



US012158966B2

(12) **United States Patent**
Birkel et al.

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 12,158,966 B2**
(45) **Date of Patent:** ***Dec. 3, 2024**

(54) **UNIFYING INTERFACE FOR CLOUD
CONTENT SHARING SERVICES**

(71) Applicant: **Intel Corporation**, Santa Clara, CA
(US)

(72) Inventors: **Steven J. Birkel**, Portland, OR (US);
Rita H. Wouhaybi, Portland, OR (US);
Timothy Verrall, Pleasant Hill, CA
(US); **Mrigank Shekhar**, Camas, WA
(US)

(73) Assignee: **Intel Corporation**, Santa Clara, CA
(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 dis-
claimer.

(21) Appl. No.: **17/956,184**

(22) Filed: **Sep. 29, 2022**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**
US 2023/0108421 A1 Apr. 6, 2023

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation of application No. 17/062,391, filed on
Oct. 2, 2020, now Pat. No. 11,461,491, which is a
(Continued)

(51) **Int. Cl.**
G06F 21/62 (2013.01)
G06F 21/31 (2013.01)
(Continued)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC **G06F 21/6218** (2013.01); **G06F 21/31**
(2013.01); **G06Q 10/10** (2013.01); **G06Q**
50/10 (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

CPC G06F 3/067; G06F 2221/2141; G06F
3/0631; G06F 16/10; G06F 21/60;
(Continued)

(56) **References Cited**

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

7,958,453 B1 * 6/2011 Taing H04L 12/1827
709/204
8,924,569 B2 12/2014 Li
(Continued)

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

CN 1538658 10/2004
CN 103067436 4/2013
(Continued)

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Chinese Patent Office, “Notice of reexamination,” issued in con-
nection with Chinese Patent Appl. No. 201380080098.X, dated Dec.
1, 2023, 12 pages. [English translation in document].

(Continued)

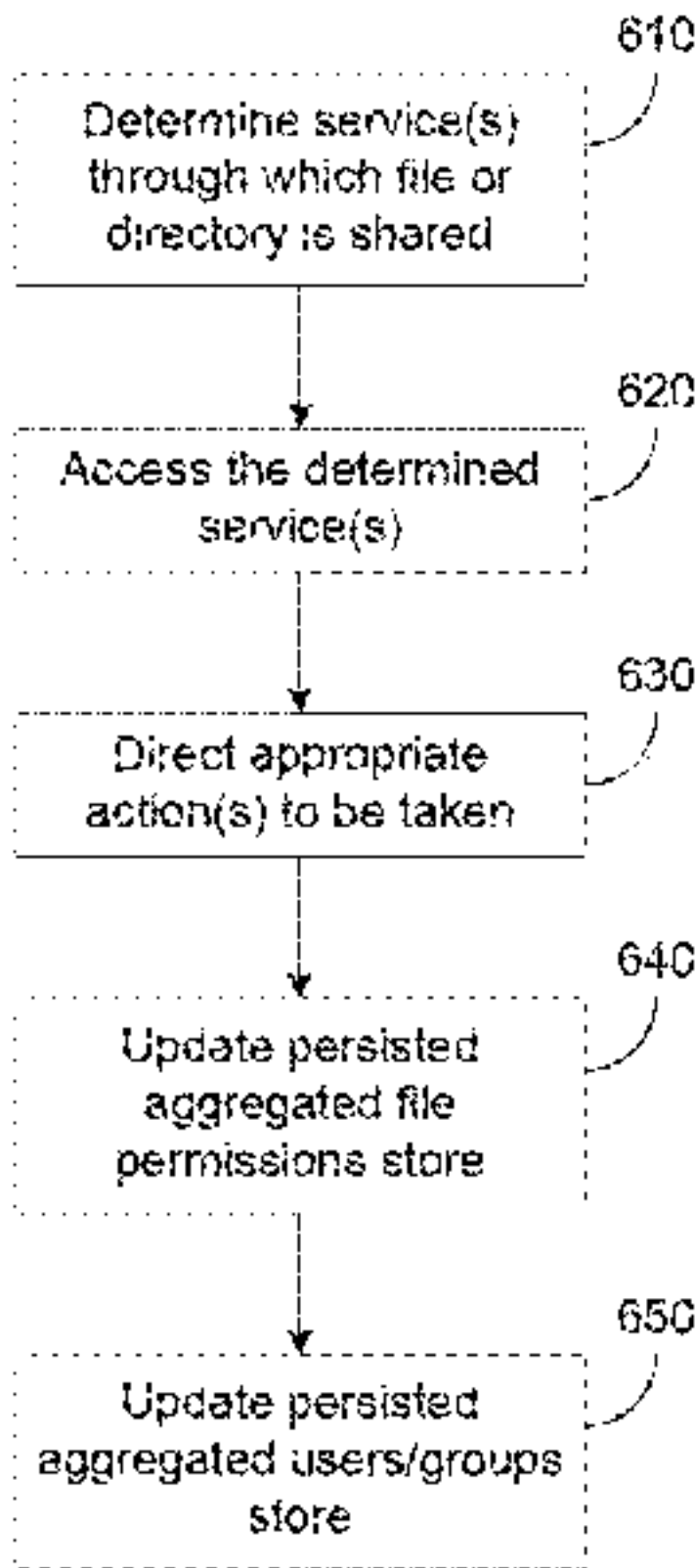
Primary Examiner — Lizbeth Torres-Diaz

(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Hanley, Flight &
Zimmerman, LLC

(57) **ABSTRACT**

Methods and systems that allow a user to see the people or
groups who have access to files that are maintained by a
plurality of cloud content sharing services. In particular, the
user may see what specific party has access to each particu-
lar file or directory, regardless of multiple cloud content
sharing services involved. Moreover, a user interface and
exposed application program interface allows the user to
manipulate the permissions, e.g., granting access, to another
person or group, to a file or directory. The user interface may
also allow the user to terminate access to the file or directory
for a person or group. The user’s action to change a
(Continued)

S40
↓



permission may be effected independently of the particular cloud content sharing service.

18 Claims, 9 Drawing Sheets

Related U.S. Application Data

continuation of application No. 14/125,504, filed as application No. PCT/US2013/068715 on Nov. 6, 2013, now Pat. No. 10,796,012.

(51) Int. Cl.

G06Q 10/10 (2023.01)

G06Q 50/10 (2012.01)

(58) Field of Classification Search

CPC G06F 21/6218; G06F 21/31; G06F 40/123;
G06F 21/62; G06F 3/0605; G06F 16/176;
G06F 21/604; G06F 16/182; G06F
16/188; H04L 67/1097; H04L 63/102;
H04L 67/306

See application file for complete search history.

(56) References Cited

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

9,122,696 B2 * 9/2015 Abuelsaad G06F 16/951
9,633,125 B1 4/2017 Garcia et al.
10,796,012 B2 10/2020 Birkel et al.
11,328,310 B2 * 5/2022 LaCroix G06F 16/986
11,461,491 B2 10/2022 Birkel et al.
2002/0107874 A1 * 8/2002 DeLorme G06F 16/10
2004/0221049 A1 * 11/2004 Blumenau H04L 43/00
707/999.1
2007/0143398 A1 * 6/2007 Graham G06Q 40/02
709/204
2007/0199068 A1 * 8/2007 Russinovich G06F 9/468
726/16
2007/0255715 A1 11/2007 Li et al.
2008/0015823 A1 1/2008 Arnold et al.
2008/0059495 A1 3/2008 Kiessig et al.
2008/0082538 A1 4/2008 Meijer et al.
2009/0100058 A1 * 4/2009 Faitelson H04L 63/10
707/999.009
2009/0307604 A1 12/2009 Giles et al.
2009/0327447 A1 12/2009 Noll et al.
2010/0332456 A1 * 12/2010 Prahlad G06F 16/122
713/160
2011/0167435 A1 * 7/2011 Fang H04L 67/1097
719/329
2011/0252071 A1 10/2011 Cidon
2011/0265030 A1 * 10/2011 Lin G06T 11/60
715/790
2012/0110055 A1 * 5/2012 Van Biljon H04L 63/0236
709/201
2012/0167197 A1 * 6/2012 Kruger G06F 21/10
726/16
2013/0066975 A1 * 3/2013 Kantor H04L 69/321
709/205
2013/0073389 A1 * 3/2013 Heath G06Q 30/02
705/14.54
2013/0179898 A1 * 7/2013 Fang G06F 16/90335
719/312
2013/0185457 A1 * 7/2013 Campbell G06F 3/0635
710/5
2013/0191339 A1 * 7/2013 Haden G06F 16/178
707/827
2013/0219176 A1 8/2013 Akella et al.
2013/0219456 A1 * 8/2013 Sharma H04L 9/0894
726/1
2013/0263289 A1 * 10/2013 Vijayan G06F 16/1748
726/31

2013/0340045 A1 * 12/2013 Wouhaybi G06F 21/10
726/4
2014/0279893 A1 9/2014 Branton
2014/0280932 A1 9/2014 Braun et al.
2014/0282851 A1 9/2014 Miller et al.
2015/0113055 A1 * 4/2015 Vijayan H04L 67/306
709/203
2015/0213284 A1 * 7/2015 Birkel G06F 21/6218
726/30
2015/0278541 A1 * 10/2015 Odnovorov H04L 9/0891
726/28
2016/0036822 A1 * 2/2016 Kim G06F 21/6236
726/4
2018/0189188 A1 * 7/2018 Kumar G06F 3/067
2018/0284996 A1 * 10/2018 Guim Bernat G06F 3/0605
2018/0293397 A1 * 10/2018 DeMember H04L 63/10
2019/0058696 A1 * 2/2019 Bowman H04L 9/0897
2020/0174706 A1 * 6/2020 Venetsanopoulos
G06F 3/0617
2020/0244628 A1 * 7/2020 Bowman H04L 9/321
2021/0097024 A1 * 4/2021 Miller G06F 16/1824
2021/0097193 A1 * 4/2021 Miller G06F 3/0622
2021/0026404 A1 8/2021 Birkel et al.
2021/0258368 A1 * 8/2021 Cassidy G06F 16/196
2023/0205904 A1 * 6/2023 Hassan G06Q 10/10
726/26
2023/0385246 A1 * 11/2023 Malhotra H04L 65/762

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

KR 1020130120893 11/2013
WO 2013116362 8/2013

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Korean International Searching Authority: International Search Report and Written Opinion issued in corresponding International Patent Application No. PCT/US2013/068715 dated Aug. 1, 2014, 9 pages.
Government of Canada: Office Action issued in corresponding Canadian Patent Application No. 2,926,605 dated Jan. 12, 2017, 4 pages.
Government of Canada: Office Action issued in corresponding Canadian Patent Application No. 2,926,605 dated Jan. 24, 2018, 4 pages.
European Patent Office: Extended Search Report issued in corresponding European Patent Application No. 13897081.9-1871 dated Mar. 28, 2017, 7 pages.
The State Intellectual Property Office of People's Republic of China: The First Office Action issued in corresponding Chinese Patent Application No. 201380080098.X dated Feb. 28, 2019, 11 pages including partial English translation.
The State Intellectual Property Office of People's Republic of China: The Second Office Action issued in corresponding Chinese Patent Application No. 201380080098.X dated Sep. 18, 2019, 9 pages including partial English translation.
The State Intellectual Property Office of People's Republic of China: The Third Office Action issued in corresponding Chinese Patent Application No. 201380080098.X dated May 15, 2020, 10 pages including partial English translation).
China National Intellectual Property Administration: Decision on Rejection issued in corresponding Chinese Patent Application No. 201380080098.X dated Feb. 3, 2021, 10 pages including partial English translation.
United States Patent and Trademark Office: Notice of Allowance issued in corresponding U.S. Appl. No. 14/125,504 dated Jun. 4, 2020, 11 pages.
United States Patent and Trademark Office: Non-Final Office Action issued in corresponding U.S. Appl. No. 14/125,504 dated Aug. 23, 2019, 16 pages.
United States Patent and Trademark Office: Non-Final Office Action issued in corresponding U.S. Appl. No. 14/125,504 dated Apr. 27, 2018, 13 pages.

(56)

References Cited

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

United States Patent and Trademark Office: Non-Final Office Action issued in corresponding U.S. Appl. No. 14/125,504 dated Nov. 18, 2016, 17 pages.

United States Patent and Trademark Office: Non-Final Office Action issued in corresponding U.S. Appl. No. 14/125,504 dated Aug. 11, 2015, 12 pages.

United States Patent and Trademark Office: Final Office Action issued in corresponding U.S. Appl. No. 14/125,504 dated Mar. 11, 2020, 14 pages.

United States Patent and Trademark Office: Final Office Action issued in corresponding U.S. Appl. No. 14/125,504 dated Nov. 19, 2018, 14 pages.

United States Patent and Trademark Office: Final Office Action issued in corresponding U.S. Appl. No. 14/125,504 dated Jun. 5, 2017, 10 pages.

United States Patent and Trademark Office: Final Office Action issued in corresponding U.S. Appl. No. 14/125,504 dated Apr. 14, 2016, 14 pages.

United States Patent and Trademark Office: Advisory Action issued in corresponding U.S. Appl. No. 14/125,504 dated Mar. 20, 2019, 3 pages.

United States Patent and Trademark Office: Advisory Action issued in corresponding U.S. Appl. No. 14/125,504 dated Aug. 29, 2017, 4 pages.

Patent Cooperation Treaty, "International Search Report," issued in connection with International Appl. No. PCT/US2013/068715, dated Aug. 1, 2014, 3 pages.

Patent Cooperation Treaty, "International Preliminary Report on Patentability," issued in connection with International Appl. No. PCT/US2013/068715, dated May 10, 2016, 7 pages.

Patent Cooperation Treaty, "Written Opinion" issued in connection with International Appl. No. PCT/US2013/068715, dated Aug. 1, 2014, 6 pages.

United States Patent and Trademark Office, "Notice of Allowance and Fee(s) Due," issued in connection with U.S. Appl. No. 17/062,391, dated May 26, 2022, 12 pages.

United States Patent and Trademark Office, "Non-Final Rejection," issued in connection with U.S. Appl. No. 17/062,391, dated Aug. 5, 2021, 17 pages.

The State Intellectual Property Office of People's Republic of China, "Review Decision Letter," issued in connection with Chinese Patent Application No. 201380080098.x, dated Feb. 23, 2024, 30 pages. (Machine Translation Included).

* cited by examiner

100

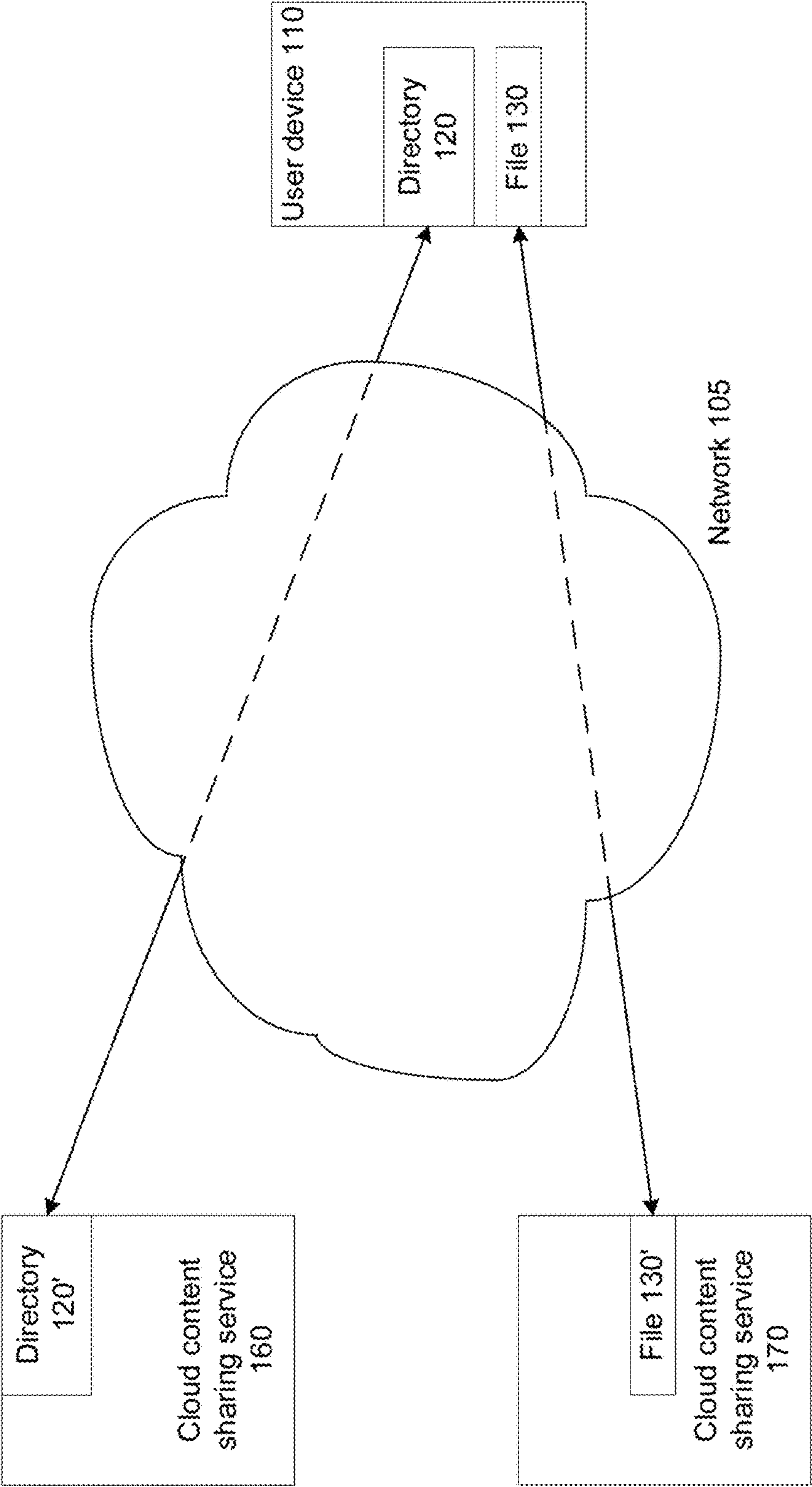


FIG. 1

200 ↗

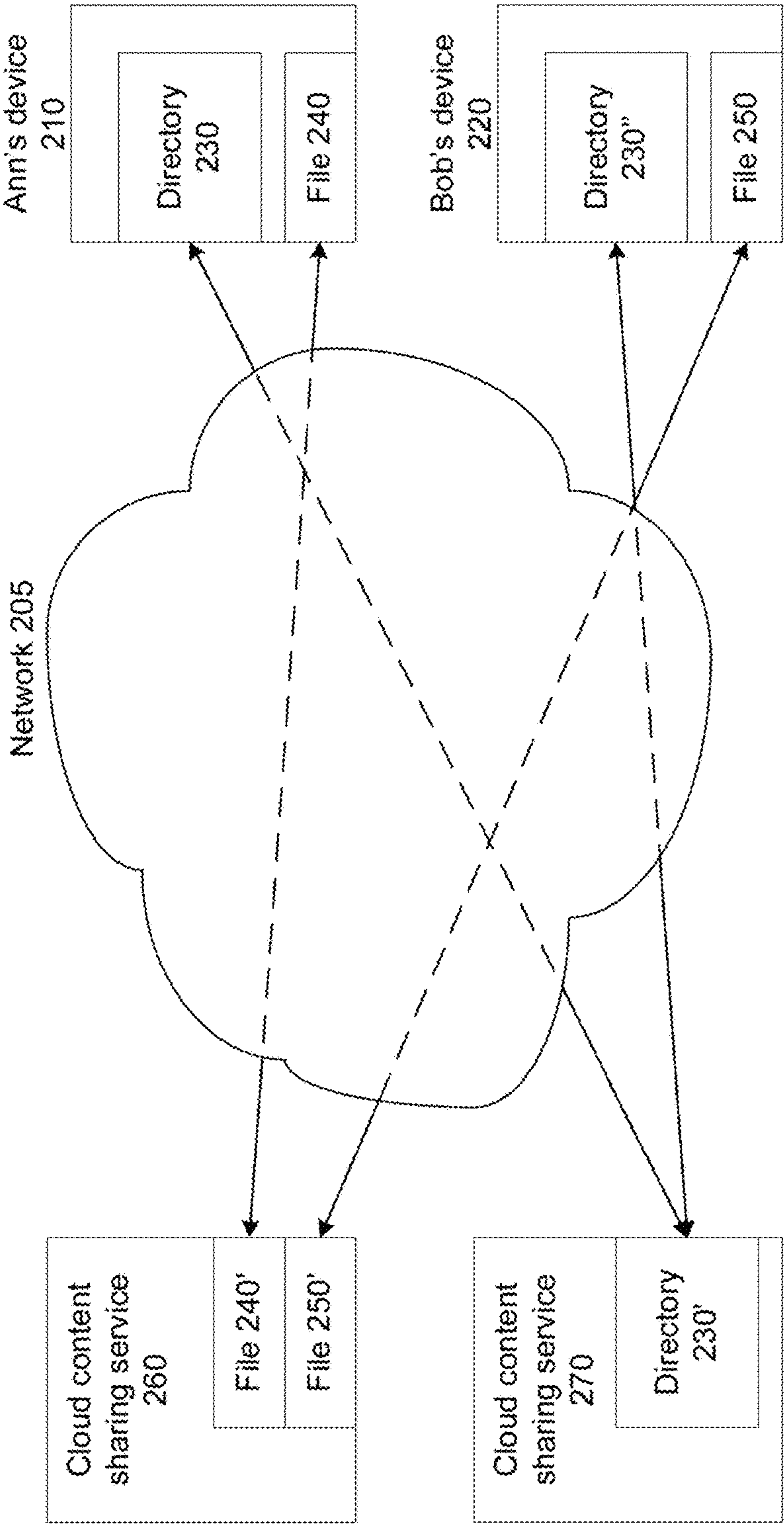


FIG. 2

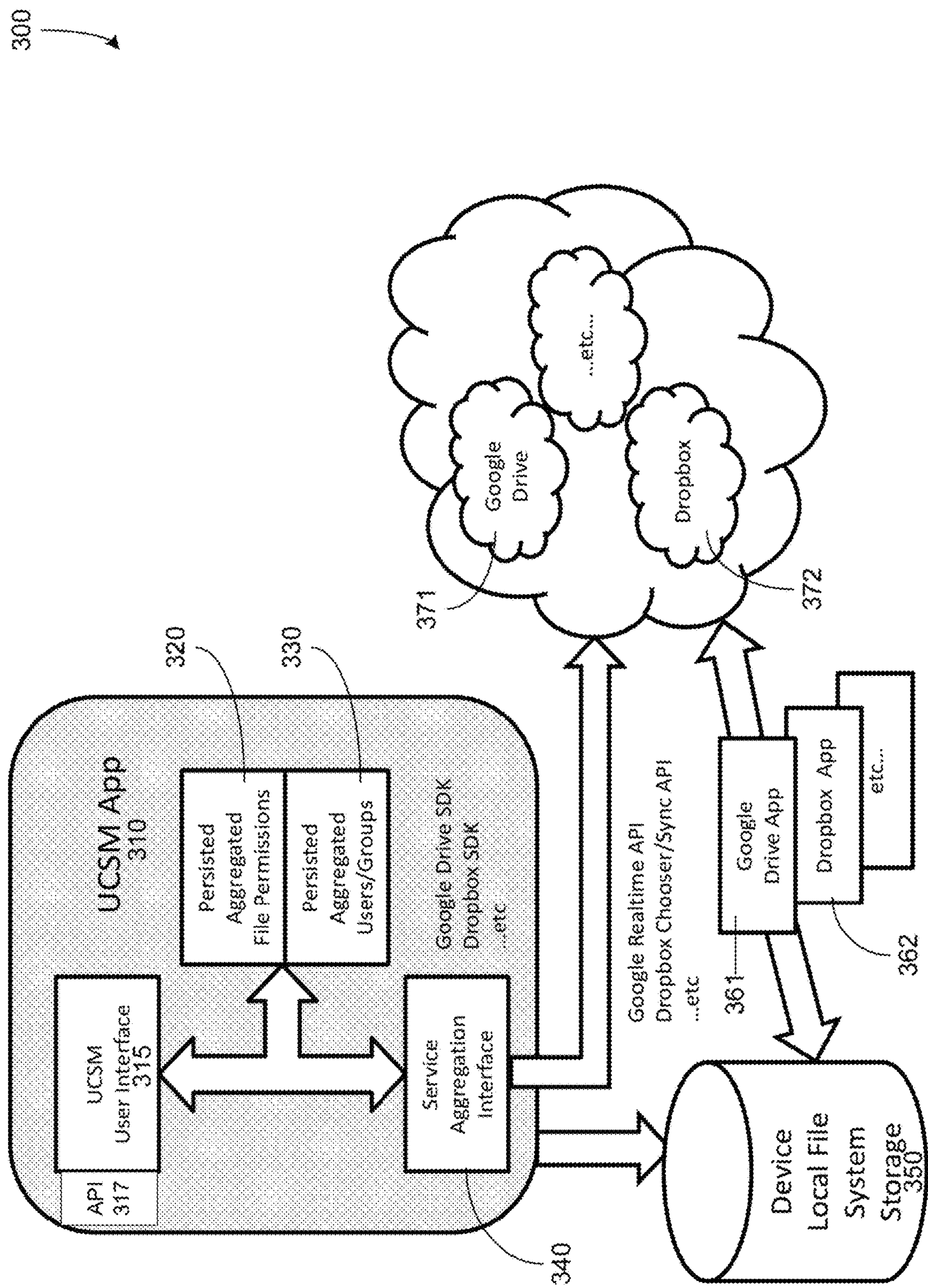


FIG. 3

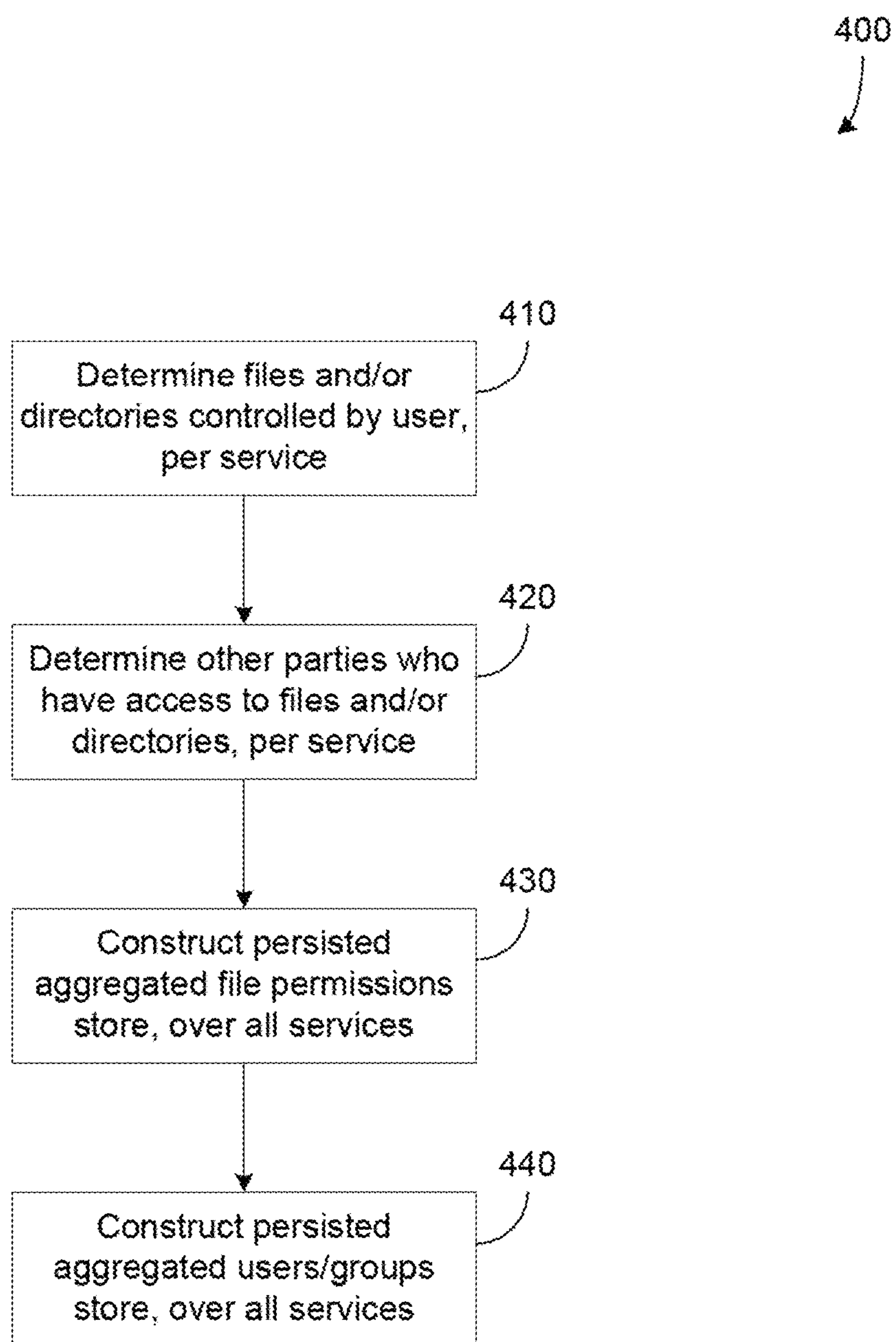


FIG. 4

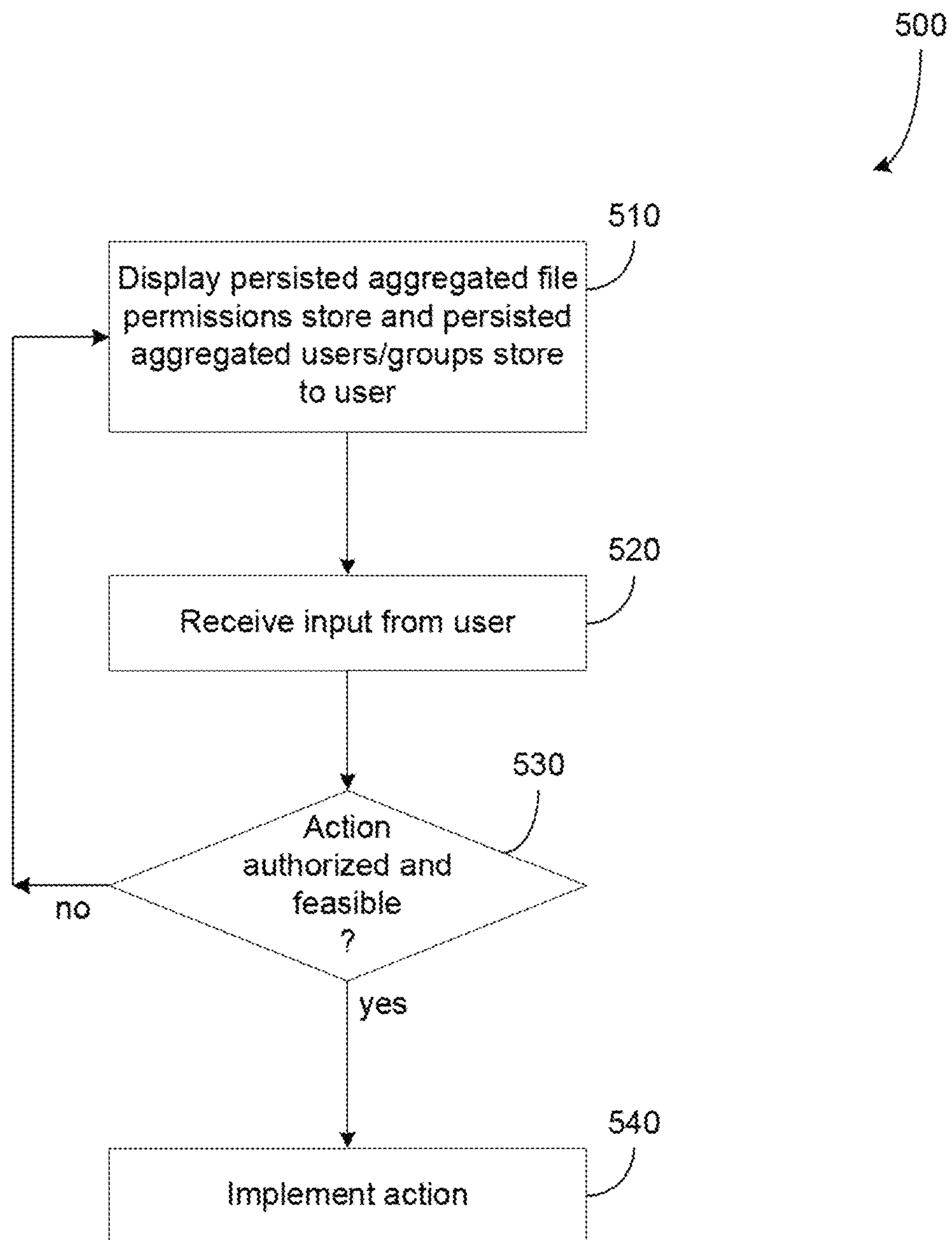


FIG. 5

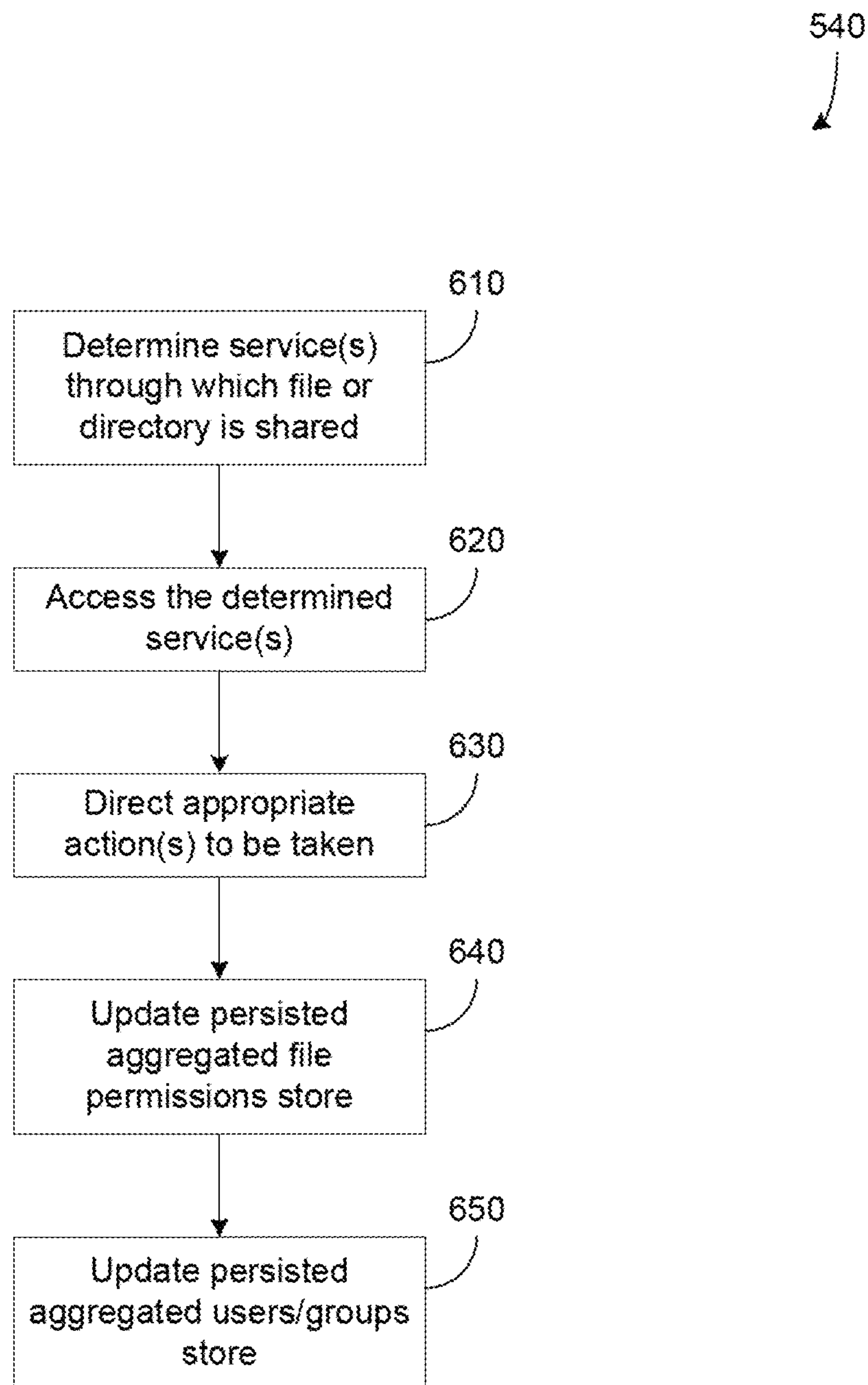


FIG. 6

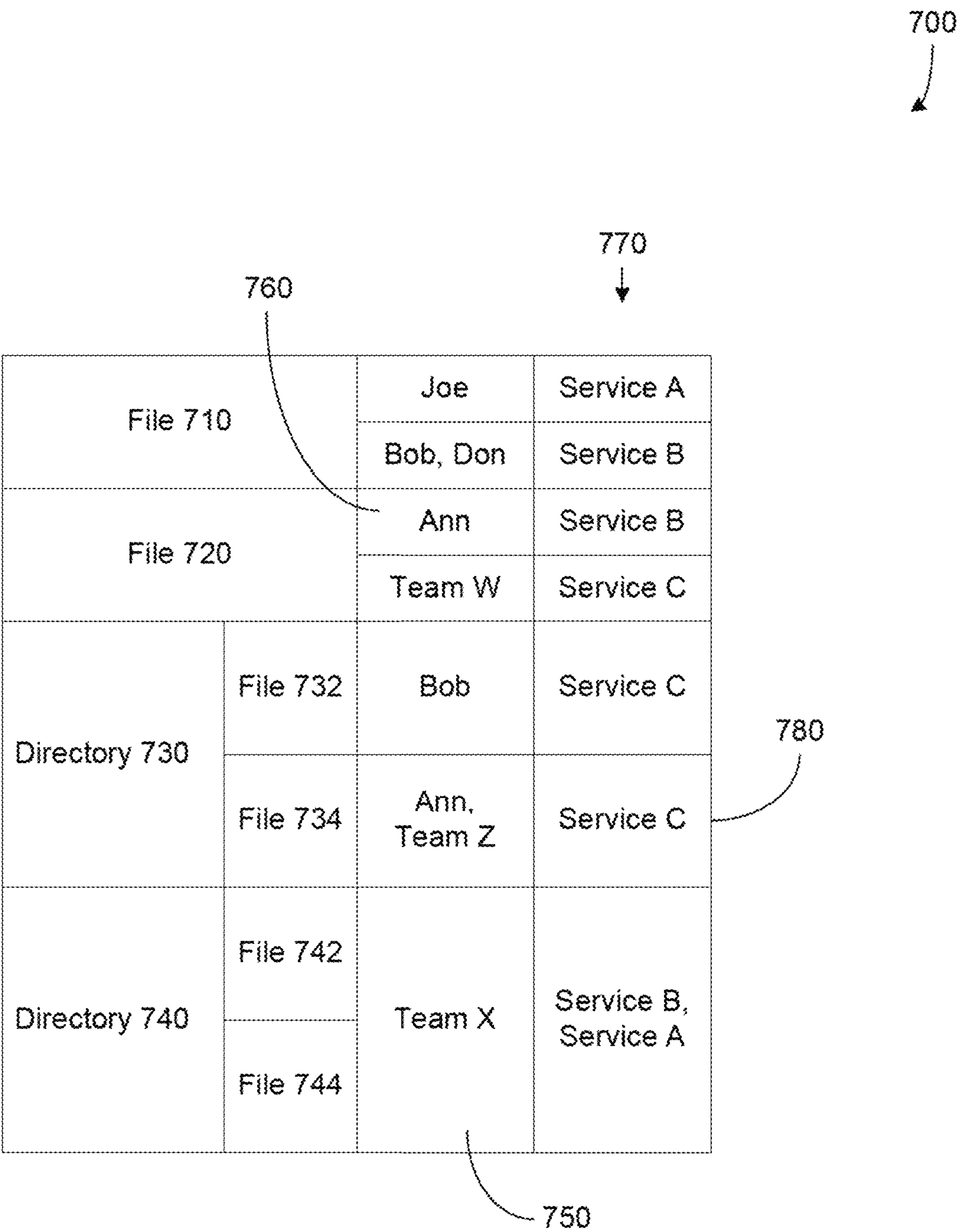


FIG. 7

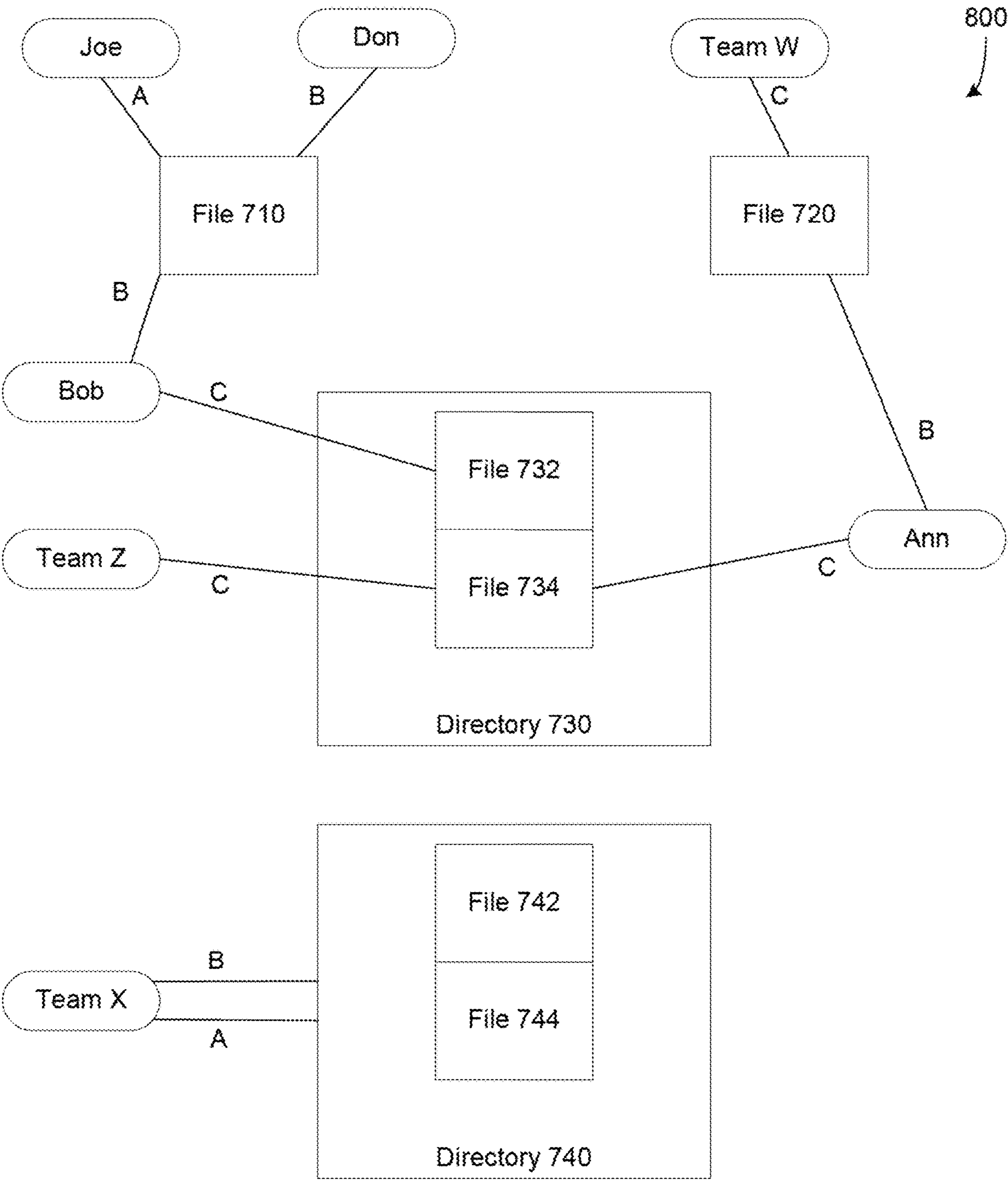


FIG. 8

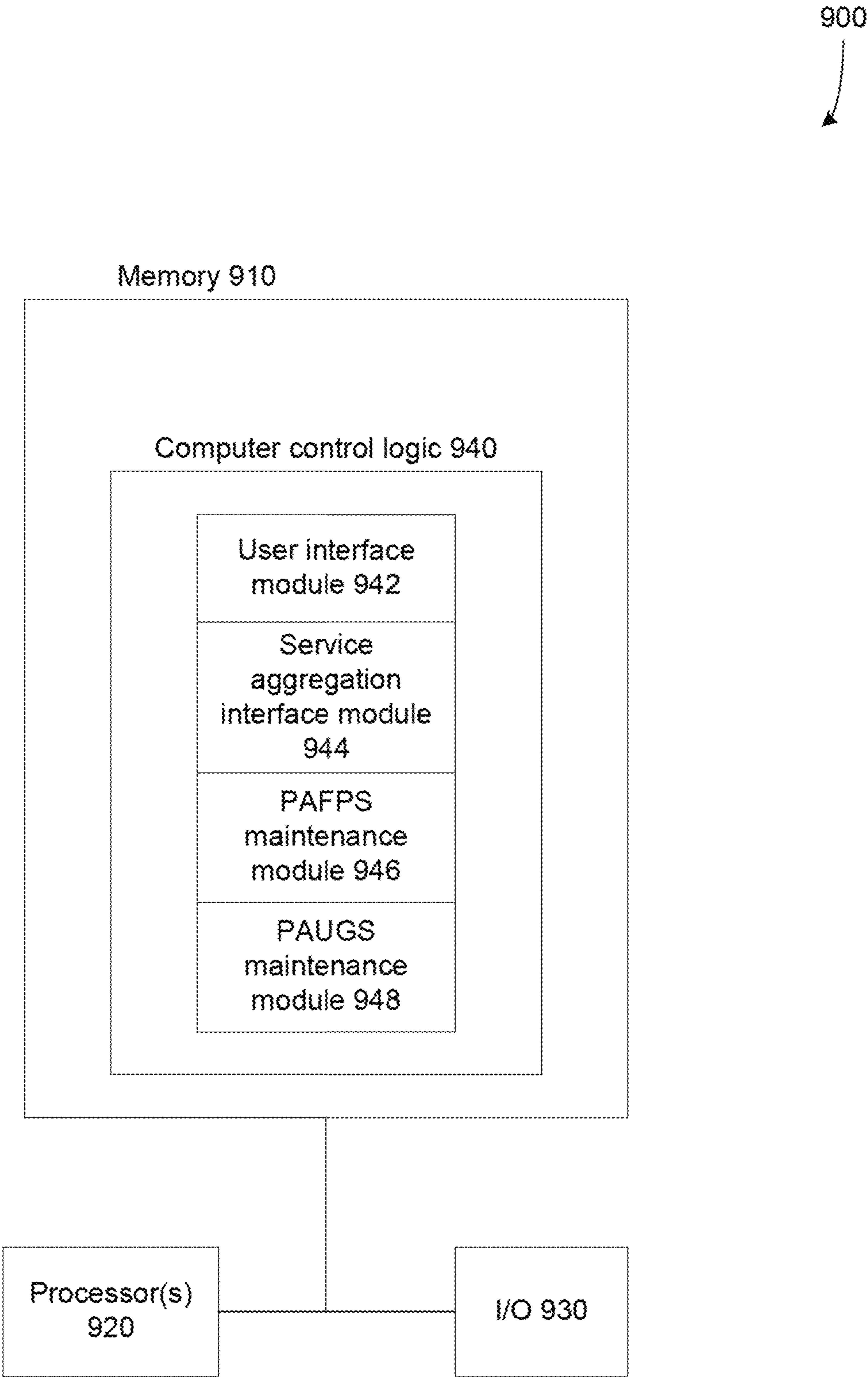


FIG. 9

1

UNIFYING INTERFACE FOR CLOUD
CONTENT SHARING SERVICESCROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED
APPLICATIONS

This patent arises from a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 17/062,391, filed on Oct. 2, 2020, which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 14/125,504, filed on Dec. 11, 2013, which corresponds to a national stage entry of International Patent Application No. PCT/US2013/068715, filed Nov. 6, 2013, which designated, among the various States, the United States of America. U.S. patent application Ser. No. 17/062,391, U.S. patent application Ser. No. 14/125,504 and International Patent Application No. PCT/US2013/068715 are hereby incorporated by reference in their respective entireties.

TECHNICAL FIELD

Embodiments described herein relate to networked content sharing.

BACKGROUND

A number of cloud-based content-sharing services have appeared in recent years. These include cloud content sharing services such as Dropbox, Google Drive, and Box.net. Each of these services allows a user to store files in a cloud-based filespace that is controlled by the user or his/her group. These files may represent text, images, audio, or video content. The files may be mirrored and synchronized with a locally stored directory at any or all of the user's computing devices. Moreover, the files may be shared with other users via the cloud content sharing service. In the user's filespace, certain files or directories may be made accessible to certain other users who may also subscribe to the same service.

Access to the various files and directories may become difficult to manage, however. There may be a large number of files in the user's filespace and a large set of other users who have some degree of access. Different people or groups may be given access to different files or directories, and the user may have difficulty keeping track of who has access to which files, contending with multiple content management user interfaces. This can lead to inadvertently exposing a file to a party that should not be authorized to have access.

The problem is compounded if the user subscribes to two or more cloud content sharing services. The user may maintain some files or directories on Dropbox, others on Google Drive, and still others on Box.net, for example. Access to some files or directories may be maintained on two or more of these services. For each service, different persons or groups may have access to a given file. In such a situation, the user may have difficulty knowing who has access to what content, and whether such access is permissible or represents a security risk.

For example, a contractor may share certain files or directories with its client via Dropbox, and may share files or directories with a subcontractor via Google Drive. Some of the files may be the same for each service, while others are not. The contractor may wish to allow the client to access certain files, but not want the subcontractor to have access to these same files; conversely, it may be desirable for the subcontractor to have access to a file, but not permit the client to have access to this file. Over time, the permissions may shift, so that a person should be granted access to a file

2

only after some milestone in the contract has passed, or denied access after he has been taken off the project, for example. At any given moment, the user may not have a clear picture of what parties have access to a given file, and therefore may risk exposing a file to an unauthorized person.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE
DRAWINGS/FIGURES

FIG. 1 is a block diagram illustrating multiple cloud content sharing services.

FIG. 2 is a block diagram illustrating multiple cloud content sharing services and file access by multiple parties.

FIG. 3 is a block diagram illustrating the system described herein, according to an embodiment.

FIG. 4 is a flow chart illustrating the construction of information stores, according to an embodiment.

FIG. 5 is a flow chart illustrating operation of a user interface module, according to an embodiment.

FIG. 6 is a flow chart illustrating implementation of a change to an access permission, according to an embodiment.

FIG. 7 is an example of a user interface, according to an embodiment.

FIG. 8 is an example of another user interface, according to an alternative embodiment.

FIG. 9 is a block diagram illustrating a software or firmware embodiment.

In the drawings, the leftmost digit(s) of a reference number identifies the drawing in which the reference number first appears.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

An embodiment is now described with reference to the figures, where like reference numbers indicate identical or functionally similar elements. While specific configurations and arrangements are discussed, it should be understood that this is done for illustrative purposes only. A person skilled in the relevant art will recognize that other configurations and arrangements can be used without departing from the spirit and scope of the description. It will be apparent to a person skilled in the relevant art that this can also be employed in a variety of other systems and applications other than what is described herein.

Disclosed herein are methods and systems that offer an advantage of allowing a user to see the people or groups who have access to files that are maintained in a plurality of cloud content sharing services. Embodiments may allow the user to see, at a glance, whether the appropriate parties or groups have access to particular files or directories, and whether any files or directories are being improperly exposed to parties or groups who should not have access. In particular, the user may see what specific parties or groups have access to a particular file or directory, regardless of the cloud content sharing service involved. Moreover, a user interface may allow the user to manipulate the permissions, e.g., grant access, for another person or group, to a file or directory. The user interface may also allow the user to revoke access to the file or directory for a person or group for confidentiality purposes, for example. The user's action to change access permission may be effected independently of the particular cloud content sharing service.

Context for the systems and methods described herein is illustrated in the example scenario of FIG. 1. Here, a user device 110 stores a directory 120 and a file 130. Note that the term "directory," as used herein, refers to a collection of any

number of files. A directory may contain multiple files, or may contain zero files; moreover, a directory may include one or more other directories. The device **110** may be any computing device without limitation, such as a desktop personal computer, a laptop, a tablet computer, a smartphone, or a wearable computer. The directory **120** is also maintained by a cloud content sharing service **160**. The directory **120**, as maintained by this service, is shown as directory **120'**. Changes made to the directory **120** by the user may be reflected as corresponding changes to directory **120'**. The user's file **130** may be maintained by a different cloud content sharing service, shown as service **170**. Changes made to the file **130** by the user may be reflected as corresponding changes to file **130'**. The user may also be able to access directory **120'** and file **130'** through any of his computing devices. Any changes made to these files or directories may be made locally at whatever device is used by the user, and reflected in their copies stored at the cloud content sharing services. Moreover, changes to file **130'** and directory **120'** by other users may be mirrored at their respective copies at the user's assorted local computing devices. While a file is shown stored at service **170** and a directory is shown stored at service **160**, note that in general any number of files and/or directories may be stored at either service.

In addition, a cloud content sharing service will typically store metadata related to the files and/or directories stored by the service. This metadata may include, for example, access control data that describes the parties or groups that have permission to access the files and/or directories stored by the service. The interaction between the user's devices, such as user device **110**, and the cloud content sharing services, may take place via a network **105**, such as the Internet, an intranet, a wide area network, a local area network, a personal area network, or some combination thereof.

By storing files or directories at a cloud content sharing service, a file or directory may be made available to other parties who also subscribe to the service. This is illustrated in FIG. 2. Here, user Ann may have a computing device **210** that stores a directory **230** and a file **240**. Ann may use a cloud content sharing service **270** to maintain directory **230**, shown at this service as directory **230'**. She may use another such service **260** to maintain file **240**, which is stored at this service as file **240'**.

Ann's directory **230'** may also be accessible by user Bob, via Bob's computing device **220**. Bob's device **220** may therefore also maintain a copy of this directory, shown as directory **230''**. Any changes to this directory, by either user, may be synchronized with the copy **230'** of this directory, and with the copy stored at the other user.

FIG. 3 illustrates an embodiment of the system described herein. The system may include a unified cloud service management (UCSM) application **310**. This application may include a user interface module **315** in communication with two stores, a persisted aggregated file permissions (PAFP) store **320** and a persisted aggregated users/groups (PAUG) store **330**. The PAFP store **320** may reflect some or all of the local file system in storage **350** and some or all of the files and directories (i.e., objects) shared in the various cloud content sharing services. The PAUG store **330** may identify a service-agnostic view of persons and groups (i.e., subjects) with which the user shares files and directories via the cloud content sharing services. Collectively, the PAFP store **320** and the PAUG store **330** may provide enough information to describe the shared files and directories controlled by the local user, and the users and groups that may access them. Further, the UCSM application may expose application

program interface (API) functions that extend the functions of the User Interface to other programs on the platform on which the UCSM executes.

This collective information identifying files and directories, plus the parties having access to the files/directories may be presented to the local user through the user interface module **315**. The user interface module **315** may present this information in a tabular form, in a graphical form, or in any other manner known to persons of ordinary skill in the art. Examples of these forms of presentation will be discussed in greater detail below.

The user may use interface module **315** to manipulate the access permissions, i.e., may grant, to a particular person or group, access to a file or directory, or may revoke such access. Such an action may be effected at the appropriate cloud content sharing service using an application program interface provided by that service. For example, if a person currently has access to a file via Dropbox, an instruction may be sent to Dropbox (**372**) through the local API for Dropbox. The various software development kits (SDKs) for the respective cloud content sharing services may be used to create a service aggregation interface module **340** to allow interfacing with these services. As before, local user files in storage **350** may be synchronized with the various cloud content sharing services **371**, **372**, etc., using the respective applications (**361**, **362**, . . .) for these services.

The creation of the PAFP store **320** and the PAUG store **330** is illustrated in FIG. 4, according to an embodiment. At **410**, the files and directories that are controlled by the user are identified. These files and directories may represent the entities for which the user may control access. As noted at **410**, the cloud content sharing service that is used for each file/directory is also determined. It should be noted that a given file or directory may be shared through more than one such service, and the PAFP and PAUG may be maintained in such a way as to reflect summary file-to-directory mappings across multiple cloud content sharing services.

At **420**, the other parties (e.g., other persons or groups) having access to each such file or directory may be determined. Again, this determination is made per cloud content sharing service, so that each party's access to a particular file or directory is determined for each service through which the file/directory is shared.

At **430**, the PAFP store may be constructed, drawing on data gathered at **410** and **420**. As discussed above, the PAFP store identifies the objects shared in the various cloud content sharing services. At **440**, the PAUG store may be constructed. This store provides a service-agnostic view of all users and groups with which the user shares files or directories, as noted above.

Operation of the user interface is illustrated in FIG. 5, according to an embodiment. At **510**, the persisted aggregated file permissions store and the persisted aggregated users/groups store may be displayed to the user. These stores may be presented to the user in any of several ways, as would be understood by a person of ordinary skill in the art. Examples will be described in greater detail below. At **520**, input may be received from the user. Such input may take the form of choosing some action, such as granting, to a user or group, access to a particular file or directory, for example, or revoking such access.

At **530**, a determination may be made as to whether such an action is authorized and feasible. In an embodiment, the authority of the user to take such an action may be verified. It may be prudent, for example, to verify that the user is in fact authorized to grant access to a file or directory to a particular person, and that this person is authorized to

5

receive access to this file or directory. In addition, it may be useful to verify that the intended action is feasible. Granting or denying access to a file to a particular person may not be feasible if that person does not subscribe to the cloud content sharing service that maintains this file, for example. If the desired action is both authorized and feasible, then the action may be implemented at 540. Otherwise, the processing may return to 510.

Implementation of the action corresponding to the user's input (540 of FIG. 5) is illustrated in greater detail in FIG. 6, according to an embodiment. At 610, the user's input at the user interface may be interpreted to determine the cloud content sharing service(s) through which the designated file or directory is shared. At 620, and the service(s) may be accessed. At 630, the action identified by the user's input may be converted into an instruction directed towards the service(s) determined at 610. In an embodiment, 610-630 may be implemented in service aggregation interface 340, shown in FIG. 3. Once the action is completed, at 640 the persisted aggregated file permissions store may be updated or reconstructed in the manner shown in FIG. 4. At 650, the persisted aggregated users/groups store may also be updated or reconstructed in this manner.

One example of a possible user interface design abstraction is illustrated in FIG. 7, according to an embodiment. As discussed above, such an interface may present the information maintained in the persisted aggregated file permissions store and the persisted aggregated users/groups store. FIG. 7 shows a user interface in a tabular form. Here, file 710 is shown as being accessible by Joe through cloud content sharing service A. This same file is also shared through a second service, service B, with Bob and Don. Another file, shown as file 720, is also shared through service B, this time with Ann. File 720 is also shared through service C, and may be accessed by the members of a group shown as Team W. Note that the user interface design abstraction of FIG. 7 is organized by file or directory, in that a file or directory may be looked up in the first column and information related to that file or directory (e.g., parties and groups that have access, and the particular service(s) involved) appears in the same row. In an alternative embodiment, a user interface may be organized by person or group in the first column, for example, such that information related to a person or group (e.g., files or directories that this person or group may access, and the service(s) involved) may be found in the same row. Other variations of such an interface may also be used, as would be understood by a person of ordinary skill in the art.

As discussed above, directories containing some number of files may also be shared through cloud content sharing services. A directory 730 is shown containing two files, 732 and 734. File 732 is accessible by Bob through service C. File 734 is also accessible through service C to Ann and to members of Team Z. A second directory, shown as directory 740, contains two files, 742 and 744. This directory and both of its files are shared through services A and B with members of Team X.

To make changes in the accessibility of various files and directories, the user may manipulate the associations depicted in the interface abstraction. For example, in one embodiment, the user may drag and drop the names of users into new locations; the user may also delete or add names. If the user wishes to give Joe access to directory 740, the user may add Joe's name to the field 750. After implementation of such an input, both Team X and Joe would have access to the files in directory 740, through services A and B (assuming that Joe is a subscriber to both of these services). If the

6

user wishes to revoke Ann's access to file 720, her name may be deleted from the appropriate field (760). Similarly, entries in the column 770 that identify the various services may also be manipulated. This would serve to make files available to designated parties via a specified service. If for example, the user wished to allow Bob to access file 732 through the service B, a reference to this service would be added to the appropriate field (780). In other embodiments, other graphical or textual manipulations of the interface (other than dragging and dropping) may be employed instead, as would be understood to persons of ordinary skill in the art.

In an alternative embodiment, various forms of access may also be tracked and presented to the user. Some persons may only have read access to certain files, for example, while other persons may have both read and write access. In such an embodiment, an additional column may be used to specify the type of access given to a particular person or group with respect to a particular file or directory.

The persisted aggregated users/groups store and the persisted aggregated file permissions store that are presented to the user in FIG. 7 may also be presented in a more graphical form as shown in FIG. 8, according to an alternative embodiment. Here, files and directories are shown as rectangular icons, while persons and groups are shown as oval icons. Access is indicated by lines that connect persons or groups to files and directories. These lines are labeled to indicate the cloud content sharing service through which the file or directory is shared. As before, Joe has access to file 710 through cloud content sharing service A. Both Don and Bob have access to this file through service B. Bob can also access file 732 of directory 730 using service C. File 734 in this directory is available to Team Z and to Ann through this same service. Team W has access to file 720 through service C. Ann may access this file through service B. Team X may have access to the files of directory 740 through both services A and B. In some circumstances, directories may contain other directories (sometimes called subdirectories), and these latter subdirectories may contain still more subdirectories, etc. In such a situation, the interface abstraction of FIG. 8 may grow graphically complex. In an embodiment, a high level topology may be shown, indicating the access permitted to higher level directories and files. A zoom feature may be used to allow a more detailed view of lower level subdirectories.

Using an interface such as the one shown in FIG. 8, the user may manipulate access by manipulating the graphics in one embodiment. If the user wishes to grant Joe access to directory 740, for example, the user may draw a line from Joe's icon to the rectangle representing this directory. The user may then label that line according to the cloud content sharing service to be used for Joe's access. If the user wishes to revoke Ann's access to file 720, the user may delete the line segment connecting Ann's icon to that of file 720.

In an alternative embodiment, different forms of access (e.g., read and write) may also be shown in interface 800. This may be accomplished, for example, by indicating the form of access on the various line segments (e.g., R or W, or both), and could be conveyed either by modification of the shape, color, or other object attributes.

In addition, in some circumstances, the user may have a choice as to which cloud content sharing service to use in sharing a file or directory. In this case, the user may elect a particular service on the basis of which service has the superior quality of service or cost, for the particular person involved. Factors such as bandwidth and storage capacity may be used in this decision. A particular service may also be chosen because this service is available to the person

needing access, where other services are not available to this person. In an embodiment, these considerations may be evaluated by the unified cloud service management application 310 (shown in FIG. 3) so that a recommended service is presented to the user in such a case. Alternatively, the user may make this decision on his own.

In another embodiment, the GUIs of FIGS. 7 and 8 may also name other parties who may be interested in accessing one or more of the user's files or directories. The unified cloud service management application 310 may perform a search of the user's contact lists and social media contacts, for example, to identify such parties. Such parties may then be recommended to the user via the GUI.

Various embodiments may be implemented using hardware elements, software elements, or a combination of both. Examples of hardware elements may include processors, microprocessors, circuits, circuit elements (e.g., transistors, resistors, capacitors, inductors, and so forth), integrated circuits, application specific integrated circuits (ASIC), programmable logic devices (PLD), digital signal processors (DSP), field programmable gate array (FPGA), logic gates, registers, semiconductor device, chips, microchips, chip sets, modules composed of such elements, and so forth.

Examples of software may include software components, computer programs, application programs, system programs, machine programs, operating system software, middleware, firmware, software modules, routines, subroutines, functions, methods, procedures, software interfaces, application program interfaces (API), instruction sets, computing code, code segments, words, values, symbols, or any combination thereof. Determining whether an embodiment is implemented using hardware elements and/or software elements may vary in accordance with any number of factors, such as desired computational rate, power levels, heat tolerances, processing cycle budget, input data rates, output data rates, memory resources, data bus speeds and other design or performance constraints.

The terms software and firmware, as used herein, may refer to a computer program product including a computer readable medium having computer control logic stored therein to cause a computer system to perform one or more features and/or combinations of features disclosed herein. This computer program logic may represent control logic to direct the processing of the computer. The computer readable medium may be transitory or non-transitory. An example of a transitory computer readable medium may be a digital signal transmitted over a radio frequency or over an electrical conductor, through a local or wide area network, or through a network such as the Internet. An example of a non-transitory computer readable medium may be a compact disk, a flash memory, random access memory (RAM), read-only memory (ROM), or other data storage device or tangible medium.

A computing system that executes such software/firmware is shown in FIG. 9, according to an embodiment. The illustrated system 900 may include one or more processor(s) 920 and may further include a body of memory 910. Processor(s) 920 may include one or more central processing unit cores and/or a graphics processing unit having one or more GPU cores. Memory 910 may include one or more computer readable media that may store computer control logic 940. Memory 910 may be implemented as a hard disk and drive, a removable media such as a compact disk, a read-only memory (ROM) or random access memory (RAM) device, for example, or some combination thereof. Processor(s) 920 and memory 910 may be in communication using any of several technologies known to one of ordinary

skill in the art, such as a bus or point-to-point interconnect. Computer control logic 940 contained in memory 910 may be read and executed by processor(s) 920. One or more I/O ports and/or I/O devices, shown collectively as I/O 930, may also be connected to processor(s) 920 and memory 910.

Computer control logic 940 may include logic that embodies some or all of the processing described above. In the illustrated embodiment, computer control logic 940 may include a user interface module 942 that implements user interfaces such as those shown at FIGS. 7 and 8. This module may be responsible for presenting the persisted stores in the forms shown in these figures, receiving user inputs, and presenting revised graphics to reflect any changed access permissions resulting from the user's inputs. These inputs may be interpreted and conveyed to a service aggregation interface module 944, which may be responsible for communication of instructions to one or more of the cloud content sharing services, wherein the commands correspond to the user's inputs. Computer control logic 940 may also include modules 946 and 948, which may be responsible for the construction and maintenance of the persisted aggregated file permissions store and persisted aggregated users/groups stores respectively. In an embodiment, the modules 942-948 may be incorporated in a unified cloud service management application such as that shown in FIG. 3, running on the user's computing device. In alternative embodiments, one or more of these modules may run as separate application programs.

Note that in other embodiments, modules 942-948 may be implemented in hardware, or in a combination of hardware, software, and/or firmware.

Methods and systems are disclosed herein with the aid of functional building blocks illustrating the functions, features, and relationships thereof. At least some of the boundaries of these functional building blocks have been arbitrarily defined herein for the convenience of the description. Alternate boundaries may be defined so long as the specified functions and relationships thereof are appropriately performed.

While various embodiments are disclosed herein, it should be understood that they have been presented by way of example only, and not limitation. It will be apparent to persons skilled in the relevant art that various changes in form and detail may be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope of the methods and systems disclosed herein. Thus, the breadth and scope of the claims should not be limited by any of the exemplary embodiments disclosed herein.

The following examples pertain to further embodiments.

Example 1 is a system comprising a persisted aggregated users/groups store maintenance module configured to construct a persisted aggregated users/groups store that identifies files controlled by a user, wherein the files are maintained in a plurality of cloud content sharing services; a persisted aggregated file permissions store maintenance module configured to construct a persisted aggregated file permissions store that identifies access permissions associated with each file; a user interface module configured to display the persisted aggregated users/groups store and persisted aggregated file permissions store to the user, and to receive input from the user indicating how one or more of the access permissions are to be changed; an application program interface enabling interaction with the persisted stores, and a service aggregation interface module configured to issue an instruction to one or more of the cloud content sharing services to implement the change.

In example 2, the system of example 1 includes persisted aggregated file permissions store and persisted aggregated users/groups store that are displayed to the user in a graphical user interface (GUI) implemented by the user interface module and wherein the input from the user is received through the GUI.

In example 3, the access permissions of example 1 describe the user(s) or group(s) that are permitted to access a file.

In example 4, the access permissions of example 3 further describe whether the user(s) or group(s) are permitted to read or write to the file.

In example 5, the persisted aggregated users/groups store of example 1 further identifies directories controlled by the user, where the directories are maintained in the plurality of cloud content sharing services; and the persisted aggregated file permissions store of example 1 identifies access permissions associated with each directory.

In example 6, the permission change of example 5 comprises one of: extending, to a second user, access rights to a filing directory; and revoking, from the second user, access rights to the file or directory.

In example 7, the instruction of example 1 is implemented only if the user is authorized to change the one or more access permissions.

In example 8, the instruction of example 1 is directed to a particular cloud content sharing service that is selected on the basis of quality of service.

Example 9 is a method, comprising: constructing a persisted aggregated users/groups store that identifies files controlled by a user, wherein the files are maintained in a plurality of cloud content sharing services; constructing a persisted aggregated file permissions store that identifies access permissions associated with each file; displaying the persisted aggregated users/groups store and persisted aggregated file permissions store to the user; receiving input from the user indicating how one or more of the access permissions are to be changed; and issuing an instruction to one or more of the cloud content sharing services to implement the change.

In example 10, the persisted aggregated file permissions store and persisted aggregated users/groups store of example 9 are displayed to the user in a graphical user interface (GUI) and the input from the user is received through the GUI.

In example 11, the access permissions of example 9 describe the user(s) or group(s) that are permitted to access a file.

In example 12, the access permissions of example 11 further describe whether the user(s) or group(s) are permitted to read or write to the file.

In example 13, the persisted aggregated users/groups store of example 9 further identifies directories controlled by the user, where the directories are maintained in the plurality of cloud content sharing services; and the persisted aggregated file permissions store of example 9 identifies access permissions associated with each directory.

In example 14, the permission change of example 13 comprises one of:

extending, to a second user, access rights to a filing directory; and revoking, from the second user, access rights to the file or directory.

In example 15, the instruction of example 9 is implemented only if the user is authorized to change the one or more access permissions.

In example 16, the instruction of example 9 is directed to a particular cloud content sharing service that is selected on the basis of quality of service.

Example 17 is one or more computer readable media comprising having computer control logic stored thereon, the computer control logic comprising logic configured to cause a processor to: construct a persisted aggregated users/groups store that identifies files controlled by a user, wherein the files are maintained in a plurality of cloud content sharing services; construct a persisted aggregated file permissions store that identifies access permissions associated with each file; display the persisted aggregated users/groups store and persisted aggregated file permissions store to the user; receive input from the user indicating how one or more of the access permissions are to be changed; and issue an instruction to one or more of the cloud content sharing services to implement the change.

In example 18, the persisted aggregated file permissions store and persisted aggregated users/groups store of example 17 are displayed to the user in a graphical user interface (GUI) and the input from the user is received through the GUI.

In example 19, the access permissions of example 17 describe the user(s) or group(s) that are permitted to access a file.

In example 20, the access permissions of example 19 further describe whether the user(s) or group(s) are permitted to read or write to the file.

In example 21, the persisted aggregated users/groups store of example 17 further identifies directories controlled by the user, where the directories are maintained in the plurality of cloud content sharing services; and the persisted aggregated file permissions store of example 17 identifies access permissions associated with each directory.

In example 22, the permission change of example 21 comprises one of: extending, to a second user, access rights to a file or directory; and revoking, from the second user, access rights to the file or directory.

In example 23, the instruction of example 17 is implemented only if the user is authorized to change the one or more access permissions.

In example 24, the instruction of example 17 is directed to a particular cloud content sharing service that is selected on the basis of quality of service.

Example 25 is a system for unifying interfaces of content sharing services, the system comprising: a persisted aggregated users/groups store maintenance module configured to construct a persisted aggregated users/groups store that identifies files controlled by a user, wherein the files are maintained in a plurality of cloud content sharing services; a persisted aggregated file permissions store maintenance module configured to construct a persisted aggregated file permissions store that identifies access permissions associated with each file; a user interface module configured to display the persisted aggregated users/groups store and persisted aggregated file permissions store to the user, and to receive input from the user indicating how one or more of the access permissions are to be changed; an application program interface enabling interaction with the persisted stores, and a service aggregation interface module configured to issue an instruction to one or more of the cloud content sharing services to implement the change.

In example 26, the persisted aggregated file permissions store and persisted aggregated users/groups store of example 25 are displayed to the user in a graphical user interface (GUI) implemented by the user interface module and wherein the input from the user is received through the GUI.

In example 27, the access permissions of example 25 describe the user(s) or group(s) that are permitted to access a file.

11

In example 28, the access permissions of example 27 further describe whether the user(s) or group(s) are permitted to read or write to the file.

In example 29, the persisted aggregated users/groups store of example 25 further identifies directories controlled by the user, where the directories are maintained in the plurality of cloud content sharing services; and the persisted aggregated file permissions store of example 25 identifies access permissions associated with each directory.

In example 30, the permission change of example 29 comprises one of:

extending, to a second user, access rights to a filing directory; and revoking, from the second user, access rights to the file or directory.

In example 31, the instruction of example 25 is implemented only if the user is authorized to change the one or more access permissions.

In example 32, the instruction of example 25 is directed to a particular cloud content sharing service that is selected on the basis of quality of service.

Example 33 is a method for unifying interfaces of content sharing services, the method comprising: constructing a persisted aggregated users/groups store that identifies files controlled by a user, wherein the files are maintained in a plurality of cloud content sharing services; constructing a persisted aggregated file permissions store that identifies access permissions associated with each file; displaying the persisted aggregated users/groups store and persisted aggregated file permissions store to the user;

receiving input from the user indicating how one or more of the access permissions are to be changed; and issuing an instruction to one or more of the cloud content sharing services to implement the change.

In example 34, the persisted aggregated file permissions store and persisted aggregated users/groups store of example 33 are displayed to the user in a graphical user interface (GUI) and the input from the user is received through the GUI.

In example 35, the access permissions of example 33 describe the user(s) or group(s) that are permitted to access a file.

In example 36, the access permissions of example 35 further describe whether the user(s) or group(s) are permitted to read or write to the file.

In example 37, the persisted aggregated users/groups store of example 33 further identifies directories controlled by the user, where the directories are maintained in the plurality of cloud content sharing services; and the persisted aggregated file permissions store of example 33 identifies access permissions associated with each directory.

In example 38, the permission change of example 37 comprises one of:

extending, to a second user, access rights to a filing directory; and revoking, from the second user, access rights to the file or directory.

In example 39, the instruction of example 33 is implemented only if the user is authorized to change the one or more access permissions.

In example 40, the instruction of example 33 is directed to a particular cloud content sharing service that is selected on the basis of quality of service.

Example 41 is means for unifying interfaces of content sharing services, by causing a processor to perform any of the methods of examples 33-40.

Example 42 is one or more computer readable media comprising having computer control logic stored thereon,

12

the computer control logic comprising logic configured to cause a processor to perform any of the methods of examples 33-40.

What is claimed is:

1. A system comprising:

memory;

computer readable instructions; and

at least one processor circuit to execute the computer readable instructions to:

cause display of first user interface elements in a graphical user interface, the first user interface elements to identify files and directories maintained by a plurality of cloud services;

cause display of a second user interface element with the first user interface elements in the graphical user interface, the second user interface element to identify a name of a first one of the cloud services that maintains a first one of the files or directories;

cause display of a third user interface element with the first user interface elements and the second user interface element in the graphical user interface, the third user interface element representative of a group permitted to access the first one of the files or directories;

cause display of a fourth user interface element with the first user interface elements, the second user interface element and the third user interface element in the graphical user interface, the fourth user interface element to indicate an access level associated with the first one of the files or directories;

update information displayed in the graphical user interface based on a manipulation of the fourth user interface element; and

invoke an application program interface associated with the first one of the cloud services to control access to the first one of the files or directories.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the at least one processor circuit is to change an access permission associated with the group and the first one of the files or directories based on a user input to the graphical user interface.

3. The system of claim 2, wherein the access permission is one of a plurality of types of access permissions.

4. The system of claim 2, wherein the access permission is a read access permission.

5. The system of claim 2, wherein the at least one processor circuit is to determine whether the user input is associated with an authorized user.

6. The system of claim 1, wherein the application program interface is one of a plurality of application program interfaces associated with the cloud services.

7. A method comprising:

displaying first user interface elements in a graphical user interface, the first user interface elements to identify files and directories maintained by a plurality of cloud services;

displaying a second user interface element with the first user interface elements in the graphical user interface, the second user interface element to identify a name of a first one of the cloud services that maintains a first one of the files or directories;

displaying a third user interface element with the first user interface elements and the second user interface element in the graphical user interface, the third user interface element representative of a group permitted to access the first one of the files or directories;

displaying a fourth user interface element with the first user interface elements, the second user interface ele-

13

ment and the third user interface element in the graphical user interface, the fourth user interface element to indicate an access level associated with the first one of the files or directories;

5 updating information displayed in the graphical user interface based on a manipulation of the fourth user interface element; and

invoking an application program interface associated with the first one of the cloud services to control access to the first one of the files or directories.

10 **8.** The method of claim 7, including changing an access permission associated with the group and the first one of the files or directories based on a user input to the graphical user interface.

15 **9.** The method of claim 8, wherein the access permission is one of a plurality of types of access permissions.

10. The method of claim 8, wherein the access permission is a read access permission.

11. The method of claim 8, including determining whether the user input is associated with an authorized user.

20 **12.** The method of claim 7, wherein the application program interface is one of a plurality of application program interfaces associated with the cloud services.

13. At least one non-transitory computer readable medium comprising computer readable instructions to cause at least one processor circuit to at least:

25 cause display of first user interface elements in a graphical user interface, the first user interface elements to identify files and directories maintained by a plurality of cloud services;

30 cause display of second user interface elements with the first user interface elements in the graphical user interface, respective ones of the second user interface elements to identify respective names of corresponding ones of the cloud services that maintain corresponding ones of the files or directories; and

35 cause display of third user interface elements with the first user interface elements and the second user interface elements in the graphical user interface, the third user

14

interface elements representative of corresponding groups permitted to access corresponding ones of the files or directories;

cause display of a fourth user interface element with the first user interface elements, the second user interface elements and the third user interface elements in the graphical user interface, the fourth user interface element to indicate an access level associated with a corresponding one of the files or directories;

update information displayed in the graphical user interface based on a manipulation of the fourth user interface element; and

invoke an application program interface associated with a first one of the cloud services to control access to one of the files or directories.

14. The at least non-transitory computer readable medium of claim 13, wherein the computer readable instructions are to cause one or more of the at least one processor circuit to change an access permission associated with a corresponding one of the groups and the corresponding one of the files or directories based on a user input to the graphical user interface.

15. The at least one non-transitory computer readable medium of claim 14, wherein the access permission is one of a plurality of types of access permissions.

16. The at least one non-transitory computer readable medium of claim 14, wherein the access permission is a read access permission.

17. The at least one non-transitory computer readable medium of claim 13, wherein the application program interface is one of a plurality of application program interfaces associated with the cloud services.

18. The at least one non-transitory computer readable medium of claim 14, wherein the computer readable instructions are to cause one or more of the at least one processor circuit to determine whether the user input is associated with an authorized user.

* * * * *