

following figures, wherein like reference numerals refer to like parts throughout the various views unless otherwise specified.

[0011] **FIG. 1** illustrates a prior art method of Internet searching.

[0012] **FIG. 2A** illustrates an embodiment of an operating environment suitable for practicing the present invention.

[0013] **FIG. 2B** illustrates an embodiment of a computer system suitable for use in the operating environment of **FIG. 2A**.

[0014] **FIG. 3** illustrates an embodiment of an immediate Internet search feedback method.

[0015] **FIG. 4** illustrates an embodiment of an automatic submission determination method.

[0016] **FIGS. 5A-5E** illustrate embodiments of a graphical user interface (GUI) for a web browser application used to implement immediate search feedback.

[0017] **FIGS. 6A-6B** illustrate embodiments of a GUI for a web browser application including immediate search feedback functionality.

[0018] **FIG. 7** illustrates an embodiment of a user interface for setting or adjusting various parameters relating to immediate search feedback.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0019] In the following detailed description of embodiments of the invention, reference is made to the accompanying drawings in which like references indicate similar elements, and in which is shown by way of illustration specific embodiments in which the invention may be practiced. These embodiments are described in sufficient detail to enable those skilled in the art to practice the invention, and it is to be understood that other embodiments may be utilized and that logical, mechanical, electrical, functional, and other changes may be made without departing from the scope of the present invention. The following detailed description is, therefore, not to be taken in a limiting sense, and the scope of the present invention is defined only by the appended claims.

[0020] The following description of **FIGS. 2A and 2B** is intended to provide an overview of computer hardware and other operating components suitable for implementing embodiments of the invention described below, but is not intended to limit the applicable environments. One of skill in the art will immediately appreciate that the invention can be practiced with other computer system configurations, including handheld devices, cellular telephones, multiprocessor systems, microprocessor-based or programmable consumer electronics/appliances, network PCs, minicomputers, mainframe computers, and the like. Embodiments of the invention can also be practiced in distributed computing environments where tasks are performed by remote processing devices that are linked through a communications network.

[0021] **FIG. 2A** shows several computer systems **1** that are coupled together through a network **3**, such as the Internet. The term "Internet" as used herein refers to a network of networks which uses certain protocols, such as the TCP/IP protocol, and possibly other protocols such as the

hypertext transfer protocol (HTTP) for hypertext markup language (HTML) documents that make up the World Wide Web (web). The physical connections of the Internet and the protocols and communication procedures of the Internet are well known to those of skill in the art. Access to the Internet **3** is typically provided by Internet service providers (ISP), such as the ISPs **5** and **7**. Users on client systems, such as client computer systems **21**, **25**, **35**, and **37** obtain access to the Internet through the Internet service providers, such as ISPs **5** and **7**. Access to the Internet allows users of the client computer systems to exchange information, receive and send emails and instant messages, and view documents, such as documents which have been prepared in the HTML format. These documents are often provided by web servers, such as web server **9** which is considered to be "on" the Internet. Often these web servers are provided by the ISPs, such as ISP **5**, although a computer system can be set up and connected to the Internet without that system being also an ISP as is well known in the art.

[0022] The web server **9** is typically at least one computer system which operates as a server computer system and is configured to operate with the protocols of the World Wide Web and is coupled to the Internet. Optionally, the web server **9** can be part of an ISP which provides access to the Internet for client systems. The web server **9** is shown coupled to the server computer system **11** which itself is coupled to web content **10**, which can be considered a form of a media database. It will be appreciated that while two computer systems **9** and **11** are shown in **FIG. 2A**, the web server system **9** and the server computer system **11** can be one computer system having different software components providing the web server functionality and the server functionality provided by the server computer system **11** which will be described further below.

[0023] Client computer systems **21**, **25**, **35**, and **37** can each, with the appropriate web browsing software, view HTML pages provided by the web server **9**. The ISP **5** provides Internet connectivity to the client computer system **21** through the modem interface **23** which can be considered part of the client computer system **21**. The client computer system can be a personal computer system, consumer electronics/appliance, a network computer, a Web TV system, a handheld device, or other such computer system. Similarly, the ISP **7** provides Internet connectivity for client systems **25**, **35**, and **37**, although as shown in **FIG. 2A**, the connections are not the same for these three computer systems. Client computer system **25** is coupled through a modem interface **27** while client computer systems **35** and **37** are part of a LAN. While **FIG. 2A** shows the interfaces **23** and **27** as generically as a "modem," it will be appreciated that each of these interfaces can be an analog modem, ISDN modem, DSL modem, cable modem, satellite transmission interface, or other interfaces for coupling a computer system to other computer systems. Client computer systems **35** and **37** are coupled to a LAN **33** through network interfaces **39** and **41**, which can be Ethernet network or other network interfaces. The LAN **33** is also coupled to a gateway computer system **31** which can provide firewall and other Internet related services for the local area network. This gateway computer system **31** is coupled to the ISP **7** to provide Internet connectivity to the client computer systems **35** and **37**. The gateway computer system **31** can be a conventional server computer system. Also, the web server system **9** can be a conventional server computer system.