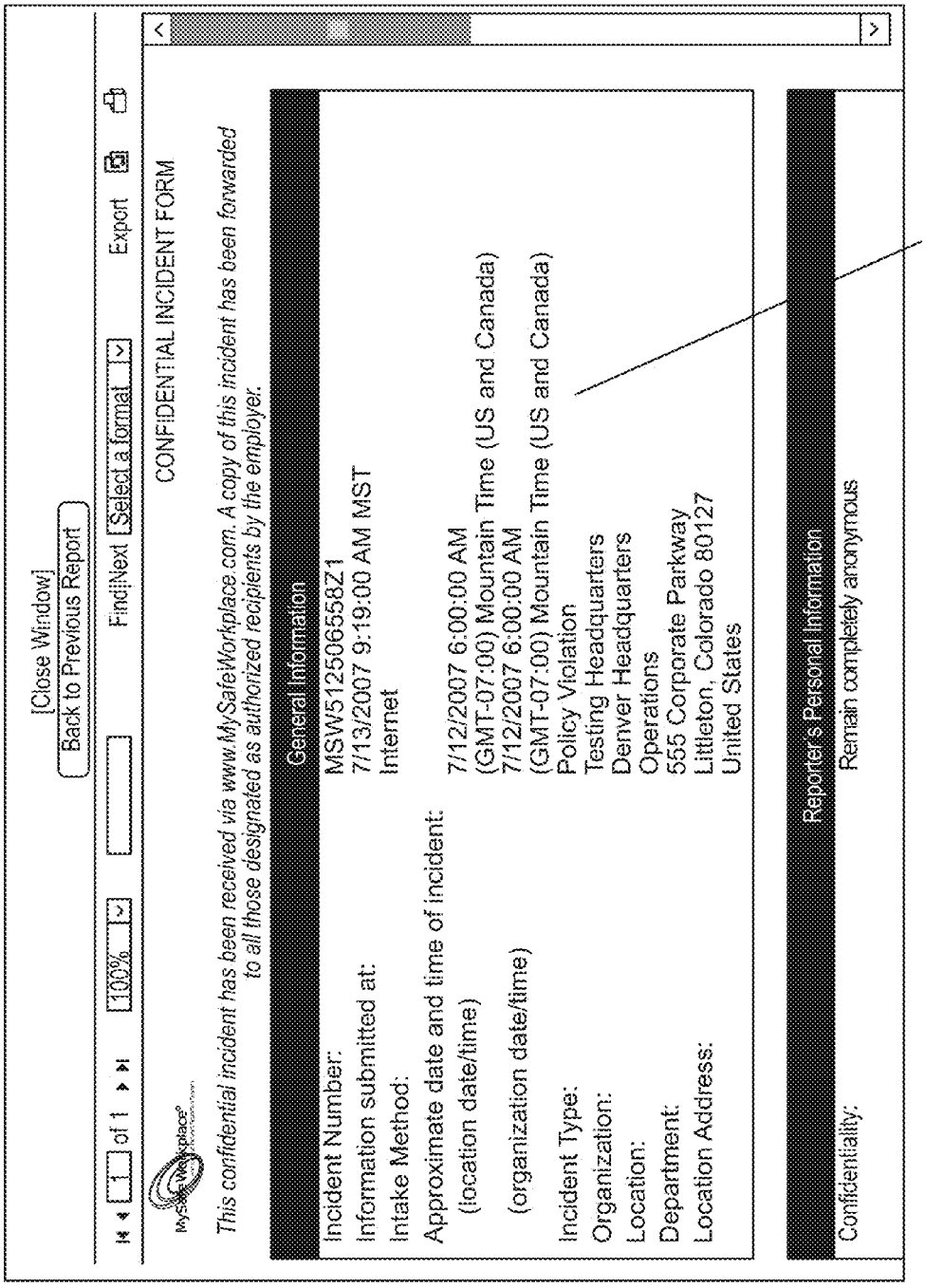

[Close Window]
Back to Previous Report
1 of 1
100%
Find|Next
Select a format
Export
CONFIDENTIAL INCIDENT FORM
MySafeWorkplace
This confidential incident has been received via www.MySafeWorkplace.com. A copy of this incident has been forwarded to all those designated as authorized recipients by the employer.
General Information
Incident Number:
MSW5125065821
Information submitted at:
7/13/2007 9:19:00 AM MST
Intake Method:
Internet
Approximate date and time of incident:
(location date/time)
7/12/2007 6:00:00 AM
(GMT-07:00) Mountain Time (US and Canada)
(organization date/time)
7/12/2007 6:00:00 AM
(GMT-07:00) Mountain Time (US and Canada)
Incident Type:
Policy Violation
Organization:
Testing Headquarters
Location:
Denver Headquarters
Department:
Operations
Location Address:
555 Corporate Parkway
Littleton, Colorado 80127
United States
Reporter's Personal Information
Confidentiality:
Remain completely anonymous
662
Read-only View of Incident Report

FIG. 48

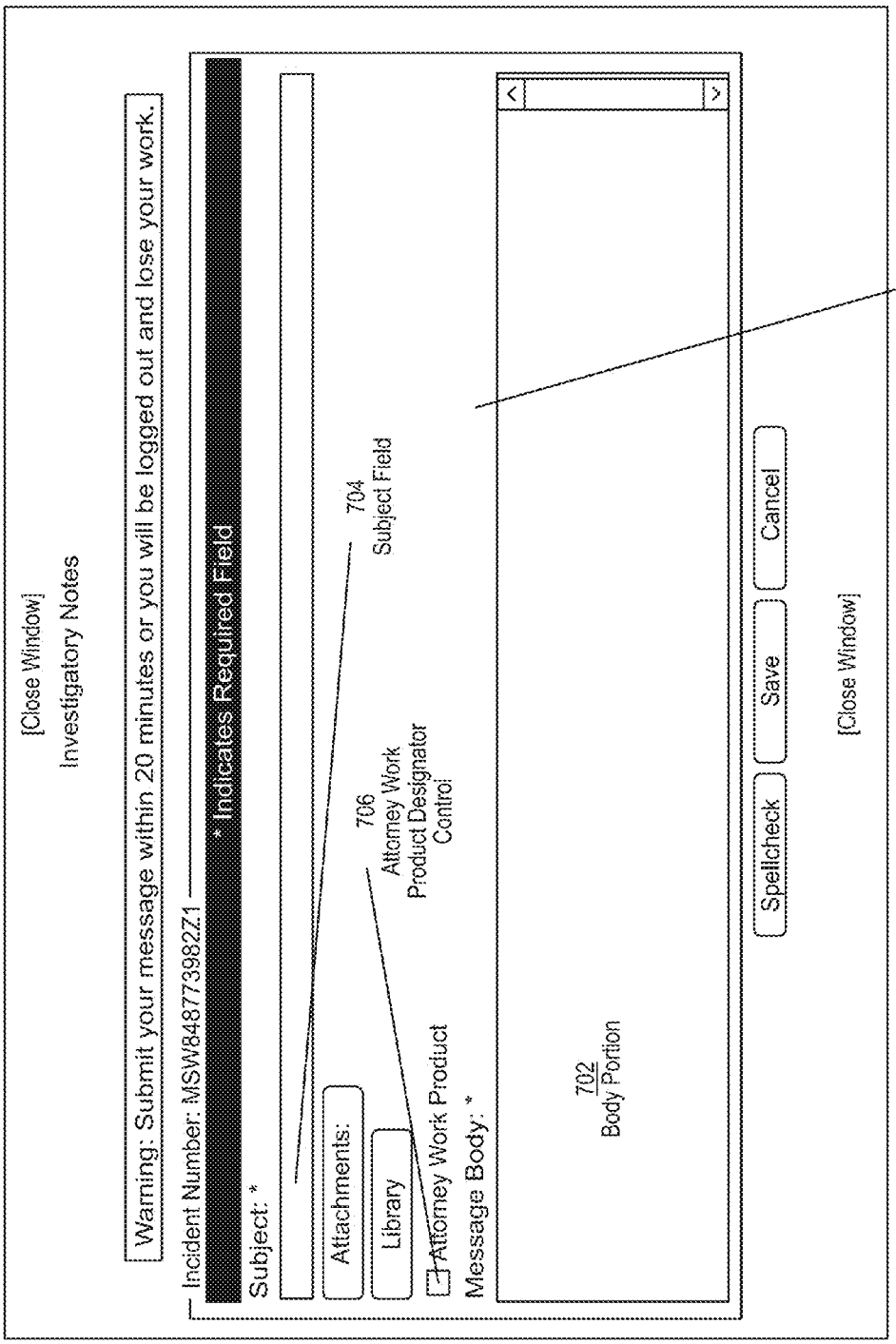

[Close Window]
Investigatory Notes
Warning: Submit your message within 20 minutes or you will be logged out and lose your work.
Incident Number: MSW848773982Z1
* Indicates Required Field
Subject: *
Attachments:
Library
Attorney Work Product
Message Body: *
702
Body Portion
704
Subject Field
706
Attorney Work
Product Designator
Control
Spellcheck
Save
Cancel
[Close Window]
700
Investigatory Notes
Entry Screen

FIG. 49

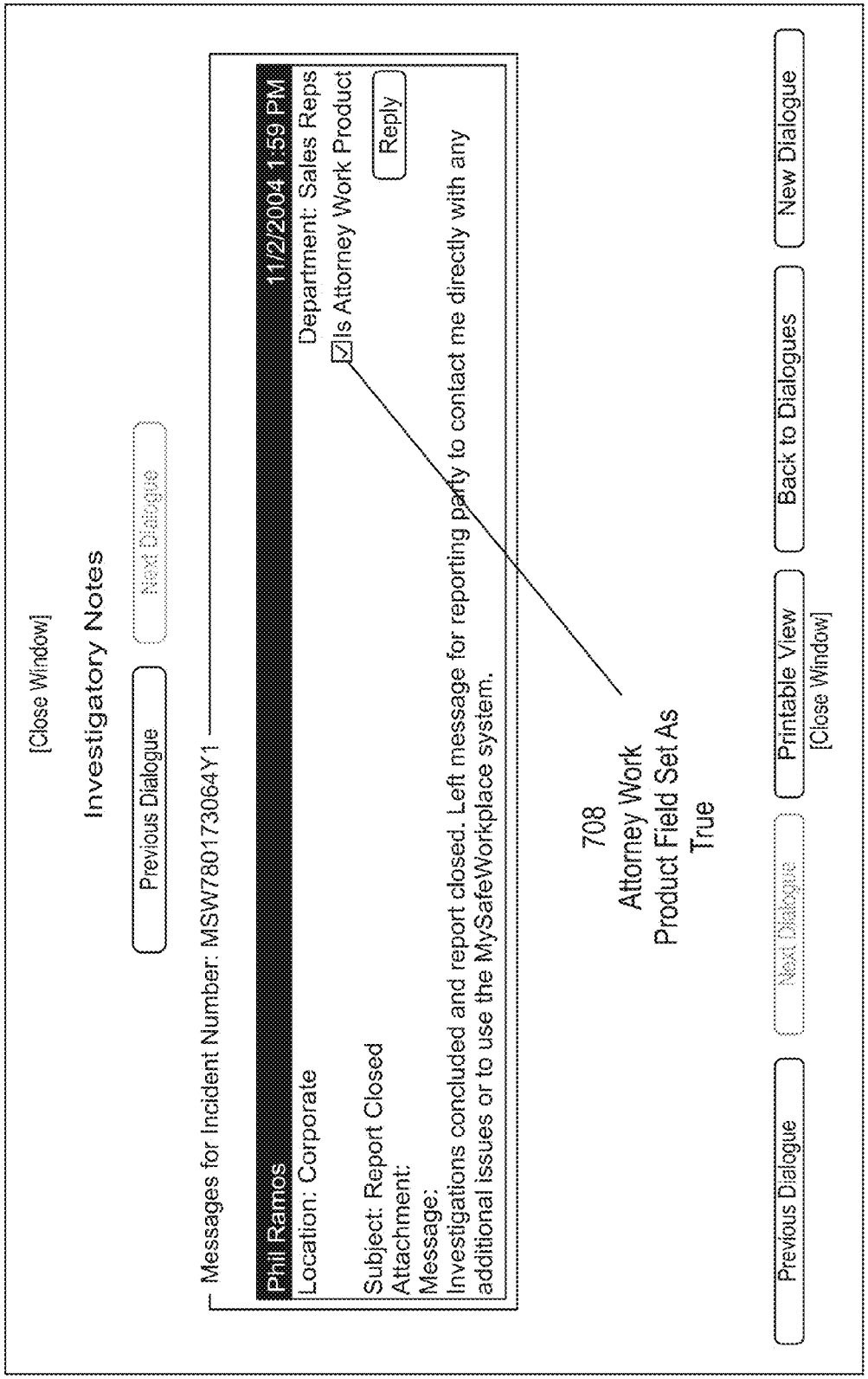

[Close Window]
Investigatory Notes
Previous Dialogue
Next Dialogue
Messages for Incident Number: MSW780173064Y1
Phil Ramos
11/2/2004 1:59 PM
Location: Corporate
Department: Sales Reps
Is Attorney Work Product
Reply
Subject: Report Closed
Attachment:
Message:
Investigations concluded and report closed. Left message for reporting party to contact me directly with any additional issues or to use the MySafeWorkplace system.
708
Attorney Work Product Field Set As True
Previous Dialogue
Next Dialogue
Printable View
[Close Window]
Back to Dialogues
New Dialogue

FIG. 50

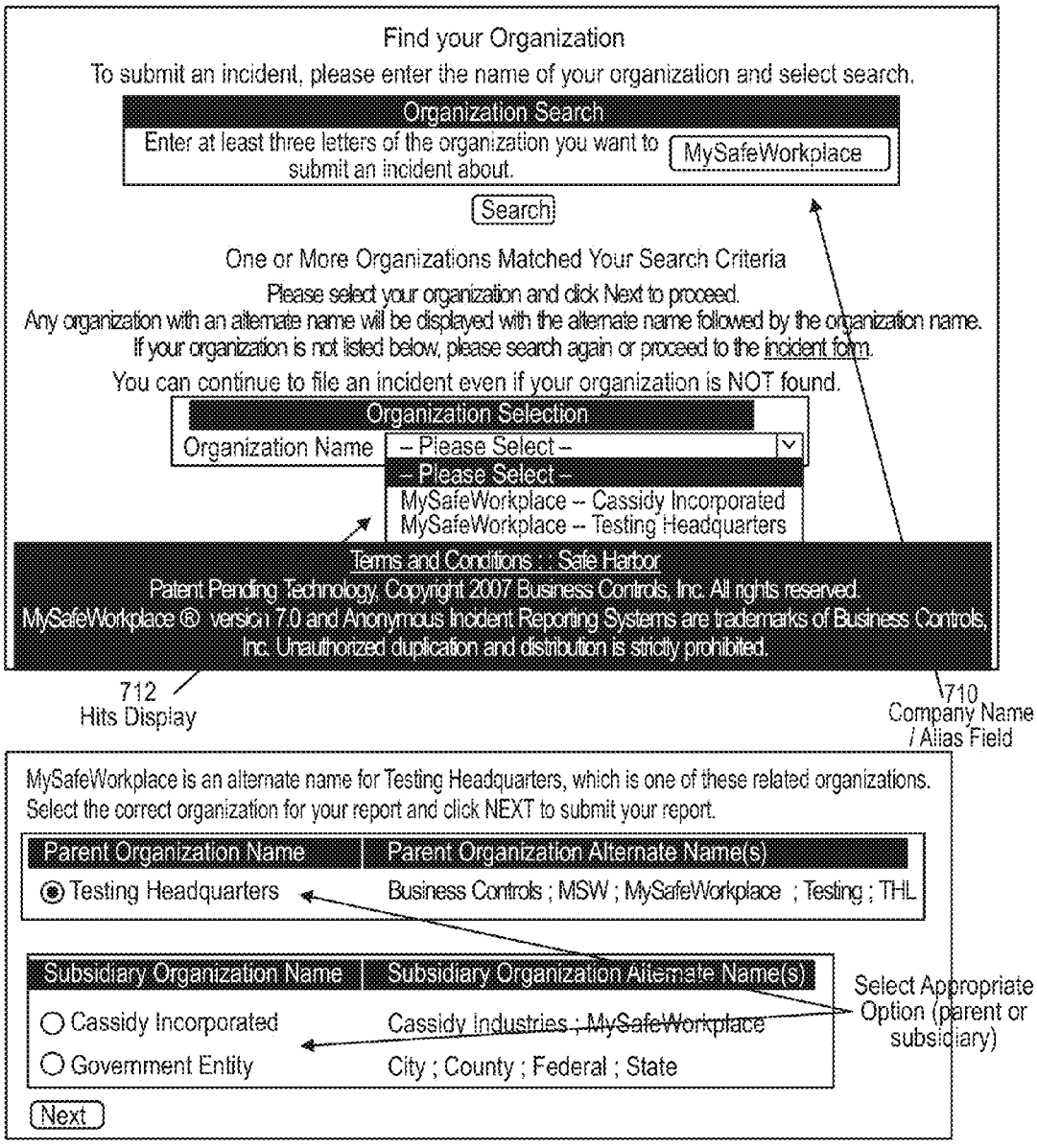

Find your Organization
To submit an incident, please enter the name of your organization and select search.
Organization Search
Enter at least three letters of the organization you want to submit an incident about.
MySafeWorkplace
Search
One or More Organizations Matched Your Search Criteria
Please select your organization and click Next to proceed.
Any organization with an alternate name will be displayed with the alternate name followed by the organization name.
If your organization is not listed below, please search again or proceed to the incident form.
You can continue to file an incident even if your organization is NOT found.
Organization Selection
Organization Name
-- Please Select --
-- Please Select --
MySafeWorkplace -- Cassidy Incorporated
MySafeWorkplace -- Testing Headquarters
Terms and Conditions :: Safe Harbor
Patent Pending Technology. Copyright 2007 Business Controls, Inc. All rights reserved.
MySafeWorkplace ® version 7.0 and Anonymous Incident Reporting Systems are trademarks of Business Controls, Inc. Unauthorized duplication and distribution is strictly prohibited.
712
Hits Display
710
Company Name / Alias Field
MySafeWorkplace is an alternate name for Testing Headquarters, which is one of these related organizations.
Select the correct organization for your report and click NEXT to submit your report.
Parent Organization Name
Parent Organization Alternate Name(s)
Testing Headquarters
Business Controls ; MSW ; MySafeWorkplace ; Testing ; THL
Subsidiary Organization Name
Subsidiary Organization Alternate Name(s)
Cassidy Incorporated
Cassidy Industries ; MySafeWorkplace
Government Entity
City ; County ; Federal ; State
Select Appropriate Option (parent or subsidiary)
Next

FIG. 51

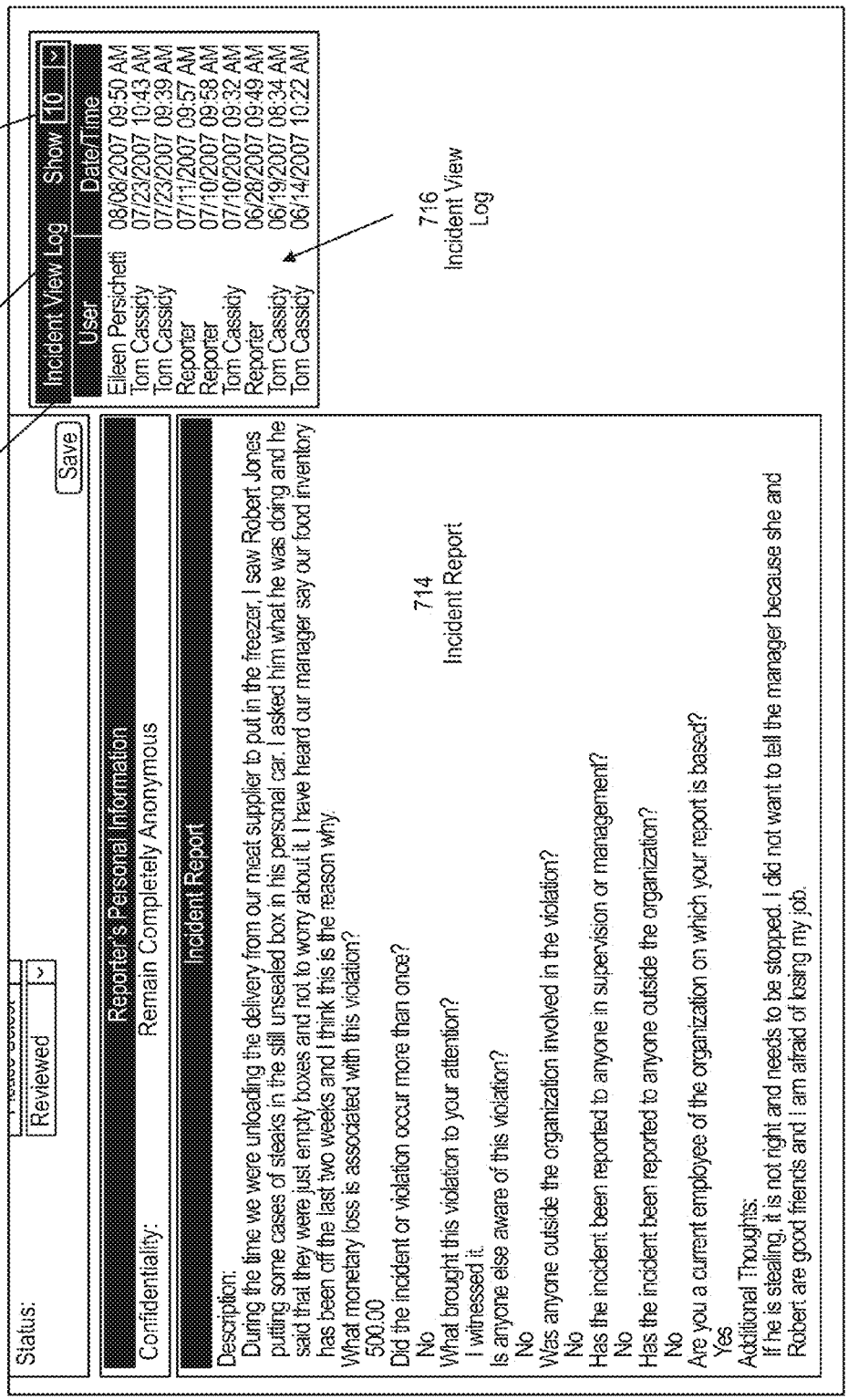

718
User Field
720
Time/Date
Field
722
Depth
Control
716
Incident View
Log
714
Incident Report
Status:
Reviewed
Save
Incident View Log
Show 10
User
Date/Time
Eileen Persichetti 08/08/2007 09:50 AM
Tom Cassidy 07/23/2007 10:43 AM
Tom Cassidy 07/23/2007 09:39 AM
Reporter 07/11/2007 09:57 AM
Reporter 07/10/2007 09:58 AM
Tom Cassidy 07/10/2007 09:32 AM
Reporter 06/28/2007 09:49 AM
Tom Cassidy 06/19/2007 08:34 AM
Tom Cassidy 06/14/2007 10:22 AM
Reporter's Personal Information
Confidentiality: Remain Completely Anonymous
Incident Report
Description:
During the time we were unloading the delivery from our meat supplier to put in the freezer, I saw Robert Jones putting some cases of steaks in the still unsealed box in his personal car. I asked him what he was doing and he said that they were just empty boxes and not to worry about it. I have heard our manager say our food inventory has been off the last two weeks and I think this is the reason why.
What monetary loss is associated with this violation?
500.00
Did the incident or violation occur more than once?
No
What brought this violation to your attention?
I witnessed it.
Is anyone else aware of this violation?
No
Was anyone outside the organization involved in the violation?
No
Has the incident been reported to anyone in supervision or management?
No
Has the incident been reported to anyone outside the organization?
No
Are you a current employee of the organization on which your report is based?
Yes
Additional Thoughts:
If he is stealing, it is not right and needs to be stopped. I did not want to tell the manager because she and Robert are good friends and I am afraid of losing my job.

FIG. 52

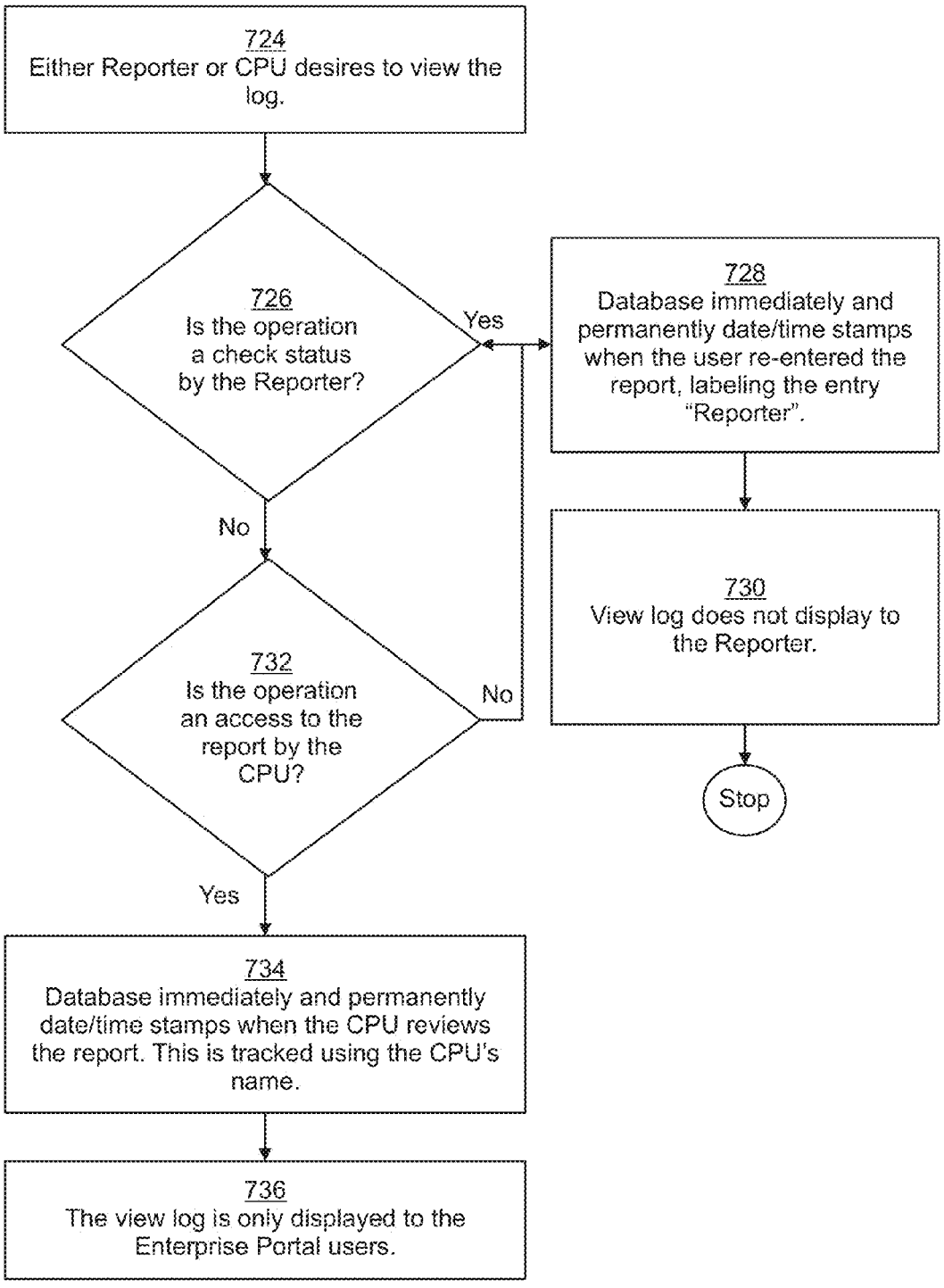

724
Either Reporter or CPU desires to view the log.
726
Is the operation a check status by the Reporter?
Yes
728
Database immediately and permanently date/time stamps when the user re-entered the report, labeling the entry "Reporter".
No
730
View log does not display to the Reporter.
732
Is the operation an access to the report by the CPU?
No
Stop
Yes
734
Database immediately and permanently date/time stamps when the CPU reviews the report. This is tracked using the CPU's name.
736
The view log is only displayed to the Enterprise Portal users.

FIG. 53

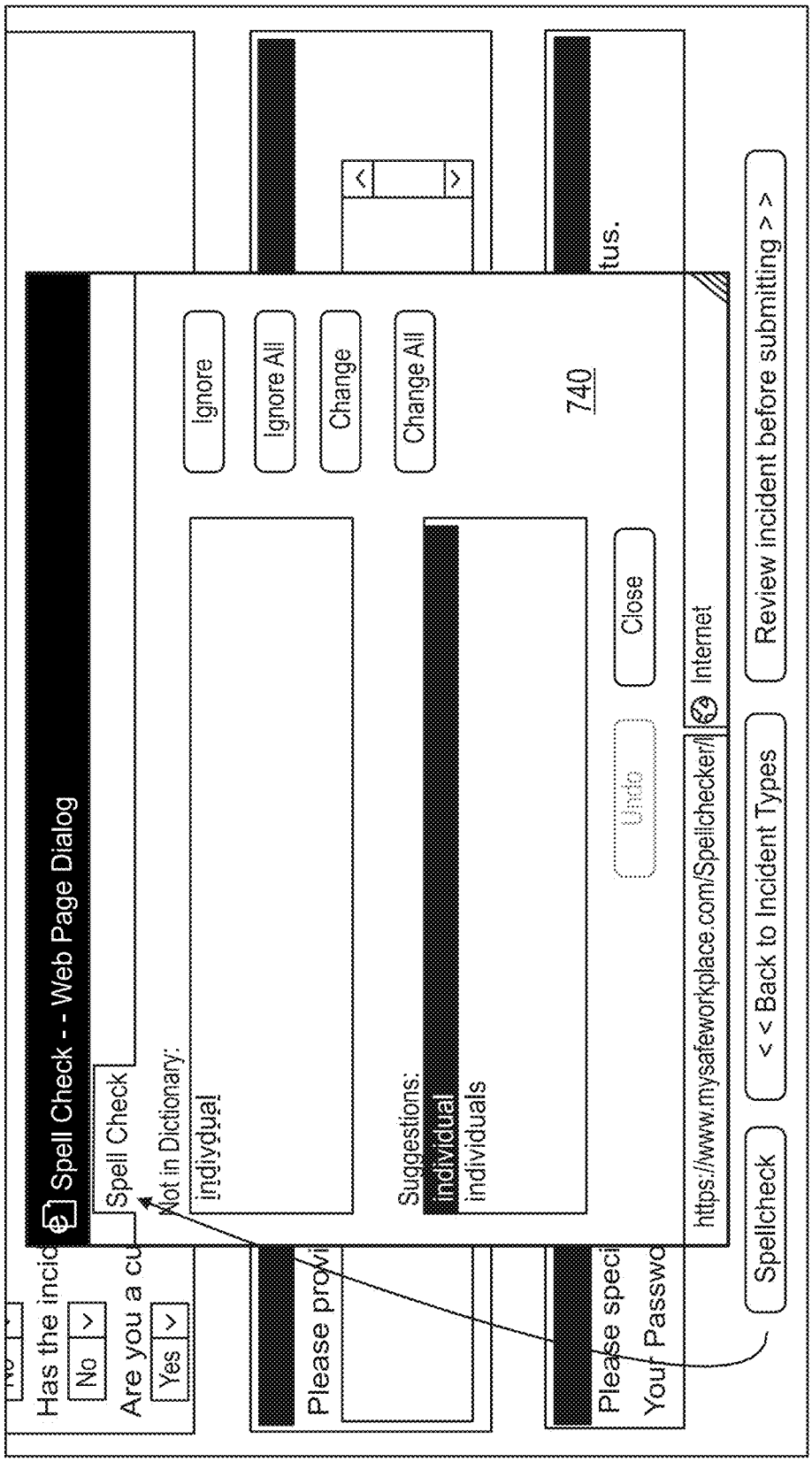

Spell Check - - Web Page Dialog
Spell Check
Not in Dictionary:
individual
Suggestions:
individual
individuals
Ignore
Ignore All
Change
Change All
740
Undo
Close
Has the incid
No
Are you a cu
Yes
Please provi
Please speci
Your Passwo
https://www.mysafeworkplace.com/Spellchecker/
Internet
Spellcheck
< < Back to Incident Types
Review incident before submitting > >
tus.

FIG. 54

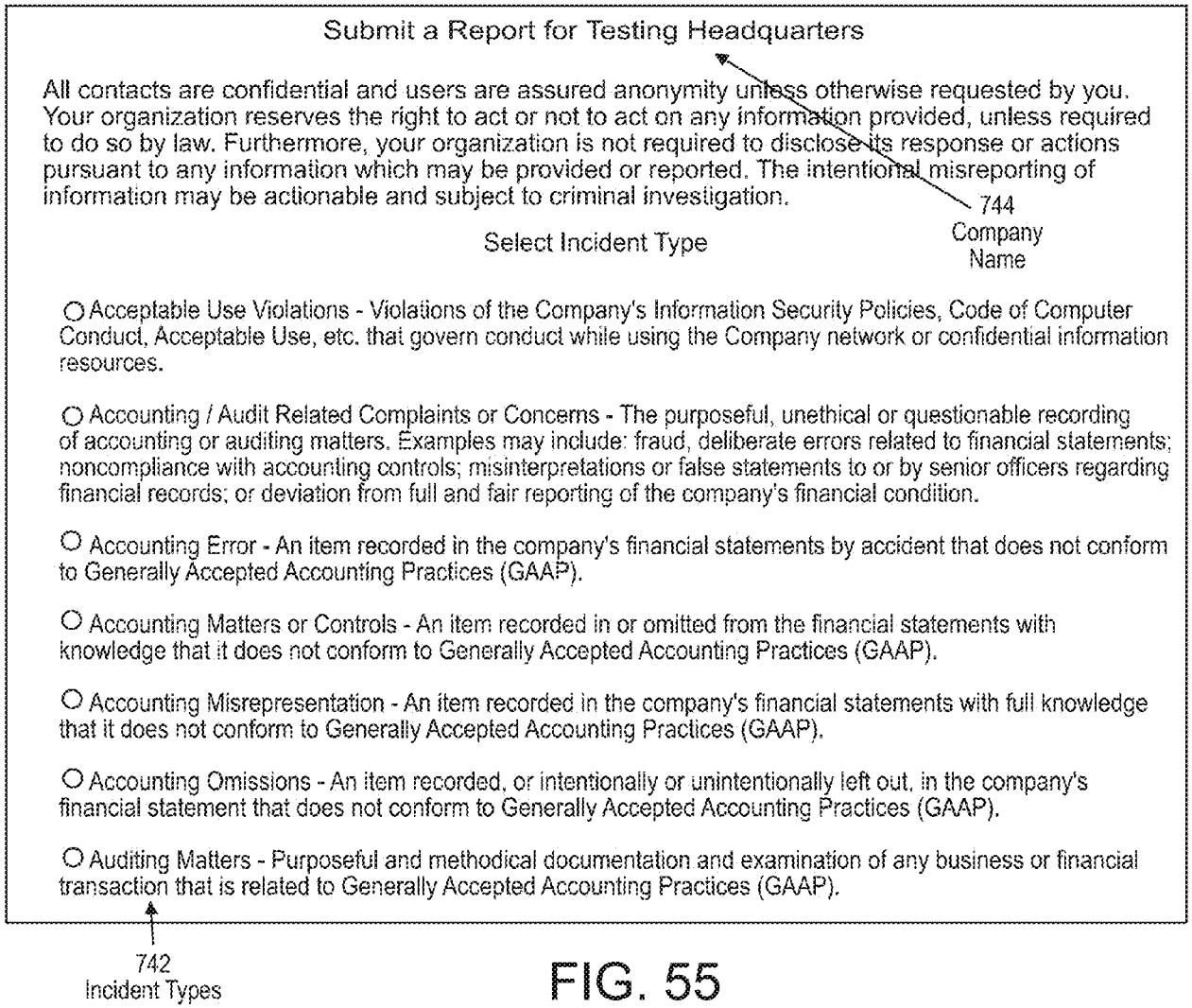

Submit a Report for Testing Headquarters
All contacts are confidential and users are assured anonymity unless otherwise requested by you. Your organization reserves the right to act or not to act on any information provided, unless required to do so by law. Furthermore, your organization is not required to disclose its response or actions pursuant to any information which may be provided or reported. The intentional misreporting of information may be actionable and subject to criminal investigation.
744
Company Name
Select Incident Type
Acceptable Use Violations - Violations of the Company's Information Security Policies, Code of Computer Conduct, Acceptable Use, etc. that govern conduct while using the Company network or confidential information resources.
Accounting / Audit Related Complaints or Concerns - The purposeful, unethical or questionable recording of accounting or auditing matters. Examples may include: fraud, deliberate errors related to financial statements; noncompliance with accounting controls; misinterpretations or false statements to or by senior officers regarding financial records; or deviation from full and fair reporting of the company's financial condition.
Accounting Error - An item recorded in the company's financial statements by accident that does not conform to Generally Accepted Accounting Practices (GAAP).
Accounting Matters or Controls - An item recorded in or omitted from the financial statements with knowledge that it does not conform to Generally Accepted Accounting Practices (GAAP).
Accounting Misrepresentation - An item recorded in the company's financial statements with full knowledge that it does not conform to Generally Accepted Accounting Practices (GAAP).
Accounting Omissions - An item recorded, or intentionally or unintentionally left out, in the company's financial statement that does not conform to Generally Accepted Accounting Practices (GAAP).
Auditing Matters - Purposeful and methodical documentation and examination of any business or financial transaction that is related to Generally Accepted Accounting Practices (GAAP).
742
Incident Types

FIG. 55

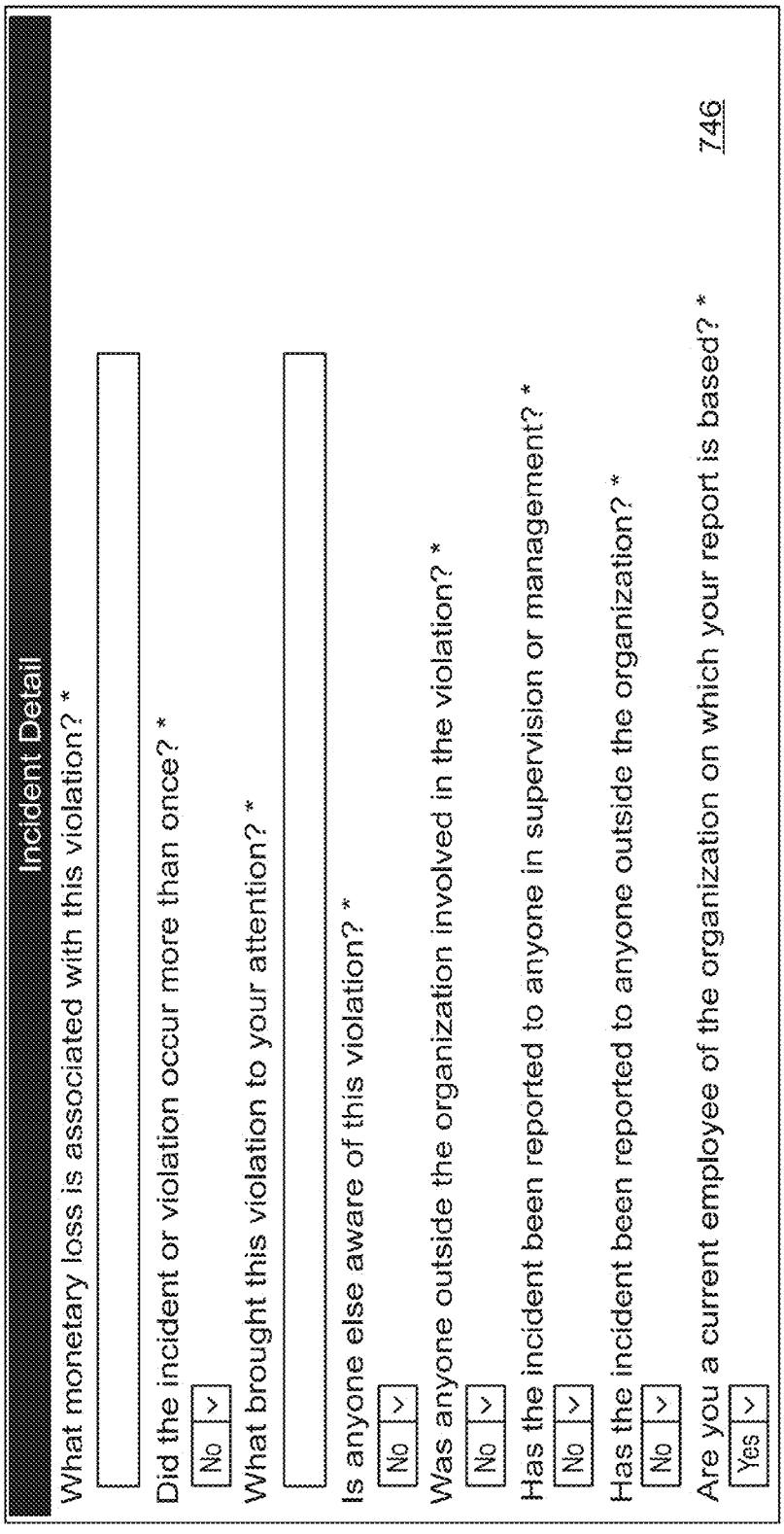

Incident Detail
What monetary loss is associated with this violation? *
Did the incident or violation occur more than once? *
No
What brought this violation to your attention? *
Is anyone else aware of this violation? *
No
Was anyone outside the organization involved in the violation? *
No
Has the incident been reported to anyone in supervision or management? *
No
Has the incident been reported to anyone outside the organization? *
No
Are you a current employee of the organization on which your report is based? *
Yes
746

FIG. 56

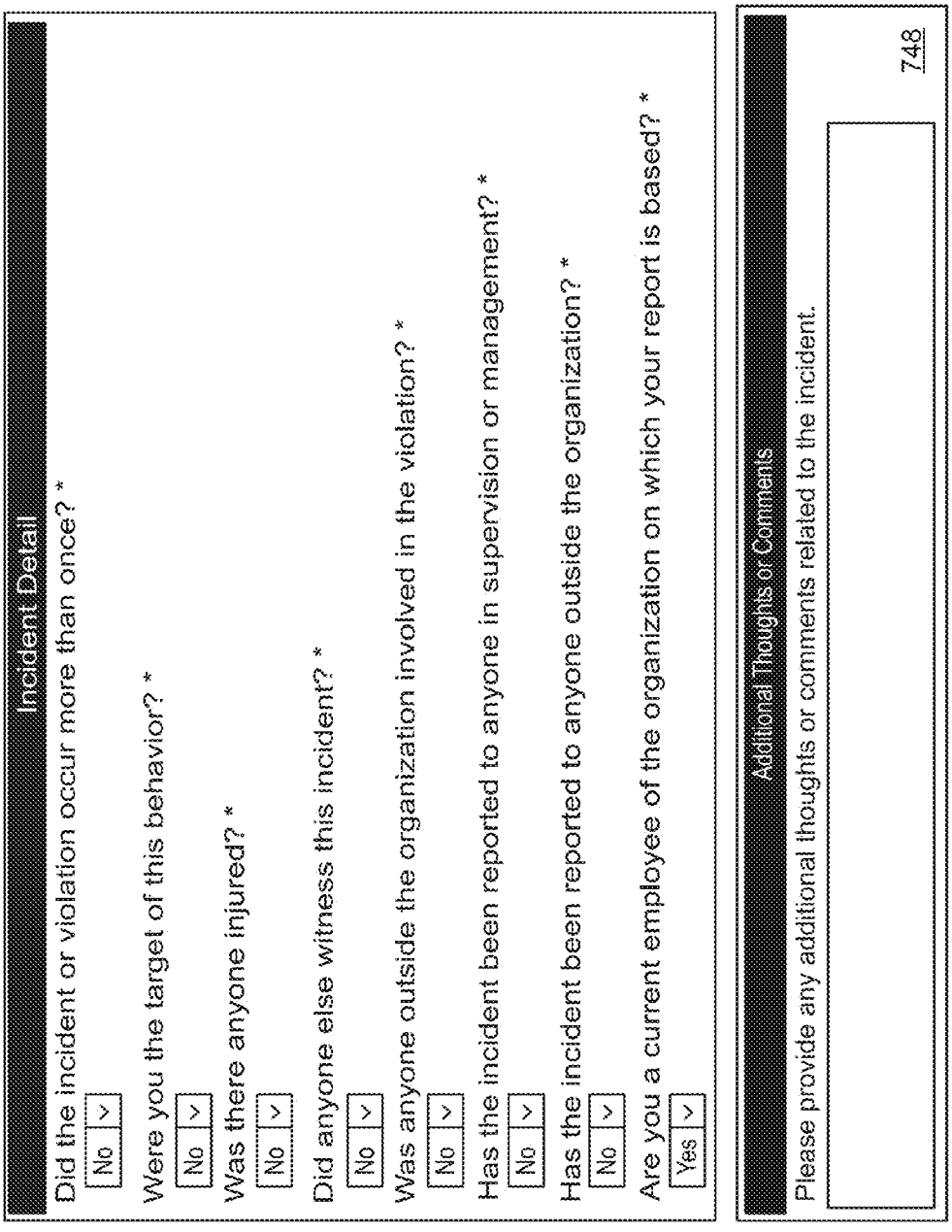

Incident Detail
Did the incident or violation occur more than once? *
No
Were you the target of this behavior? *
No
Was there anyone injured? *
No
Did anyone else witness this incident? *
No
Was anyone outside the organization involved in the violation? *
No
Has the incident been reported to anyone in supervision or management? *
No
Has the incident been reported to anyone outside the organization? *
No
Are you a current employee of the organization on which your report is based? *
Yes
Additional Thoughts or Comments
Please provide any additional thoughts or comments related to the incident.
748

FIG. 57

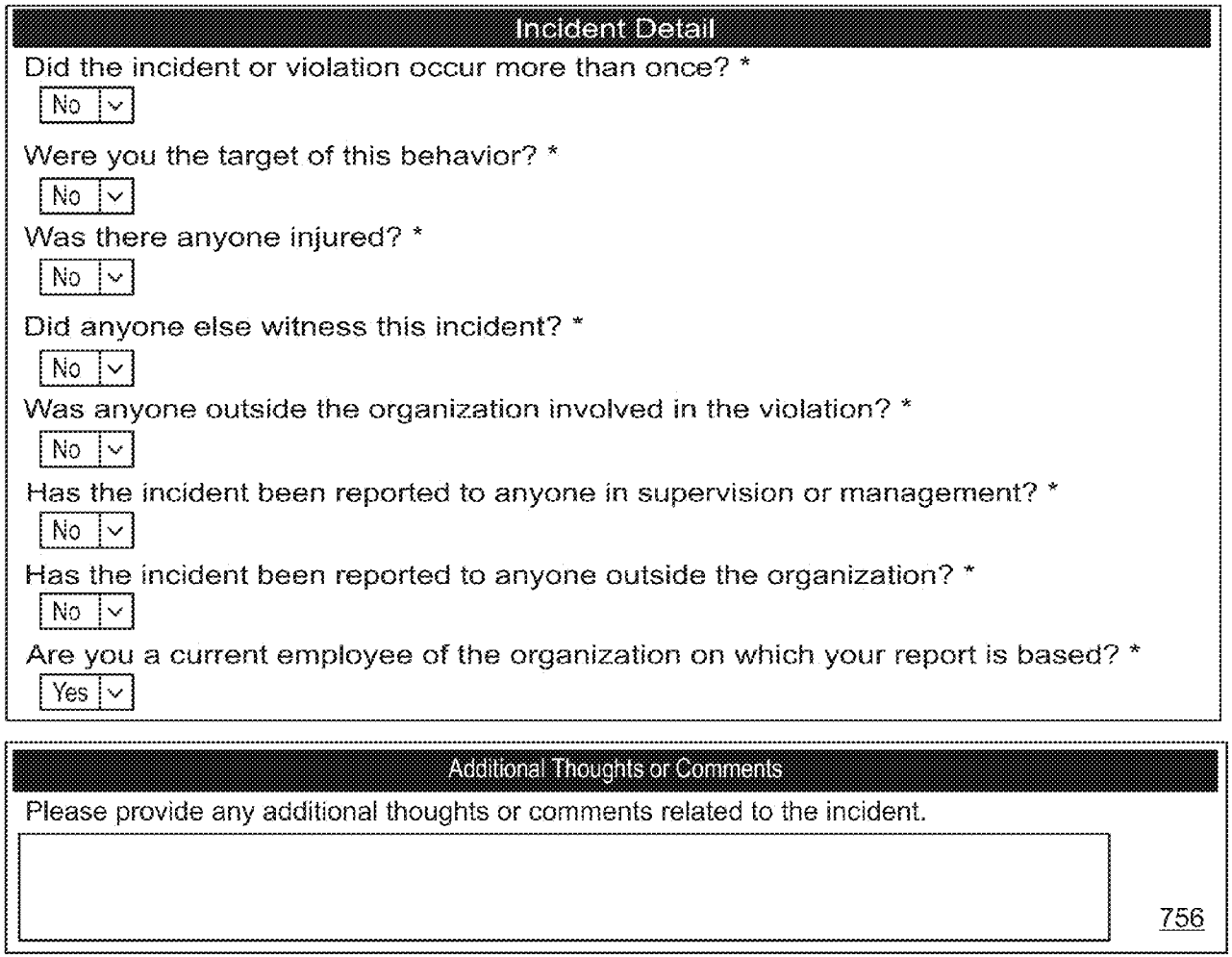

Incident Detail
Did the incident or violation occur more than once? *
No
Were you the target of this behavior? *
No
Was there anyone injured? *
No
Did anyone else witness this incident? *
No
Was anyone outside the organization involved in the violation? *
No
Has the incident been reported to anyone in supervision or management? *
No
Has the incident been reported to anyone outside the organization? *
No
Are you a current employee of the organization on which your report is based? *
Yes
Additional Thoughts or Comments
Please provide any additional thoughts or comments related to the incident.
756

FIG. 58

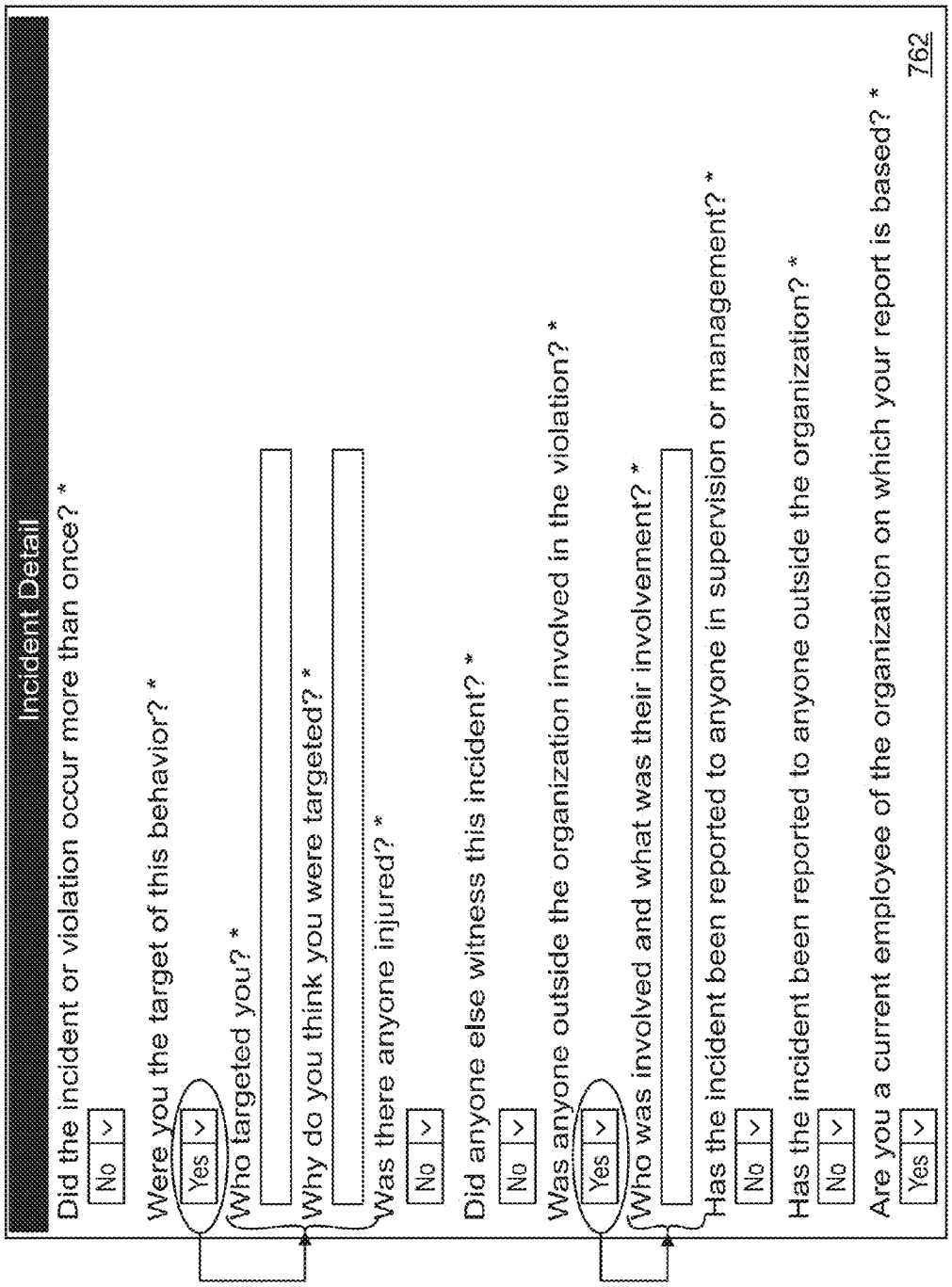

Incident Detail
Did the incident or violation occur more than once? *
No
Were you the target of this behavior? *
Yes
Who targeted you? *
Why do you think you were targeted? *
Was there anyone injured? *
No
Did anyone else witness this incident? *
No
Was anyone outside the organization involved in the violation? *
Yes
Who was involved and what was their involvement? *
Has the incident been reported to anyone in supervision or management? *
No
Has the incident been reported to anyone outside the organization? *
No
Are you a current employee of the organization on which your report is based? *
Yes
762

FIG. 59

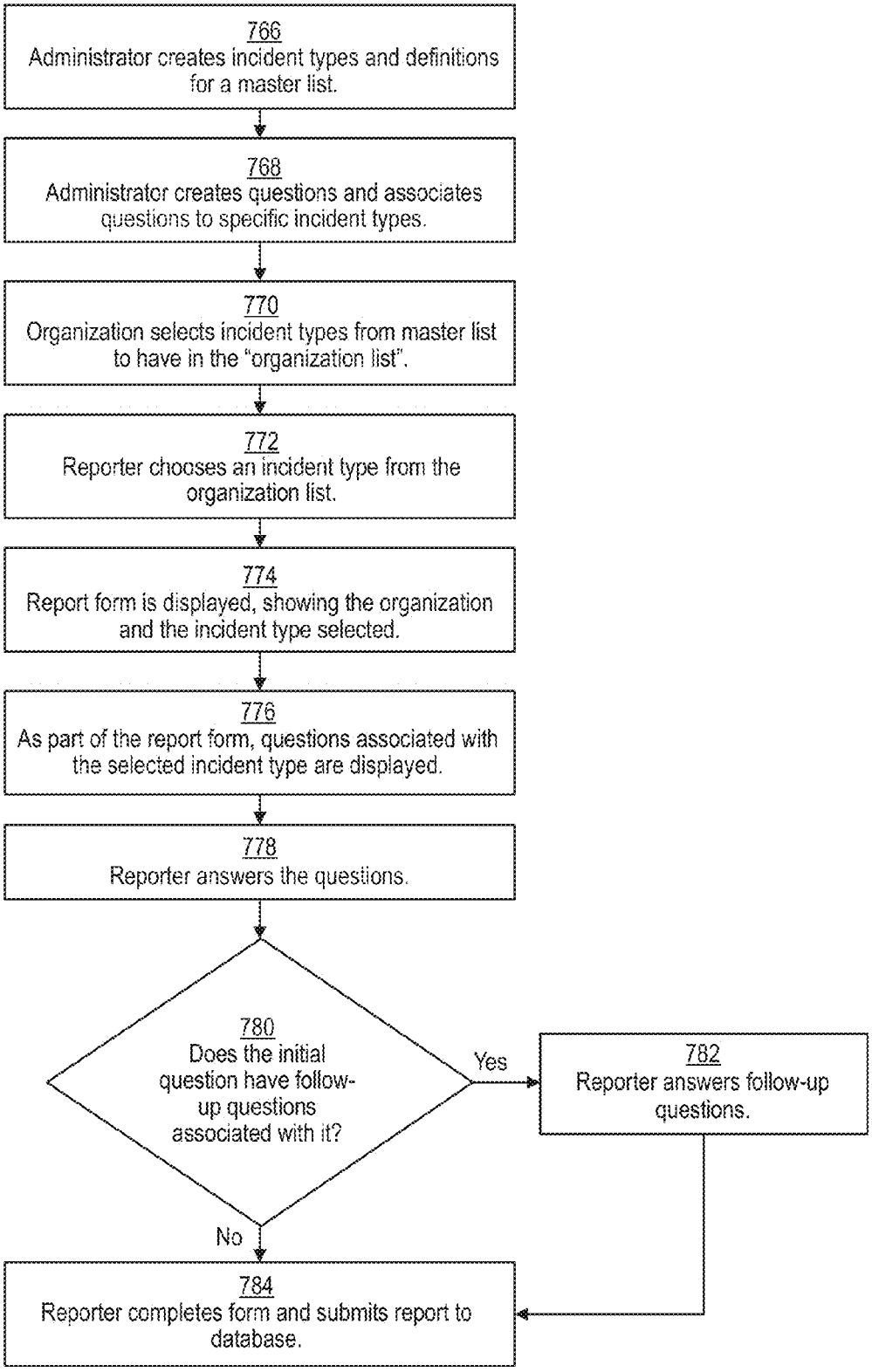

766
Administrator creates incident types and definitions for a master list.
768
Administrator creates questions and associates questions to specific incident types.
770
Organization selects incident types from master list to have in the "organization list".
772
Reporter chooses an incident type from the organization list.
774
Report form is displayed, showing the organization and the incident type selected.
776
As part of the report form, questions associated with the selected incident type are displayed.
778
Reporter answers the questions.
780
Does the initial question have follow-up questions associated with it?
Yes
782
Reporter answers follow-up questions.
No
784
Reporter completes form and submits report to database.

FIG. 60

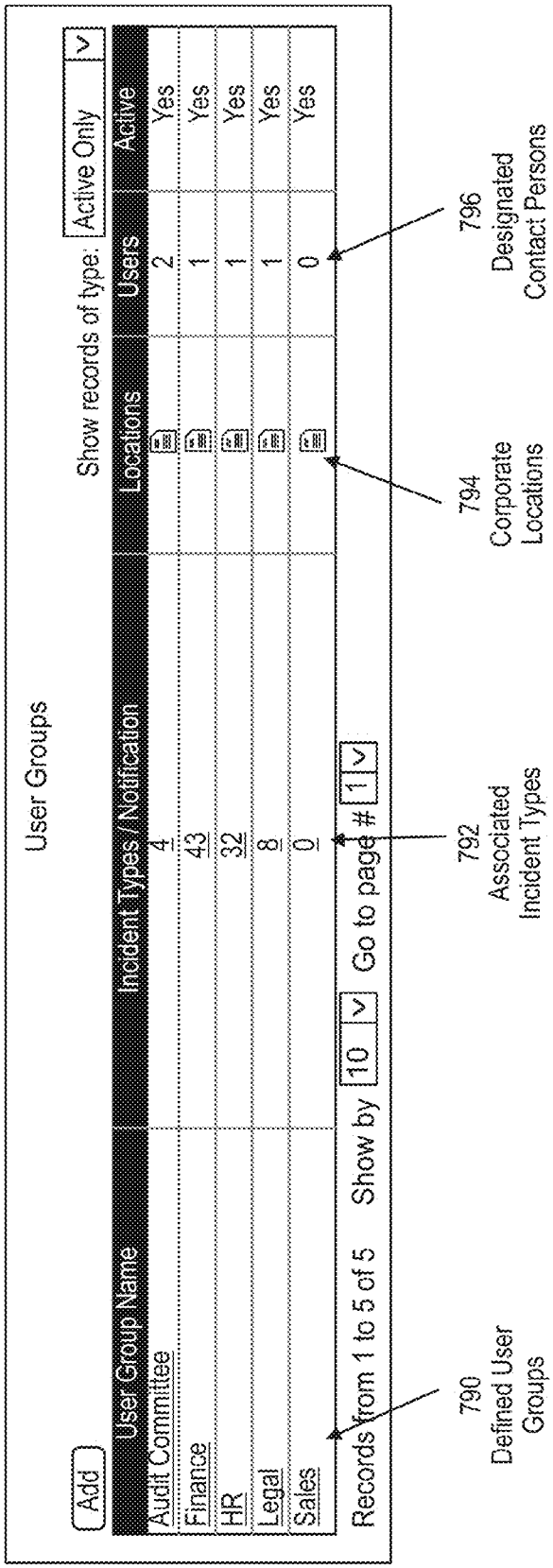

User Groups
Add
Show records of type: Active Only
User Group Name
Incident Types / Notification
Locations
Users
Active
Audit Committee 4 2 Yes
Finance 43 1 Yes
HR 32 1 Yes
Legal 8 1 Yes
Sales 0 0 Yes
Records from 1 to 5 of 5 Show by 10 Go to page # 1
790 Defined User Groups
792 Associated Incident Types
794 Corporate Locations
796 Designated Contact Persons

FIG. 61

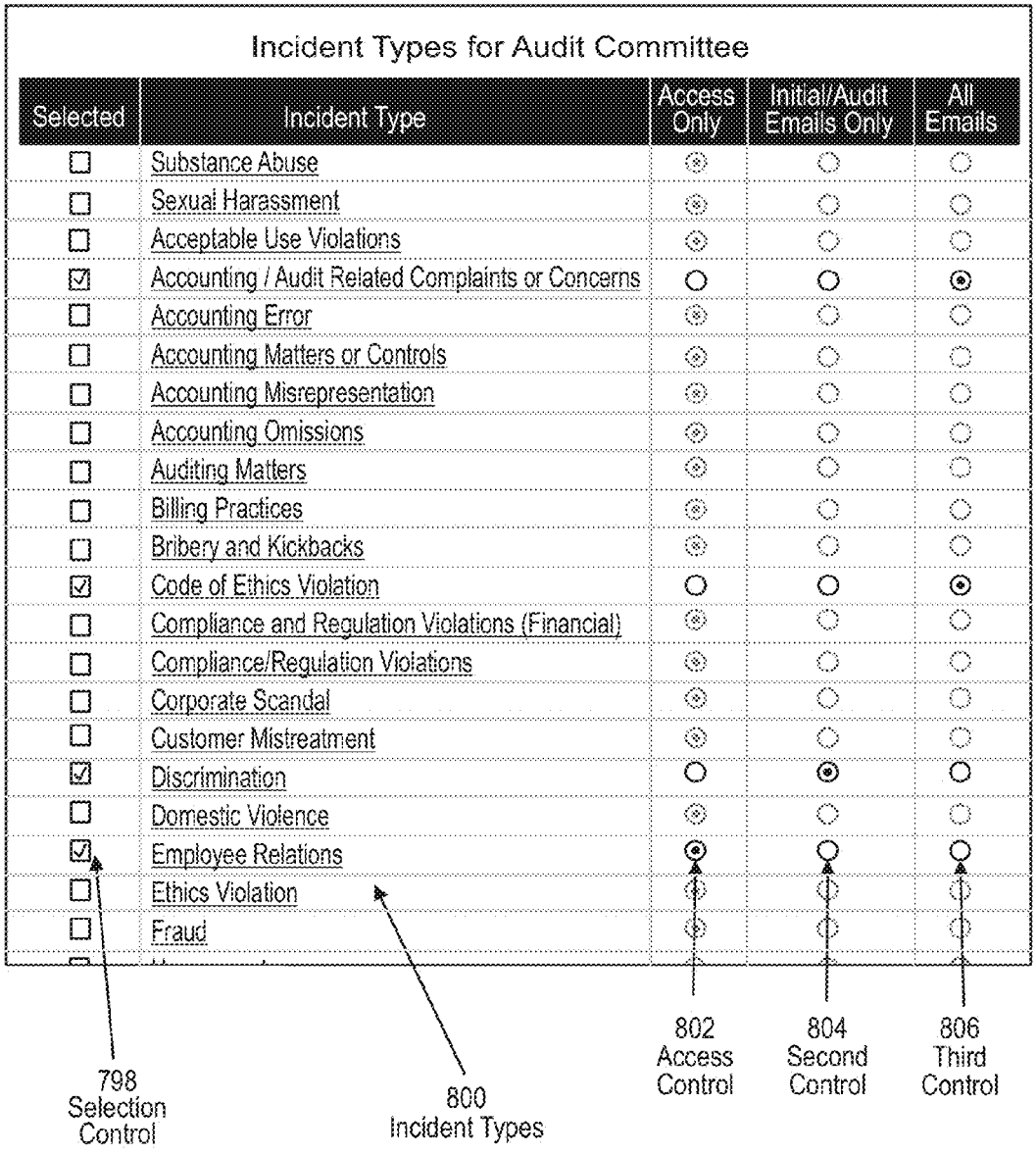

Incident Types for Audit Committee
Selected
Incident Type
Access Only
Initial/Audit Emails Only
All Emails
Substance Abuse
Sexual Harassment
Acceptable Use Violations
Accounting / Audit Related Complaints or Concerns
Accounting Error
Accounting Matters or Controls
Accounting Misrepresentation
Accounting Omissions
Auditing Matters
Billing Practices
Bribery and Kickbacks
Code of Ethics Violation
Compliance and Regulation Violations (Financial)
Compliance/Regulation Violations
Corporate Scandal
Customer Mistreatment
Discrimination
Domestic Violence
Employee Relations
Ethics Violation
Fraud
798 Selection Control
800 Incident Types
802 Access Control
804 Second Control
806 Third Control

FIG. 62

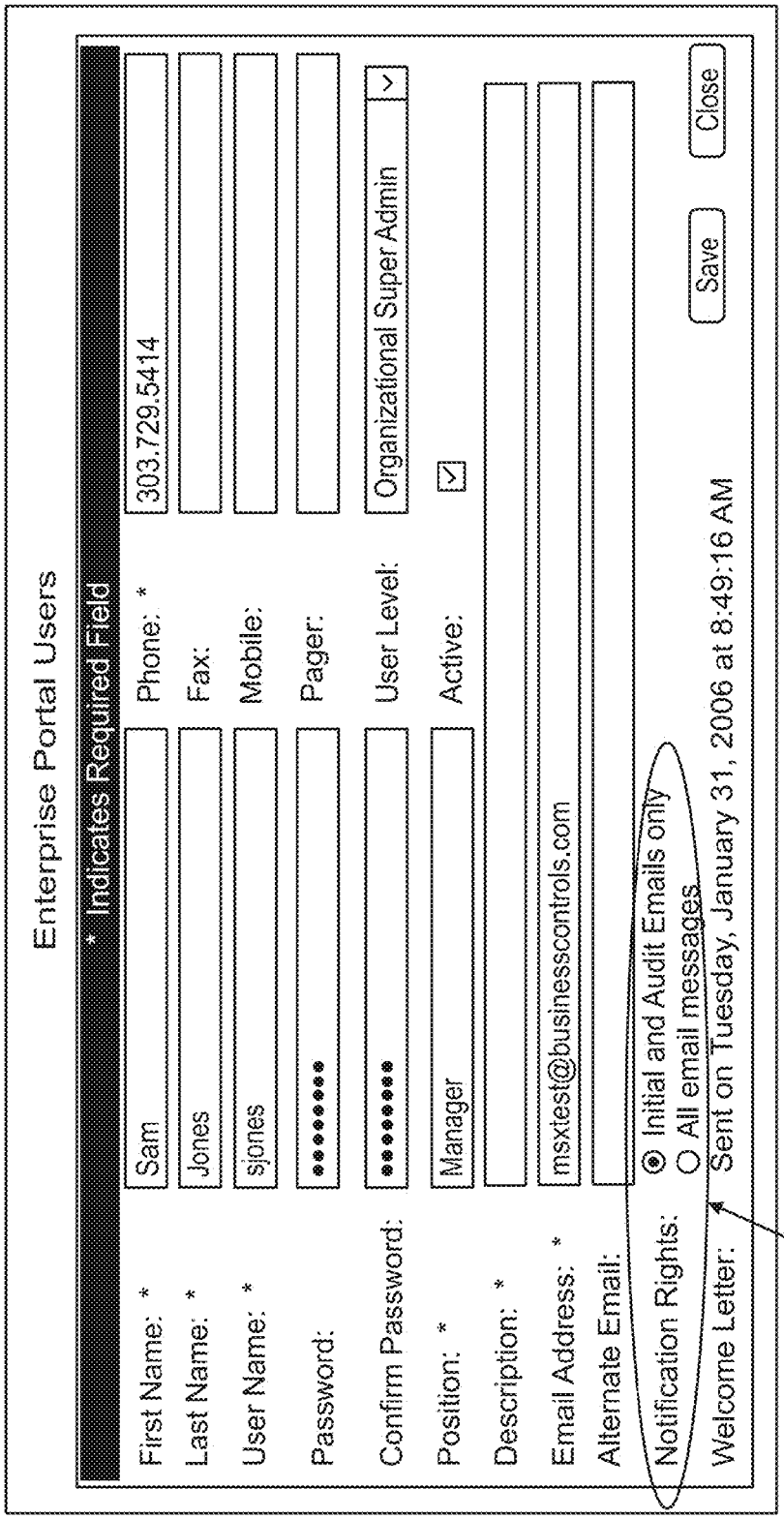

Enterprise Portal Users
* Indicates Required Field
First Name: *
Sam
Phone: *
303.729.5414
Last Name: *
Jones
Fax:
User Name: *
sjones
Mobile:
Password:
Pager:
Confirm Password:
User Level:
Organizational Super Admin
Position: *
Manager
Active:
Description: *
Email Address: *
msxtest@businesscontrols.com
Alternate Email:
Notification Rights:
Initial and Audit Emails only
All email messages
Welcome Letter:
Sent on Tuesday, January 31, 2006 at 8:49:16 AM
Save
Close
808
Notification
Controls

FIG. 63

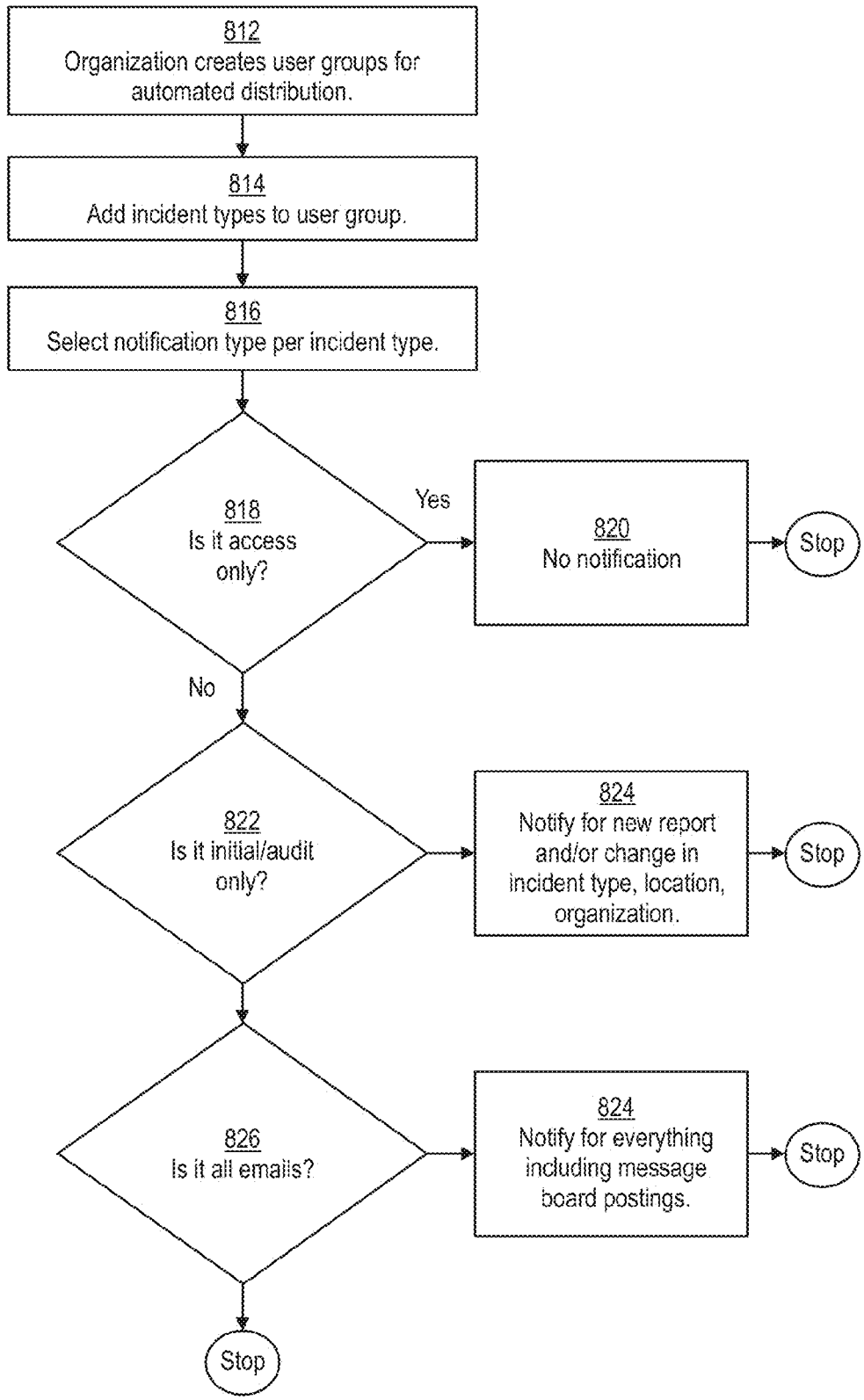

812
Organization creates user groups for automated distribution.
814
Add incident types to user group.
816
Select notification type per incident type.
818
Is it access only?
Yes
820
No notification
Stop
No
822
Is it initial/audit only?
824
Notify for new report and/or change in incident type, location, organization.
Stop
826
Is it all emails?
824
Notify for everything including message board postings.
Stop
Stop

FIG. 64

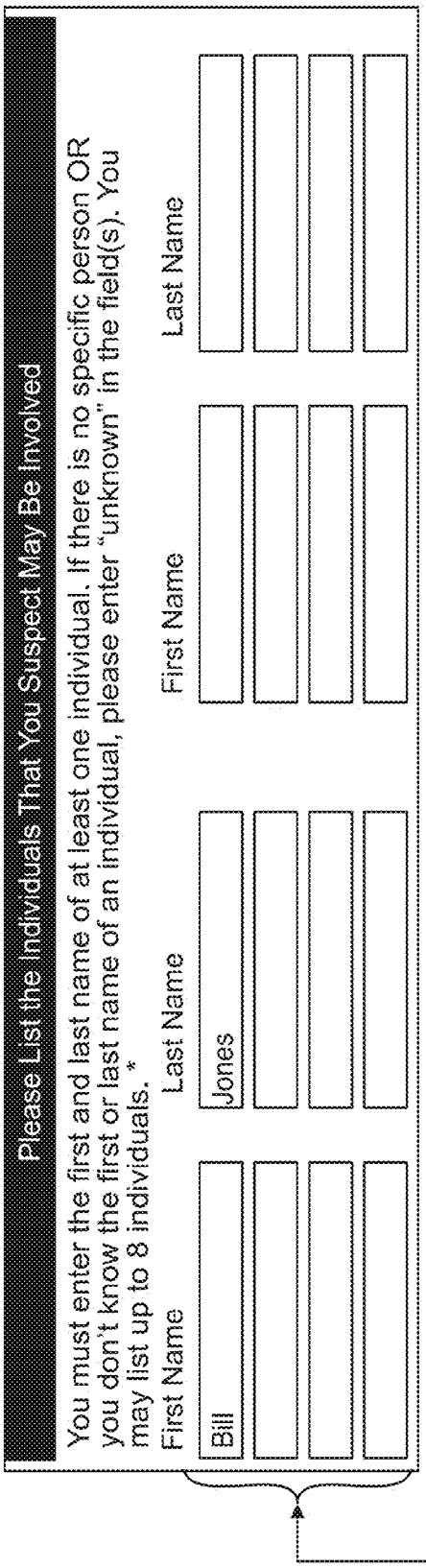

Please List the Individuals That You Suspect May Be Involved
You must enter the first and last name of at least one individual. If there is no specific person OR you don't know the first or last name of an individual, please enter "unknown" in the field(s). You may list up to 8 individuals. *
First Name
Last Name
First Name
Last Name
Bill
Jones
832
Fields for
Specifying
Suspects

FIG. 65

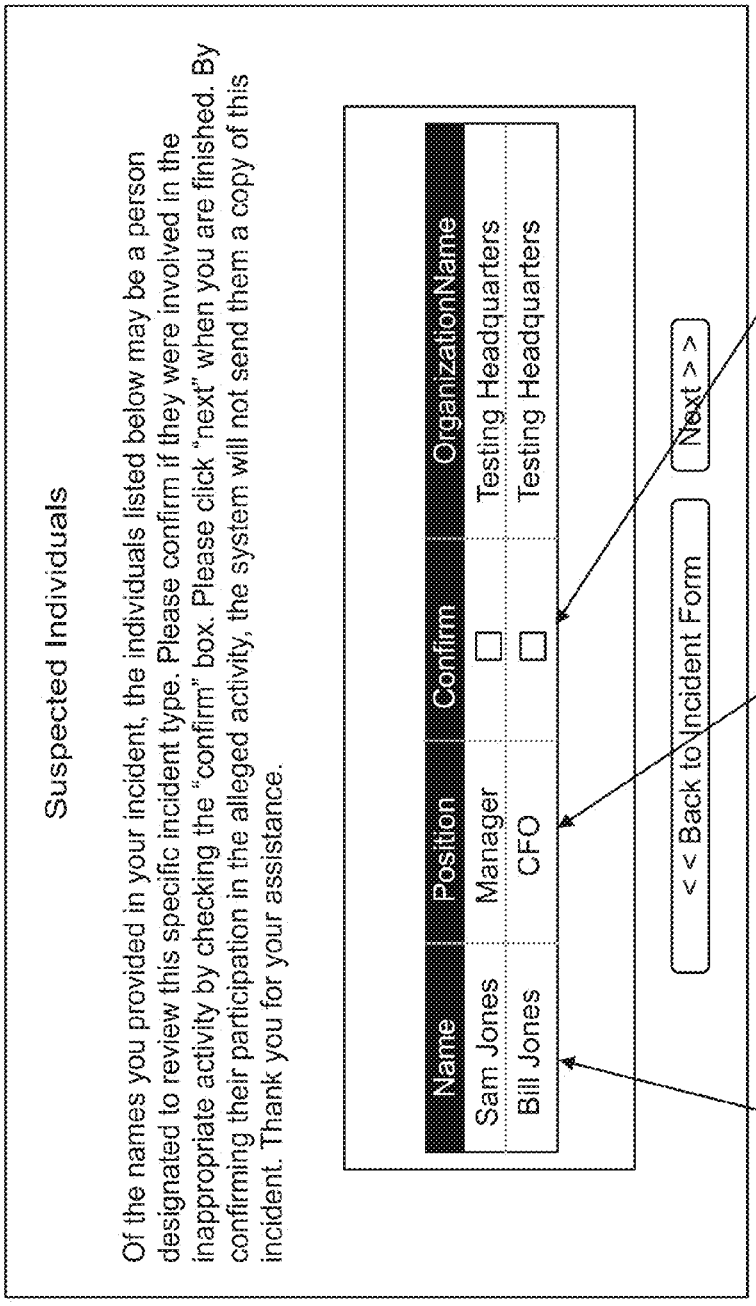

Suspected Individuals
Of the names you provided in your incident, the individuals listed below may be a person designated to review this specific incident type. Please confirm if they were involved in the inappropriate activity by checking the "confirm" box. Please click "next" when you are finished. By confirming their participation in the alleged activity, the system will not send them a copy of this incident. Thank you for your assistance.
Name
Position
Confirm
OrganizationName
Sam Jones
Manager
Testing Headquarters
Bill Jones
CFO
Testing Headquarters
< < Back to Incident Form
Next > >
834
Name Field
836
Title Field
838
Confirmation
Control

FIG. 66

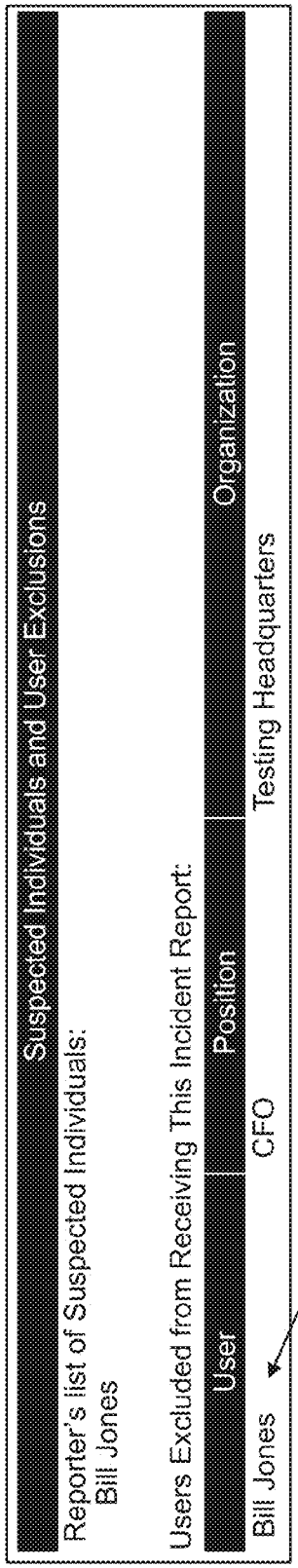

Suspected Individuals and User Exclusions
Reporter's list of Suspected Individuals:
Bill Jones
Users Excluded from Receiving This Incident Report:
User
Position
Organization
Bill Jones
CFO
Testing Headquarters
842
Display of
Suspects

FIG. 67

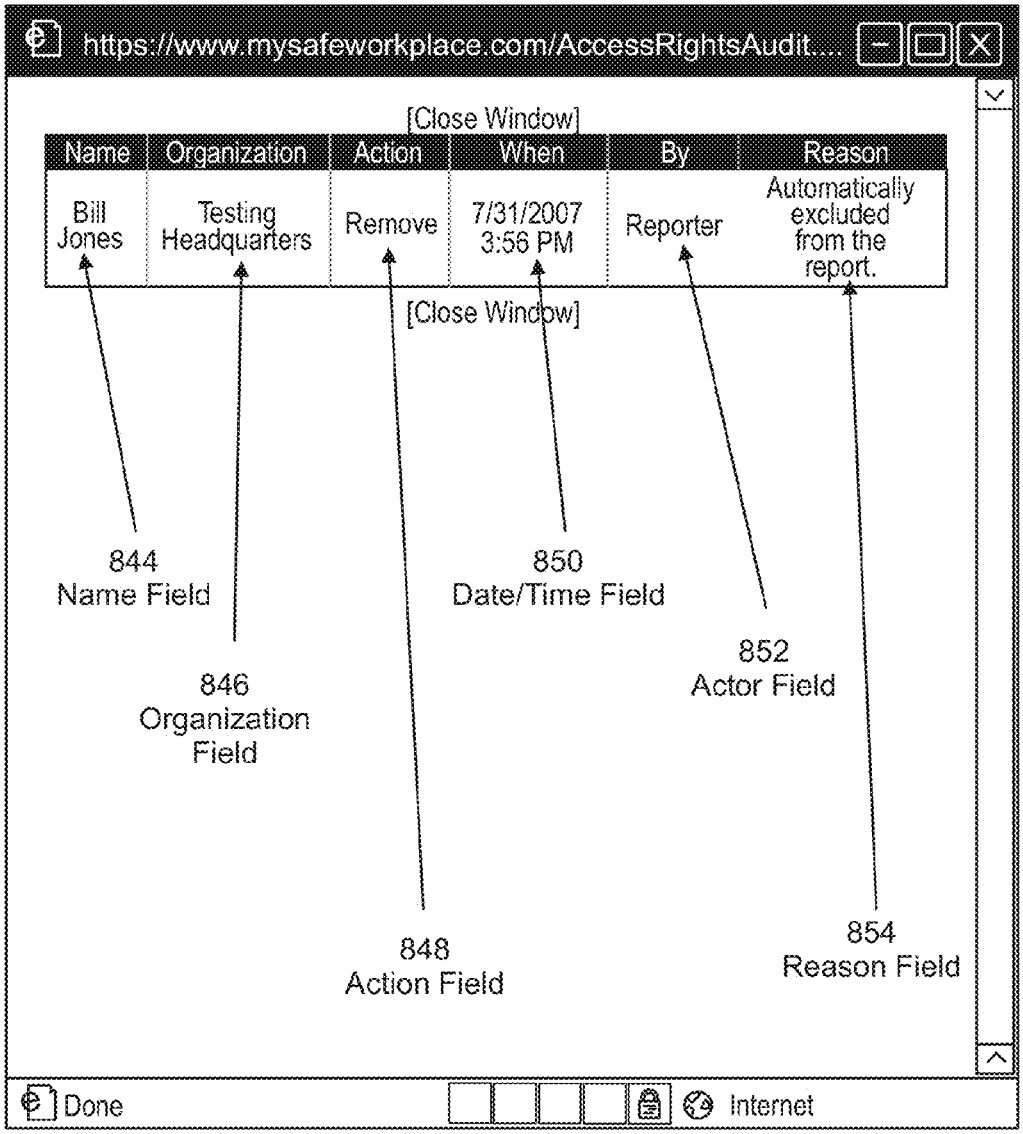

https://www.mysafeworkplace.com/AccessRightsAudit...
[Close Window]
Name
Organization
Action
When
By
Reason
Bill Jones
Testing Headquarters
Remove
7/31/2007 3:56 PM
Reporter
Automatically excluded from the report.
[Close Window]
844 Name Field
846 Organization Field
848 Action Field
850 Date/Time Field
852 Actor Field
854 Reason Field
Done
Internet

FIG. 68

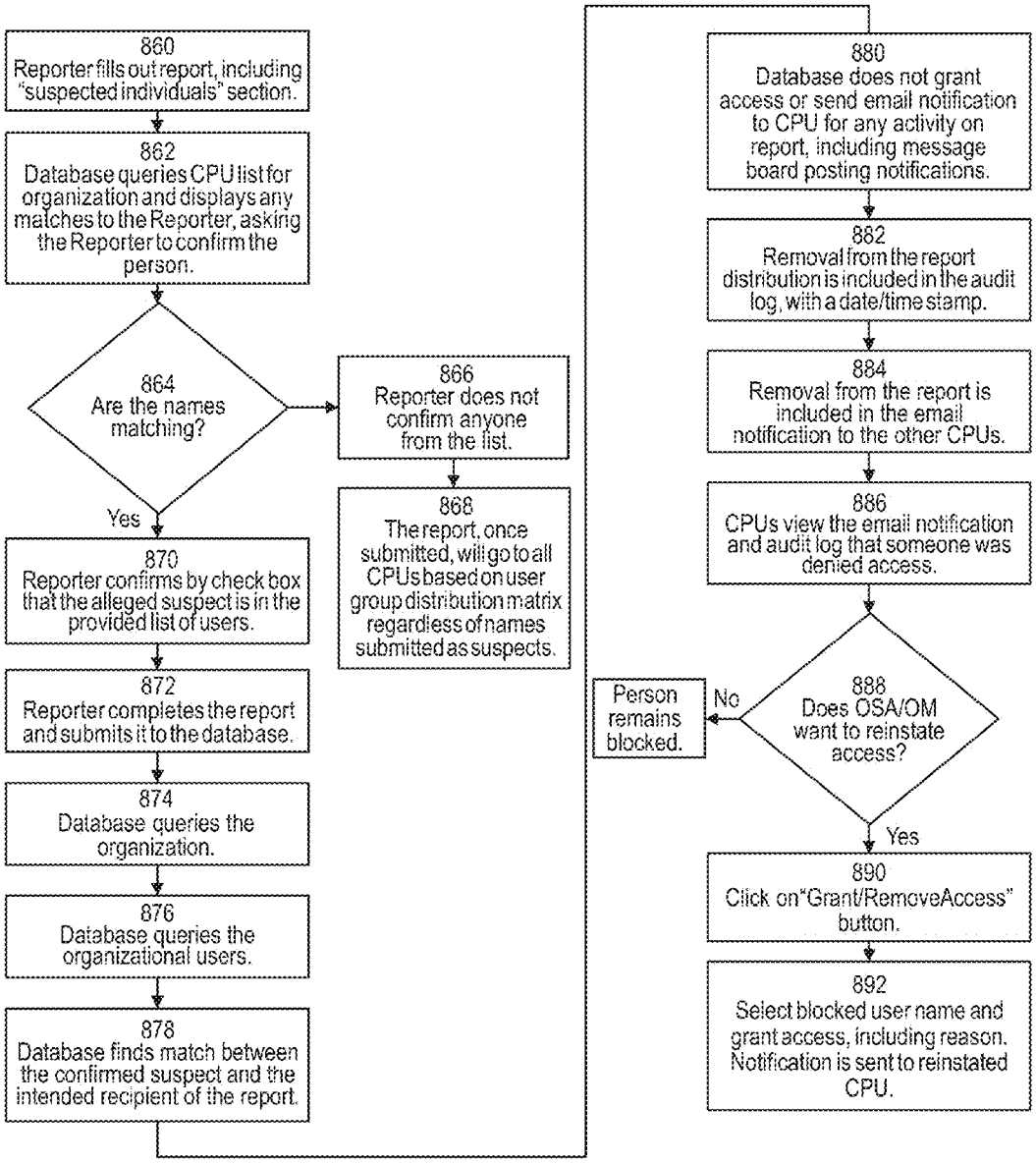

860
Reporter fills out report, including "suspected individuals" section.
862
Database queries CPU list for organization and displays any matches to the Reporter, asking the Reporter to confirm the person.
864
Are the names matching?
Yes
866
Reporter does not confirm anyone from the list.
868
The report, once submitted, will go to all CPUs based on user group distribution matrix regardless of names submitted as suspects.
870
Reporter confirms by check box that the alleged suspect is in the provided list of users.
872
Reporter completes the report and submits it to the database.
874
Database queries the organization.
876
Database queries the organizational users.
878
Database finds match between the confirmed suspect and the intended recipient of the report.
880
Database does not grant access or send email notification to CPU for any activity on report, including message board posting notifications.
882
Removal from the report distribution is included in the audit log, with a date/time stamp.
884
Removal from the report is included in the email notification to the other CPUs.
886
CPUs view the email notification and audit log that someone was denied access.
888
Does OSA/OM want to reinstate access?
No
Person remains blocked.
Yes
890
Click on "Grant/RemoveAccess" button.
892
Select blocked user name and grant access, including reason. Notification is sent to reinstated CPU.

FIG. 69

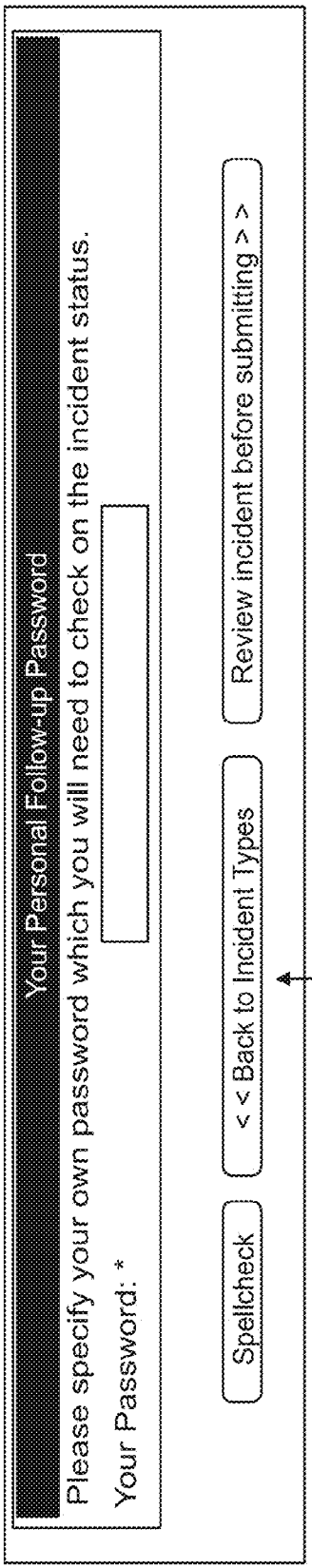

Your Personal Follow-up Password
Please specify your own password which you will need to check on the incident status.
Your Password: *
Spellcheck
< < Back to Incident Types
Review incident before submitting > >
896
Control for
Changing
Incident Type

FIG. 70

Incident Types
Selected
Display Order
Incident Type
1
Substance Abuse - The illegal or inappropriate use of drugs or alcohol, whether purchased legally (prescription) or illegally (street drugs). Substance abuse is also the misuse of any substance, whether controlled by Federal law or not, such that when put into one's body it is contrary to the substance's intended use. Examples may involve the use of alcohol, marijuana, narcotics, amphetamines, depressants, stimulants, aerosol sprays (inhalants), hallucinogens, or prescription drugs.
2
Sexual Harassment - Unwanted and offensive sexual advances or sexually offensive remarks or acts, especially made by one in a superior or supervisory position or when acquiescence to such behavior is a condition of continued employment, promotion, or satisfactory evaluation. Examples may include unwanted conversation, obscene gestures, comments, jokes, touching of a sexual or lewd nature, staring/leering or whistling.
Acceptable Use Violations - Violations of the Company's Information Security Policies, Code of Computer Conduct, Acceptable Use, etc. that govern conduct while using the Company network or confidential information resources.
Accounting / Audit Related Complaints or Concerns - The purposeful, unethical or questionable recording of accounting or auditing matters. Examples may include: fraud; deliberate errors related to financial statements; noncompliance with accounting controls; misinterpretations or false statements to or by senior officers regarding financial records; or deviation from full and fair reporting of the company's financial condition.
Accounting Error - An item recorded in the company's financial statements by accident that does not conform to Generally Accepted Accounting Practices (GAAP).
Accounting Matters or Controls - An item recorded in or omitted from the financial statements with knowledge that it does not conform to Generally Accepted Accounting Practices (GAAP).
Accounting Misrepresentation - An item recorded in the company's financial statements with full knowledge that it does not conform to Generally Accepted Accounting Practices (GAAP).
Accounting Omissions - An item recorded, or intentionally or unintentionally left out, in the company's financial statement that does not conform to Generally Accepted Accounting Practices (GAAP).
Auditing Matters - Purposeful and methodical documentation and examination of any business or financial transaction that is related to Generally Accepted Accounting Practices (GAAP).
Billing Practices - The purposeful, systemic or unethical billing of vendors, government insurance plans, managed care organizations, private insurance plans and other third party payers.
Records from 1 to 10 of 61 Show by 10 Go to page # 1
Save
898
Incident Type Selection Control
900
Order Control

FIG. 71

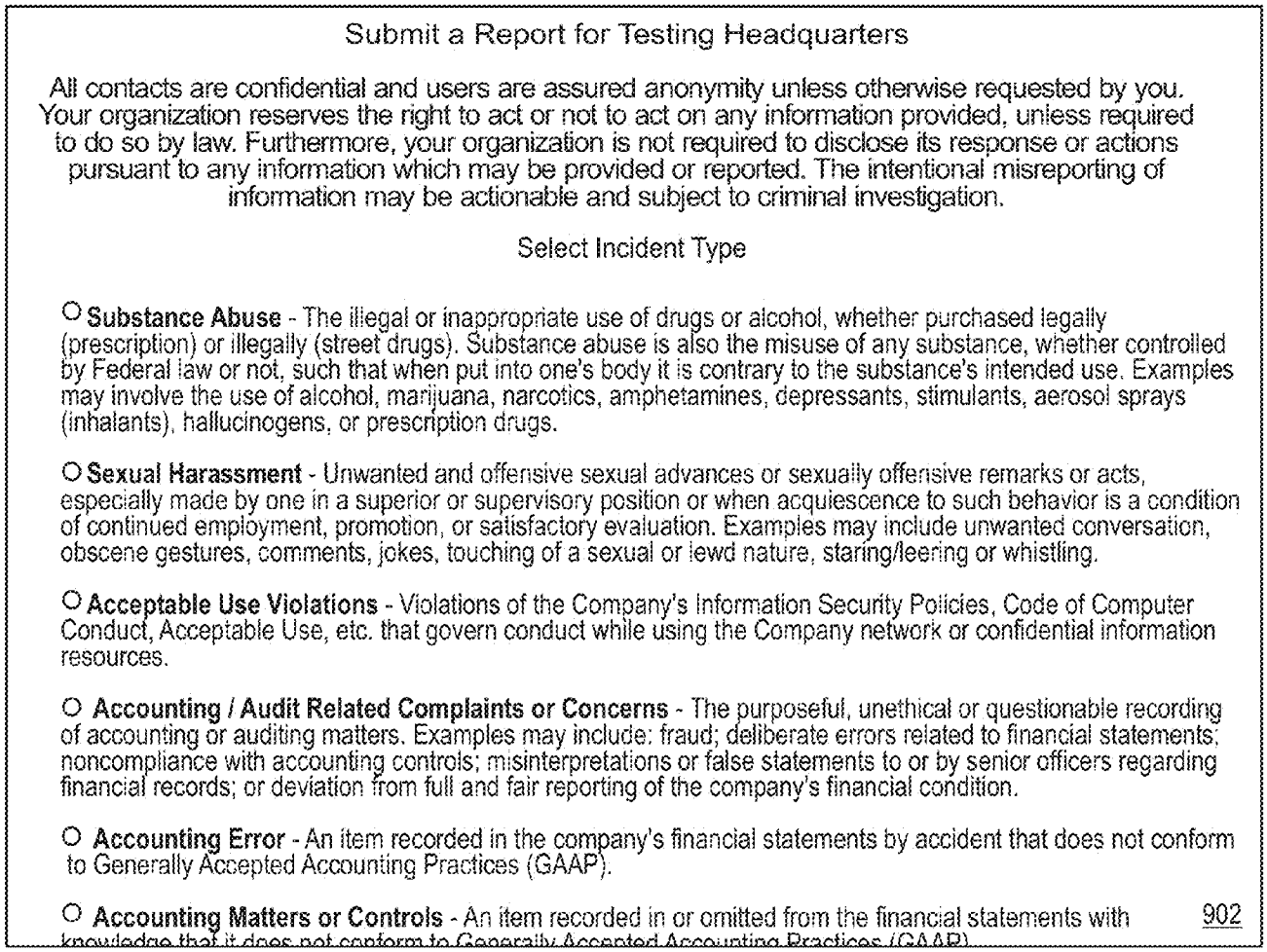

Submit a Report for Testing Headquarters
All contacts are confidential and users are assured anonymity unless otherwise requested by you. Your organization reserves the right to act or not to act on any information provided, unless required to do so by law. Furthermore, your organization is not required to disclose its response or actions pursuant to any information which may be provided or reported. The intentional misreporting of information may be actionable and subject to criminal investigation.
Select Incident Type
Substance Abuse - The illegal or inappropriate use of drugs or alcohol, whether purchased legally (prescription) or illegally (street drugs). Substance abuse is also the misuse of any substance, whether controlled by Federal law or not, such that when put into one's body it is contrary to the substance's intended use. Examples may involve the use of alcohol, marijuana, narcotics, amphetamines, depressants, stimulants, aerosol sprays (inhalants), hallucinogens, or prescription drugs.
Sexual Harassment - Unwanted and offensive sexual advances or sexually offensive remarks or acts, especially made by one in a superior or supervisory position or when acquiescence to such behavior is a condition of continued employment, promotion, or satisfactory evaluation. Examples may include unwanted conversation, obscene gestures, comments, jokes, touching of a sexual or lewd nature, staring/leering or whistling.
Acceptable Use Violations - Violations of the Company's Information Security Policies, Code of Computer Conduct, Acceptable Use, etc. that govern conduct while using the Company network or confidential information resources.
Accounting / Audit Related Complaints or Concerns - The purposeful, unethical or questionable recording of accounting or auditing matters. Examples may include: fraud; deliberate errors related to financial statements; noncompliance with accounting controls; misinterpretations or false statements to or by senior officers regarding financial records; or deviation from full and fair reporting of the company's financial condition.
Accounting Error - An item recorded in the company's financial statements by accident that does not conform to Generally Accepted Accounting Practices (GAAP).
Accounting Matters or Controls - An item recorded in or omitted from the financial statements with
902

FIG. 72

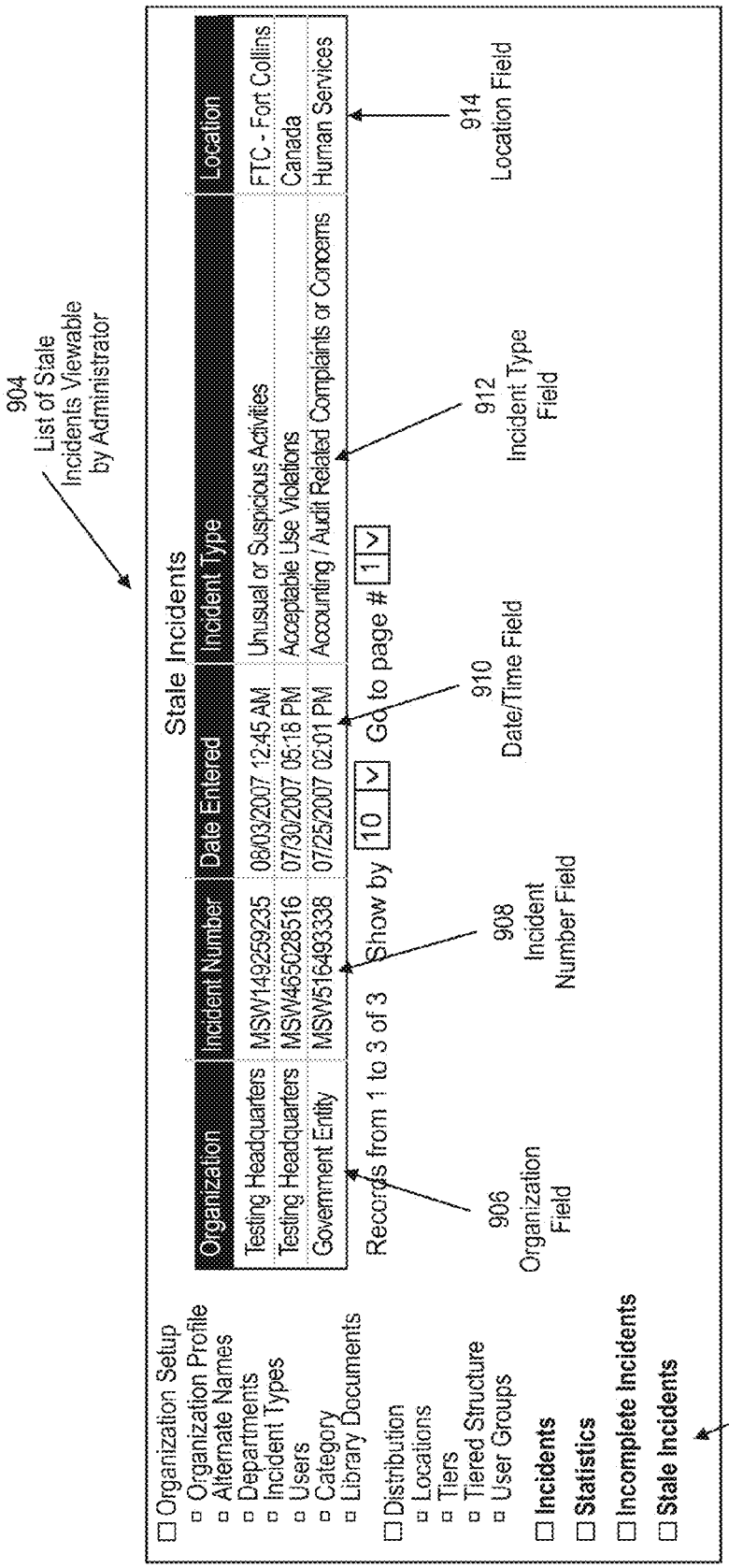

904
List of Stale Incidents Viewable by Administrator
Stale Incidents
Organization
Incident Number
Date Entered
Incident Type
Location
Testing Headquarters
MSW149259235
08/03/2007 12:45 AM
Unusual or Suspicious Activities
FTC - Fort Collins
Testing Headquarters
MSW465028516
07/30/2007 05:16 PM
Acceptable Use Violations
Canada
Government Entity
MSW516493338
07/25/2007 02:01 PM
Accounting / Audit Related Complaints or Concerns
Human Services
Records from 1 to 3 of 3
Show by 10
Go to page # 1
906 Organization Field
908 Incident Number Field
910 Date/Time Field
912 Incident Type Field
914 Location Field
Organization Setup
Organization Profile
Alternate Names
Departments
Incident Types
Users
Category
Library Documents
Distribution
Locations
Tiers
Tiered Structure
User Groups
Incidents
Statistics
Incomplete Incidents
Stale Incidents
903 Stale Incidents Display Control

FIG. 73

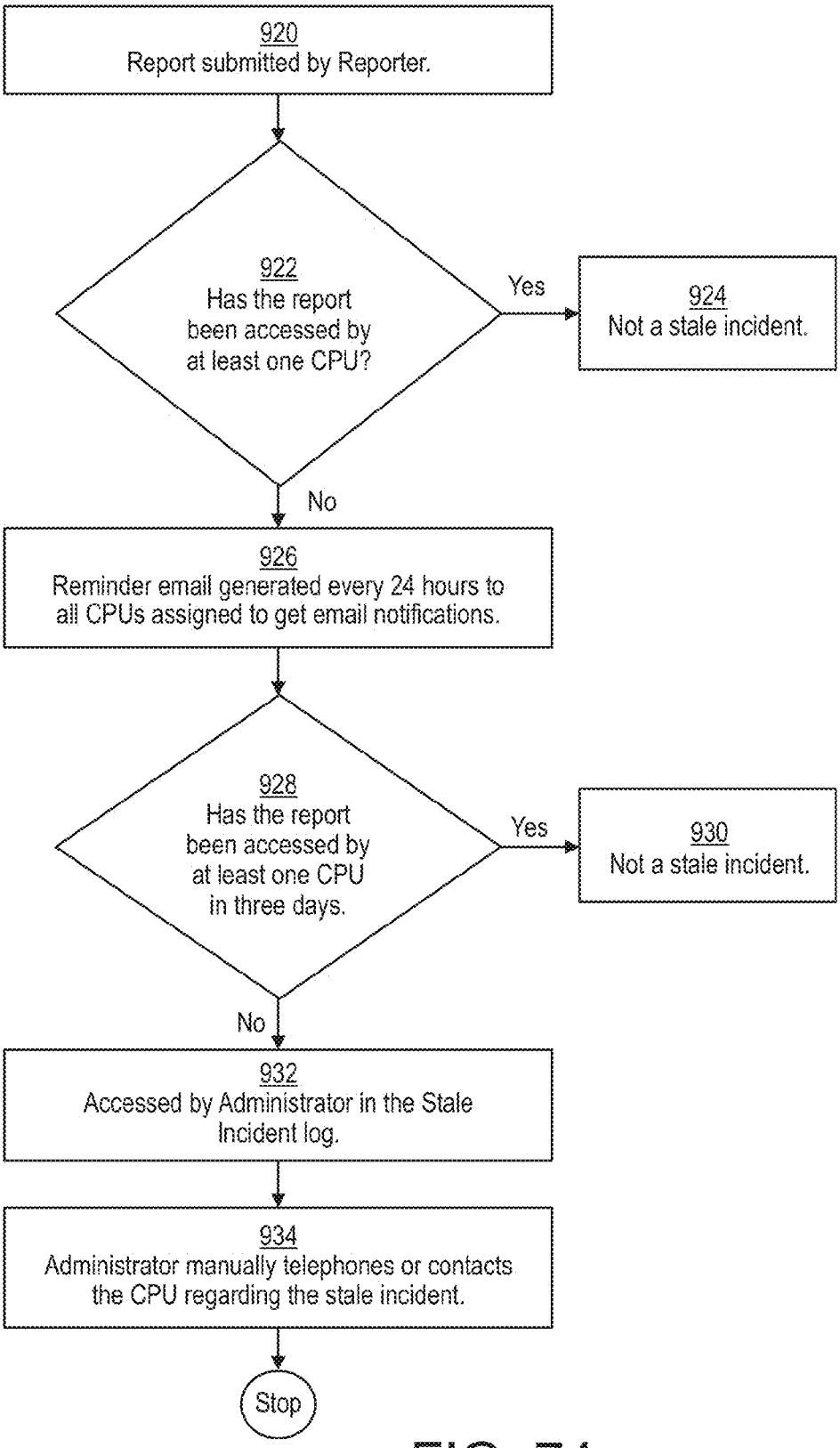

920
Report submitted by Reporter.
922
Has the report been accessed by at least one CPU?
Yes
924
Not a stale incident.
No
926
Reminder email generated every 24 hours to all CPUs assigned to get email notifications.
928
Has the report been accessed by at least one CPU in three days.
Yes
930
Not a stale incident.
No
932
Accessed by Administrator in the Stale Incident log.
934
Administrator manually telephones or contacts the CPU regarding the stale incident.
Stop

FIG. 74

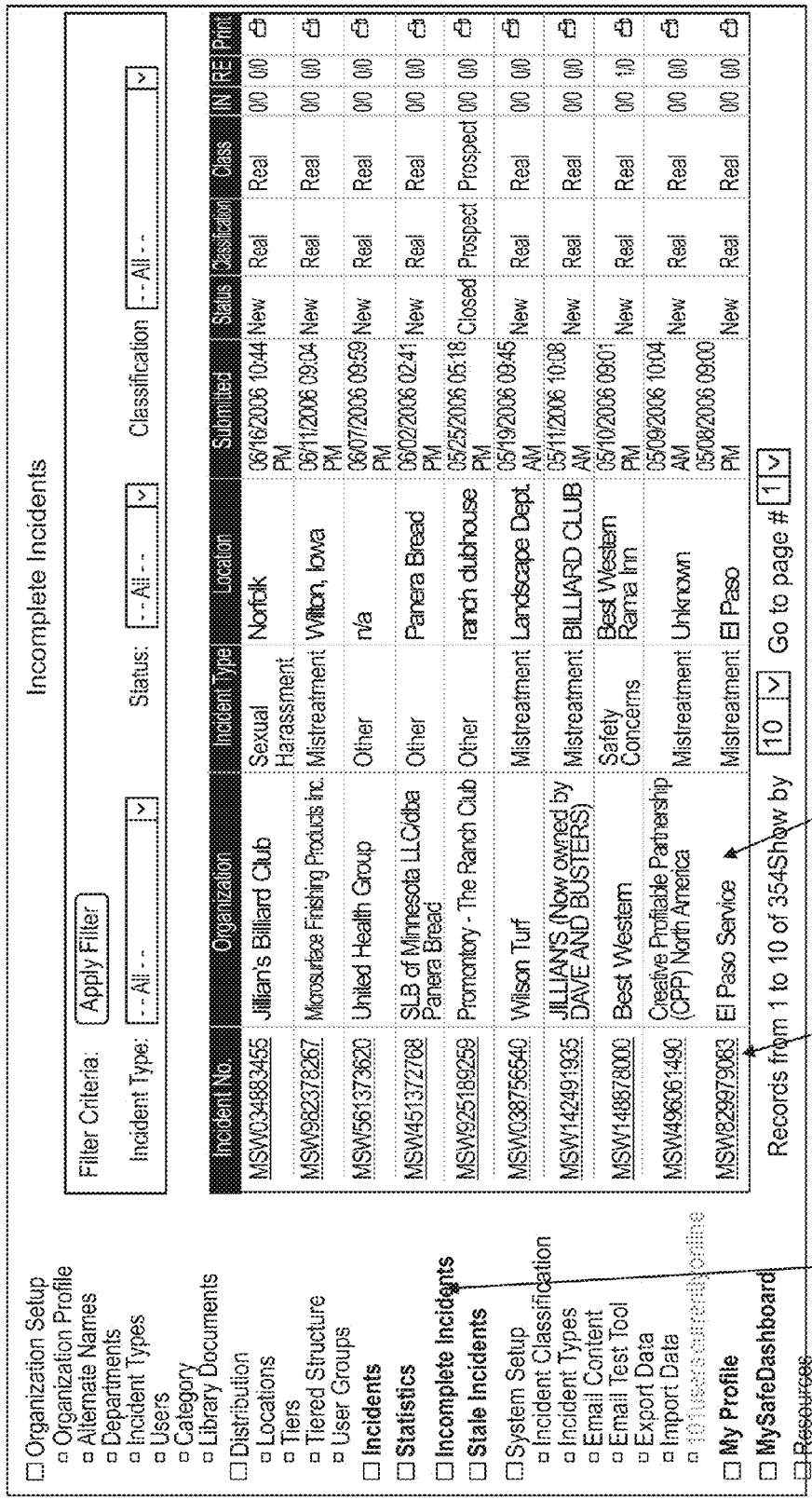

950
List of Incomplete Incident Reports
Incomplete Incidents
Filter Criteria:
Apply Filter
Incident Type:
Status:
Classification
Incident No
Organization
Incident Type
Location
Submitted
Status
Classification
Class
MSW034883455
Jillian's Billiard Club
Sexual Harassment
Norfolk
06/16/2006 10:44 PM
New
Real
Real
MSW982378267
Microsurface Finishing Products inc.
Mistreatment
Wilton, Iowa
06/11/2006 09:04 PM
New
Real
Real
MSW561373620
United Health Group
Other
n/a
06/07/2006 09:59 PM
New
Real
Real
MSW451372768
SLB of Minnesota LLC/dba Panera Bread
Other
Panera Bread
06/02/2006 02:41 PM
New
Real
Real
MSW925189259
Promontory - The Ranch Club
Other
ranch clubhouse
05/25/2006 05:18 PM
Closed
Prospect
Prospect
MSW038756540
Wilson Turf
Mistreatment
Landscape Dept.
05/19/2006 03:45 AM
New
Real
Real
MSW142491935
JILLIAN'S (Now owned by DAVE AND BUSTERS)
Mistreatment
BILLIARD CLUB
05/11/2006 10:08 AM
New
Real
Real
MSW148878000
Best Western
Safety Concerns
Best Western Rama Inn
05/10/2006 09:01 PM
New
Real
Real
MSW496061490
Creative Profitable Partnership (CPP) North America
Mistreatment
Unknown
05/09/2006 10:04 AM
New
Real
Real
MSW829879063
El Paso Service
Mistreatment
El Paso
05/08/2006 09:00 PM
New
Real
Real
Records from 1 to 10 of 354
Show by 10
Go to page # 1
Organization Setup
Organization Profile
Alternate Names
Departments
Incident Types
Users
Category
Library Documents
Distribution
Locations
Tiers
Tiered Structure
User Groups
Incidents
Statistics
Incomplete Incidents
Stale Incidents
System Setup
Incident Classification
Incident Types
Email Content
Email Test Tool
Export Data
Import Data
My Profile
MySafeDashboard
Resources
952
Incomplete Report Display Control
954
Incident Number Field
956
Organization Field Specified by Reporter

FIG. 75

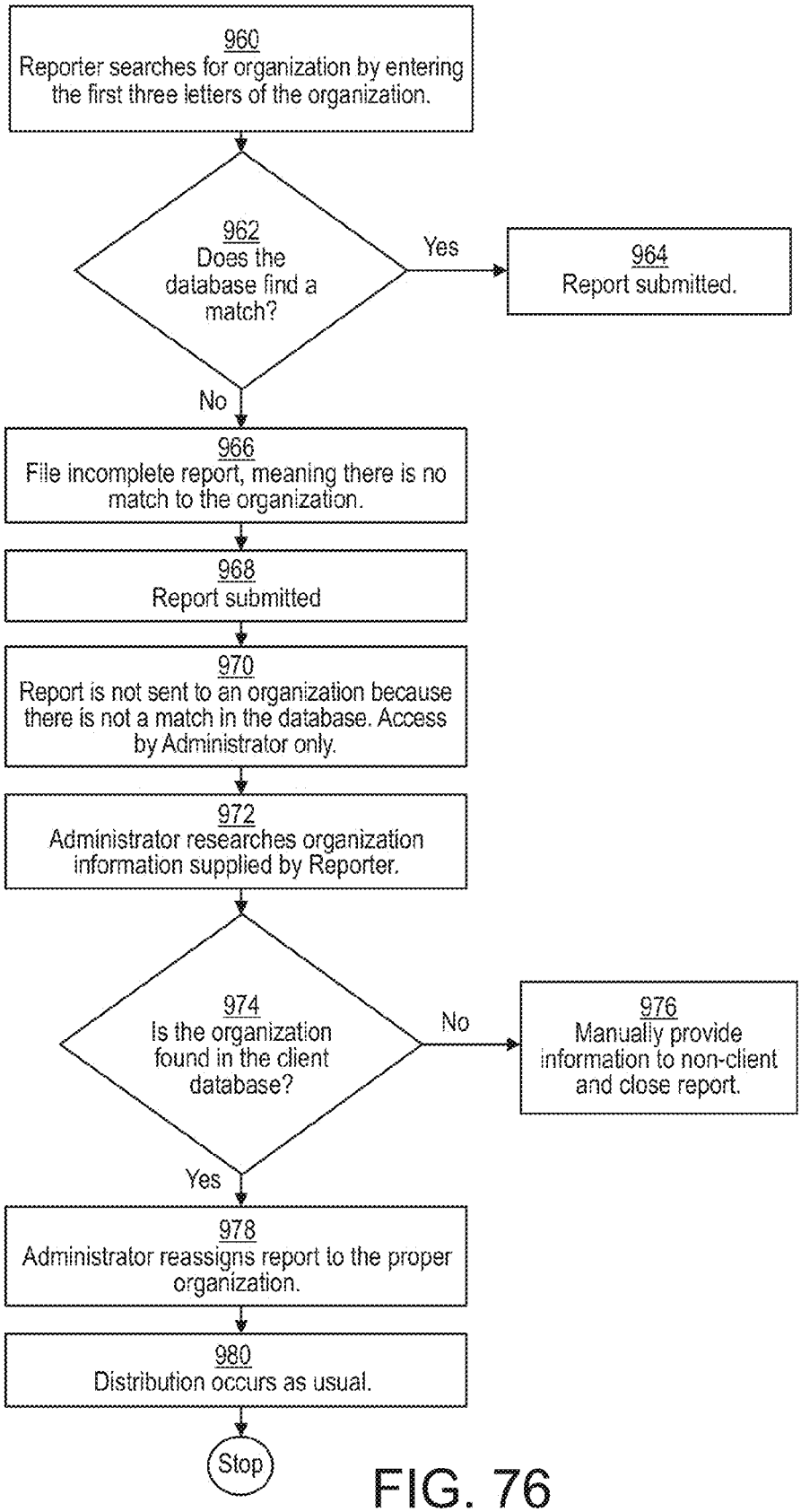

960
Reporter searches for organization by entering the first three letters of the organization.
962
Does the database find a match?
Yes
964
Report submitted.
No
966
File incomplete report, meaning there is no match to the organization.
968
Report submitted
970
Report is not sent to an organization because there is not a match in the database. Access by Administrator only.
972
Administrator researches organization information supplied by Reporter.
974
Is the organization found in the client database?
No
976
Manually provide information to non-client and close report.
Yes
978
Administrator reassigns report to the proper organization.
980
Distribution occurs as usual.
Stop

FIG. 76

ANONYMOUS REPORTING SYSTEM

This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/317,809 filed Dec. 29, 2008, entitled "Anonymous Reporting System" now U.S. Pat. No. 8,250,025 which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/740,835 filed Apr. 26, 2007, now abandoned, entitled "Anonymous Reporting System," that claims priority from U.S. Provisional Application Ser. No. 60/795,600 filed Apr. 26, 2006 and which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/288,835 filed Nov. 5, 2002.

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates generally to systems for handling and arranging information, and more particularly to information handling for receiving and categorizing anonymous reports in relation to security issues, safety issues, and other corporate or institutional issues where anonymity may be desired.

BACKGROUND

The reporting of "incidents" is often of great value in recognizing potential problems before the persons involved go further along the same paths, too often with tragic or unfortunate results. Early recognition of problem personalities or trends can provide opportunities for intervention and prevention of more serious activities. Incidents of all sorts occur frequently in social circumstances, such as in schools or the workplace, where stress can lead to escalation, and escalation can lead to violence. The problems relate to groups which include three of the largest segments of the population; children attending school from age five through eighteen, students attending secondary school and those employed. The latest U.S. census estimates that 73 million Americans are in school and 134 million are in the workplace. Those in charge of security and the well being of the persons in these environments often have a "need to know" about incidents which might seem minor, but can be the harbinger of events of greater consequence.

Difficulties occur in the handling of reports and in encouraging observers to make the incidents known to those in authority, however. These difficulties arise in areas of collating and correlating the incidents and in maintaining secrecy and the privacy of the persons involved, whether they are the perpetrators or the witnesses. There is frequently a fear factor among witnesses, as well as a general reluctance to get involved or to be seen as a "snitch" or troublemaker. Overcoming obstacles to reporting incidents, and providing a structure for discreet and efficient handling of reports is accordingly an organizational goal.

A major concern in modern society deals with these incidents, especially in light of trends of violence in the workplace and educational institutions. Today, violence, including sexual assault and harassment, is so prevalent in the workplace that, in many organizations it has become an accepted fact of life.

The National Center for Victims of Crime reported 709 homicides in the workplace during 1998 and 13 million workers say they are concerned about the behavior of a coworker who they think could become violent. Twenty-five percent of workers said their company offered training on workplace violence, sixty-five percent said theirs did not, and nine percent said they did not know if work had offered any training or help. Nine percent of workers reported an assault or other violent act in their workplace in the past year, and eighteen percent reported a threat or verbal intimidation, three out of every four say they are getting no guidance on how to prevent violence or how to recognize the dangers of violence [National Center for Victims of Crime, 1999].

These astounding figures suggest that more than 12 million acts of violence and 24 million threats or verbal intimidations occur each year [U.S. Department of Education and Justice, 1998]. Only 25 percent of the companies surveyed have begun, in some way, to address violence at work [Business Controls, Inc., *What Every Employer Should Know About Workplace Violence,* 2000]. While many companies have begun to recognize the need to address the potential for violence, it is evident that they are looking for a starting point. Anonymous employee "hotlines" have been established to meet this need. Many of the hotlines were established without thought as to who might use them and how they would be used.

In addition, most telephone hotlines and other incident reporting systems utilize a standard incident report form. As can be appreciated, the standard form may have a variety of fields that ask for information relevant to each of the different types of reports that might be made. It can also be appreciated that certain portions of this requested information are completely irrelevant or inapplicable to certain types of incident reports. Asking a reporting individual to supply some of this irrelevant and inapplicable information can, at worst, frustrate the individual enough to not complete and submit the form or, at best, annoy the individual.

In 2002, the U.S. Congress enacted the Sarbanes-Oxley Act which closely regulates corporate governance and financial practice. In particular, increased requirements were placed on corporations to collect and report information that may be relevant to shareholders.

The present inventors have recognized the need for finding ways to obtain and correlate information preliminary incidents as a tool for preventing violence and harassment. In particular, the present inventors have recognized the need for methods for encouraging greater participation in reporting, creating a greater degree of witness confidence and safety, and collecting appropriate information relevant to the incident to be reported.

SUMMARY

In light of the above and according to one broad aspect of one embodiment of the present invention, disclosed herein is an anonymous incident reporting system that collects data that is relevant to the type of incident being reported. In one example, the system may be implemented as an Internet-based system for use by a reporting individual. The system may include a web server that provides a reporting individual the opportunity to make a report relative to one of a plurality of entities, the reporting individual having the option to remain anonymous in the report. The server can further allow the reporting individual to select a type of report that the individual wishes to make and, based on that selection, a corresponding report form is generated for that type of report to be made. The corresponding form is different for different types of reports to be made.

The system may be separately configurable for each of a plurality of entities, wherein every reporting individual is associated with an entity, wherein the corresponding form for a given type of report for one entity is different from the corresponding form for the same given type of report for at

least one other entity. The reporting individual can enter data in defined fields on the corresponding report form that is generated.

The individual may have the choice of different levels of anonymity. One of the choices the individual may have is complete anonymity. One of the choices the individual may have is anonymity toward the entity but not toward administrators of the system. One of the choices the individual may have is no anonymity.

The reporting individual may make the selection of the type of report that the individual wishes to make by selecting one of a plurality of types of reports listed in a selection list. The corresponding report form for a given type of report may differ from a corresponding report form for another type of report by the defined fields in the report forms. The differences between the defined fields on different report forms may relate to different requested information.

According to another broad aspect of another embodiment of the present invention, disclosed herein is a method for collecting incident reports from reporting individuals about a group of entities via the internet. In one example, the method may include providing a website for reporting individuals to visit; allowing the reporting individual to identify the entity; allowing the reporting individual to select a type of report to be submitted; providing a report form that corresponds to that type of report, based on the selection of report type; allowing the reporting individual to enter data into the report firm; allowing the reporting individual to remain anonymous in the report; and allowing the reporting individual to submit the form.

Each entity may specify the report form corresponding to each report type that will be provided to reporting individuals who identify that entity. Each entity specifying the report form may include allowing each entity to provide a customized report form.

The features, utilities and advantages of the various embodiments of the invention will be apparent from the following more particular description of embodiments of the invention as illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** is a block diagram of an example of an anonymous incident reporting system, in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. **2** (including FIGS. **2**A and **2**B) illustrates an example of a set of operations that may be performed in one example of an anonymous reporting system, in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. **3** is another example of a set of operations that may be performed in one example of an anonymous reporting system, in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. **4** is an example of a report form that is tailored for a particular type of incident to be reported, namely Fraud, in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. **5** is an example of a report form that is tailored for a particular type of incident to be reported, namely Sexual Harassment, in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. **6** is an example of a report form that is tailored for a particular type of incident to be reported, namely Theft, in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. **6**A is a flow chart illustrating one example of a reporting party entering a reporter portal through a website.

FIG. **6**B is a flow chart illustrating one example of a client participant entering an enterprise portal through a website.

FIG. **7** is an example of a computer display screen or graphical user interface (GUI) for providing a drop-down menu for the reporting person to select the desired level of anonymity, in accordance with one embodiment.

FIG. **8** is an example of a computer display screen with one or more fields requesting that the reporting person provide a password that the anonymous reporting system will associate with an incident report.

FIG. **9** is an example of a computer display screen wherein an anonymous reporting system communicates a unique access number to a reporting person after the reporting person has submitted an incident report.

FIG. **10** illustrates an example computer display screen where a reporting person has selected to remain "anonymous toward your organization" and where a set of personal information fields are provided in order to obtain identifying information from the reporting person.

FIG. **11** is a flowchart showing an example of the reporting party selecting levels of anonymity.

FIG. **12** is an example screen shot of a notification e-mail for the company participant users to notify them of the submission of an incident report.

FIG. **13** is a flowchart for illustrating an example of the operations of providing automated notifications to designated recipients.

FIG. **14** is a flowchart for illustrating the notification system in accordance with one embodiment.

FIG. **15** is an example of a notification email sent to the reporting party in response to the organization posting a message to a message board.

FIG. **16** illustrates an example of a computer display screen having a status button option for a reporting party to select to display a report status.

FIG. **17** illustrates an example of a computer display screen asking a reporting party to enter an access number and password in response to selecting the status button in FIG. **16**.

FIG. **18** is an example of a message board message in accordance with one embodiment.

FIG. **19** is an example of a message board message as displayed to the reporting party.

FIG. **20** is a flow chart illustrating one example of posting a message to a message board.

FIG. **21** illustrates, using a flowchart, one example of how a reporting party may create an original message or reply to an existing message in a message board.

FIG. **22** is illustrates, using a flowchart, one example of how a client participant user may create an original message or reply to an existing message in a message board.

FIG. **23** illustrates an example of a computer display screen listing each authorized company representative that may receive and handle incident reports.

FIG. **24** illustrates an example of a computer display screen for enabling/disabling user control.

FIG. **25** illustrates an example of a computer display screen for establishing tiers for distribution of incident reports within an organization.

FIG. **26** illustrates an example of a computer display screen with a distribution control button for displaying the distribution tiers structure for reports that will be sent to certain user groups.

FIG. **27** illustrates an example of a computer display screen of an example distribution tier for a group "Audit Committee."

FIG. **28** is an example of an incident summary report.

FIG. **29** illustrates an example of a computer display screen for adding viewing rights for company representatives.

FIG. **30** is a flowchart illustrating one example of adding a user to a system.

FIG. **31** is a flowchart illustrating one example of removing a user from a particular report.

FIG. **32** is a flowchart illustrating one example of removing a user from a system.

FIG. **33** is a flowchart illustrating one example of creating a user record for each individual having access to a system.

FIG. **34** is a flowchart illustrating one example of establishing organizational tiers in the system.

FIG. **35** is a flowchart illustrating one example of modifying a report submitted by a reporting party at the organizational level.

FIG. **36** is a flowchart illustrating one example of changing the report distribution list at the organizational level.

FIG. **37** is an example of a computer display screen for listing the types of reports that may be generated within a display tool.

FIG. **38** is an example of a display of historical data with associated filters.

FIG. **39** is an example of a keyword filter to allow a company to look for incident reports with certain terms.

FIG. **40** illustrates an example of a company/institutional participant filter to filter data across organizations

FIG. **41** illustrates an example of an incident type filter for particular incident types for historical display purposes.

FIG. **42** is an example of a histogram display showing the number of reports filed each month for a four month period.

FIG. **43** is an example of a computer display screen shown in response to clicking the active link of FIG. **42**.

FIG. **44** is an example of a computer display screen shown in response to clicking the active link of FIG. **43**.

FIG. **45** is a graphical presentation of active incident reports by type and status, in one embodiment.

FIG. **46** illustrates an example of a computer display screen showing a number of locations from the graphical display from FIG. **45**.

FIG. **47** is an example of an expanded view of a particular location using the control of FIG. **46**.

FIG. **48** is an example of a read-only view of an incident report.

FIG. **49** illustrates an example of a computer display screen for entering an investigatory note, with an attorney work product designator control.

FIG. **50** illustrates an example of a computer display screen for entering an investigatory note with an attorney work product designator control set to true.

FIG. **51** illustrates an example of a computer display screen for the reporting party to enter an organization search.

FIG. **52** is illustrates an example of a computer display screen having an incident view log associated with a particular incident report

FIG. **53** is a flow chart illustrating one example of a view log operation.

FIG. **54** illustrates an example of a computer display screen having a spell check control.

FIG. **55** is an example of a plurality of incident types that may be presented to a reporting person for selection when making an incident report.

FIG. **56** is one example of a display of questions relating to a particular incident type.

FIG. **57** is another example of a display of questions relating to a particular incident type.

FIGS. **58** and **59** are examples of automated follow-up questions in response to a reporting party's answers to initial questions.

FIG. **60** is a flow chart of one example of a reporting party answering a series of questions in a report.

FIGS. **61**, **62** and **63** illustrate examples of an institution's portal and user groups with notification attributes.

FIG. **64** is a flowchart showing one example of creating user groups for automated distribution of reports.

FIG. **65** illustrates an example of a computer display screen having fields for specifying suspects within the report.

FIG. **66** illustrates an example of a computer display screen of the names returned by the system after searching a database using the name provided by the reporting party with an associated confirmation control for selection by the reporting party.

FIG. **67** illustrates an example of a computer display screen showing a party that is excluded from receiving reports based upon the reporting party naming the excluded individual by the reporting person.

FIG. **68** illustrates an example of a computer display screen showing information related to an excluded party.

FIG. **69** is a flowchart illustrating an example of excluding a suspected individual from a report distribution by a reporting party.

FIG. **70** illustrates an example of a computer display screen having a control for changing the incident type.

FIG. **71** illustrates an example of a computer display screen that allows a company/institutional participant to select or deselect a particular incident for display to a reporting party.

FIG. **72** illustrates an example of a computer display screen showing the reporter portal showing the listing of the incident types in the order selected by the company/institutional participant in FIG. **71**.

FIG. **73** illustrates an example of a computer display screen showing a list of stale reports viewable by an administrator.

FIG. **74** is a flowchart illustrating one example of dealing with stale reports.

FIG. **75** illustrates an example of a computer display screen showing a list of incomplete incident reports viewable by an administrator.

FIG. **76** is a flowchart illustrating one example of dealing with incomplete incident reports.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

FIG. **1** illustrates a block diagram of an example of an anonymous incident reporting and communications system **10** for schools, businesses/companies, public institutions, hospitals and governmental agencies, in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention.

The system **10** involves services coordinated by a system provider **12** and utilized by a variety of client organizations **14** (also referred to herein as institutional participants, client participants, companies, governmental agencies, universities and the like) and individual constituent users or reporting parties **16**. If desired, the system **10** allows a reporter **16** to remain anonymous, and therefore anonymously and easily report threats of violence, harassment, misconduct including sexual misconduct, discrimination, dishonesty or other concerns in a timely and safe manner over the Internet **20**. In addition to incident reporting, reporters **16** can also report workplace accidents, pass along suggestions and obtain safety information. System **10** permits reporters **16** to

generate incident reports **28** with a reporter-chosen level of anonymity and instantly transmit them to one or more pre-designated client participant user (CPU) **22** in the client organization **14**.

In one example, the system **10** includes a system provider/administrator **12** that provides or hosts, either directly or indirectly, one or more software applications or services **13** which provide a variety of functions to permit and manage anonymous incident reporting. In one embodiment, the system **20** runs on a Microsoft® .Net ("dot net") platform and a SQL database with a 128-bit encryption provided through Secure Socket Layer (SSL) protocols and certificates. In one example, the administrator **12** provides a software program or programs **13** which are accessible by an client organization **14** (such as a corporation, hospital or university) and a reporter **16** (such as an employee, healthcare worker, or student) over a network **20** such as the Internet or an organization's Intranet. The software application **13** may be, in one example, divided into a first client organization interface or portal (shown as the client organization **14** enterprise portal) having an interface and which is configured to receive and transmit data between the client organization **14** and the administrator **12**; and a second reporting party interface or portal (shown as the reporter's portal) which is configured to receive and transmit data between the reporter **16** and the administrator **12**. In one example, one or more databases **15** are utilized by the administrator **12** and the software application **13** in order to store data relating to the anonymous reporting system **10**. Preferably, the operations described herein with reference to administrator **12** are automatically performed by the software application **13** so that the system **10** can operate with little or no human delays introduced by the administrator **12**. This is in contrast with existing non-automated systems, where the communication of information may be delayed by one or more persons at the administrator level.

In one example of the present invention, when a reporter **16** observes an incident for which he/she desires to file an incident report **28**, the reporter **16** accesses a web site (preferably having software **13** thereon and controlled by the administrator **12**) with a plurality of web pages or application services that are made available to the reporter **16** for preparing and filing an incident report. In one example, the reporter **16** selects or provides the following information, which is in no way exhaustive or limiting: the organization name, in response to series of computer display screens and queries generated by the software an appropriate incident type relating to the incident (i.e., Harassment, Discrimination, Workplace Violence, Accounting, Bribery, Misconduct, etc.), a desired anonymity level, the location/date/time of the incident, a description of the incident, the individuals involved in the incident, the incident details and a follow-up password for future communications with a Client Participant User (CPU) **22** over a message board. In another example, if desired by the reporter **16**, an incident report **28** may also be made by phone and the live person cycles through the same information. Some screens and queries are standard and provided in all situations, whereas other screens and queries are specialized and are provided in response to the particular information selected or provided by the reporter **16**.

Once the incident report **28** is submitted, the report **28** is stored in the databases **15**. Preferably and in one example, the raw data content of databases **15** are not directly accessible or editable by either reporter **16** or client organization **14**. The data stored in the databases **15** are accessible and viewable to the reporter **16** and the client organization **14** through the portals of software application **13** which limit access and privileges with respect to the incident report data. Typically, raw data content is neither directly accessible nor editable by the administrator **12**.

Various features and functions that may be included in the anonymous reporting system **10** and the related software application **13** are disclosed. The anonymous reporting system **10** may be configured by the administrator **12** to provide anonymous reporting capabilities for a variety of client organizations **14**, and their numerous individual constituents or potential reporters **16**. For example, if a client organization **14** desires to provide anonymous reporting capabilities to its employees **16**, then the client organization **14** may subscribe to an anonymous reporting service provided by administrator **12**. The client organization **14** may then establish with the administrator **12** a plurality of various characteristics or attributes of the anonymous reporting system in order to customize the presentation to a reporter **16** through the reporter's portal.

For instance, as disclosed herein and in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, the client organization **14** may customize the type of reports and the specific questions posed by each different type of report available for use by the reporter **16**. As another example, the client organization **14** may set up and establish, through one or more computer display screens of the client organization's portal, how incident reports **28** are distributed within the client organization **14** to CPUs **22**. The client organization **14** may also establish a variety of differing levels of privileges for managing incident reports **28** that are received by the client organization **14**.

Generally, once the client organization **14** has configured its account with administrator **12** through the client organization's portal, administrator **12** then activates the service which permits employees **16** of the client organization **14** to submit incident reports anonymously over network **20** to administrator **12** through the reporter's portal. Upon receipt of incident reports **28**, the administrator **12** electronically notifies the pre-designated CPUs **22** of client organization **14** of the receipt of an incident report **28**. In one example, the administrator **12** automatically and substantially in real-time notifies the pre-designated CPUs **22** of client organization **14** that an incident report **28** has been received, preferably via electronic mail (e-mail). The client organization **14**, through one or more of its pre-designated CPUs **22**, can then access the report, typically in a read-only manner, as it is stored by administrator **12** in database **15**.

In one example, an anonymous reporting system **10** may generate, upon the submission of an incident report **28** by a reporter **16**, at least two unique numbers associated with the incident report. First, internal report number may be generated which is adapted to be used by the client organization **14** in association with a particular incident report **28** for purposes of tracking and auditing. Preferably, the internal report number is not made available or seen by the reporter **16**. Second, external report number, also described herein as an access number, may also be generated and associated with an incident report. The access number is provided only to the reporter **16**, and is not accessible by the client organization **14**. In one example, both the internal report number and the external report number are maintained in databases **15**, which, as described above, are not accessible by either the reporter **16** or the client organization **14**.

FIG. **1A** illustrates an example of a block diagram of software **13** that is provided by or operated by administrator **12**. In one example, a firewall may be provided between the software **13** and the network connections. The firewall may

be configured so that direct access to the raw data within the database **15** is not permitted. In one example, the software **13** includes a reporter's portal, and client organization's enterprise portal. The reporter portal/interface and client organization enterprise portal/interface typically comprise a graphical user interface for use with a browser on a computer connected to a network. The reporter's portal may include code that generates the web pages which gather and intake information from a reporter **16** relating to an incident in order to form an incident report. The reporter's portal may also include code for reporting on the status of an incident report, as well as providing for message board functionality.

The enterprise portal may include code segments to provide data relating to incident reports to a particular client organization **14** for which the incident report corresponds. The enterprise portal may also include code segments for setup of the client organization **14** and its CPUs **22**, along with hierarchical reporting structures. The enterprise portal may also include code segments for providing incident report **28** tracking and auditing, as well as statistical analysis, displays, and message board functionality as described above. The software **13** may include a business objects layer which specifies user interface pieces and application logic, and may also include a data access layer which handles access of data to and from the relational database, and provides data to the business objects layer as required by the portals under the data request of the reporters **16** or CPUs **22**. It is understood that FIG. **1**A is provided by way of example only, and that one or more features of an anonymous reporting system **10** or software **13** may be implemented through the use of software architectures other than those shown in FIG. **1**A.

One embodiment of the invention is shown in a flowchart manner in the illustration of FIG. **2** (shown as divided into FIGS. **2**A and **2**B for presentation purposes). The illustrated embodiment shows one particular example of the operations of the system **10** in response to an access request **26** by any client organization **14**. There are numerous combinations of functions and features that may be possible using the features and functions illustrated in FIGS. **2**A and **2**B, however, one particular example is shown to illustrate several features in a particular combination without limiting the combination to the one example. The access request may be direct, such as in a secure online electronic access over the Internet or through a client organization's **14** Intranet portal used to access the same, or indirect, where a telephone report is provided and concurrently entered into the system **10** by personnel of the administrator **12**. The interface **24** with the system **10**, whether directly or delayed (as in the case of telephone communication), is through the website **27** which is provided by the administrator **12**. One or more websites **27** may be provided, with each being customized to the requirements of the particular client organization **14**.

In one example, upon submission of a report **28** (regardless of type), reporters **16** are immediately issued a confidential access number **30**. The access number **30** allows the reporter **16** to anonymously follow up on his or her report **28** at a later date, and provide additional information or assist further if necessary. Services, whether accessed via telephone **18** or the Internet **20**, are available to reporters **16** at any time of day or night, seven days a week.

A website component **27** may be provided. FIGS. **2**A and **2**B illustrate an example of how the user interfaces **24** with the website **27** through the Internet **20** and how the information provided is managed and disseminated. The process allows anonymous and encrypted communications between the reporter **16** and a pre-assigned CPU **32**. The CPU **32** will typically be associated with the system provider **12** and may administer the service for a variety of separately maintained services for CPU **22**. The reporter **16** is permitted to create and print reports **28**, as well as respond to inquiries **34** posted by the CPU **32**. The CPU **32** may browse, read, view, and print those reports **28**. A back-office application **36** allows the CPU **32** to use reports **28** to conduct statistical analysis, create charts, and print custom reports.

In one example, the system **10** may include an optional "anonymizer" **38** feature. The anonymizer **38**, in one example, operates as follows: upon entering the site **27**, the reporter **16** is immediately anonymized. All identifying information is rendered unintelligible and is immediately purged when the reporter **16** leaves the site. The reporter **16** will remain anonymous until he leaves the site.

In one example, from the HOME PAGE **42**, the reporter **16** makes a choice by selecting "Check Status" **46**, "Make a Report" **48**. Typically, in each case, an SSL (Secure Socket Layer) encryption protocol **52** is executed. The reporter **16** will be alerted to such by a message window and the appearance of a small padlock icon **54** appearing in the tool tray of their browser. Double-clicking on this icon **54** will reveal the digital certificate assigned, confirming encryption. SSL encryption services will be provided for the site by a commerce vendor, such as Verisign.

Regardless of the nature of the report indicated, which will depend entirely on the situation, report data **56** of indefinite length may then be entered. The system **10** provides a word processor data entry screen **58** which allows the reporter **16** to enter and edit, in a report form **59**, whatever sort of information is desired. The word processor screen **58** remains open until the reporter **16** has determined that the data entry is complete and has submitted it to the system **10**. Any information or report provided by the reporter **16** while SSL is enabled will be encrypted until notified otherwise. When the reporter **16** leaves a secured portion of the site, encryption will conclude and the padlock icon **54** will disappear from the toolbar.

Administrative rights can be granted to designated CPUs **22** (usually security personnel associated with the subscriber participants **14**). These participants will be a part of the group called administrators **32**. In one example, administrators **32** will be provided an "Access Code" and access number **30**. Upon verification against a database, administrators **32** may view reports created by their associated reporters **16** (e.g. their employees or students).

Reports **28** created by reporters **16** will be stored in a relational database (see below for how reports are created). Administrators **32** may browse, read, view, and print reports **28**. The back-office application **36** allows them to conduct statistical analysis, create charts and print custom reports for their own purposes.

In one example, an administrator **60**, who will typically be a person associated with and controlled by the system provider **12** will have rights to perform any administrator function, assign access numbers and access codes, as well as post messages in response to user reports. Only the administrator **60**, a designated CPU **32**, and the report's author (the specific reporter **16** who generated the particular report **28**) will be permitted to view prior reports and administrator postings, in one example.

A "message flag" **62** will identify reports **28** within the database with messages **64** posted by the administrator **60**, which allows the reporter **16** and the administrator **60** to have electronic dialogue (much like email) where both remain anonymous. When the reporter **16** next logs on they will be able to select the "Check Messages" **46** on the

HOME PAGE **42** and will have an opportunity to review and reply to the messages **64** from the administrator **60**.

The report **28** will be distributed to pre-determined CPUs identified by the client/subscriber **14**.

In one example, the reporter **16** submits a report and obtains a user and report specific access number **74**. The reporter **16** is prompted to submit the report **28** and in doing so, is shown a non-editable rendition of the report. The reporter **16** is then provided the option to "Submit Report" or "Redo" **78**. Selection of "Redo" returns the reporter **16** to the incident report form. Once the report is submitted, a random number generating method **76** produces a unique nine-digit access number (or of other length) which becomes the User access number **74** associated with the report **28**. The reporter **16** is instructed to manually record this. Simultaneously, the user access number **74** is coupled to the report **28** and saved in a database.

Submission of the report **28** immediately results in the system **10** emailing the report to the administrator **60** and any designated recipient **22** (selected system provider managers or report reviewers). In one example, the report **28** is also bounced against a "Fuzzy Database" **80** in an effort to identify the client administrator or client-designated recipient. Because the website **27** is open and entry is not password protected, anyone with Internet access can enter the site and create/submit a report **28**. As such, the reporter **16** cannot be provided pull-down lists of all clients to identify and select his/her employer or school because of confidentiality concerns. Additionally, any typographical error or misspelling on the part of the reporter **16** may make the identity of the corresponding client organization **14** impossible to determine electronically. The "Fuzzy Database" **80**, containing permutations of the names of subscriber clients **14**, will be used to link the user's report **28** to the proper client organization **14**. Once linkage is accomplished, the report **28** will be emailed to the pre-designated client recipient **22**. If no match is found, the report **28** is forwarded to a default CPU **32** who determines future handling.

The user access number **74** created in the process will allow the administrator **60** to post messages **64** to a desired report **28**. In turn, reporters **16** may later return to the site and retrieve those messages **64** by identifying him/herself only with the user access number **74**. Upon re-entry to the site **27**, a reporter **16** retrieving messages may append an existing report **28** or create a new one. A new report **28** will generate a new user access number **74**.

As described above, the present invention is utilized in the context of safety, security and personnel management applications, particularly in schools and the workplace. The system is adapted to be accessible to any interested party with access to websites **27**. Potential client organizations **14** will typically be institutions, either academic or corporate, with concerns about controlling incidents which may presage more serious future conduct.

For the above and other reasons, it is expected that the anonymous reporting system of the present invention will have widespread industrial applicability. Therefore, it is expected that the commercial utility of the present invention will be extensive and long lasting. Further, recent enhancements to the above-described anonymous reporting system may include the ability to include one or more various features as disclosed herein. For example, report forms may be provided that are tailored to the type of incident to be reported. Such a system is described in further detail below.

For example, an individual wishing to make a report may access a website such as www.mysafeworkplace.com (or www.mysafecampus.com, www.mysafehospital.com, or other such web addresses for system **10**) where they can make a selection to indicate they wish to make a report. After making this selection, they may be redirected to a secure site where they are asked to enter the name of the organization or entity for which a report is to be made. For example, the individual may be asked to enter the first three letters of the organization's name. If the three entered letters are recognized, then a generic report form relative to that client organization **14** appears for the reporting individual to complete. The individual is asked to confirm the full name of their organization and any subsidiaries upon which they intend to make a report.

As shown in flowchart **100** in FIG. **3**, after accessing the website (**102**) the individual is asked what type of report they wish to submit. After selecting a type of report (**104**), the screen automatically changes to provide a report form (**106**) that is tailored to the type of incident to be reported. For example, an incident entitled "Accounting Error" would result in a different report form to be generated than would selection of an incident such as "Fraud", "Harassment", "Theft", or "Workplace Violence." The reporting individual then completes and submits the form (**108**).

Examples of some report forms that are specific to various types of incidents to be reported are shown in FIGS. **4**, **5** and **6**. In FIG. **4**, the form **108**A relates to an Incident Type of Fraud. The form **108**A includes a section **112** of questions that are common to each of the types of forms. The form also includes a section **114** of questions that are unique to each of the types of forms. Similarly, FIG. **5** shows a form **108**B that relates to an Incident Type of Sexual Harassment. The form **108**B includes a section **112** of questions that are common to each of the types of forms. The form also includes a section **116** of questions that are unique to that type of form. Similarly, FIG. **6** shows a form **108**C that relates to an Incident Type of Theft. The form **108**C includes a section **112** of questions that are common to each of the types of forms. The form also includes a section **118** of questions that are unique to that type of form.

It can be appreciated that the anonymous reporting system may be administered by one entity, such as the entity that maintains and administers the www.mysafeworkplace.com website.

Various companies, institutions or customers may engage this administrator/entity to list those customers as organizations at the entity's anonymous reporting system website so that reporting individuals can make reports about those customers (these customers may be referred to herein as client organizations, among other terms used herein). The individuals who visit the website and make reports are referred to herein as reporting individuals, reporting parties, or reporters **16**, among other terms. Thus, it can be appreciated that each of the administrator, the client organizations, and the reporting individuals have different rights and abilities to modify the website and enter data there.

The following sections illustrate and describe in greater detail various aspects and features associated with the anonymous reporting system **10**. It should be appreciated that the description is in no way meant to be limiting of the associated heading, and may be implemented and/or coded in software or otherwise without departing from the scope and spirit of the overall system. As such, one of skill in the art reading the description and viewing the illustrations, screen shots and flowcharts may decide to reorder or eliminate certain aspects and/or features without departing from the underlying scope and spirit of the system and its features.

Entering the Enterprise and Report Portals

As illustrated in the flowchart of FIG. **6**A, in the illustrated example, the reporter **16** enters the System by accessing www.mysafeworkplace.com through any internet browser (**120**). Typically, the Internet site is secure with the data transferred from the reporter **16** encrypted, however, the site does not have to be secure and the data transfer does not need to be encrypted to operate as intended. A secure website and data encryption provides an added level of security to the exchange of data between the reporter **16** and an intermediary/system provider. The System provides the Reporting Party two options (**122**) on its home page to enter the reporting portal: "Make A Report" or "Report Status." If, subsequent to filing the initial report, the Reporting Party moves the on-screen cursor over the "Go!" button for "Report Status" and performs a mouse click operation the system **10** opens a new page and prompts the reporter **16** to enter his "Login" information (**124**). The reporter **16** will enter a unique "Access Number" which the system **10** provided at the conclusion of filing the initial report. The Reporting Party will also enter his unique "Password" which the reporter **16** created when he filed his initial report (**126**). Upon clicking "Submit," the system **10** will open a new page to allow the reporter **16** to view his initial report.

As shown in the illustrated example, from the report page, the reporter **16** may access the System's "Message Board" by selecting a GUI button "Talk to Your Organization." In one example, the user is viewing a GUI with a button labeled Talk to Your Organization (**128**). and moves the mouse cursor over the GUI button and clicks the mouse to activate the choice. In response to the mouse click, the software program performs a series of operations to move the current GUI page to another GUI page having a message board specific to his/her report. In one particular embodiment the mouse click-to-new GUI screen operation is implemented in Microsoft® .Net, however, any programming language may be used without departing from the scope of the invention. As stated, the system **10** opens a new GUI window that provides the message board specific to the reporter's **16** report. If the CPU **22** has posted a message, the system displays certain information about the message, such as message subject, author and date to name a few. The reporter **16** may then move the cursor over the HTML link. Activating a mouse click on the message subject HTML link displays the content of the CPU's **22** message in a new page. If the reporter **16** desires to post a message for the CPU **22**, he will move the cursor over a GUI button titled, "New Dialogue" and click the mouse to activate the operation. The system opens a new page with a subject line and message body field for the reporter **16** to type free-form text.

Referring now to the illustrated example of FIG. **6**B, the client organization **14** enters the system's enterprise portal by accessing www.mysafeworkplace.com/[clientidentifier]/login.aspx through any internet browser. The [client identifier] tag is the unique location assigned to the CPU **22** within the system, thereby creating a URL unique to the CPU **22** so that all viewable information associated with the CPU **22** may be accessed. The system **10** provides the client organization **14** with a login page prompting him to enter a unique username and password. In response to the unique username and password, the system **10** opens a new page providing an incident report overview of reports the client organization **14** has received from a variety of reporting parties **16** and clicks the mouse to select the particular incident number. The client organization **14** may move the cursor over any incident number listed on the page. The system **10** opens a new page displaying the specific incident report. In one example, each incident number is an HTML link to the underlying report, so that selecting the particular incident number will automatically open the new page displaying the selected incident report.

The client organization **14** may alternatively enter the system **10** via the email notification automatically generated by the system **10** when a report is received by the system **10**. When the client organization **14** receives an email notification, he may move the on-screen cursor over the unique incident report number and generate a mouse click, which the system **10** designates as a hyperlink directly to the specific report. The system **10** will then open a new Internet window providing the client organization **14** with a login page prompting him to enter a unique username and password. After the client organization **14** enters his username and password, the system **10** opens a new window displaying the specific incident report referenced in the email notification. If the client organization **14** has previously logged into the system **10**, the system will bypass the login page and immediately display the specific incident report in a new window.

Selectable Levels of Anonymity

In one embodiment of the invention, an anonymous reporting system **10** may be provided with a plurality of different levels of anonymity for reporters **16** to utilize. In one example, a first level of anonymity includes complete anonymity wherein no contact information or personal identification information (e.g., name, telephone number or e-mail address) is provided by the reporter **16** in filing the incident report **28**. In this way, the reporter **16** can submit an incident report **28** with complete anonymity, both towards the client organization **14**, as well as towards the administrator **12**. In one example, the anonymous reporting system **10** may utilize a computer display screen which provides the reporter **16** with a selection of a plurality of levels of anonymity, as illustrated in FIG. **7**. In the example of FIG. **7**, a computer display screen or graphical user interface (GUI) provides a drop-down menu for the reporter **16** to select from three levels of desired anonymity. In this example, if the user selects "remain completely anonymous" as the anonymity level, then the computer display screen removes the queries for identifying information, such as name, phone numbers, personal e-mail addresses, etc., as is shown in one example in FIG. **8**.

In FIG. **8**, once the reporter **16** has selected an anonymity level of completely anonymous, the computer display screen is provided with one or more fields requesting that the reporter **16** provide a password which the anonymous reporting system **10** will associate with this incident report. As will be described below, once the reporter **16** submits the incident report with the follow-up password, the anonymous reporting system **10** randomly generates an access number for the reporter **16** and notifies the reporter **16** of this access number. The reporter **16**, after submitting the incident report, may engage in follow-up communications with the client organization **14** using only the access number and follow-up password, without any personally identifying information, such that the reporter's **16** anonymity may be maintained. FIG. **9** illustrates an example of a computer display screen wherein the anonymous reporting system **10** communicates a unique access number to the reporter **16** after the reporter **16** has submitted an incident report.

A second level of anonymity may include anonymity towards the client organization **14**. In this example, the reporter **16** provides identifying information which may include name, telephone numbers, personal e-mail addresses, etc.; however, this information is received only

by administrator **12** and stored in databases **15**, but not made available whatsoever to client organization **14**. Hence, in this example, the administrator **12** obtains information to facilitate easy and quick follow up communications, but the administrator **12** does not supply such identifying information to the client organization **14**. FIG. **10** illustrates an example computer display screen wherein the reporter **16** has selected to remain "anonymous toward your organization" and wherein a set of personal information fields are provided in order to obtain identifying information from the reporter **16**.

In one example, another level of anonymity may be provided which is effectively "no anonymity" wherein the client organization **14** and the administrator **12** are both made aware of the identity and contact information of the reporter **16**. In this example, a computer display screen may be generated by the system **10** in a manner similar to FIG. **10**, except that the information obtained from the reporter **16** will be reported by administrator **12** to the client organization **14**.

As illustrated in the flowchart of FIG. **11**, the system **10** allows the reporter **16** to select the level of anonymity the reporter desires (**200**), by prompting with the question "Do you wish to remain anonymous?" The system **10** provides three options in a drop-down menu (**209**) for the reporter **16** to chose from: "Remain completely anonymous" (**208**); "Remain anonymous toward your organization" (**207**); and "Do not care about anonymity" (**206**). The system **10** provides an optional pop-up window, titled "Explain", which provides definitions for each of the three levels of anonymity to allow the reporter **16** to review prior to selecting anonymity level (**205**). The reporter **16** **10** makes his anonymity selection, which the system saves to a database (**210**). In one particular embodiment, the anonymous selection is stored in an anonymity category table in a relational database program such as SQL, however, any suitable database program may be used.

If the reporter **16** selects "Remain Completely Anonymous" (**215**), the system **10** automatically hides all contact fields where the reporter **16** would otherwise enter his identifying information (**220**), including name, email address, and phone numbers. The system **10** displays the reporter's anonymity category selection **12** of "Remain completely anonymous" (**225**) for the client organization **14** and the administrator **12** to view.

If the reporter **16** selects "Remain anonymous toward your organization" or "Do not care about anonymity", the system **10** displays the following contact fields, "Your name", "Day phone number", "Evening phone number", and "Personal Email" (**230**). The reporter **16** completes each contact field (**235**). In some cases, data must be entered into certain fields for the reporter **16** to continue to the next screen and therefore continue with the reporting process. In the illustrated embodiment, the reporter **16** would be required to enter his name, a daytime phone number and an evening phone number with personal e-mail being optional. The required fields for the illustrated embodiment should not be limiting as any combination of fields may be required prior to continuing the reporting process. The system also asks the reporter **16** to select a response to the question "How best may we contact you?" and provides a drop-down menu including the options of "Day Phone", "Evening Phone", "Personal Email", or "Any of the above". When the reporter **16** completes the contact fields, the system **10** automatically saves the data to a database (**240**). In one example, the information provided in each contact field is stored in a confidentiality table in a relational database program such as the one described for the anonymity category table.

If the reporter **16** selects "Remain anonymous toward your organization" (**245**), the system **10** displays that anonymity category selection for the client organization **14** and the administrator **12** to view. The reporter's **16** contact data that the system **10** saved to the database is displayed only to the administrator (**255**), for example.

If the reporter **16** selects "Do not care about anonymity" (**250**), the system **10** displays that Anonymity Category selection and the reporter's **16** contact data that the system **10** saved to the database for the client organization **14** and the administrator **12** to view, for example.

Automatic Notification of Incident Reports

In another example of an embodiment of the invention, an anonymous reporting system **10** may be provided with automatic electronic notification to a client organization **14**, via e-mail or other electronic notification means, upon the occurrence of an identifiable event, such as a database transaction in a database. In one example, such a transaction may include the filing of an incident report **28** by a reporter **16**. In one embodiment, the administrator's software system **13**, immediately upon receiving an incident report filed by a reporter **16**, automatically notifies the client organization **14** of the fact that an incident report **28** has been filed. In one example, the notification may be in the form of an e-mail or set of e-mails sent to one or more pre-CPUs **22** of the client organization **14**.

FIG. **12** illustrates one example of an electronic notification, more particularly an e-mail **200**, in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention. As shown in FIG. **12**, a notification e-mail **200**, sent from the administrator **12** through the administrator's e-mail address **205**, is sent to one or more CPUs **22** of the client organization **14** to the CPU's e-mail address **206** wherein the subject line of the e-mail **201** identifies that the e-mail relates to an urgent employee incident. In one example, the e-mail **200** includes a field **201** that describes the incident type, a field **203** that lists the CPUs of the e-mail notification, and a field **202** that describes the organization that is the subject of the incident report. In one example, the notification e-mail may also include a hyperlink to the incident report **204**, which may be displayed in the form of an incident report number when the recipient moves the on-screen cursor over the hyperlink and activates a mouse click, a new page is opened requesting the recipient to enter his/her unique identification and password to gain access to the incident report.

FIG. **13** illustrates an example of operations for providing automated electronic notifications to CPUs of the filing of an incident report, in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention. During enterprise setup, the client organization **14** specifies CPUs and desired notification levels (**208**). For instance, the client organization **14** may assign one or more individuals within the client organization **14** to be CPUs and have certain roles or privileges in receiving and processing incident reports made in the anonymous reporting system. Hierarchical tiers or groups may be defined, and CPUs may be specified to receive notifications under certain conditions, such as geographic conditions, entity or subsidiary relations, or other parameters that may be specified by the client organization, as will be described in greater detail below. Moreover, notification levels may be specified, so that certain CPUs receive electronic notifications of all activities related to a particular incident report, whereas other CPUs may receive notifications of only a subset of all

of the events related to a particular incident report, as may be desired by a particular client organization **14**.

When a database transaction occurs that triggers an operation to send an electronic message to the client organization **14**, such as an incident report being received by the software system **10** (**209**) for example, the system matches the incident report against the privilege level of the CPUs as well as the user group settings defined by the client organization **14** to determine which CPUs should receive notification of the filing of the incident report (**210**). In one embodiment, a database transaction may be a number of organization transaction types such as submitting a new report by a reporting party, adding a new user a report, making a change to report distribution or a reporting party posting a message to a message board to name a few. In another embodiment, a database transaction may be a number of reporting party transaction types such as an organization posting a message to a message board. Operation **209** may also exclude notification of the filing of an incident report, for example, when the incident report relates to a complaint against a person who happens also to be a designated recipient of the report. In one example, an incident report includes a field for the reporter **16** to identify a "named party" involved in the offending incident. The system **10** may exclude from notification any person who is specified by the reporter **16** as a "named party" in the incident report.

Having determined what persons should receive notification of the particular incident report, the system **10** matches electronic notification content type to the transaction type (**211**), creates an electronic notification and transmits the notification to the individuals determined previously (**212**). In one example, an electronic notification may be an e-mail having an incident type field, an organization name field, a list of CPUs field, and a link to the incident report, as shown in the example of FIG. **12**, although other electronic notification formats may be used depending upon the particular implementation.

The system **10** may log or track the transmission of the incident report **28** to each individual that accesses the incident report (**213**). In one example, all e-mails related to an incident report are logged in the database **15**, and such logging data may include the recipient's name, a time and date stamp that the e-mail was sent, and the internal report number of the incident report. In this way, the client organization **14** and its CPUs are immediately notified of the filing of an incident report on a 24 hour/7 day basis regardless of when a reporter **16** submits the incident report.

As illustrated in the flowchart of FIG. **14**, upon submission of an incident report, the Client Participant Users (CPU) **22** have access to the report and may receive notification via email about the new report, based on certain criteria. In one example, if a CPU **22** has been named in a report and excluded by the reporter **16**, which is defined step within the report submission process, the system will exclude such user from all access and notification processes (**227**). If a CPU **22** has been named, but not excluded by the reporter **16**, then access and notification will be completed the same as for any other CPU **22** (**230**).

The system **10** automatically sends notification of and provides access to the new report to several individuals based upon their privilege level. In one embodiment, all OSA level users receive an e-mail notification with an embedded hyperlink to the report. A list of all the additional users with access to the report is also included within the notification e-mail. The e-mail notifications are typically tracked in a log, such as a user assigned log or e-mail log, for example. In one embodiment, all users who have been granted access to the report, regardless of notification settings, are logged in a "Users Assigned" log, which is displayed with the incident report view.

If the CPU **22** has a privilege level of less than an OSA (**236**), then the "User Group" CPUs are notified if the incident type, location, and organization are also contained within the User Group parameters (**240**). Notification is provided only if the incident type selected by the reporter **16** is set within the User Group configuration to allow for notification (**249**)(**250**). Otherwise, access is provided without specific notification (**244**).

Message Boards. Notification of Message Board Activity, Message Board Anonymity

Moreover, a system **10** may also be provided with the feature of a message board that may be utilized to provide communication between client organizations **14** and reporters **16**. If desired, the system **10** may be provided with the capability of providing electronic notifications to CPUs **22** of the client organization **14** that there is new message board activity.

In one example, a system **10** is provided with a message board that permits client organizations **14** to communicate with reporters **16** vis-à-vis message boards. This provides the client organization **14** with the ability to ask further questions of the reporter **16**, as well as for the reporter **16** to provide additional information or facts relating to the incident, all while maintaining the anonymity of the reporter **16**.

The process of notifying CPUs **22** of client organization **14** of activity on the message board related to a particular incident may be provided utilizing a manner similar to that described above with reference to FIG. **13**. Specifically, after the client organization **14** has set up or selected particular recipients to receive notifications of message board activity, then thereafter when a reporter **16** posts a message to a message board related to a particular incident report, the system **10** automatically notifies the CPUs **22** of the client organization **14** that a message posting exists.

E-mail notifications **252** of message board activity can also be sent to reporters **16** if the reporter **16** selected an anonymity level where the reporter **16** provided the administrator **12** with an e-mail address of the reporter **16**. An example of such an e-mail is illustrated in FIG. **15**, wherein an e-mail notification **252** is sent to a reporter **16** (in this example shown as "Jake@yahoo.com") and the subject line **251** identifies that "your organization has posted a message." The notification e-mail **252** may include an incident number field **253** which displays the incident number, as well as text indicating that the reporter's **16** client organization **14** has posted a message in response to the incident report.

In cases where the reporter **16** has chosen to remain completely anonymous to both the client organization **14** and the administrator **12**, a message board may be provide that is accessible to the anonymous reporter **16** whenever the anonymous reporter **16** checks the report status. In one example, administrator **12** provides, as part of the reporter's portal, a status button that permits the reporter **16** to check the status of the incident report which they filed. FIG. **16** illustrates an example of a computer display screen having a status button **255** that a reporter **16** may select in order to view report status; and upon activating the status button, in one example, a computer display screen, such as shown in FIG. **17**, is provided that has an access number field **259** for querying the reporter **16** for an access number (which was previously provided to the reporter **16**, see FIG. **9**) as well as a field **258** for querying the reporter **16** for their follow up

password (which was previously specified by the reporter **16** as part of the report they submitted, see FIG. **8**).

In FIG. **18**, an example of a message board **261** is illustrated, wherein a series, set, or string of messages related to an incident report are displayed for viewing by the reporter **16**. As shown in the example of FIG. **18**, a computer display screen may be provided with messages from the client organization **14** (**262**) to the reporter **16**, as well as messages from the reporter **16** to the client organization **14** (**263**). In one example, the messages from the client organization **14** to the reporter **16** may identify the author of the client organization's **14** message **264**, as well as a date/time stamp **265**. As shown in FIG. **18**, the reporter's **16** anonymity is maintained, as the message board **261** does not display identifying information about the reporter. In one example, each message may be provided with a display field **266** indicating whether the particular message is "attorney work product."

In one example, when the corporation posts a message to the message board **261**, the message is internally tagged with the CPU's **22** user ID, which is used later for audit trails and historical recordkeeping (not shown). The message may then be posted to the message board, and when the reporter **16** views the message, the CPU's **22** name is not displayed on the message board, but instead the author is displayed as "your organization" or the like. If the reporter **16** replies to the CPU's **22** message, then an event of a posting will spawn the appropriate e-mail notification back to the client organization **14**.

In another embodiment, the name of the client organization's **14** author of a message may be withheld in the message board **261** when viewed by the reporter **16**, so that the identity of the specific individual at the client organization **14** who is posting a message is anonymous to the reporter **16**. FIG. **19** illustrates an example of a computer display screen wherein a message board **270** is provided that does not display the name of the CPU **22** who posted the message to the reporter **16** **271**. FIG. **19** is the message board view **270** from the perspective of the reporter **16**; preferably, the view of the message board from the client organization's **14** perspective would display the CPU's **22** name who authored the particular message on behalf of the client organization **14**, such as in the example of FIG. **18**. Hence, by providing a message board for anonymous communications between a reporter **16** and a client organization **14**, embodiments of the present invention may provide for further investigation and follow-up of an incident report. The client organization **14** may also use the message board to communicate other facts or data to the reporter **16**, such as the status of the investigation into the reported incident.

FIG. **20** shows a flowchart for one example of the posting of message to a message board. A message is posted by either a reporter **16** (**276**) or a CPU **22** user (CPU) **22** (**283**), by opening the message board, creating the message with subject line, and saving the text. The message may either be an original message, or a reply to an existing message. If the message was saved by the reporter **16**, then the system **12** automatically sends notification to the CPU **22** if the CPU **22** belongs to a user group with the notification level of "All Emails" for that specific incident type (**291**) or if the CPU **22** is at the organizational super administrator (OSA) level, then the OSA **467** automatically receives the e-mail notification if the user record flag is set to "all emails" (**294**). However, if the OSA's user record flag is set to "initial/audit emails only", they will not receive message board notifications (**292**). If the message was saved by the CPU **22**, the notification is sent automatically to the reporter **16** if the reporter **16** provided an email address in their contact information contained in the database (e.g., Confidentiality Table) (**281**). A notification is also sent to the CPUs **22** (except for the author of the message) if the CPU **22** belongs to a user group with the notification level of "All Emails" for that specific incident type. A notification is also sent to the OSA level users, if the OSA user record has the notification level of "All Emails".

In the case of investigatory notes message board postings a message is posted by the CPU **22** by opening the message board, creating the message with the subject line, and saving the text to the database. The message may either be an original message, or a reply to an existing message. Notification is sent to the CPUs **22** (except for the author of the message) if the CPU **22** belongs to a user group with the notification level of "All Emails" for that specific incident type. A notification is also sent to the OSA level users, if the OSA user record has the notification level of "All Emails." In the illustrated example, reporters **16** do not have access to, or receive notification about investigatory notes message postings.

As illustrated in the flowcharts of FIGS. **21** and **22**, a message board, or method to create and save information, is provided for the both the reporter **16** and the client participant users **22**, and is entitled "Talk to Your Organization" (from the reporter's **16** view when checking status of their report) and "Talk to Reporting Party" from the CPU's **22** view in reviewing a specific incident report. The input screen is designed to capture text for the purpose of recording communications between the reporter **16** and the client organization **14**. Such communications may include questions about the incident, additional information provided as part of the report, or resulting conclusions reached by the client organization **14**. Additionally, the client organization **14** may use this message board to offer additional contact information to the reporter **16** for direct one-on-one communications between the parties by putting such information in the body of a message.

In one example, FIG. **21** illustrates how a reporter **16** may create an original message or reply to a message in a message board. For example, the reporter **16** may log into the report by selecting the "Go" button in the report status section of the main (home) web page of the system. The reporter **16** is prompted for their report ID number and the personal password they provided and was saved by the system **10** when submitting their report (**300**). The reporter **16** selects the button titled "Talk to Your Organization" by moving the on-screen cursor over the GUI button and performing a mouse click operation to open the message board (**302**).

A new window opens which displays any existing messages, listed by subject, original message author, and showing the number of replies, the author of the most recent reply, and the date of the most recent reply (or date of the original message submission if no replies exist). In one particular embodiment, the author of each message and/or reply is displayed as "Your Organization" for any messages or replies saved by CPUs **22**, and displayed as "reporter" for any messages or replies saved by the reporter **16**. If the reporter **16** desires to add a new message to the message board, the reporter **16** moves the on-screen cursor over a GUI button titled "New Dialog" and performs a mouse click operation to open a new message creation window. If the reporter **16** wants to respond to an existing message or just view an existing message (**308**), the reporter **16** simply clicks on the message in the message board (**306**). In the

illustrated embodiment, the manner in which a message is authorized is the same for both a new message and replying to an existing message.

The new window contains an alert to the reporter **16** about the system time-out provisions, an entry field for the subject of the message and an entry field for the body of the message. In one embodiment, the system times out after 20 minutes. The reporter **16** enters the subject line and message text (**312**)(**320**). An optional spell-check button is available, and when selected, will process the text entries against a standard spell-check dictionary, prompting the reporter **16** for response to any non-matching text in order to correct spelling as needed.

In one example, once the text of the message is entered, the reporter **16** has two options available: save the message to the message board or cancel the message. A "save" GUI button is available to save the entered text (**326**). If the message is saved, the message will be shown in the message board with a time and date stamp and the author is identified as "reporter". Once saved, the message is not alterable in any way by any party. A "cancel" GUI button is also available to not save the entered text and therefore exit the message and close the new window (**324**).

The message author is saved as "reporter" for view by either the reporter **16** or the CPU **22**. Any messages or replies authored by CPUs **22** are labeled as "Your Organization" for viewing by the reporter **16**. Therefore, the anonymity of the reporter **16** is protected as no contact information from the database (e.g., Confidentiality Table) is displayed within the message board. The anonymity of the CPUs **22** is also protected as no identifying information is provided about the CPU **22** to the reporter **16**.

In another example, FIG. **22** illustrates how a CPU **22** may create an original message or reply to a message in a message board. The CPU **22** logs into a specific report and enters his unique username and password (**328**). For example, the CPU **22** may choose the report from a list or from a hyperlink in an e-mail notification. The CPU **22** then moves the on-screen cursor over either the GUI button "investigatory notes" or the GUI button "talk to reporting party" and activates a mouse click (**330**). Choosing "talk to reporting party" takes the CPU **22** to the message board for the particular report.

In one embodiment, a new window opens which displays any existing messages, listed by subject, original message author, and showing the number of replies, the author of the most recent reply, and the date of the most recent reply (or date of the original message submission if no replies exist). In one particular embodiment, the author of each message and/or reply is displayed as "Your Organization" for any messages or replies saved by CPUs **22**, and displayed as "reporter" for any messages or replies saved by the reporter **16**.

If the CPU **22** desires to add a new message to the message board, the CPU **22** selects a GUI button titled "Talk to Reporting Party" to open a new message creation window. If the CPU **22** wants to respond to an existing message or just view an existing message (**348**)(**352**), the CPU **22** simply clicks on a message in the message board. In the illustrated embodiment, the manner in which a message is authored is the same for both a new message and replying to an existing message.

The new window contains an alert to the CPU **22** about the system time-out provisions, an entry field for the subject of the message, and an entry field for the body of the message. In one embodiment, the system times out after 20 minutes. The CPU **22** enters the subject line and message text (**334**)(**354**). An optional spell-check button is available (**336**)(**354**), and when selected, will process the text entries against a standard spell-check dictionary, prompting the CPU **22** for response to any non-matching text in order to correct spelling as needed. An optional attorney work product option is also available that internally marks the message as attorney work product (**336**), meaning such a designation is not visible to the reporter **16** but may be used internally in any manner.

In the illustrated embodiment, once the text of the message is entered, the CPU **22** has two options available, either save the message to the message board or cancel the message. A "save" GUI button is available to save the entered text (**356**). In the illustrated example, if the message is saved, the message will be shown in the message board with a time and date stamp and the author is identified as "Your Organization". A warning displays to the CPU **22** that the reporter **16** will be sent the message, thus asking the CPU **22** if he still wants to send the message (**342**)(**360**). Once saved, the message is not alterable in any way by any party (**346**). The CPU **22** may reply to original messages or reply to replies of messages (**364**). A "cancel" GUI button is also available to not save the entered text and therefore exit the message and close the new window (**340**)(**358**).

The message author is saved as "Your Organization" for view by the reporter **16** and with the CPU's **22** name for the other CPUs **22** of the organization. Any messages or replies authored by CPUs **22** are labeled as "Your Organization" for viewing by the reporter **16**. The anonymity of the CPU **22** is protected as no identifying information is provided about the CPU **22** to the reporter **16**.

Management Functions

In another embodiment, system **10** may be provided with a control for permitting CPUs **22** to assign or remove particular individuals from the anonymous reporting system **10**. FIG. **23** illustrates an example display screen listing each authorized CPU **22** (**370**) to receive and handle incident reports as listed, as well as their privilege level **372**. In one example, OSA privilege level provides organizational super administrative level and can be used to define the distribution of incident reports. An organizational manager privilege level (OM), in one example, provides all of the same privileges as an OSA, but does not receive automatic notification of every incident. An organizational administrative level (OA) provides for data entry, and a privilege level of a designated recipient (DR) can be utilized to specify individuals who are designated to receive incident reports, such as chief financial officers, senior managers, etc. Read only privilege levels (RO) can be provided for individuals who may read incident reports but cannot write data related to such reports within the system. As shown in FIG. **23**, for each user, an active display field **374** can be provided which indicates whether the particular user is active, and a control **376** can be provided for enabling or disabling an account of a particular CPU **22** of a client organization **14**, as shown in FIG. **24**.

Generally, when a new client organization **14** establishes an account with the administrator **12** in the system **10**, during the client setup process, an OSA or administrator is established which permits the OSA to set up other CPUs **22**. The OSA can define organizational structures and distribution of incident reports as desired. Further, particular incident types can be assigned to certain individuals, for instance, if desired, discrimination incident types could be assigned to the client organization's **14** EEOC manager.

Organizational structures can be defined with unlimited multiple tiers to facilitate organized automated distribution

of incident reports as they are received. For instance, a client organization **14** can set up tiers in tier fields **378**, including regions **380**, territories **382**, districts **384**, locations **386** or by other tiers as desired by the corporation (see FIG. **25**). In one example, the tiers may be used to specify automated distribution of received incident reports based on user groups as shown in FIGS. **26** and **27**. In FIG. **26**, for example, the audit committee is provided with a distribution control display button **388** wherein the screen **390** of FIG. **27** may be displayed to show the distribution tiers for reports that will be sent to the audit committee. FIG. **27** shows an example of a completed tier structure with selections for a specific user group—in effect, FIG. **27** shows the various locations that, if involved or specified in an incident report, will have such incident reports distributed to the audit committee. In other words, reports from these specified locations are sent to the audit committee. In this manner, embodiments of the present invention can specify the locational sources that a particular user group will receive incident reports. In the example of FIG. **27**, the audit committee receives reports from all locations in the East District **396** except from the Denver location. The checkboxes on each region **392**, **394** permit the client organization **14** to specify the automated distribution of incident reports received from particular locations to a particular user group, such as the audit committee in this example.

As shown above, with respect to FIG. **14**, distribution of incident reports may also be governed by the incident type, such that particular user groups receive incident reports that relate only to a specified one or more incident types.

FIG. **28** illustrates an example of an incident summary or view page **400** that may be presented to a client organization **14** indicating the incident internal report number **401** and the incident type **403**, in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention. The view page may include general information about the incident **402**, controls for a message board/investigatory notes **404**, a status change log **406**, a display of users assigned to the incident as well as related controls **408**, and an incident view log **410** showing the CPUs **22** which have reviewed the incident. Controls **412** may also be provided for updating the incident report data. For instance, in one example, the client organization **14** can revise or reassign the reporter's **16** designated incident type, location, or organization, and the software will permit such an update while maintaining the original data entered by the reporter **16**. As shown in FIG. **28**, for instance, the original incident type **414** was selected by the reporter **16** as "customer mistreatment," and the current incident type **416** has since been reassigned to "accounting misrepresentation," and both the original **414** and current **416** incident types are displayed in the incident information pane **402** that is displayed. Permitting a CPU **22** to reassign or update the incident type, location, or organization may be useful for a number of purposes, including improving the accuracy of the incident report and the subsequent actions taken by the client organization **14**. Because the software maintains the original data entered by the reporter **16**, the integrity of the initial incident report as entered by the reporter **16** is maintained. In one example, when an update to a field of an incident report (such as type, location, organization) is made, the CPU **22** is asked to specify and enter a reason for the change.

In another embodiment of the present invention, a system **10** may be provided wherein access rights to a particular incident report may be selectively controlled. As shown in FIG. **29**, a set of controls **418** may be provided for a plurality of corporate representatives in order to enable the addition of CPUs **22** to view a specified report, and in one example, a reason for adding a particular corporate representative is required to be specified for audit and tracking purposes. In one example, the date/time that a user was added or removed is also tracked for audit purposes.

FIG. **30** illustrates a CPU **22** adding a user to system **12** by moving the on-screen cursor over the "users" link in the enterprise portal and activating a mouse click operation. In one example, a CPU **22** may create a user record and access level (**429**) so as to add a user to the system **10**. In one particular operation, the CPU **22** clicks on the "Users" link in the Enterprise Portal, and the system opens a new page displaying all the current CPUs **22**. The CPU **22** then clicks the "Add" button and the system **10** opens a new page. The CPU **22** enters the user's name, username (for login purposes), position, and contact information, and saves the change.

The CPU **22** then determines if the individual user should have automatic distribution of reports (**431**). If so, the CPU **22** adds the user to a user group (**439**), as described herein. If user does not get automatic notification of reports, the CPU **22** determines if user should have access to an individual report (**433**).

Continuing with the example of FIG. **30**, an individual user is to have access to an individual report, CPU **22** must grant the user access to the report. To do so, for example, the CPU **22** opens the individual report (**435**). Within the report, there is a box titled "Users Assigned to Incident" displaying each user who has access to that report. The CPU **22** moves the on-screen cursor over the "Grant/Remove Access" GUI button within the user assigned to incident box and performs a mouse click operation. In response to the mouse click operation, the system **10** then opens a new page that displays a list of all users within the organization. The CPU **22** then checks the user to add to access the report, provide a reason for granting access, and save the change. The system **10** notifies the new user via email that he has been granted access to the report (**437**).

In FIG. **31**, if a user receives automatic access of the report, the CPU **22** may remove access to the report (**441**). To do so, for example, the CPU **22** opens the individual report. Within the report, there is a box titled "Users Assigned to Incident" displaying each user who has access to that report. The CPU **22** moves the on-screen cursor in the GUI over the "Grant/Remove Access" button within the Users Assigned to Incident box and performs a mouse click operation. The system **10** opens a new page showing the list of all users within the organization. The CPU **22** unchecks the box by the user's name, provides a reason for removing access, and saves the change (**445**). In one example, the system **10** does not send any notifications to the user, but it will deny access of the report to the user (**447**).

FIG. **32** shows one example of removing a user from system **10**. To remove a user from the system **10**, the CPU **22** opens the user record for that individual, accessed through clicking on the "Users" link in the Enterprise Portal. The CPU **22** then clicks on the box next to "Active" to delete the checkmark from the box and saves the change.

As illustrated in the flow chart of FIG. **33**, the CPU **22** may create a user record for each individual who may have access to the system **10**. User records includes, name, title, contact information, and in one embodiment one of five privilege levels.

In the illustrated example, the top Privilege Level is Organizational Super-Administrator (OSA). The OSA gets automatic notification for every report, access to all reports, creates and configures the organization and users within the

enterprise portal. The next Privilege Level is Organizational Manager (OM). The OM has the same privileges as the OSA, but does not receive automatic notification of every report. The next Privilege Level is Organizational Administrator (OA). The OA may create the organizational configuration, but cannot affect distribution and does not receive reports unless he also assigned to a user group. The next Privilege Level is Designated Recipient (DR). The DR receives notification of reports if he is assigned to a user group, has access to those reports, and cannot affect any organizational configurations or any other settings within the System. The final Privilege Level is Read Only (RO). The RO has view-only access to reports if he is assigned to access them in a user group. It should be appreciated that any number of privilege levels may be created, and therefore, the five illustrated in FIG. **33** are not intended to be limiting in any way.

To set the privilege level, the CPU **22** must then open the user record for the user, by moving the on-screen cursor over the users link in the enterprise portal and performing a mouse click operation. In response to the mouse click operation, the system **10** opens a new page listing all of the users, which allows the CPU **22** to click on the name of the individual user to change his/her privilege level he wants to affect. The CPU **22** must then click on the corresponding privilege level in the user record and save the change.

As shown in the flow chart of FIG. **34**, the administrator **12** first determines if a client organization **14** has previously been created for the client (**475**). If not, the system **10** directs the administrator **12** to a new page to create an organization profile for the client organization **14** (**477**). More specifically, in one particular embodiment, the CPU **22** clicks on the "Organization Profile" link in the enterprise portal, and the system **10** opens a new page that allows the CPU **22** to enter the organization's contact information and save the changes.

After the administrator **12** creates the organization profile, the CPU **22** determines if locations have been added to the client organization **14** (**479**). If not, the system **10** directs the CPU **22** to add locations for the client organization **14** (**481**), including an address and time zone for each. In one example, the CPU **22** enters the new screen by clicking on the "Locations" button from the Enterprise Portal. The CPU **22** then adds the location name and address for the client location and saves the changes.

The system then allows the CPU **22** to define Tier Levels for the organization (**483**). In one embodiment, the CPU **22** selects the "Tiers" link from the enterprise portal. The CPU **22** may define the number of tiers and name each tier, based on region, division, or other sub-groups of the organization (**485**). For example, the CPU **22** might name each region in the tier as East Region and West Region. Then, the CPU **22** might name each division in the tier as District **1**, District **2**, and District **3**.

The CPU **22** may then determine whether an client organization's **14** location is associated with the lowest level of a tier (**487**). For example, if Location A, Location B, and Location C are associated with District **1**, then the CPU **22** assigns each location accordingly to District **1**. The CPU **22** then assigns each tier in the structure to the next higher level (**491**). For example, the CPU **22** will assign District **1** and District **2** (with each district's corresponding assigned locations) to East Region. The CPU **22** will continue the assignments all the way to the top Organization level (**493**).

FIG. **35** illustrates one example of revising a report distribution while maintaining the original. The reporter **16** creates a new report which is saved by the system **10** (**495**). The system sends notification emails to the CPUs **22** who have access to the report as defined by user group settings (**497**). Depending on the privilege level of the CPU **22**, the CPU **22** may revise the incident type, organization, or location that was identified by the reporter **16**.

If the CPU **22** has a privilege level of OSA or OM, the CPU **22** may modify the incident type, organization, or location from the original settings identified by the reporter **16** in the report (**505**). In the illustrated example, if the CPU **22** is a DR, OA or RO privilege level, the CPU **22** may not modify the report (**503**). To modify the report, the CPU **22** opens the report, which contains a box titled "Update Incident." In one embodiment, the box contains five parameters which may be modified: "Organization," "Location," "Incident Type," "Priority" and "Status." For example, from a drop-down menu, the CPU **22** may select (1) any of the client's pre-defined organization levels, (2) any of the client's pre-defined locations and (3) any of the client's pre-selected incident types. The CPU **22** saves the changes (**511**).

The system **10** saves the original data entered by the reporter **16**, and retains the new data entered by the CPU **22**. The system **10** then reviews the user group distribution matrix and grants new access and/or sends an email notification to any new users who should receive access to the report based on the new data entered by the CPU **22** (**513**). The system **10** disables access to the report to any users who do not have access based on the distribution criteria entered by the CPU **22** (**515**).

The system **10** will display both the new modifications and the original data entered by the reporter **16** for any CPU **22** to view (**517**).

As illustrated in the flow chart of FIG. **36**, in one example, the reporter **16** submits a report to the system **10** and the report is stored in a database (**519**). The System **10** sends notification emails to the users included in the user groups who are designated to have access to the report based on user group settings, such as location, incident type, and privilege level to name a few (**521**). If a CPU **22** enters the report and determines that another organizational member, who does not have automatic access, should receive the report, then the CPU **22** may grant access for the individual report (**523**).

In illustrated example, if the CPU **22** has an OSA or OM privilege level (**525**), the CPU **22** may grant access to the report. For example, when the CPU **22** opens the report, the system may display a table titled "Users Assigned to Incident." In this example, this table has two columns listing every organizational user and his corresponding client organization **14**, who has automatic access to view the report. The CPU **22** may then move the on-screen cursor over the "Grant/Remove Access" button at the bottom of the table in the GUI and activate a mouse click operation. In response to the mouse click operation, the system **10** may open a new page displaying a table with the names of all CPUs **22**. The CPU **22** may then click on the check box next to each name to grant access to a new user (**541**), and also provide a written reason for the change. The system **10** stores the reason, date, and time of the change permanently within its audit log(**543**). The system **10** may be configured to automatically send an email notification to the new user who has been granted access to the report (**545**).

In one example, if the CPU **22** desires to grant access to a report to a new user who is not previously created for the client, the CPU **22** selects the Users link from the Enterprise portal (**537**). The CPU **22** creates a new user record for the new user and saves the data. The CPU **22** re-enters the

report, and grants access to the new user by utilizing the above-described methods (**539**).

Graphical and Analytical Display Tools

In another embodiment of the present invention, various graphical and statistical displays of incident report data may be provided to both the client organizations **14** and/or the administrator **12**, if desired. These graphical and statistical displays help provide the client organization **14** with the ability to analyze trends or hot points within its organization structure. In one example, historical data may be viewed graphically, based on categories of incident types, report status, aging of active reports, aging of active reopened reports, closure rates of non-reopened reports, closure rates of reopened reports, frequency of reporting over time, and location. FIG. **37** illustrates an example of a listing **600** of the types of reports that may be generated, if desired.

In one example, controls may be provided so that a CPU **22** may view data based on the organization, a date range, an incident type, or a report status. In FIG. **38**, controls for each of these parameters are provided which effectively filter the data presented based upon the selection of one or more particular filter parameters. In FIG. **38**, a display of historical data **604** for a one-year period of time based on location is provided. This example shows that between the dates of Apr. 21, 2005 and Apr. 21, 2006, there were five "acceptable use violations" in various locations of the organization. The incident list **608** provided includes the internal report number **610** (shown as an incident number), the date the report was entered **612**, the status of the report **614**, as well as the location related to the report **606**. Such a display assists the client organization **14** to examine the types of incidents that are being reported at various locations over specified periods of time. The display of historical data may be filtered using an incident type filter **616**, a date control filter **618**, an organization control filter **620** and a status filter **620** to further limit the useful information displayed.

In another embodiment, a keyword search **622** may be provided as a filter parameter, so that a client organization **14** can look for incident reports that include certain keywords, such as the keyword "gun" as shown in FIG. **39**. An entity control **624** may also be provided for allowing a client organization **14** to filter data across organizations including parent organizations and subsidiaries thereof, as shown in FIG. **40**. An example of an incident type data filter **626** is shown in FIG. **41** that includes a drop down menu listing a plurality of incident types, as well as a control for each incident type to allow the CPU **22** to select or deselect particular incident types for historical display purposes.

In another embodiment, a CPU **22** may view statistical information regarding incident reports. In FIG. **42**, a histogram **628** is shown which illustrates the number of reports filed each month during the first four months of 2006 which satisfy the filter parameters specified in this example. In one example, each vertical column display is an active link **630** to greater detail data, as shown in FIG. **43**, which shows a greater amount of the timing of various incident reports that were filed during the month of February 2006. The columns in FIG. **42** may also be active links to greater detailed information, for instance the user may select the February 14 date in FIG. **43** and, in one example, may be presented with the data from one of the two incident reports **632** that were filed on February 14, as shown in FIG. **44**. Preferably, the incident reports are viewed as read-only when displayed through an analytical, graphical or statistical tool. Hence, embodiments of the present invention may be provided with graphical display tools for displaying statistical data or historical data relating to incident reports, in such a manner that if a user desires, the detailed report may be provided as an end point to the data display.

In addition, pie charts can be utilized to display graphical representations of incident reports by incident types, status, or age of reports, as desired. Examples are shown in FIGS. **45**, **46**, **47** and **48**.

FIG. **45** illustrates an example of a graphical representation (pie chart) of active incident reports by type **634** and by status **636**. Through such a display, a CPU **22** or other user can easily view the number of different incident types of incident reports received by a particular entity. An incident type key **642** may also be displayed, and the pie chart and key are preferably color-coded. In one example, each of the slices or portions of the pie-chart represent a different incident type **638**, and each of the slices or portions of the pie-chart are active links **640** which when selected will activate a display of a level of more detailed information relating to the particular incident type selected.

In another example, a pie-chart can be displayed that is divided up based on the current status of incident reports (e.g., reviewed, re-opened, action pending, new, etc.). In one example, each of the slices or portions of the pie chart represent a different incident report status **644**, and each of the slices or portions of the pie-chart are active links **646** which when selected will activate a display (such as in FIG. **46**) of a level of more detailed information relating to the particular incident report status.

Each segment of the chart, whether displayed as a pie chart or bar chart, is an active link, allowing the CPU **22** to view the specific incident types, by location, which are represented by that segment; and then a further active link from the incident type listing to a read-only version of the actual incident report.

FIG. **46** illustrates a display of a number of reports by location from the pie segment selected from FIG. **45**, as FIG. **46** shows a first layer of "drill-down" information. In FIG. **46**, a list of locations **650** is displayed along with the corresponding number of incidents related to each location **652**. In one example, each location listed in FIG. **46** has a control for expanding the information **654** relating to each location, and in this example the information which may be selectively displayed beneath each location includes the incident types **656**, dates of incident **658**, and incident number **660** as shown in FIG. **47**. As shown in FIG. **48**, a CPU **22** may then view, in read-only display **662**, any or the particular incident reports listed in FIG. **48**.

In one example and as shown in the example computer display screens of FIGS. **46** and **47**, these displays can also be provided with one or more filter controls, such as data range controls **655**, incident type filter controls **657**, status filter controls **659**, and entity filter controls **661**. These controls/filters can be used by the CPU **22** for specifying parameters in order to display data that is relevant or important, for instance when performing trend analysis.

Investigatory Notes

In another embodiment, a system **10** may also be provided with an ability to create and log investigatory notes by a client organization **14**, and to designate those investigatory notes as attorney work product. In one example, investigatory notes may be entered into the system in the same manner illustrated and described with respect to the flowchart of FIG. **22**. FIGS. **49** and **50** illustrate examples of computer display screens, wherein FIG. **49**, an investigatory note screen **700** is provided which has a subject field **704** a body portion **702** for entry of the investigatory notes, and an attorney work product designation control. The attorney work product designation control **706** permits the CPU **22** to

indicate whether the particular investigatory note is attorney work product, and when the investigatory note is saved by the system **10**, the attorney work product designation control is read by the system and saved as an attribute for each message, stored permanently. In one example, messages or investigatory notes are permanently stored and cannot be altered once posted. Such messages or investigatory notes may be "write once, read many" data types. FIG. **50** illustrates that the message posted by the CPU **22** has been designated as attorney work product by setting the attorney work product field **708** set as time.

Aliases for Client Organization's Name

A system **10** may also be provided with a feature that permits a reporter **16** to enter an alias of a client organization **14** name when preparing an incident report. The establishment of aliases permits the client organization **14** to make it easier for a reporter **16** to specify the client organization **14**, through the use of alternative names of an organization. For instance, if the formal client organization **14** name is MySafeWorkplace, the client organization **14** could establish an alias or nickname for that client organization **14** as MSW. Generally, this capability may be provided and established through the client organization's **14** enterprise portal during setup or as a property, as the organization can define one or more aliases for the organization's name. Once the aliases have been established, in the report intake portal, an organization's search field is displayed to the reporter **16**, and the reporter **16** enters the formal client organization **14** name or the alias or nickname for the client organization **14**. The characters entered by the reporter **16** may then be searched against the literal names stored in the databases **15**, as well as against all of the aliases stored in the databases **15**. Conventional search algorithms may be employed as desired. FIG. **51** illustrates an example of a display screen wherein the reporter **16** enters data into a client organization **14** name/alias field **710** and in response, the computer display shows a drop-down list **712** of the hits that are generated so that the reporter **16** can select the proper entity which it desires to make an incident report on.

Log of Views of Incident Reports

A system **10** may also be provided with a "view log" tracking feature wherein a log is maintained of each individual that has viewed a report, as well as a time and date stamp when that viewing occurred. In one example, when the software received a request from a user (such as a CPU **22** or the reporter **16**) to view the report, the software writes the user ID, the report ID, and the data and time stamp to a log table. In one example, the software maintains a single table that stores all incident report views and all access to incident reports, and such data may be stored sequentially and linearly and indexed by the report ID, if desired. This feature provides an audit trail in terms of individuals who have reviewed a particular incident report. FIG. **52** illustrates an example of a computer display screen wherein an incident view log is shown associated with a particular incident report. The incident view log, in one example, includes a listing of each time a particular incident report was viewed, and may include a user field specifying which user (or an anonymous reporter **16**) viewed the reports, and a time and date field indicating when the particular user accessed the incident report. A depth control may also be provided which permits the CPU **22** to control the depth of the log that they are viewing. The log may be displayed in chronological or reverse chronological order, or any other order desired.

FIG. **53** illustrates an example of a view log operation that may initiate after user accesses system **10** as described in FIGS. **6**A and **6**B. In one embodiment, if the user is the reporter **16**, he accesses the system **10**, subsequent to filing the report, by selecting the "Check Status" button on the home page **724**. Typically, upon selection, the system **10** immediately and permanently saves the date and time when the reporter **16** re-enters the report in a database **728**. The view log does not display the date and time stamp to the reporter **16** (**730**).

In another example, if the user is the CPU **22**, he accesses the system **10** by moving the on-screen cursor over the hyperlink contained in the email notification and performing a mouse click operation or by accessing the client-specific webpage. For either operation, the system **10** immediately and permanently saves the date and time when the CPU **22** views the report. The date and time stamp is typically saved using the CPU's **22** individual name (**734**).

Typically, the system **10** displays the view log for CPU **22**, but not the reporter **16**, under the title "Incident View Log." In one example, the View Log has two columns: (i) "User" which lists the names of the CPUs **22** who viewed the report and "reporter" to identify the reporter **16** when he has viewed the report, and (ii) "Date/Time" which lists the corresponding date and time that the user viewed the report.

Spell-Checking for Report Input

A system may also be provided with spell check functionality for each report input. For instance, spell check functionality may be provided to spell check the body of the report details prior to a reporter **16** finally submitting the incident report. Spell check functionality may also be provided for each message board posting, prior to submission of a particular message. In one example, conventional spell checking may be provided with a U.S./English dictionary, although other languages could be supported if desired. Moreover, specialized dictionaries, such as medical dictionaries, legal dictionaries, automotive dictionaries, or the like, could be utilized as well with the spell check, as desired. FIG. **54** illustrates one example of a computer display screen **740** wherein a spell check control is provided for the reporter **16** prior to submission of a report.

Automated Report Questions and Automated Follow-Up Questions

In another embodiment, a system **10** may be provided with predefined or automated report questions that are specific to particular incident types. As described above, the client organization **14** or CPU **22** can specify the types of incidents that are available for a reporter **16** to file an incident report on. In one example, when a reporter **16** selects a particular type of incident to file a report on, the system **10** automatically selects a set of questions that are specifically tailored to the particular incident type selected by the reporter **16**. In this way, the system **10** adapts the questions posed to the reporter **16**, and thereby permits more relevant information to be obtained from the reporter **16** with respect to the particular incident type. In one example, the incident type will dictate which questions are used and presented to the reporter **16**. Questions may be defined in database **15** and associated with different incident types which are tied to a particular organization.

For instance, FIG. **55** illustrates an example of a plurality of different incident types **742** that may be presented to a reporter **16** for selection when making an incident report. The incident types include "accounting error," "accounting misrepresentation," "accounting omission," and could include various other types of incidents depending upon the implementation. If the reporter **16** selects "accounting error" as the incident type, then in one example, system **10** may display questions **746** related to the "accounting error"

incident, as shown in FIG. **56**. If, however, the reporter **16** had selected an incident type of "workplace violence," then different questions **748** related to workplace violence (and not to accounting errors) would be displayed to the reporter **16**, as shown in FIG. **57**.

In another embodiment, a system **10** may be provided with automated follow-up questions that are displayed based on a reporter's **16** input or responses to prior questions. In one example, questions may be stored in the database **15** as having automated or smart follow-up questions, and if a particular automated question is answered with a first response, then the software displays a particular first follow-up question; and if such a question is answered with a second response, then the software displays a second follow-up question, the second follow-up question being different than the first follow-up question. FIGS. **58** and **59** show an example of automated follow-up questions, wherein in FIG. **58**, the initial display screen **756** is shown, and in FIG. **59**, based on the reporter's **16** answers to a first question, a subsequent set of questions **762** are displayed which ask for additional information. In this manner, the questions presented to the reporter **16** are adaptive based on the input received from the reporter **16**.

In accordance with the flowchart of FIG. **60**, for one example, in the "system set-up" section of the database, the administrator **12** creates incident types and definitions (**766**). This list is the master list of incident types that the CPU **22** may select from to determine what incident types are allowed for their employees to report on. Typically, the administrator **12** creates questions and associates them with each incident type (**768**). A link is then created between incident types and associated questions within the system **10**, typically in code by a programmer.

When establishing an client organization's **14** configuration in the system **10**, the CPU **22** selects incident types from the master list (**770**). They may also determine the order in which incident types populate for their employees. For instance, workplace violence may be their biggest concern so it is the first option for employees to chose from.

When filing a report, the reporter **16** chooses from the incidents designated as options from the client organization **14** (**772**). The report form is displayed and includes the organization name and the incident type chosen (**774**). As the reporter **16** scrolls through the questions on the report form, only the questions associated with the chosen incident type are displayed to the reporter **16** (**776**). The reporter **16** answers the questions in the form (**778**). Depending upon the answer of the reporter **16**, follow-up questions may populate the report. For example, an answer to the question "Did the incident or violation occur more than once?" may populate the report with the follow-up question "How many times did it occur?"

The reporter **16** completes the report and submits it. The report is stored in system database **15** and sent to appropriate CPUs **22** based on user group distribution matrix.

Selectively Enabling/Disabling Notifications Regarding Report Activity

In another embodiment, a system **10** may be provided with a control to deactivate or disable report activity notifications after initial notifications have been sent to CPUs **22**. In one example, CPUs **22** can be set up with access to reports without any notifications (i.e., access to reading reports without necessarily being notified of a filing of a report or of any message board activity related to the report); or can be set up to receive notifications of the filing of incident reports and any changes to those reports; or can be set up to have access to reports as well as receive notifications of incident reports and changes to such reports.

FIGS. **61-63** illustrate examples of client organization's portal and user groups with notification attributes. In FIG. **61**, the user groups **790** that have been defined for a particular client organization **14** are listed, and for each user group, particular incident types **792** can be assigned for reporting to that particular user group. Further, incidents related to particular locations **794** can be assigned or associated with a particular user group, and a designated contact person **796** may be specified per user group. For instance, in the example of FIG. **61**, the "audit committee" has been assigned or selected to receive notifications of any incident reports relating to 13 particular incident types (shown in FIG. **62**), and one individual has been designated as a contact person for receiving notifications relating to the incident types assigned for the audit committee.

In FIG. **62**, a list of incident types **800** is displayed, with a control **798** for each to be assigned or associated with the particular user group of "audit committee." For each incident type, different notification controls may be provided so that a user group can define the type of notification that they received with respect to specific incident types. An access only control **802** permits the user group to access an incident report, but not to receive any e-mail notifications of the filing of incident reports or any related activity to the incident report specific to a particular incident type. A second control **804** may be provided that, when enabled, provides the user group with e-mail notifications of the filing of an incident report and any changes to the incident report thereafter, but does not include any e-mail notifications of message board postings related to the incident report, in one example. A third control **806** may be provided which, when enabled, provides the user group with e-mail notifications of all activity relating to an incident report of a particular type, including the filing of an incident report, the change to an incident report, and all message board postings or other activity related to the incident report.

If desired, on a user level for a CPU **22**, a set of controls may be provided which defines the notification properties for that user. FIG. **63** illustrates an example of a computer display screen wherein a control **808** is provided to notify the particular user via e-mail of the filing of incident reports and subsequent changes/audits of the incident reports; or for the user to receive notification of all e-mail messages relating to activity relating to an incident report, changes/audits, and message board activity.

As illustrated in the flow chart of FIG. **64**, the CPU **22** creates user groups for automatic distribution of reports based on predefined parameters, including incident types, locations, and individual CPUs **22** (**812**). The CPU **22** clicks his mouse on the "User Groups" link in the Enterprise Portal, causing the system **10** to open a new page displaying a user groups table with columns for "User Group Name," "Incident Types," "Distribution," "Users" and "Active." The CPU **22** clicks on the "Add" button on the page to create a new user group.

The system **10** opens a new page which requires the CPU **22** to create the name for the user group (for example, "Legal"). When the CPU **22** clicks "Save," the system **10** refreshes the screen and includes the new user group name in the user group table. The CPU **22** then clicks on the number under the incident types column (which the system defaults to 0), and the system **10** opens a new page displaying all available incident types for the client. The CPU **22** then checks the box next to each incident type for which the

user group should receive notification. The CPU **22** may then select which notification type should relate to each incident type (**816**).

In one embodiment, the three notification type options may be (i) "Access Only," (ii) "Initial/Audit Emails Only," and (ii) "All Emails." The CPU **22** selects the notification type by clicking in the corresponding button on the same page. The "Access Only" notification level directs the system **10** to provide no notification of reports to the user group, but allows the CPU **22** within the user group to have access to an individual report when he logs into the System (**820**). The "All Emails" notification type directs the system **10** to provide automatic email notification to the users of the user group of all reports and activity and allows the CPUs **22** to have access to all reports (**828**). The "Initial/Audit Emails Only" notification type directs the system **10** to provide notification of all reports only for the initial notice that the report was made, and any audit change to the distribution of the report, but not for message board or investigatory notes activity (**826**). Further, it also provides the CPUs **22** within the user group access to all reports within that incident type. Once selected, the system **10** refreshes the screen to include the notification type information.

The CPU **22** then selects the icon under the Location/Distribution column and the system **10** opens a new page displaying the client organization's locations. The CPU **22** click his mouse on the boxes next to the locations to be associated with the user group. When the CPU **22** clicks "Save," the system refreshes the screen and includes the locations in the user group table. The CPU **22** then clicks on the number under the users column (which the system defaults to 0), and the system **10** opens a new page displaying all available users for the client. The CPU **22** then checks the box next to each CPU **22** who should receive notification within that user group.

Verification of Suspect Names and Access Blocking from Incident Reports

In another embodiment, a system **10** may include a feature to verify suspected individuals involved with an incident report. In large organizations, there may be many individuals who share the same last name, and accordingly, embodiments of the present invention may include a name search and verification feature. As described above, the reporter **16** is asked to list individuals that may be involved in the particular incident. (See FIG. **65**, for example, which includes fields for specifying suspects **832**) In one example, the software, upon receiving the data entered by a reporter **16** that specifies a suspect, searches the database **15** against a list of CPUs **22** provided by the client organization **14** as well as their titles or positions. Upon searching the database for the name entered by the reporter **16**, the software may confirm the suspected individual name by displaying the name and position/title of the suspected individual to the reporter **16**, as shown in the example of FIG. **66**.

In FIG. **66**, the display is provided with a confirmation control **838**, along with a display of a name field **834** and title field **836** that permit the reporter **16** to confirm that the suspected individual specified earlier (i.e., in FIG. **65**) by the reporter **16** is in fact the appropriate person to list as a suspected individual.

As discussed above, if a suspected individual for a particular incident report is also in the e-mail distribution for the particular incident report (i.e., suspect is included in the client organization's **14** access and notification parameters), in one example, the suspected individual is excluded or removed from the e-mail distribution (i.e., removed from notification and access) for the incident reports so that the suspected individual does not receive an e-mail notification, have access, or receive any other information from the system **10** related to the incident report. FIG. **67** illustrates a display **842** of an exclusion from receiving an incident report based on the naming of a person as a suspected individual by the reporter **16**. In one example, the removal of the CPU **22** from the e-mail distribution/notification and any other communications may be logged by the system **10**, as is shown in FIG. **68**. In FIG. **68**, a log entry may include a name field **844** specifying the name of the CPU **22**, an organization field **846** specifying the CPU's **22** organization, an action field **848** specifying the action that was taken with respect to the individual (i.e., removing this individual from the e-mail distribution), a time and date field **850**, an actor field **852** specifying who took the action, and a reason field **854** that explains the reason for the action.

In accordance with the flowchart of FIG. **69**, for one example, the reporter **16** fills out report, including "suspected individuals" section (**860**). The reporter **16** lists the first and last name of the people they suspect to be involved. If they do not know one of the names, they enter "unknown" in the suspected individuals section. The reporter **16** submits the report upon completion.

The System searches for a direct match between those names listed and any CPU **22** in the database for that client organization **14** (**862**). Typically, the spelling of the names must be an exact match, however, in another example, phonetic and frequently misspelled names may also be searched. If the system **10** locates a match between the suspected individuals listed by the reporter **16** and a CPU **22** in the database, the system **10** will prompt the reporter **16** to confirm the individual (**862**). A screen populates with any CPU **22** that matches the reporter's **16** entry in the suspected individuals section of the report.

Continuing with the example of FIG. **69**, if the reporter **16** locates a match in the list provided as a result of the search by system **10**, the reporter **16** checks the box by the alleged suspect's name (**870**). The reporter **16** then completes the report and submits it to the system **10** (**872**). In the illustrated example, the system queries the organization, and more particularly, the CPUs **22** of the organization (**876**).

In a typical situation, the system **10** sends automatic email notifications and/or access to CPUs **22** in accordance with user group distribution matrix. However, if the system **10** locates a match between the confirmed suspect and one of the intended recipients of the reports (as determined by the user group distribution matrix) (**878**), the system does not grant access or send an email notification to the CPU **22** who was listed as the suspect (**880**). The CPU **22** does not have access to any activity on the report, including initial email/access, message boards, or audit emails and logs). The CPU **22** is disabled from the report. The system **10** automatically logs the CPU's **22** removal from the report in the audit log(**882**). The removal of the CPU **22** is date and time-stamped and lists removal as "automatically excluded from report." CPU's **22** removal from report is also included in email notifications to OSA and OM (**884**). At the bottom of the email notifications, it lists the CPUs **22** that still have access to the report.

The CPUs **22** are informed on the initial email notification and on the audit log that a CPU **22** was denied access to the report (**886**). The OSA and/or OM may decide to reinstate access to that person (**888**). If a decision is made to reinstate, the OSA or OM opens the particular report the CPU **22** was disabled from and click on "grant or remove access." The OSA **467** or OM selects blocked person's names and re-grant access. Email notification sent to CPU **22** that was

previously blocked. If the OSA and/or OM decide that they do not wish to reinstate access, the CPU **22** remains blocked.

If the reporter **16** does not find a match or confirm anyone from the list (**866**), the report, once submitted, will go to all CPUs **22** based on the user group distribution matrix regardless of names submitted as suspects (**868**). The reporter **16** confirms a match for the system to disable the CPU **22**.

Change of Incident Types by Reporters

In another embodiment, the system **10** may be provided with a control for the reporter **16** to change the incident type after drafting the reports but prior to submission of the report. Preferably, when the reporter **16** changes the incident type, the software retains and displays to the reporter **16** the data that has already been entered by the reporter **16** which is relevant to the changed incident type. In one example, the software provides for the reporter **16** to select the organization, pick the incident type and fill in or provide general information regarding the incident. As the data is entered by the reporter **16**, the data is saved to a temporary location. If the reporter **16** decides to change the incident type from the initial type to a second incident type, the software maintains the general information relating to the incident and pre fills those fields in the report displayed to the reporter **16** with respect to the second incident type. The software may also display specific questions relating to the second incident type. In one example, a computer display is provided with a control for changing the incident type by the reporter **16**. FIG. **70** illustrates an example of a computer display screen having a control for changing the incident type **896**, and in one example this control is displayed to the reporter **16** prior to the reporter's **16** final submission of the incident report.

Designation of Order of Incident Type Listing in Reporter's Portal

In another embodiment, a system **10** may be provided with a capability for CPUs **22** to designate the order of incident types as they are presented to reporters **16** through the reporter portal, as well as designate which incident types should be displayed whatsoever to the reporter **16**. In one example, the default order of listing of incident types is alphabetical, and one or more controls may be provided so that an client organization **14** or CPU **22** may specify a display order that is something other than alphabetical. In FIG. **71**, through the client organization's **14** enterprise portal, an incident type selection control **898** may be provided in a computer display screen which permits a client organization **14** to select or deselect a particular incident type from being displayed to reporters **16** through the reporter's portal.

For each incident type, an order control **900** may also be provided wherein the client organization **14** may specify the order in which the particular incident type will be displayed relative to other selected incident types. For example in FIG. **71**, the client organization **14** has selected substance abuse as the first incident type to be displayed, followed by sexual harassment. As shown in the example of FIG. **72**, which is a sample display screen of a reporter's portal **902**, the incident types are listed with substance abuse first, followed by sexual harassment, followed by the remaining selected incident types in alphabetical order.

Display of Stale Incident Reports

In another embodiment, a system **10** may be provided with a feature wherein the administrator **12** can view a list of stale incident reports. In one example, stale incident reports include incident reports that have been received but where no one from the client organization **14** has reviewed the report within a specified amount of time which renders the report "stale" (i.e., 48 hours, although other amounts of time can be used depending upon the implementation). In one example, the software may provide an administrator **12** with a stale incident report display control **903**, as shown in FIG. **73**, which provides a list of stale incidents **904** viewable by the administrator **12**. In one example, the stale incident report may include, for each incident report which has not been initially viewed by a client organization **14**, an organization field **906** for describing the name of the organization, an incident number field **908** containing the incident number, a date and time field **910**, an incident type field **912** that includes the incident type specified by the reporter **16** in the incident report, and a location field **914**. In this manner, an administrator **12** can be made aware of stale incidents, and may contact, if desired, a representative at a particular organization to inform the organization of the existence of an incident report that has not been acted upon or read by the client organization **14**. While in one example, an incident report is deemed stale if no review of the report has occurred within 48 hours, it is understood that a time period of less than or greater than 48 hours may be utilized depending upon the implementation. If desired, a display of stale reports may also be provided to the client organization **14** in a similar manner.

In the example illustrated in FIG. **74**, a report is sent to certain CPUs **22** based on access and notification rights found in user group distribution matrix (**920**). The system, at a predefined interval, queries whether at least one CPU **22** has accessed the report (**922**). If the response is a yes, in one embodiment, the system **10** automatically changes the report status to "reviewed" and the report is not considered "stale" (**924**). If response is a no, in another embodiment, the system **10** generates a reminder email which it sends to all CPUs **22** who automatically receive that report based on access and notification rights found in user group distribution matrix (**926**). For example, the system **10** may send the email to the user group every 24 hours with the following message: "You have not reviewed a submitted incident within the last 24 hours. Please click the incident number (insert hyperlink) to review the incident details. The reporter **16** selected the incident type (insert incident type) for this report."

In one example, if a CPU **22** accesses the report within three days of the initial email reminder, the system no longer considers the report stale (**930**). In the same example, if a CPU **22** does not access the report within three days of the initial email reminder, the system **10** logs the report as a "stale" report. The Stale Report log is viewed through the "Stale Incident" link accessed only by the administrator **12** in the Enterprise Portal, not by any CPU **22** (**932**). The administrator **12** may then manually telephone and/or email the appropriate CPU **22** to alert him that no CPUs **22** have reviewed the report (**934**).

Display of Incomplete Incident Reports

In another embodiment, system **10** may include an incomplete incident reporting feature viewable by administrators **12**. An incomplete incident report may include an incident report that is filed by a reporter **16** which does not properly specify the name of or location of a client organization **14** which is part of the system **10**. For instance, if a reporter **16** submits an incident report that is related to a client organization **14** which is not part of the system **10**, then such a report could be considered an incomplete incident report. In one embodiment of the invention, administrators **12** of the system **10** are provided with a control to display incomplete incident reports.

As shown in the example of FIG. **75**, a list of incomplete incident reports **950** may be provided for viewing by an administrator **12**. In one example, the list of incomplete

incident reports includes, for each incomplete incident, the incident number field **954** and a field specifying the organization that was entered by the reporter **16** (**956**). If desired, the administrator **12** may attempt to reconcile the incomplete incident reports with a client organization **14** that is part of the system **10**, or if the organization specified by the reporter **16** is not part of the system **10**, the administrator **12** may provide such information to the organization specified by the reporter **16**, if desired.

In the example illustrated in the flowchart of FIG. **76**, the reporter **16** searches for his/her organization on the "make a report screen" by entering the first three letters of the organization's name (**960**). The system **10** searches the database **15** for a match (**962**). If organizations within the database matches the reporter's **16** entry, the system **10** displays a list of possible matches and the reporter **16** selects the correct organization. The reporter **16** submits the report (**964**).

Continuing with the example of FIG. **76**, if no match is found, or the matches that are displayed are not correct, the reporter **16** may search again. If there is still no match, the reporter **16** may click on proceed to "incident form." The reporter **16** files a report for an organization that is not contained in the system database **15**, so the system **10** designates the report as an "Incomplete Report" (**966**). The reporter **16** submits the report (**968**).

In one example, the system **10** does not send the report to any organization because there is no match in the database (**970**). The system **10** provides notification and access to the report to the administrators **12**. The body of the alert email indicates the report is not associated with any client organization **14** and the system **10** funnels it into its "incomplete reports" section. Typically, the incomplete reports section is only accessible by administrators **12**. The administrator **12** manually researches the organization in the report to determine if it belongs to any pre-existing client (**972**). If the organization is found to be a current client in the database, but the reporter **16** filed the report under a wrong name, the administrator **12** manually reassigns the report to the organization (**978**). This manual reassigning operation is initiated by accessing the "incomplete reports" link in the administrator's Enterprise Portal, clicking on the hyperlink associated with the report, selecting the appropriate organization, location, and incident type, and clicking save. Normal distribution takes place and the report is removed from the "incomplete reports" list (**980**). If the organization is not found to be an existing client in the database, the administrator **12** manually provides information to non-client if contact information was provided (**976**). If reporter **16** provides contact information, the administrator **12** also instructs reporter **16** that the organization does not use the system. The report typically remains in the "incomplete reports" list in the system **10**.

Hence, it can be seen that various embodiments of the invention provide useful features for an anonymous incident reporting system. It is understood that, depending upon the implementation, a system could include one or more of the features or functions described here, alone or in combination with other features or functions disclosed herein.

Embodiments of the present invention may be embodied as computer readable code on computer readable media such as CD-ROMS or transmitted as computer signals on carrier waves. While the methods disclosed herein have been described and shown with reference to particular operations performed in a particular order, it will be understood that these operations may be combined, sub-divided, or re-ordered to form equivalent methods without departing from the teachings of the present invention. Accordingly, unless specifically indicated herein, the order and grouping of the operations is not a limitation of the present invention.

It should be appreciated that reference throughout this specification to "one embodiment" or "an embodiment" or "one example" or "an example" means that a particular feature, structure or characteristic described in connection with the embodiment may be included, if desired, in at least one embodiment of the present invention. Therefore, it should be appreciated that two or more references to "an embodiment" or "one embodiment" or "an alternative embodiment" or "one example" or "an example" in various portions of this specification are not necessarily all referring to the same embodiment. Furthermore, particular features, structures or characteristics may be combined as desired in one or more embodiments of the invention.

While the invention has been particularly shown and described with reference to embodiments thereof, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that various other changes in the form and details may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A computer implemented method of providing a reporting system for the exchange of incident information between an employee and an employer, comprising:

providing an on-line form to make a report using a computing device by an employee, the form including a plurality of data fields configured for receiving incident information from the employee;

receiving, via a computing device, the incident information and report from the employee;

receiving, via a computing device, a level of anonymity selected by the employee, said level of anonymity associated with the report;

storing the incident information, the report, and the level of anonymity in a database;

providing an employee interface on a computing device for the employee to retrieve and view the report by using an access number associated with the report and a password selected by the employee without requiring the employee to reveal their identity;

displaying, on a computing device, the report to the employee using the reporting party interface;

providing an employer interface on a computing device for the employer to retrieve and view the report; and

displaying, on a computing device, the report to the employer using the employer interface, the report populated with incident information based upon the level of anonymity.

2. The computer-implemented method of claim **1**, wherein the plurality of data fields are configured for receiving information relating to a sexual harassment incident.

3. The computer-implemented method of claim **1**, wherein at least one of the plurality of fields is configured for receiving the level of anonymity of the reporting party.

4. The computer-implemented method of claim **3**, wherein the level of anonymity is chosen from a group comprising:

remain completely anonymous;

remain anonymous to an organization; and

do not care about anonymity.

5. The computer-implemented method of claim **4**, wherein a selection of the level of anonymity of remain anonymous to the organization results in the reporting party providing personal identification information to an intermediary without providing the personal identification information to the organization.

6. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein the personal identification information comprises a name of the reporting party and a phone number for the reporting party.

7. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, further comprising:

the employee selecting a level of anonymity from a list of options, the options comprising:

remain completely anonymous;

remain anonymous to the employer; and

no anonymity preference.

8. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein the database is a relational database.

9. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein the reporting party interface is configured for use with an Internet browser.

10. The computer-implemented method of claim 9, wherein the Internet browser is facilitated using a secure website having data encryption configured for encrypting confidential data transmitted using the browser.

11. The computer-implemented method of claim 10, wherein:

the reporting party interface is a first portal;

the employer interface is a second portal;

the first portal is configured to transmit and receive data between the employee and an intermediary; and

the second portal is configured to transmit and receive data between the employer and the intermediary.

12. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein the incident information includes confidential data.

13. The computer-implemented method of claim 12, further comprising storing the associations between the plurality of data fields and the confidential data in the database.

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