[0030] As noted earlier, the rate of consumption can be indicative of potential problems in the System operation. Excessive page counts per item, excessive postage, multiple mailings to a given addressee are all kinds of problems that tend to consume resources at a rate greater than planned. The usage profile database 32 is programmed to address these issues. The System rate of consumption is indicative of these issues. If the System operator knows that a media consump tion rate of one thousand pages per hour and postage of S340 per hour is the norm, the database can be programmed with a consumption rate consistent with that, plus perhaps 10% for routine variances. AS the alert controller 22 gathers data from the various Sensors, it calculates the rate of consump tion and compares this with the database 32 threshold levels. When one is exceeded, the alert controller 22 generates an alert at alert output 33. Conceptually, there is a predicted rate of consumption plus a variance factor that Set a usage rate threshold which is programmed into the database 32. The alert controller 22 monitorS Sensors to establish the actual rate, which is then compared with the usage profile database 32 rate. A deviance from the acceptable rate of consumption causes an alert to be generated.

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