

the work flow manager embeds a routing list within the message; and

the work flow list is embedded as an extension to an internal-format mark-up language within the message.

15. An access gateway as claimed in claim 1, wherein:

the processor comprises a work flow manager for routing messages within the gateway; and

the work flow manager is a service within the gateway.

16. An access gateway as claimed in claim 1, wherein:

the processor comprises a work flow manager for routing messages within the gateway;

the work flow manager is a service within the gateway; and

the gateway comprises a middleware communications mechanism, the work flow manager service subscribes to a default middleware channel, and an edge service automatically places a message received at either server interface onto the default channel.

17. An access gateway as claimed in claim 16, wherein each service places a message onto the default channel if it does not detect a next service indicator in the work flow list.

18. An access gateway as claimed in claim 1, wherein:

the processor comprises a plurality of services, including an edge service for interfacing with the content server interface and an edge service for interfacing with the mobile network interface; and

a service is a transaction logging service and said service terminates a message by storing message data if there is no next service in the work flow list.

19. An access gateway as claimed in claim 1, wherein the processor performs convergence by using a plurality of messages with different content formats to generate an output message with a different content format.

20. An access gateway as claimed in claim 1, wherein the processor performs convergence by using a plurality of messages with differing underlying bearers to provide a single coherent message.

21. An access gateway as claimed in claim 1, wherein the processor performs convergence by conditionally processing or rendering content or messages from network bearers according to data received from other network systems.

22. An access gateway as claimed in claim 1, wherein:

the processor performs convergence by using a plurality of messages with differing underlying bearers to provide a single coherent message; and

a session manager service manages linkages between the gateway and external systems for convergence.

23. An access gateway as claimed in claim 1, wherein the processor performs convergence by using a plurality of messages with different content formats to generate an output message with a different content format; and wherein the processor converts a content format in a received message to an internal format and processes the message in said internal format.

24. An access gateway as claimed in claim 23, wherein the internal format is a mark-up language.

25. An access gateway as claimed in claim 1, wherein:

the processor performs convergence by using a plurality of messages with different content formats to generate an output message with a different content format;

the gateway receives an input message with content of a first format, converts the first format to an internal format, converts the internal format to a second format and routes the message to an external system, receives a response from said external system with said content in a third format, converts said third format to the internal format, and generates an output message with said content in a fourth format.

26. An access gateway as claimed in claim 1, wherein the processor comprises an access control authorization function for managing access rights and user service policies of application provider servers.

27. An access gateway as claimed in claim 1, wherein:

the processor comprises an access control authorization function for managing access rights and user service policies of application provider servers; and wherein said function generates a set of access control rights and a user service policy with rights for direct access by the associated application provider server, and a schema of maximum rights which can be assigned by the application provider server in a cascading structure.

28. An access gateway as claimed in claim 27, wherein said function automatically checks a fresh request for access rights and user service policy against a schema of an existing set of rights.

29. An access gateway as claimed in claim 27, wherein said function is a provisioning service within the gateway which communicates with other services of the gateway via an internal middleware mechanism.

30. A method of operation of an access gateway comprising a content server interface, a mobile network interface, and a processor, the method comprising the steps of the processor bi-directionally routing content-rich messages between said interfaces.

31. A method as claimed in claim 30, wherein the processor comprises a plurality of services, including an edge service for interfacing with the content server interface and an edge service for interfacing with the mobile network interface; and each service includes a plurality of components, wherein each component operates autonomously within the service in communication with other components within the same service.

32. A computer program product comprising software code for performing operations of a method of claim 30 when executing on digital computer.

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