United States District Court,
N.D. Illinois.

A. ZIARNO,
v.
AMERICAN NATIONAL RED CROSS.

Aug. 30, 2000.

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ORDER

JAMES M. ROSENBAUM, District Judge.

This matter is before the Court for consideration of claim construction, pursuant to Markman v. Westview Instruments, Inc., 52 F.3d 967 (Fed.Cir.1995) (en banc), *aff'd,* 517 U.S. 370 (1996). The Court heard the parties' arguments on April 17, 2000, and received extensive pre- and post-hearing briefs. Pending trial, the Court's conclusions on such matters are as follows.

When claim language is defined in the context of one claim, it need not be defined again for subsequent claims using the same terms; the jury will be instructed that definitions are consistent throughout the patent. Therefore, claim language already defined will not be redefined. When specific terms within claim language require construction, the Court has only construed those terms.

The Court has considered the parties' pleadings regarding claim language not included below, and has concluded that the language requires no further definition.

1. ***a data packet transferring computer network***

A "data packet transferring computer network" is a computer system by which a block of computer information is broken into smaller information units called "packets." These packets are sent over a computer network over a variety of paths. The packets are automatically reassembled into their proper order at the receiving end.

1. ***comprising:***

including the following elements, but not excluding others.
1. *[a][i] communicating a request for a contribution data packet*

[ii] to a plurality of remote contribution accepting devices

[iii] communicatively linked

[iv] to a contributions managing device

[v] and remote from each other and

[vi] geographically remote from said contributions management device,

Carrying a request for a contribution from a contributions management device to more than one device which is physically separated from the packet sending device. These separated devices are electronically linked. The contribution information packets may be computer-transferred to one or more of the separated devices and maintained by the receiving device.

1. *[b] accepting said request for a contribution data packet at said remote contribution accepting devices by way of a routine, said remote contributions accepting devices utilizing a routine for accepting at least one contribution,*

A "routine" is a computer program or a portion of a computer program designed to accomplish a defined task. In this case, the contribution data packet is accepted by the physically separated contribution-accepting devices, using a routine which allows it to accept information representing one or more contributions.

1. *[d] inputting contributions at said contribution accepting devices in response to said request;*

To "input" means to provide computer-readable information to the system. Here, the contribution information is input to the contribution accepting devices.

1. *[e] receiving and recording at said contributions managing device from a plurality of said remote contribution accepting devices said contributions inputted on said plurality of said remote contribution accepting devices,*

The contributions from more than one of the contribution accepting devices are received and recorded at the physically separated contribution management devices.

3. *The method in accordance with Claim 1 further comprising correlating respective contributions with recipient data, said recipient data being selected from the group consisting of an individual who is deceased, a single recipient of a collection and a recipient selected from a plurality of recipients, to obtain correlated recipient data; temporarily storing respective correlated recipient data at respective contribution accepting devices; transferring said correlated recipient data to said contributions management device; and processing said correlated recipient data.*

The method in accord with claim one; additionally, the contribution is correlated with a specific recipient of the type described.

5. *The method in accordance with Claim 1 further comprising presenting to prospective contributors a request for a contribution, said request for contribution comprising data packets comprising multiple display screens soliciting the entry of a contribution.*

The method described in Claim 1, and requesting that a potential contributor make an electronically-made contribution. The request for a contribution is shown on more than one visual display screen.

6. *The method in accordance with Claim 1 further comprising temporarily retaining information on said contributions on said remote contribution accepting devices prior to communication of said contributions to said contributions managing device.*

The method in accord with Claim 1; additionally, the contribution accepting devices temporarily store the contribution information before sending it to the remote contribution management device.

7. *The method in accordance with Claim 1 further comprising communicating said contributions from said contributions managing device to a funds processing device for further processing thereof.*

The method described in Claim 1; and in addition, the contribution management device transfers the information to a device which can electronically withdraw the funds from a contributor or debit a contributor's account.

8. *The method in accordance with Claim 1 further comprising [a] correlating a respective contribution to a cause to which said contribution was designated to obtain cause correlated contribution data, [b] communicating said cause correlated contribution data to a record generator remotely located from a number of contribution accepting devices, [c] generating a record at said record generator having thereon at least a portion of said cause correlated contribution data, and forwarding said record to a recipient of said record.*

A method in accord with Claim 1, which then relates the electronic contribution, which is directed to a specific cause, to a physically separated device programmed to record the contribution from more than one contribution accepting device. The record of the contribution is sent to a recipient.

16. *The method in accordance with Claim 1 further comprising correlating a respective contribution with a respective request for a contribution data packet, said request for a contribution data packet selected from a group consisting of a prayer data packet, an entreaty data packet, and a petition data packet, to obtain a correlated request; and, processing said correlated request.*

A method in accord with Claim 1, which then relates a particular contribution with a particular request for funds, including a particular prayer, or request.

18. *The method in accordance with Claim 1 further comprising correlating a respective contribution with identity data of a respective contributor making a respective contribution.*

A method in accord with Claim 1, which correlates the contribution with the party making the contribution.

21. *The method in accordance with Claim 1 in which said remote contribution accepting devices comprise*

input means, said input means selected from a group consisting of a keyboard and touch sensitive screen, at least one microprocessor, and a display, and further comprising the step inputting contribution data on said remote contribution accepting device.

This Claim is in accord with Claim 1, and describes a number of kinds of devices which can input contribution information.

23. *The method in accordance with Claim 1 further comprising presenting on said remote contribution accepting devices symbols representing operators for inducing the making of monetary contributions, said symbols comprising said request for a contribution data packet.*

An "operator" is the device by which a person triggers the action, usually by means of a button, switch, or similar triggering device. The operator, in this case, has marks or symbols specifying contribution amounts.

24. *The method in accordance with Claim 1 further comprising presenting symbols representing monetary values of an order inducing the making of contribution preferences of contributors, said values selected from the group consisting essentially of $1, $5, $10, $15, and N5, in which N is an integer and 15<=N, said symbols being communicated to said contribution accepting devices in said request for a contribution data packet*

A method in accord with Claim 1, where the request for a contribution has symbols representing contributions designed to induce such contributions. The symbols represent $1, $5, $10, $15, $20, or any whole dollar amount over $20.

29. *The method in accordance with Claim 1 further comprising accommodating the contribution preference of contributors by presenting on said contribution accepting devices an additional request selected from the group comprising a request for a contribution inducing the making of said contribution, and a request for the making of a contribution to a plurality of different causes.*

A method in accord with Claim 1, which requests that the contributor make more than one contribution to different causes.

31. *The method in accordance with Claim 1 in which said request comprises a plurality of requests to make contributions to a plurality of collections for which said contributions are being solicited, and further comprising correlating respective contributions with the collections for which they are designated.*

A method in accord with Claim 1, which allows the multiple contributions which have been requested, and given, to be correlated with the separate collections chosen by the contributor.

32. *The method in accordance with Claim 1 further comprising coding said contributions at said electronic contribution accepting devices to obtain coded contributions; and decoding said coded contributions at a device other than said electronic contribution accepting devices.*

"Coding" means to put the information into computer-readable format, so that the information can be read by the intended recipient, but not readily read by other recipients, whether computers or people. "Decoding" is the reverse of "coding," that is, reading the information by the recipient computer. Beyond that, this claim language does not require further definition.

33. *The method in accordance with Claim 1 further comprising communicatively linking said contributions accepting devices in a local area network.*

A "local area network" is a group of computers and other devices over a relatively limited area connected by a communications link that enables any device to interact with any other on the network.

44. *The method in accordance with Claim 1 in which there are multiple collections for which contributions are solicited during an electronic contribution session and further comprising designating the specific collection to which a respective contribution is designated during said contribution session.*

A method in accord with Claim 1, which allows more than one collection to be solicited during a finite time period of use of the collection devices and designating each specific contribution to its specific request.

48[e]. *said contributions management device being optionally geographically remote from a plurality of said electronic contributions accepting devices*

Each contributions accepting device may be, but need not be, located in a geographically remote location from the contributions management device. In this context, "geographically remote" means in a different area, separated significantly in space.

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