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**Spiegel**

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(54) **APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR SINGLE ACTION CONTROL OF SOCIAL NETWORK PROFILE ACCESS**

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(52) **U.S. Cl.**
USPC ..... **715/833**; 715/747; 715/974

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
USPC ..... 715/747, 833, 974
See application file for complete search history.

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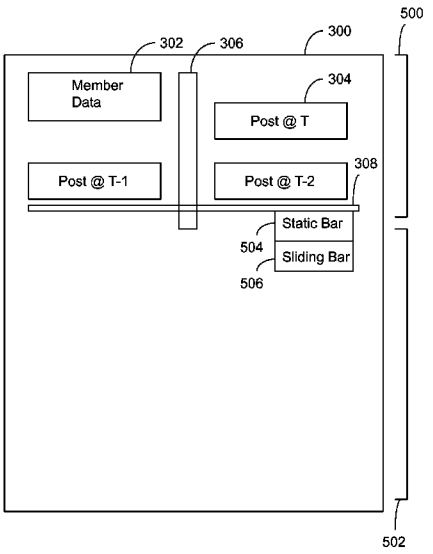
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A computer implemented method includes allowing a user to access a user-controlled social network profile page with posts in a specified order. A user is permitted to traverse an interface element across the specified order to establish a set position for the interface element. Access to posts is provided on a first side of the set position to define a viewable profile. Access to posts is blocked on a second side of the set position to define a non-viewable profile.

**4 Claims, 8 Drawing Sheets**



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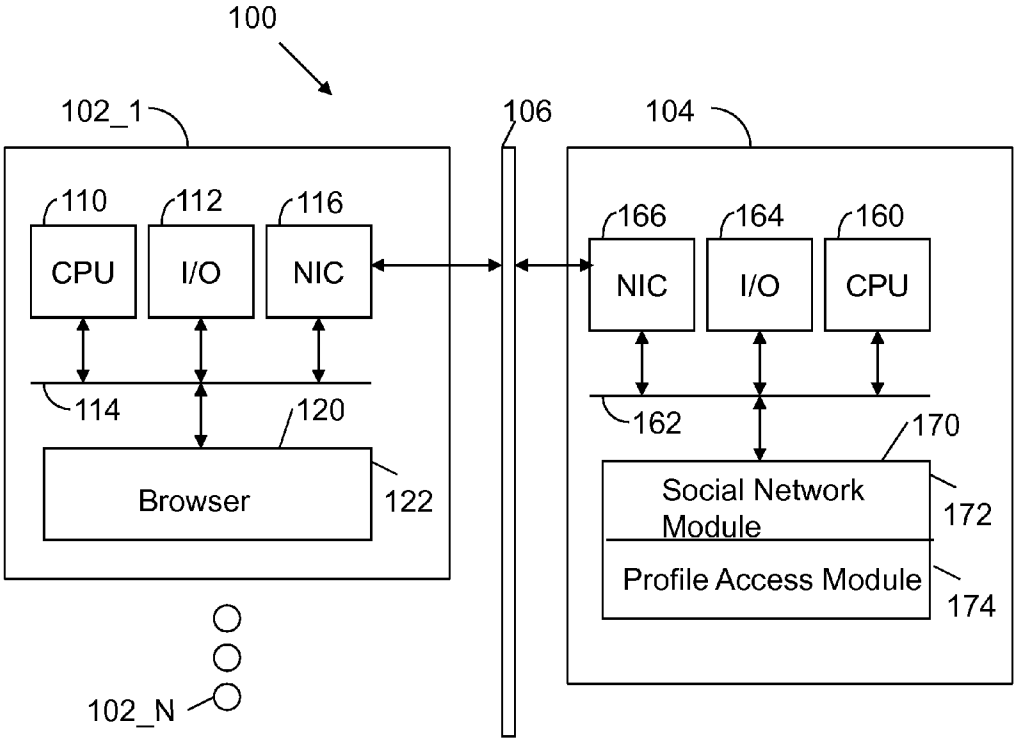
100
102_1
106
104
110
112
116
CPU
I/O
NIC
114
120
Browser
122
102_N
166
164
160
NIC
I/O
CPU
162
170
Social Network Module
172
Profile Access Module
174

FIG. 1

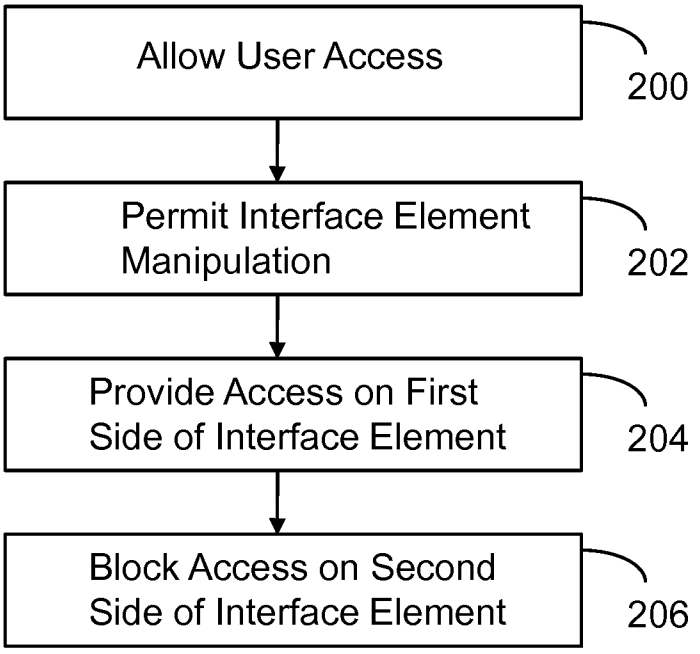
Allow User Access
200
Permit Interface Element Manipulation
202
Provide Access on First Side of Interface Element
204
Block Access on Second Side of Interface Element
206

FIG. 2

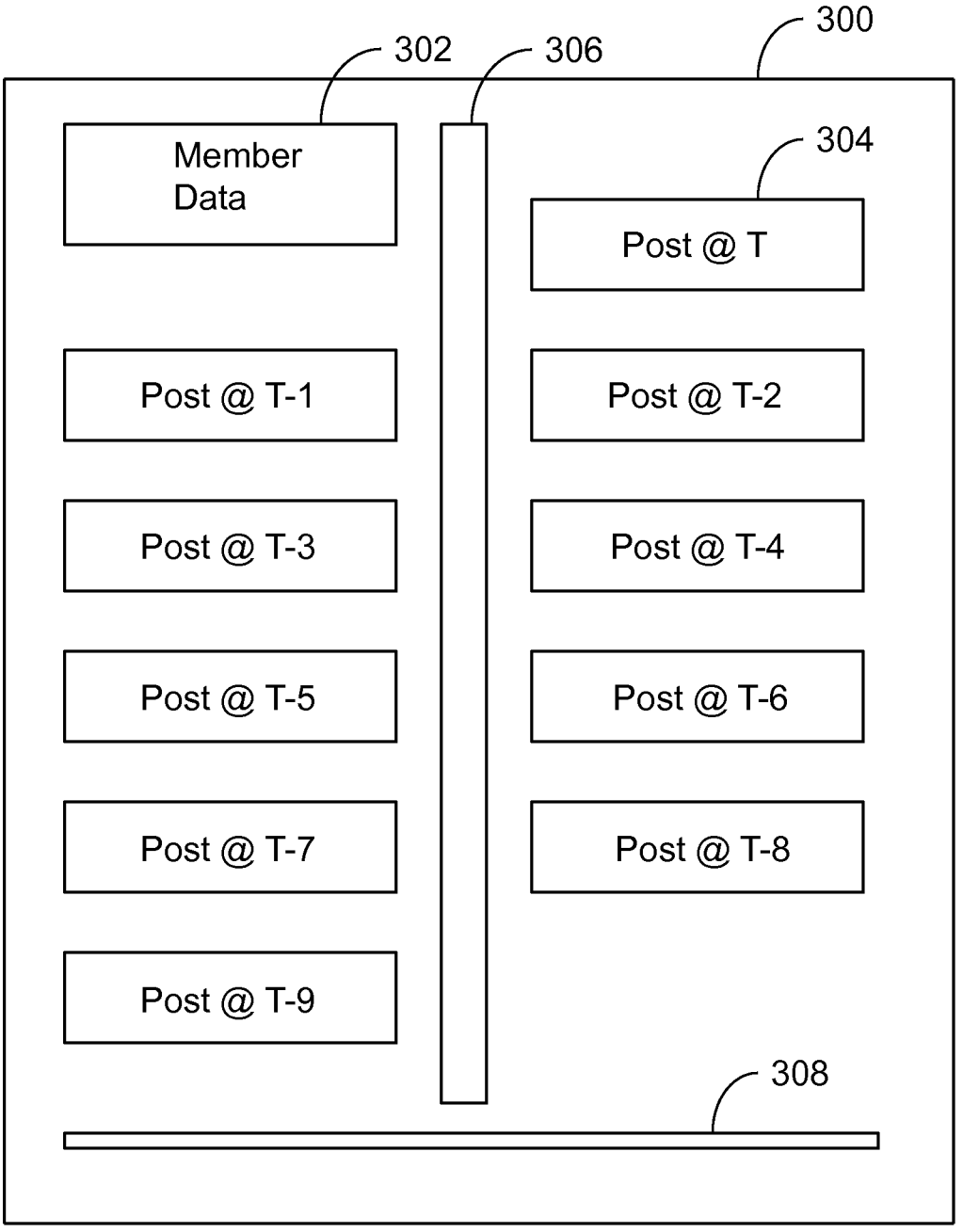
300
302
306
304
Member Data
Post @ T
Post @ T-1
Post @ T-2
Post @ T-3
Post @ T-4
Post @ T-5
Post @ T-6
Post @ T-7
Post @ T-8
Post @ T-9
308

FIG. 3

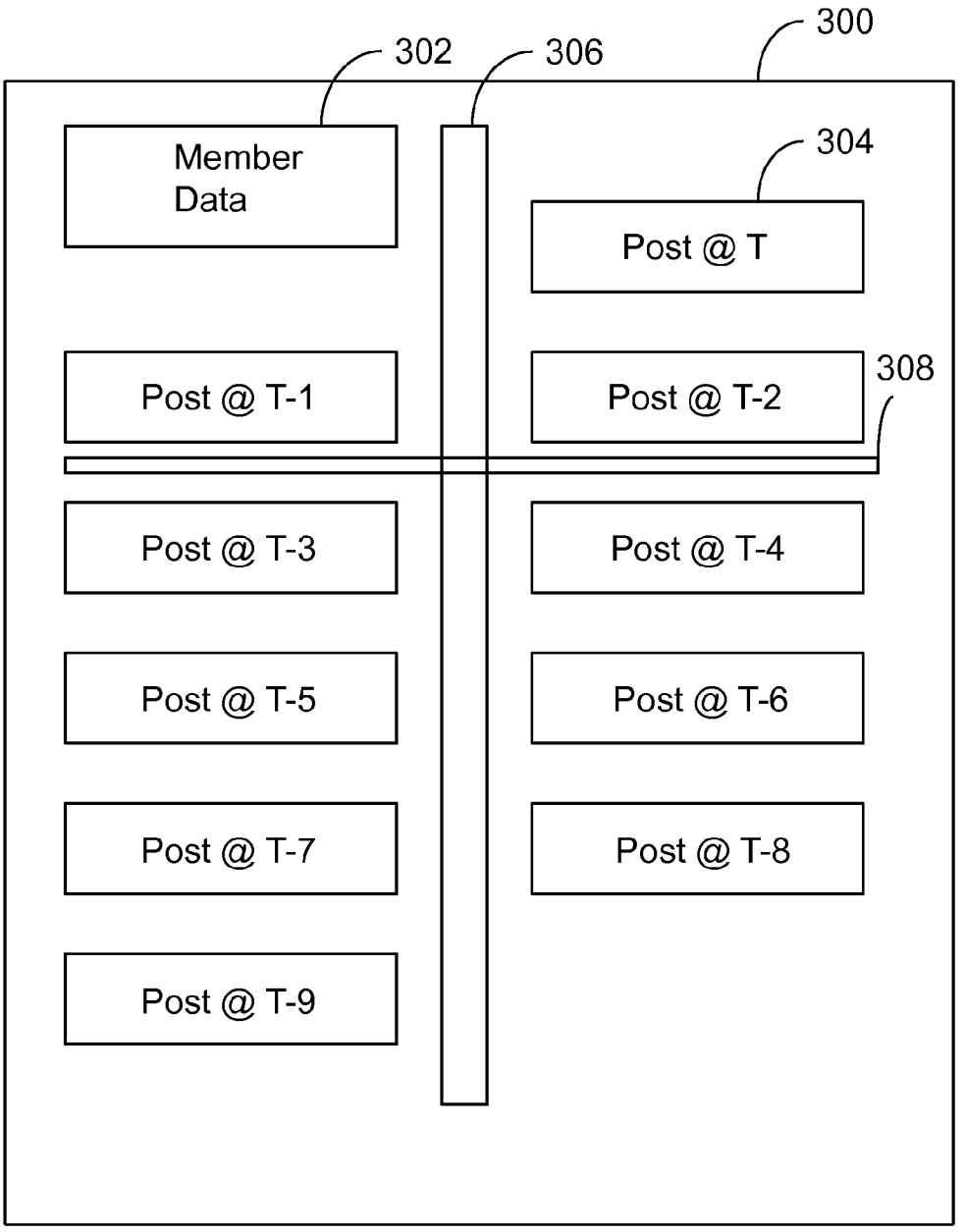
300
302
306
304
Member Data
Post @ T
Post @ T-1
Post @ T-2
308
Post @ T-3
Post @ T-4
Post @ T-5
Post @ T-6
Post @ T-7
Post @ T-8
Post @ T-9

FIG. 4

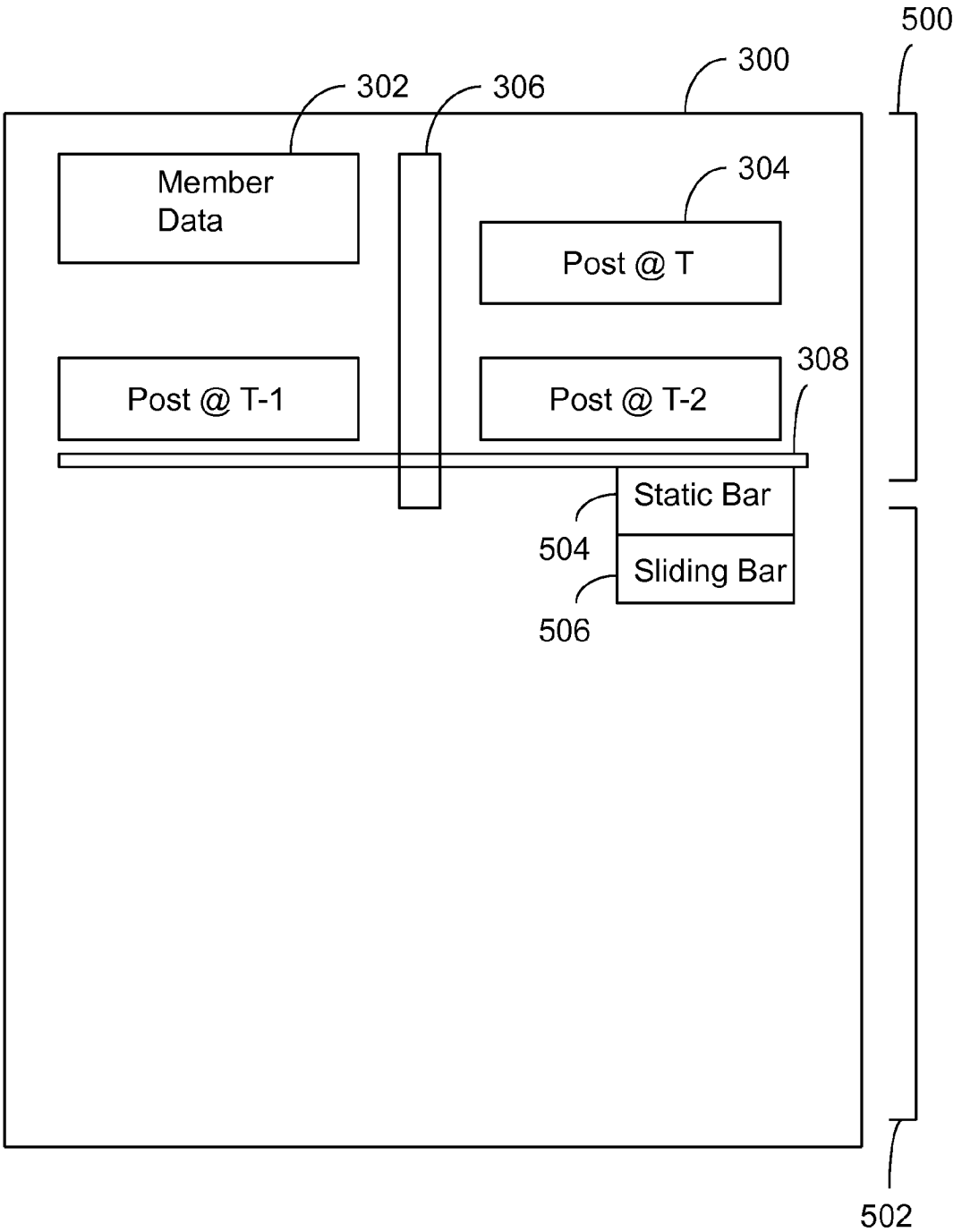
500
300
302
306
Member Data
304
Post @ T
Post @ T-1
Post @ T-2
308
Static Bar
504
Sliding Bar
506
502

FIG. 5

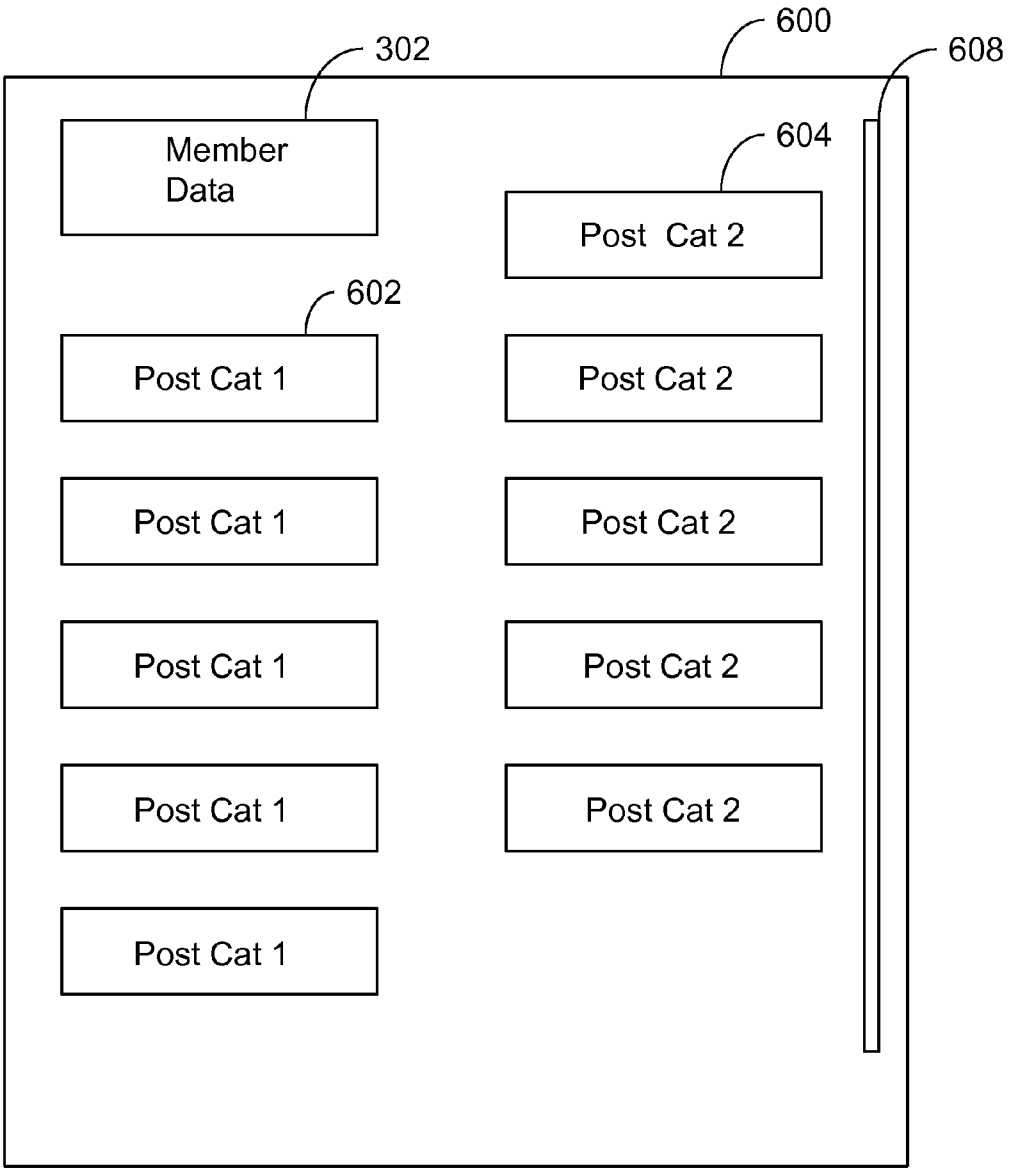
600
302
608
Member Data
604
Post Cat 2
602
Post Cat 1
Post Cat 2
Post Cat 1
Post Cat 2
Post Cat 1
Post Cat 2
Post Cat 1
Post Cat 2
Post Cat 1

FIG. 6

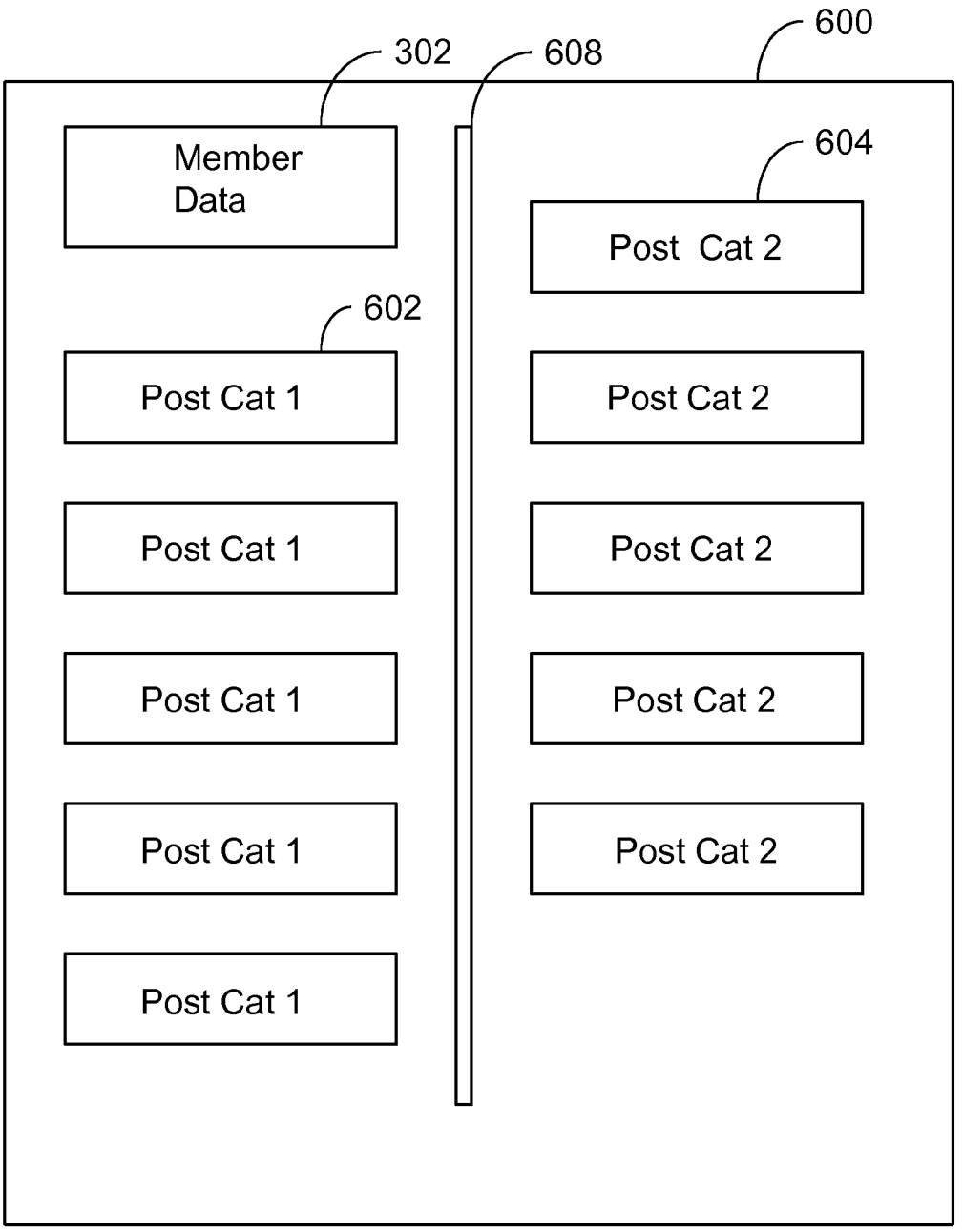
600
302
608
Member Data
604
Post Cat 2
602
Post Cat 1
Post Cat 2
Post Cat 1
Post Cat 2
Post Cat 1
Post Cat 2
Post Cat 1
Post Cat 2
Post Cat 1

FIG. 7

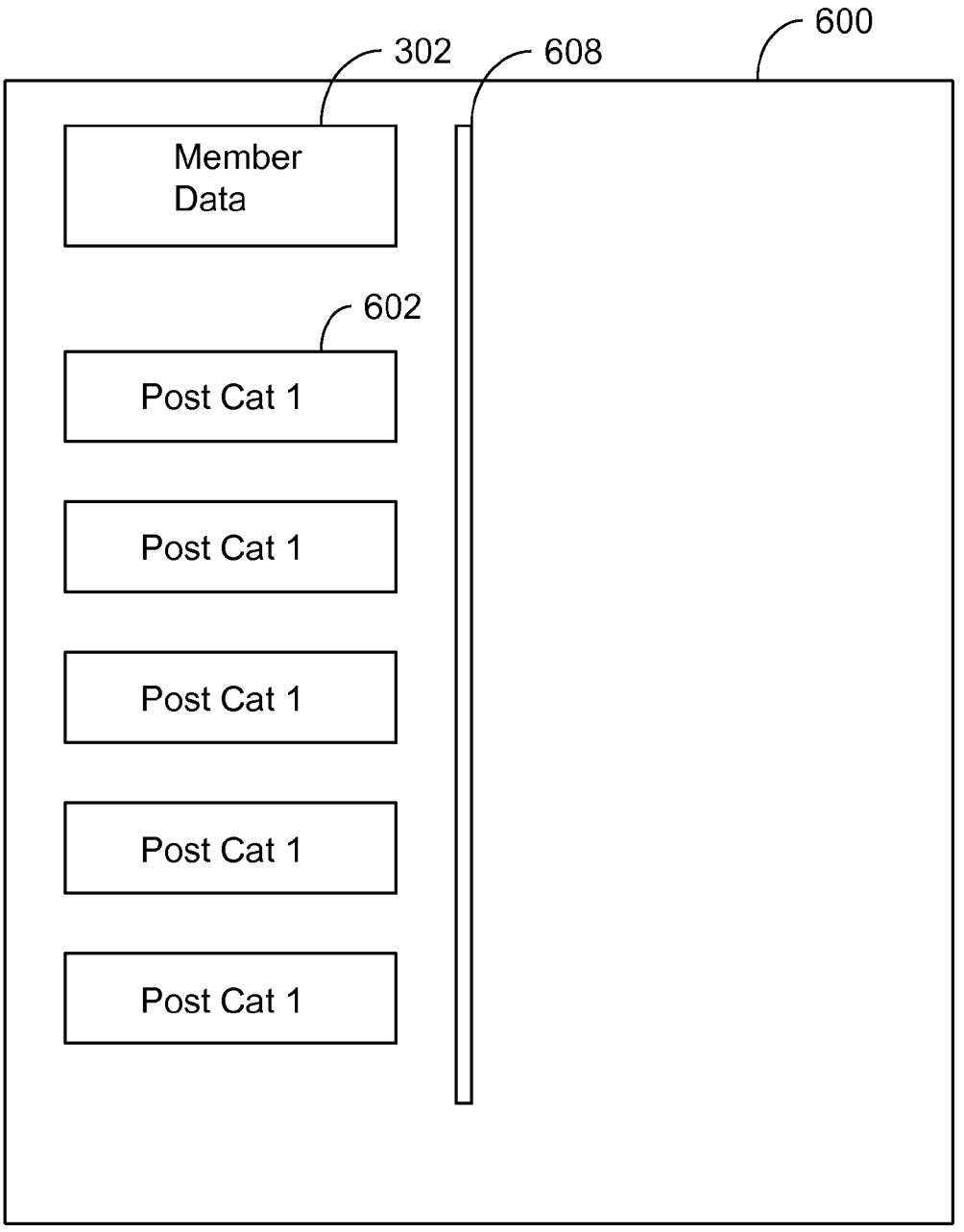
600
302
608
Member Data
602
Post Cat 1
Post Cat 1
Post Cat 1
Post Cat 1
Post Cat 1

FIG. 8

# APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR SINGLE ACTION CONTROL OF SOCIAL NETWORK PROFILE ACCESS

## FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates generally to communications in computer networks. More particularly, this invention relates to single action control of social network profile access.

## BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

A social network service is an online service, platform or site that facilitates the building and maintenance of social relations among individuals. Each member of a social network service maintains a profile with user information and user posts, which may be comments, photographs, videos, endorsements and the like. The posts may be from the user and/or individuals that the user is affiliated with in the social network. In this way, social network sites allow users to share ideas, activities, events and interests with affiliated individuals.

Privacy is a growing concern with social networks. Information posted by a user or an affiliated individual may be distasteful or become outdated. The user may desire to restrict access to certain information on their profile while allowing access to other information. While most social networks have configurable privacy control settings, such privacy control settings may be hard to find and in many instances they are confusing, resulting in an unintended access to information. Given that users are generally able to see all of the content that they have contributed to their profile, it can be difficult to determine what content is visible to others and what is visible only to the user.

Accordingly, improved techniques for controlling social network profile access are desirable.

## SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A computer implemented method includes allowing a user to access a user-controlled social network profile page with posts in a specified order. A user is permitted to traverse an interface element across the specified order to establish a set position for the interface element. Access to posts is provided on a first side of the set position to define a viewable profile. Access to posts is blocked on a second side of the set position to define a non-viewable profile.

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

The invention is more fully appreciated in connection with the following detailed description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. **1** illustrates a system configured in accordance with an embodiment of the invention.

FIG. **2** illustrates processing operations associated with an embodiment of the invention.

FIG. **3** illustrates a profile page with a single action interface element utilized in accordance with an embodiment of the invention.

FIG. **4** illustrates a profile page with a re-positioned interface element.

FIG. **5** illustrates a profile page with that provides selective profile information in accordance with an embodiment of the invention.

FIG. **6** illustrates a profile page ordered by category.



FIG. **7** illustrates the profile page of FIG. **6** with a re-positioned interface element.

FIG. **8** illustrates the profile page of FIG. **5** with a set privacy control bar that provides selective profile information in accordance with an embodiment of the invention.

Like reference numerals refer to corresponding parts throughout the several views of the drawings.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

FIG. **1** illustrates a system **100** configured in accordance with an embodiment of the invention. The system **100** includes a set of client devices **102_1** through **102_N** and at least one server **104** connected via a network **106**, which may be any wired or wireless network.

Each client device **102** may be a computer, tablet, Smartphone and the like with standard components, such as a central processing unit **110** connected to input/output devices **112** via a bus **114**. The input/output devices **112** may include a touch display, keyboard, mouse and the like. A network interface circuit **116** is also connected to the bus **114** to provide connectivity with network **106**.

A memory **120** is also connected to the bus **114**. The memory **120** stores standard components, such as a browser **122**, which allow one to access a social network site, such as a social network site hosted on server **104**. Server **104** also includes standard components, such as a central processing unit **160** connected to input/output devices **164** via a bus **162**. A network interface circuit **166** is also connected to the bus **162**. Further, a memory **170** is connected to the bus **162**. The memory **170** stores modules of executable instructions to implement disclosed operations. For example, the memory **170** may store a social network module **172**, which supports standard social network operations, such as hosting profile pages, maintaining social graphs for individual users and facilitating communication between the individual users.

The memory **170** also stores a profile access module **174**. The profile access module **174** includes executable instructions to implement operations of the invention. In particular, the profile access module **174** includes executable instructions to allow a user to manipulate an interface element to establish single action control of social network profile access. The interface element may be any object (e.g., bar, line, circle) that partitions one set of information from another set of information.

FIG. **2** illustrates processing operations associated with an embodiment of the profile access module **174**. Initially, a user is allowed access to a user-controlled social network profile page **200**. For example, a client device **102** may access the social network module **172** of the server **104**. In response, the server **104** supplies to the client a user-controlled social network profile page.

FIG. **3** illustrates a user-controlled social network profile page **300**, which may be displayed on a client device. The profile page **300** includes member data **302**. The member data **302** may specify the member's name, biographic information, interests and the like. In one embodiment of the invention, the member data **302** is in a fixed position such that it is always viewable.

The profile page **300** also includes posts **304** in a specified order, in this case along a temporal axis **306**. In this example, there are 10 posts. The latest post is "Post@T", while earlier posts are marked "Post@T-1" through "Post@T-9". FIG. **3** also illustrates an interface element **308**. In this case, the interface element is referred to as a privacy bar.

Returning to FIG. **2**, the next operation performed by the profile access module **174** is to permit the interface element to

be manipulated **202**. For example, the interface element **308** may be dragged with a single action gesture applied to a touch display of the client device. Alternately, the interface element **308** may be manipulated through a single action mouse stroke or keyboard stroke. The interface element **308** is manipulated along the temporal axis **306**. As the interface element **308** is manipulated, the server **104** refreshes the profile page **300** displayed on the client device. FIG. **4** illustrates an example of a refreshed profile page with the interface element **308** at a new position. Observe that the user of the user-controlled social network profile page can still view posts on either side of the interface element **308**. However, members of the user's social network have limited post access. That is, as shown in FIG. **2**, social profile access is provided on a first side of the interface element **204**. In this example, social profile access is provided on top of the interface element **308**. Access is blocked on the second side of the interface element **206**. In this example, social profile access is blocked on the bottom of the interface element.

FIG. **5** illustrates this functionality. In particular, FIG. **5** illustrates the provision of access to posts on the first side of the bar position to define a viewable profile **500**. FIG. **5** also illustrates the blocking of access to posts on a second side of the bar position to define a non-viewable profile **502**.

The interface element **308** may include a configurable setting to establish the future position of the interface element **308**. As shown in FIG. **5**, a user may select a static interface element **504** or a sliding interface element **506**. The system may have a default to one option or the other. In the case of a static bar, as time advances the viewable profile expands. That is, the currently viewable posts "Post@T", Post@T-1" and "Post@T-2" would remain viewable and additional posts would be positioned on top of them in temporal order. In the case of a sliding bar, as time advances, the viewable profile maintains a static temporal window size. In this example, the viewable profile would include a temporal window size for three posts. Thus, as new posts arrive, an older post, such as "Post@T-2" would slide into the non-viewable profile region **502** to make room for the new posts. In this way, a listing of all posts is maintained, but access to the posts is limited. Accordingly, a user can make those posts available at a later time, if desired, by moving the interface element **508** down the temporal axis **306**.

The processing operations of FIG. **2** may be applied to profile pages with different configurations. For example, FIG. **6** illustrates a profile page **600** with member data **302** and posts organized by category. In particular, there is a column of posts **602** in a first category and a column of posts **604** in a second category. The category may be established by content, sub-sets of social network members or other criteria. A vertical interface element **608** may be manipulated across category regions. FIG. **7** illustrates a re-positioned interface element **608**. Again, the user observes posts on either side of the interface element **608**. However, as shown in FIG. **8**, members of the user's social network only see posts in the first category **602**, while posts in the second category are blocked.

An embodiment of the present invention relates to a computer storage product with a computer readable storage medium having computer code thereon for performing various computer-implemented operations. The media and computer code may be those specially designed and constructed for the purposes of the present invention, or they may be of the kind well known and available to those having skill in the computer software arts. Examples of computer-readable media include, but are not limited to: magnetic media such as hard disks, floppy disks, and magnetic tape; optical media such as CD-ROMs, DVDs and holographic devices; magneto-optical media; and hardware devices that are specially configured to store and execute program code, such as application-specific integrated circuits ("ASICs"), programmable logic devices ("PLDs") and ROM and RAM devices. Examples of computer code include machine code, such as produced by a compiler, and files containing higher-level code that are executed by a computer using an interpreter. For example, an embodiment of the invention may be implemented using JAVA®, C++, or other object-oriented programming language and development tools. Another embodiment of the invention may be implemented in hardwired circuitry in place of, or in combination with, machine-executable software instructions.

The foregoing description, for purposes of explanation, used specific nomenclature to provide a thorough understanding of the invention. However, it will be apparent to one skilled in the art that specific details are not required in order to practice the invention. Thus, the foregoing descriptions of specific embodiments of the invention are presented for purposes of illustration and description. They are not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the invention to the precise forms disclosed; obviously, many modifications and variations are possible in view of the above teachings. The embodiments were chosen and described in order to best explain the principles of the invention and its practical applications, they thereby enable others skilled in the art to best utilize the invention and various embodiments with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated. It is intended that the following claims and their equivalents define the scope of the invention.

The invention claimed is:

**1**. A computer implemented method, comprising: allowing a user to access a user-controlled social network profile page with posts in a specified order;

permitting a user to traverse an interface element across the posts in the specified order to establish a set position for the interface element;

providing access to posts on a first side of the set position for the interface element to define a viewable profile;

blocking access to posts on a second side of the set position for the interface element to define a non-viewable profile, wherein blocking access to posts includes blocking access to posts observed by social network members associated with the user, while the user has access to posts on the first side of the set position and the second side of the set position; and

supplying a configurable setting to establish a future position of the interface element, wherein the configurable setting allows selection of a static interface element position such that as time advances the viewable profile expands and selection of a sliding interface element position such that as time advances the viewable profile maintains a static temporal window size.

**2**. The computer implemented method of claim **1** wherein the viewable profile includes fixed information that remains in the viewable profile.

**3**. The computer implemented method of claim **1** wherein the specified order is along a temporal axis.

**4**. The computer implemented method of claim **1** wherein the specified order has category regions.

* * * * *