



(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Sarkar

(10) **Pub. No.: US 2007/0282654 A1**

(43) **Pub. Date: Dec. 6, 2007**

(54) **APPOINTMENT SCHEDULING SYSTEM**

(52) **U.S. Cl. 705/8**

(76) **Inventor: Shyamal K. Sarkar, Blauvelt, NY (US)**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

Correspondence Address:
ASHOK TANKHA
OF COUNSEL, LIPTON, WEINBERGER & HUSICK
36 GREENLEIGH DRIVE
SEWELL, NJ 08080

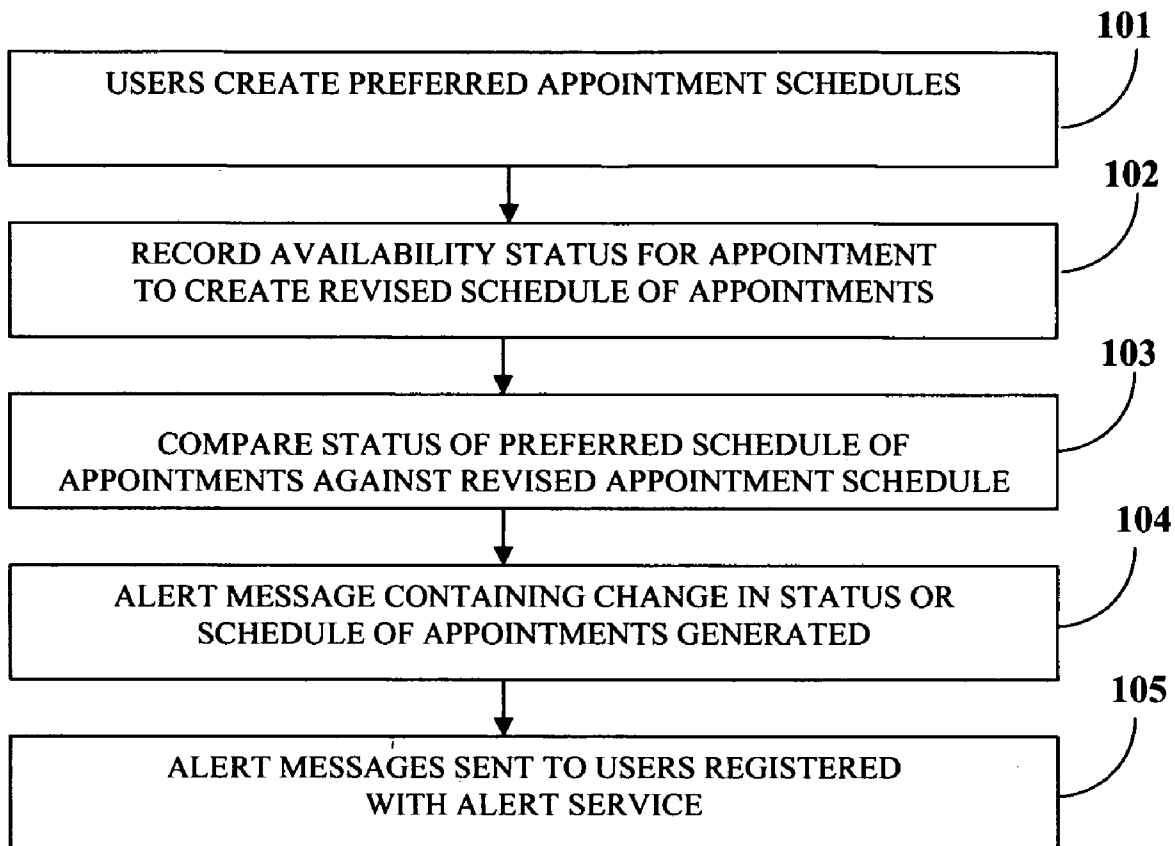
Disclosed herein is a method and system for alerting users of an appointment system of any change in an appointment schedule between practitioners and clients. If a user registered in the appointment system chooses to schedule an appointment, the user confirms the appointment by sending a conformation message to the message handling module. The appointment system, at predetermined intervals of time compares the status of preferred schedule of appointment against the existing schedule of appointments and if there is any change in the status of scheduled appointment, the change is stored in the central database and an alert message generated. The alert messages are sent via email or short message services (SMS) or a prerecorded voice message on their wire-line phone to users affected by the change in schedule and who have registered for the appointment service.

(21) **Appl. No.: 11/445,695**

(22) **Filed: Jun. 3, 2006**

Publication Classification

(51) **Int. Cl. G06F 9/46 (2006.01)**



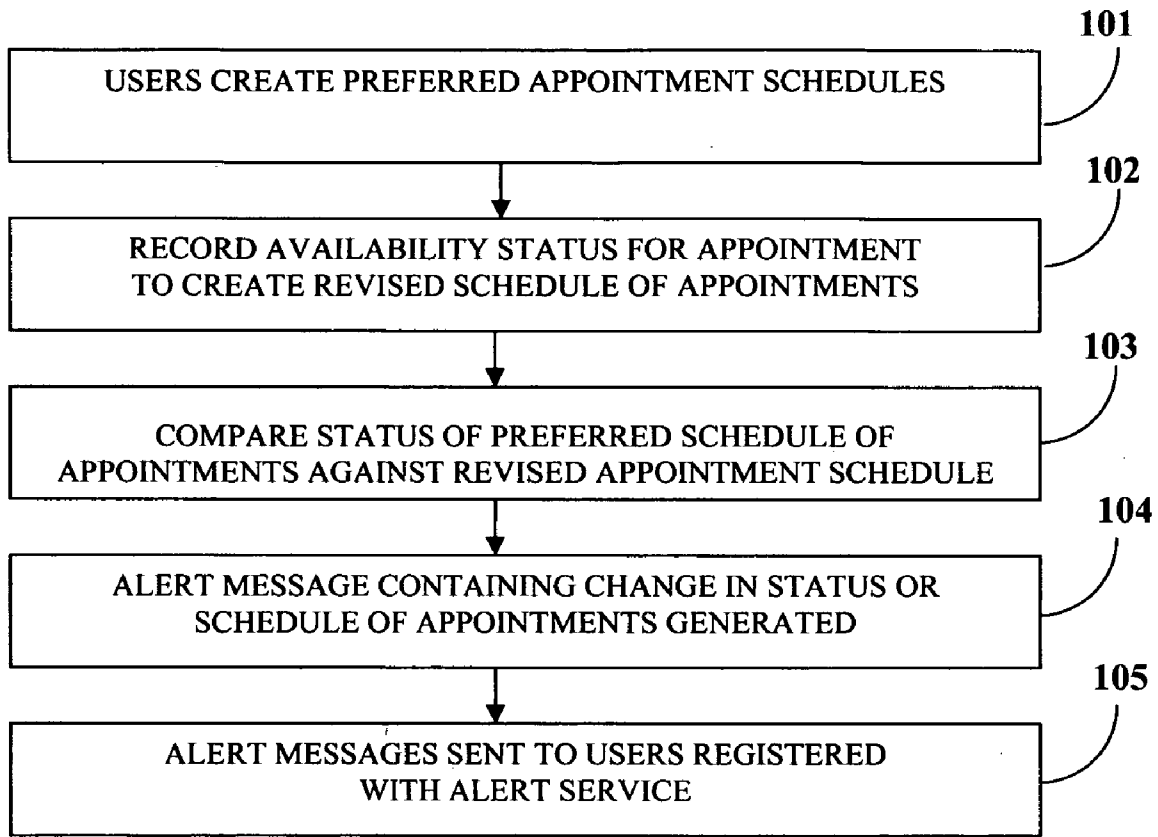


FIGURE 1A

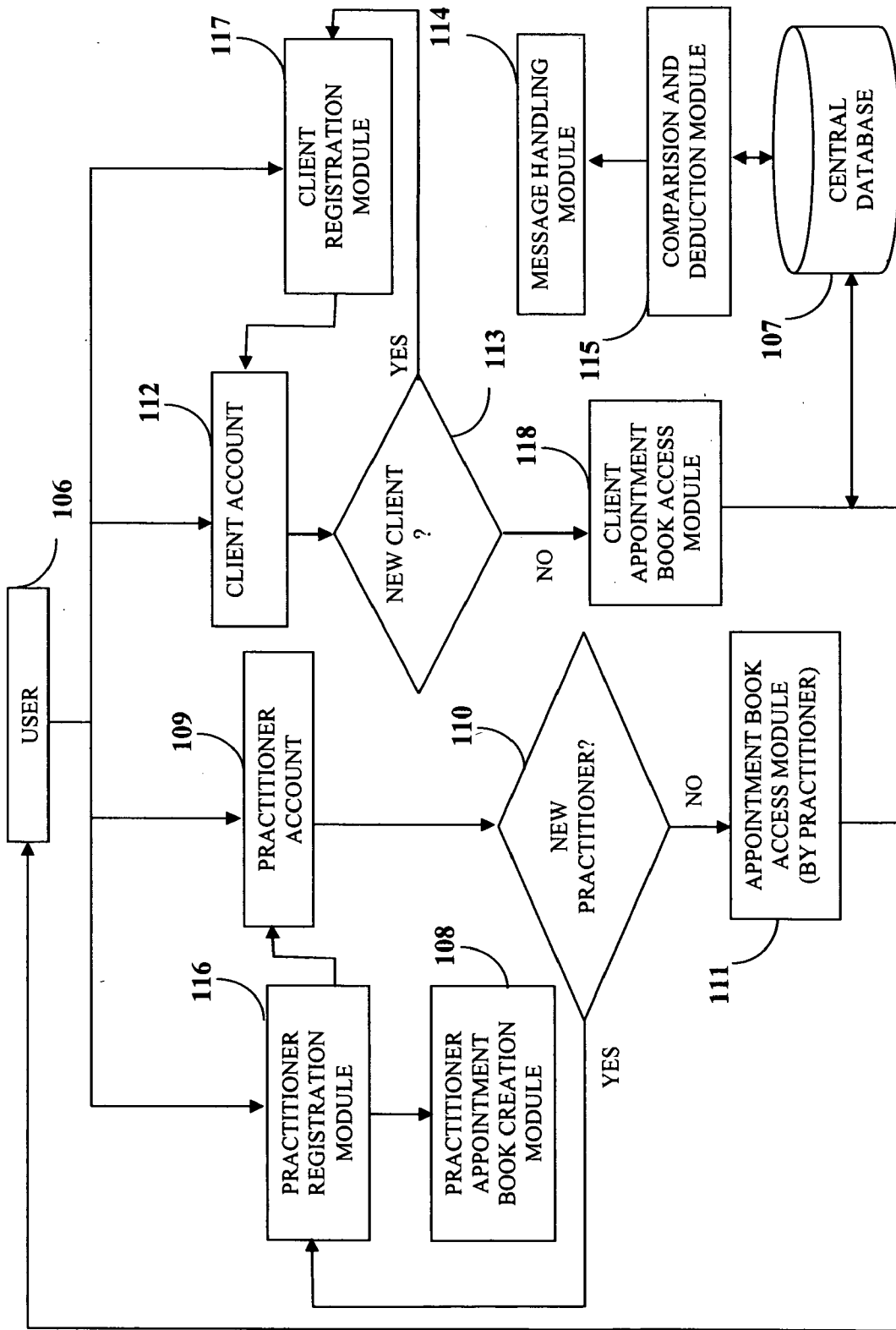


FIGURE 1B

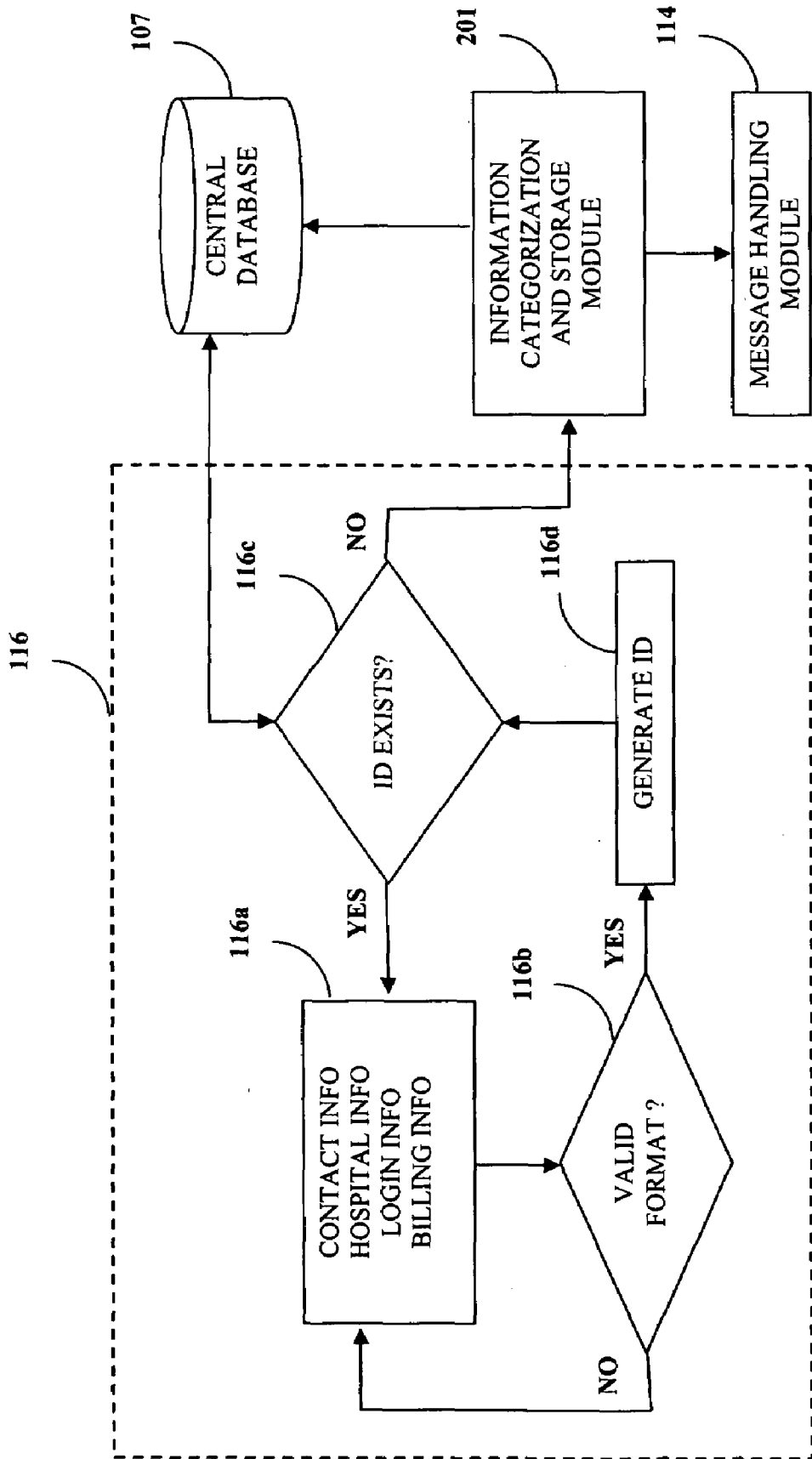


FIGURE 2

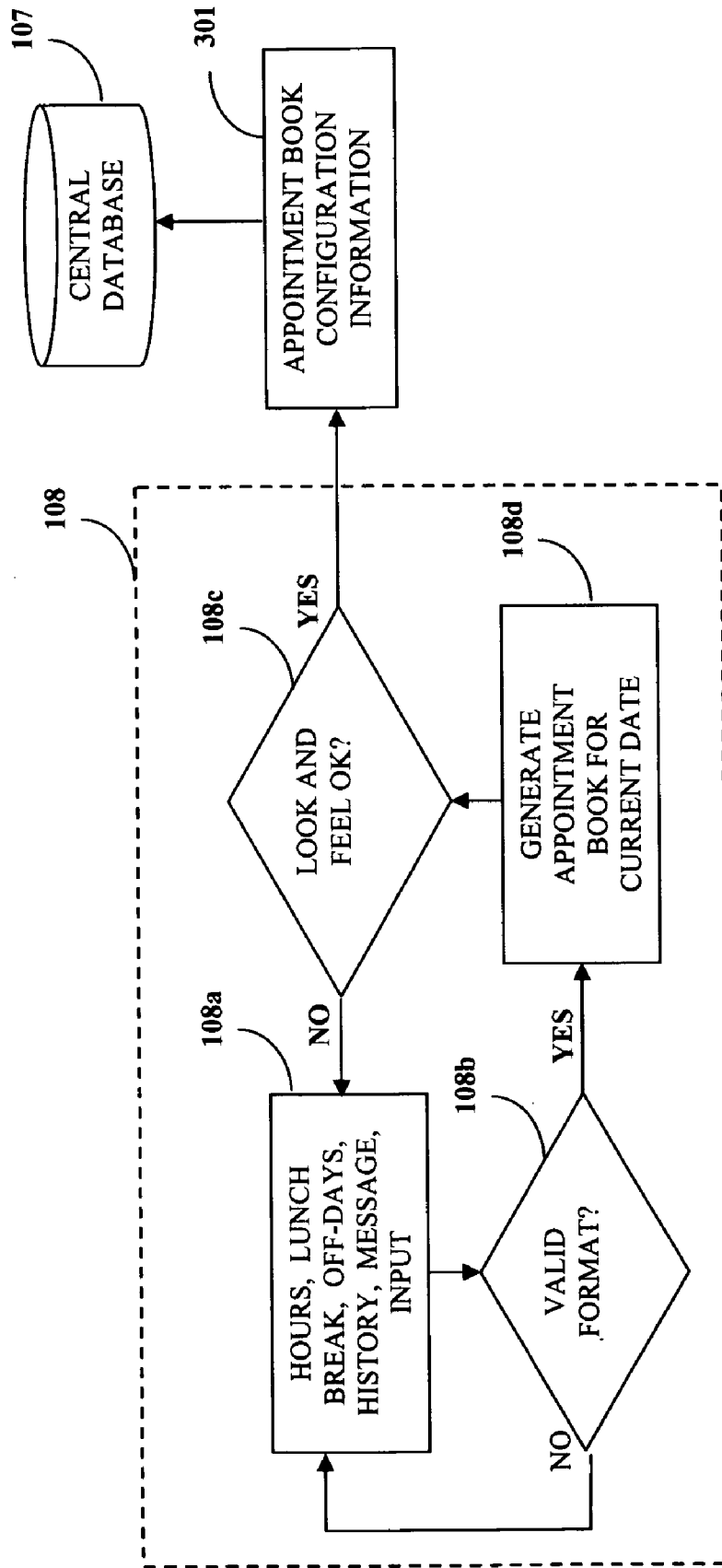


FIGURE 3

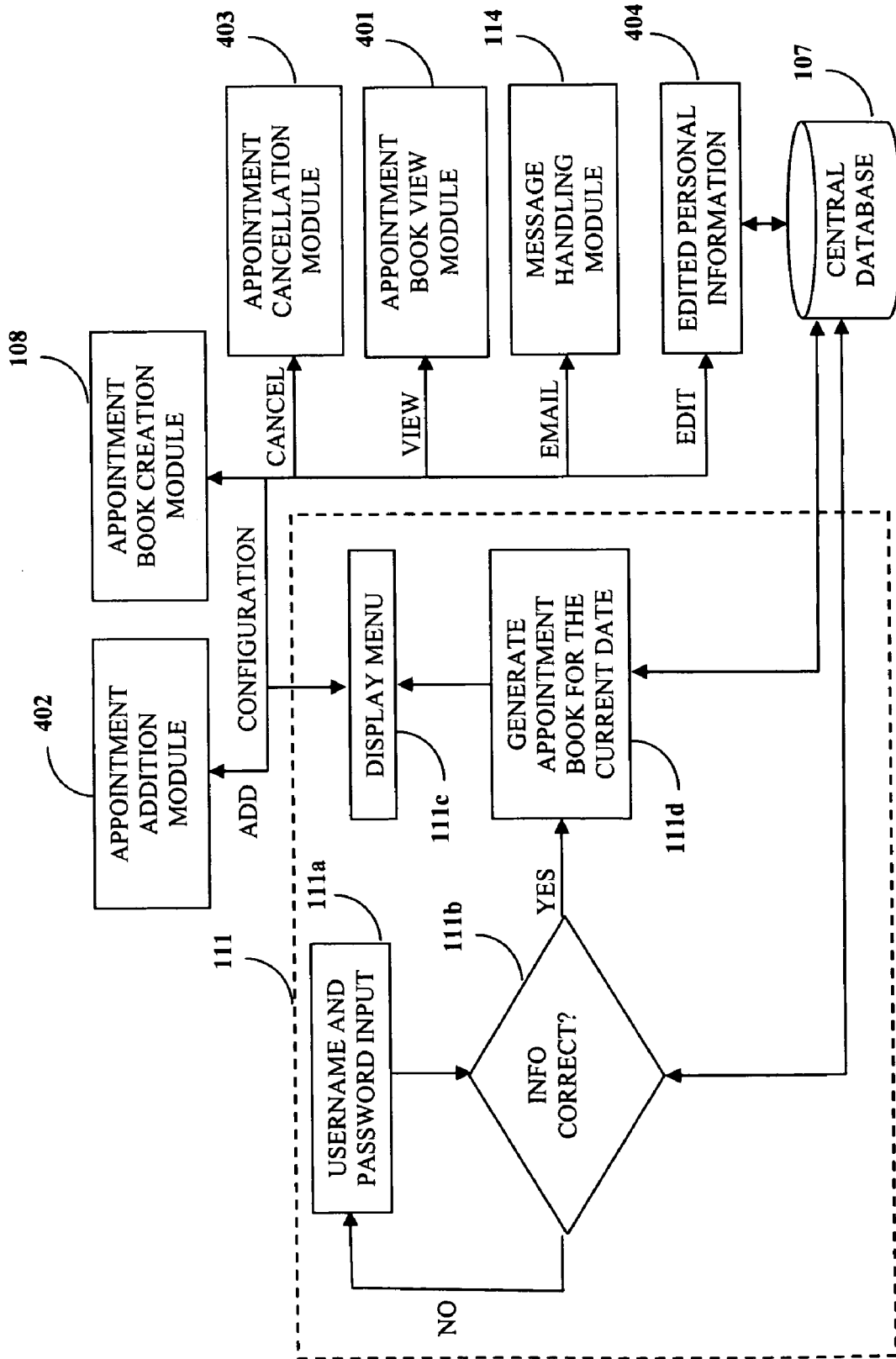


FIGURE 4

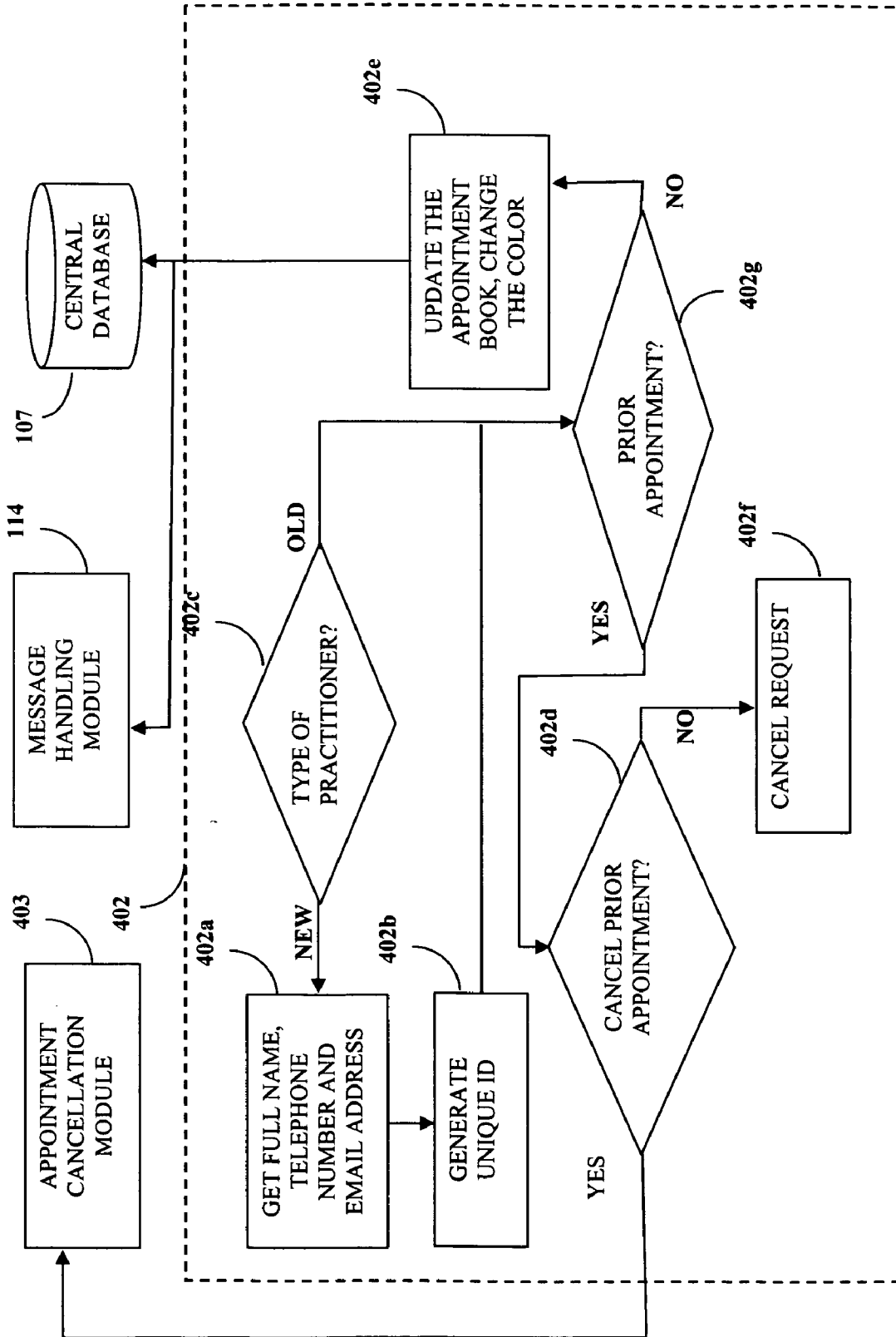


FIGURE 5

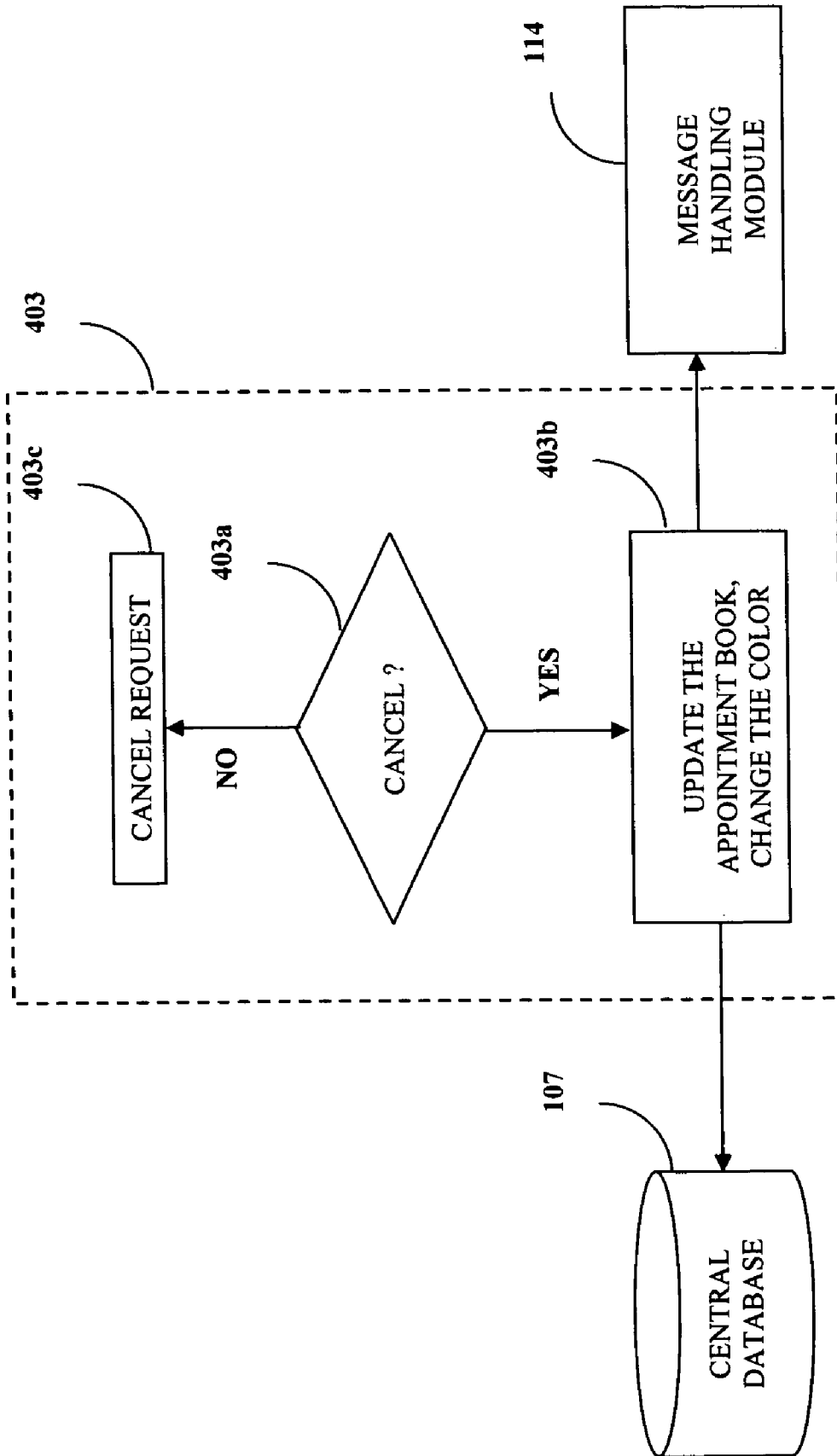


FIGURE 6

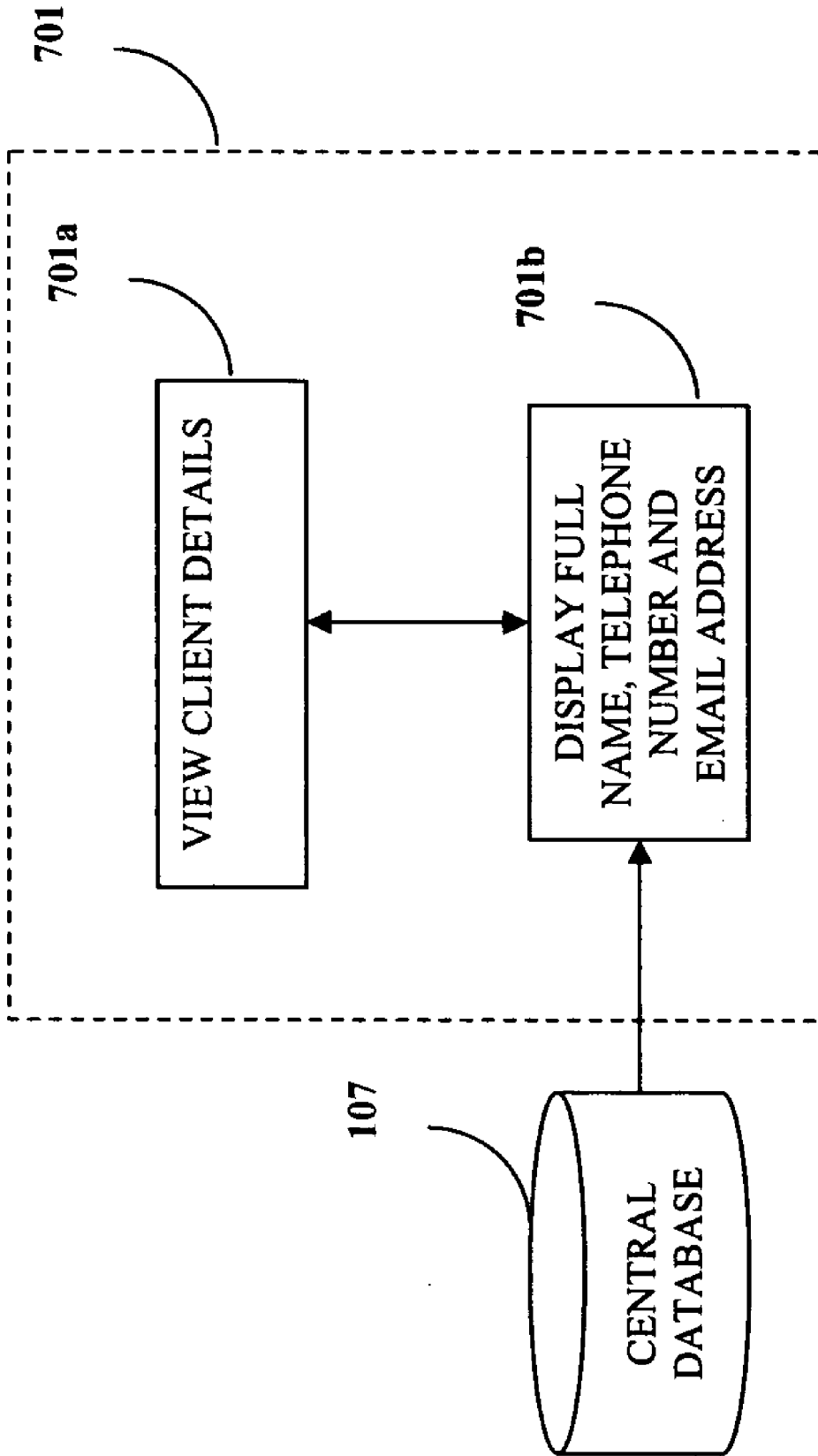


FIGURE 7

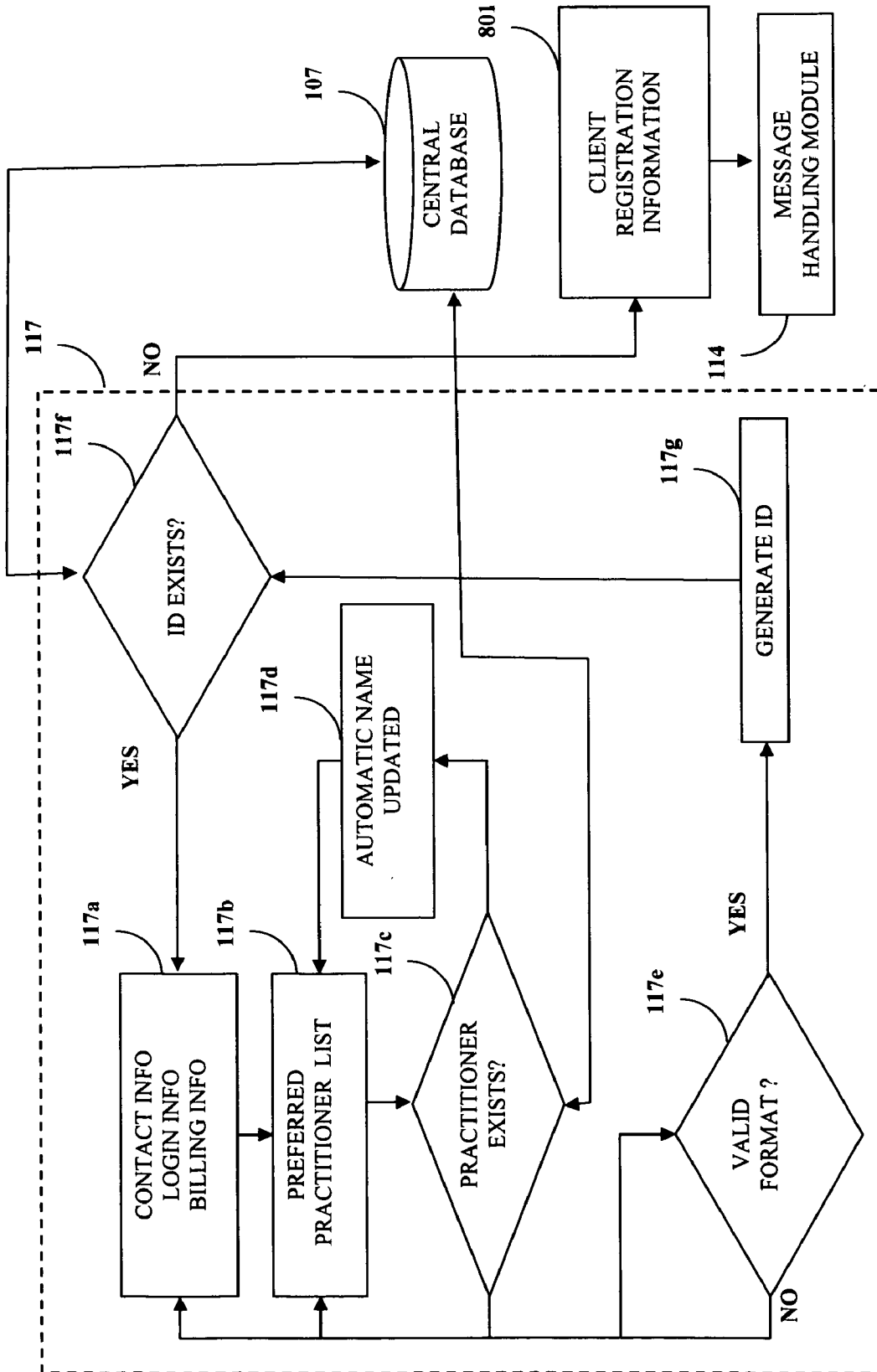


FIGURE 8

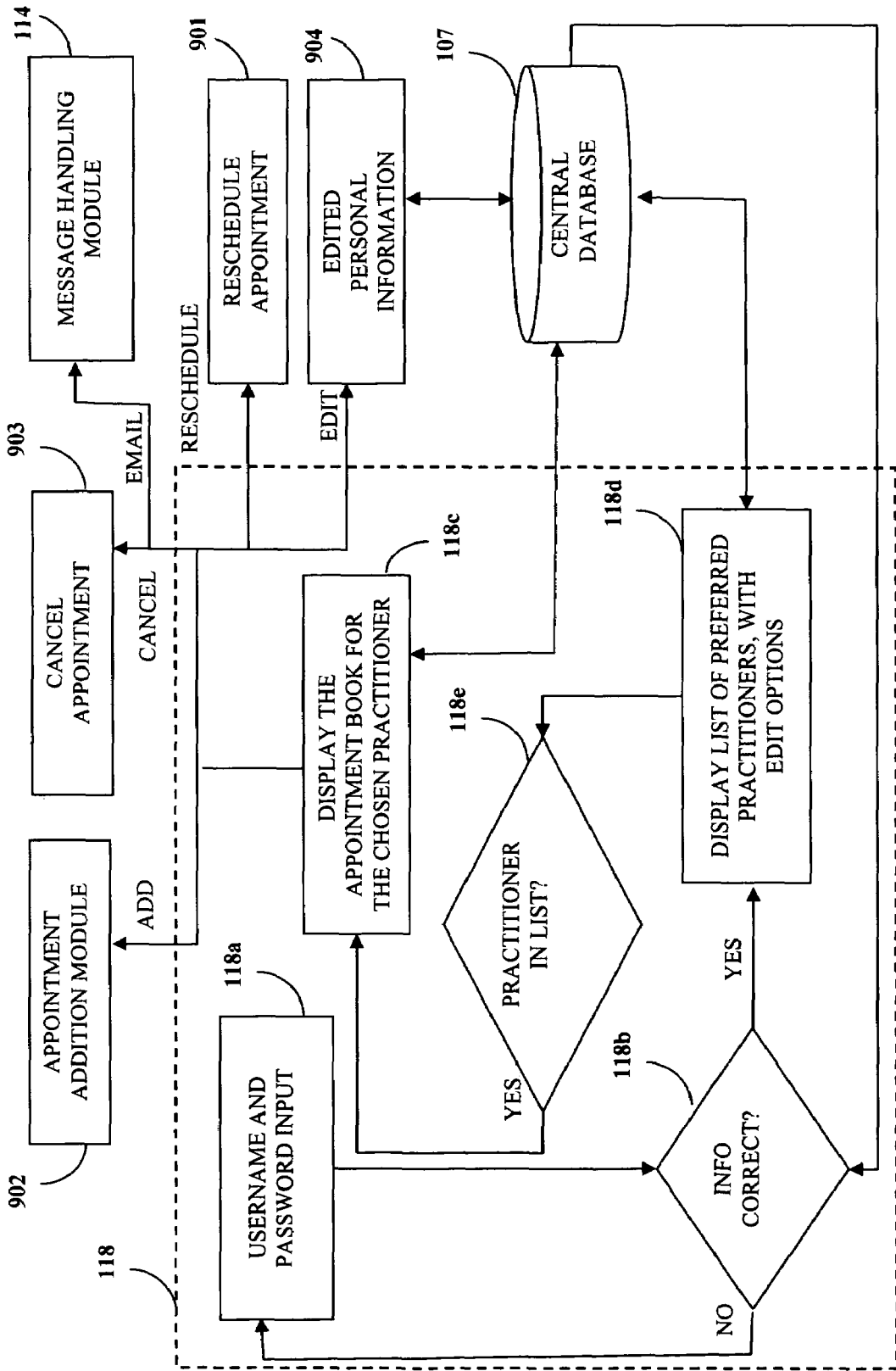


FIGURE 9

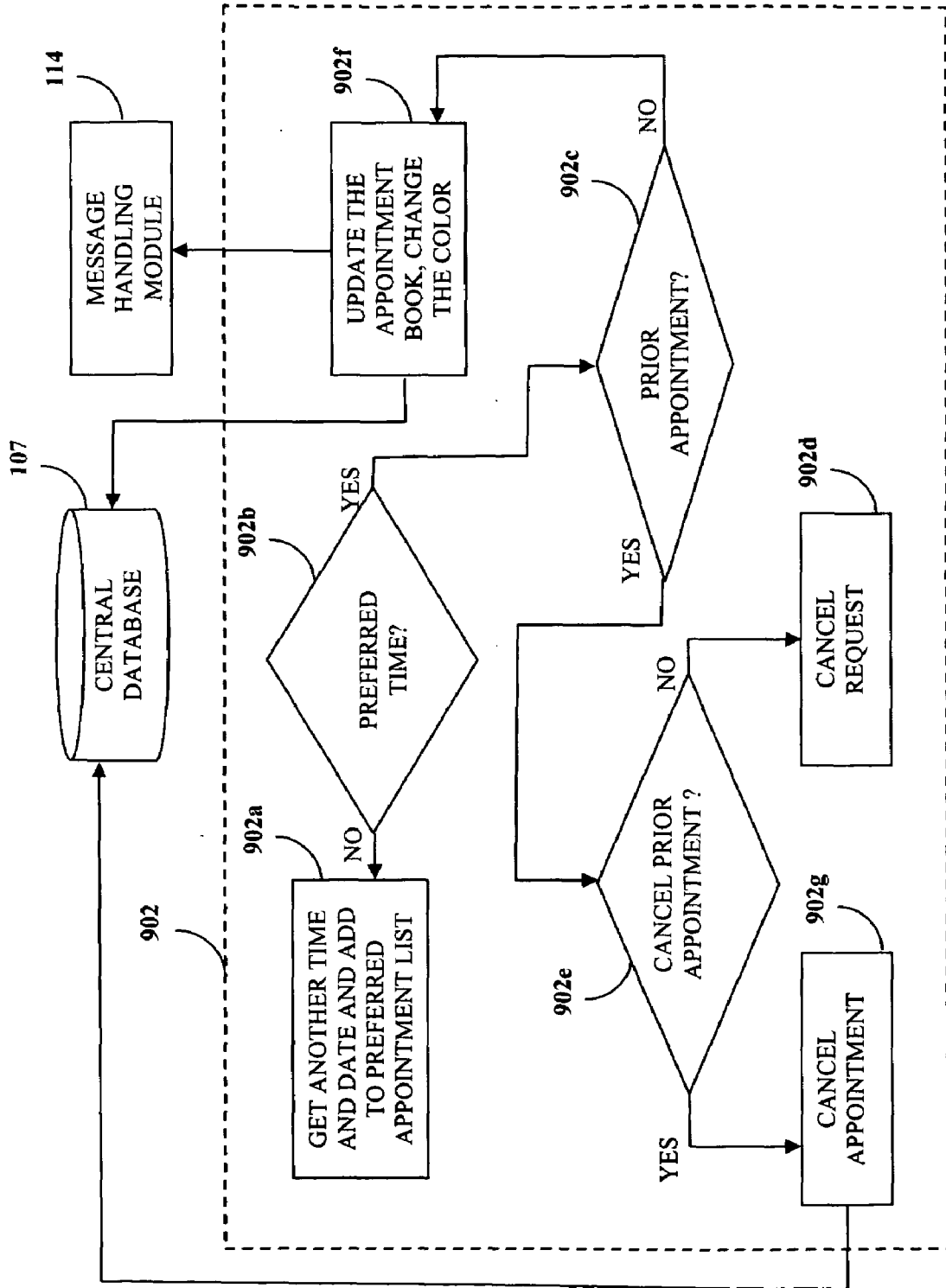


FIGURE 10

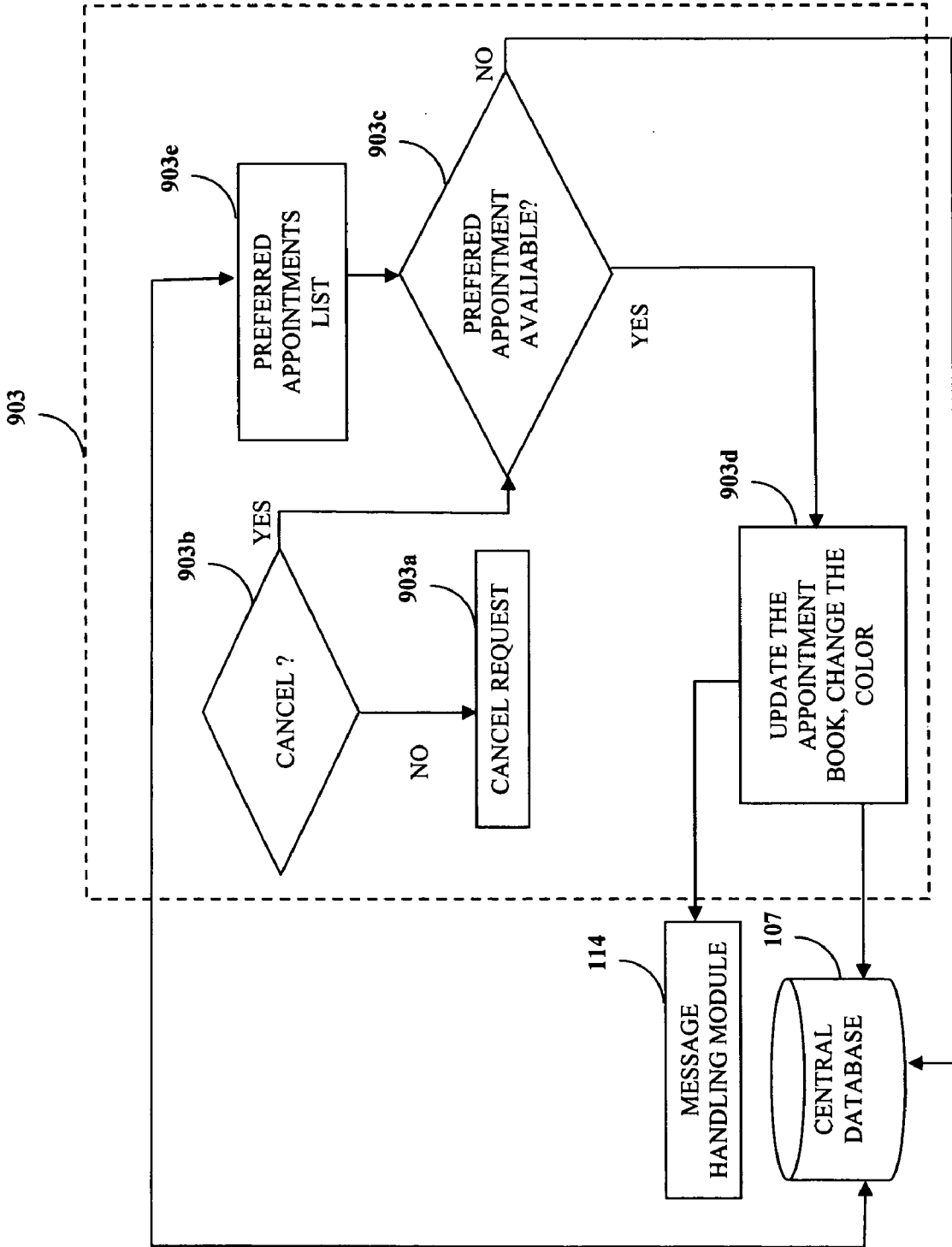


FIGURE 11

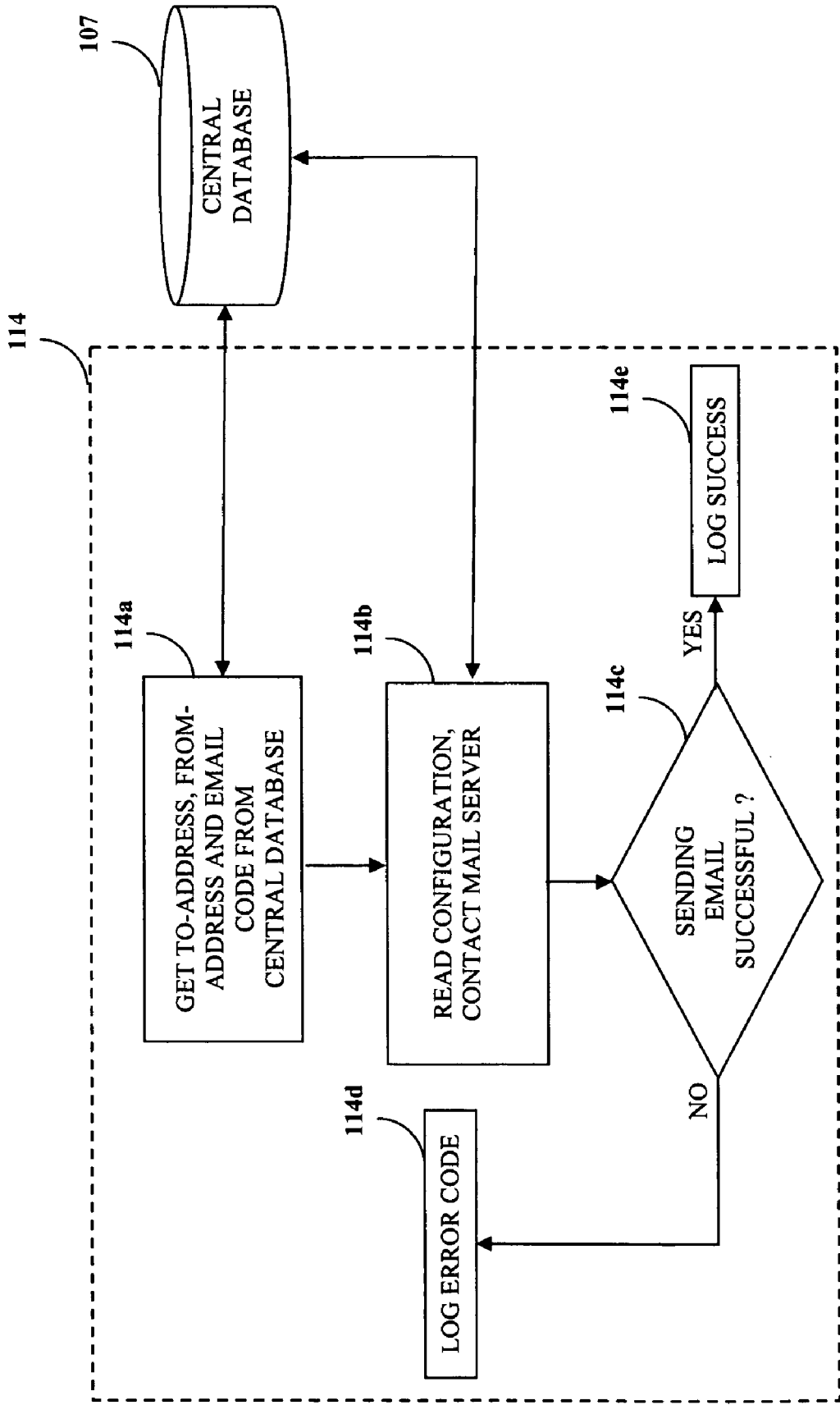


FIGURE 12

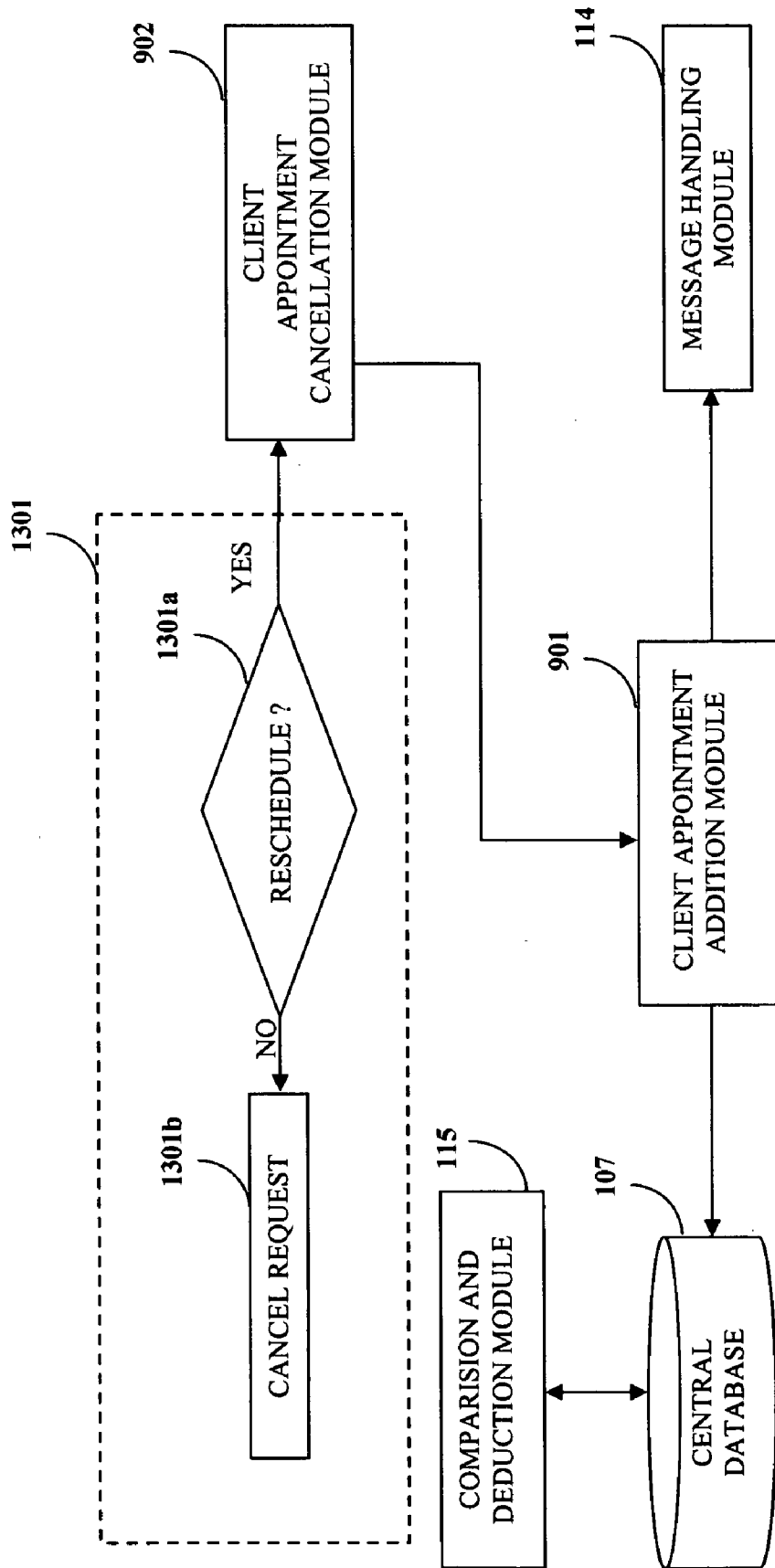


FIGURE 13

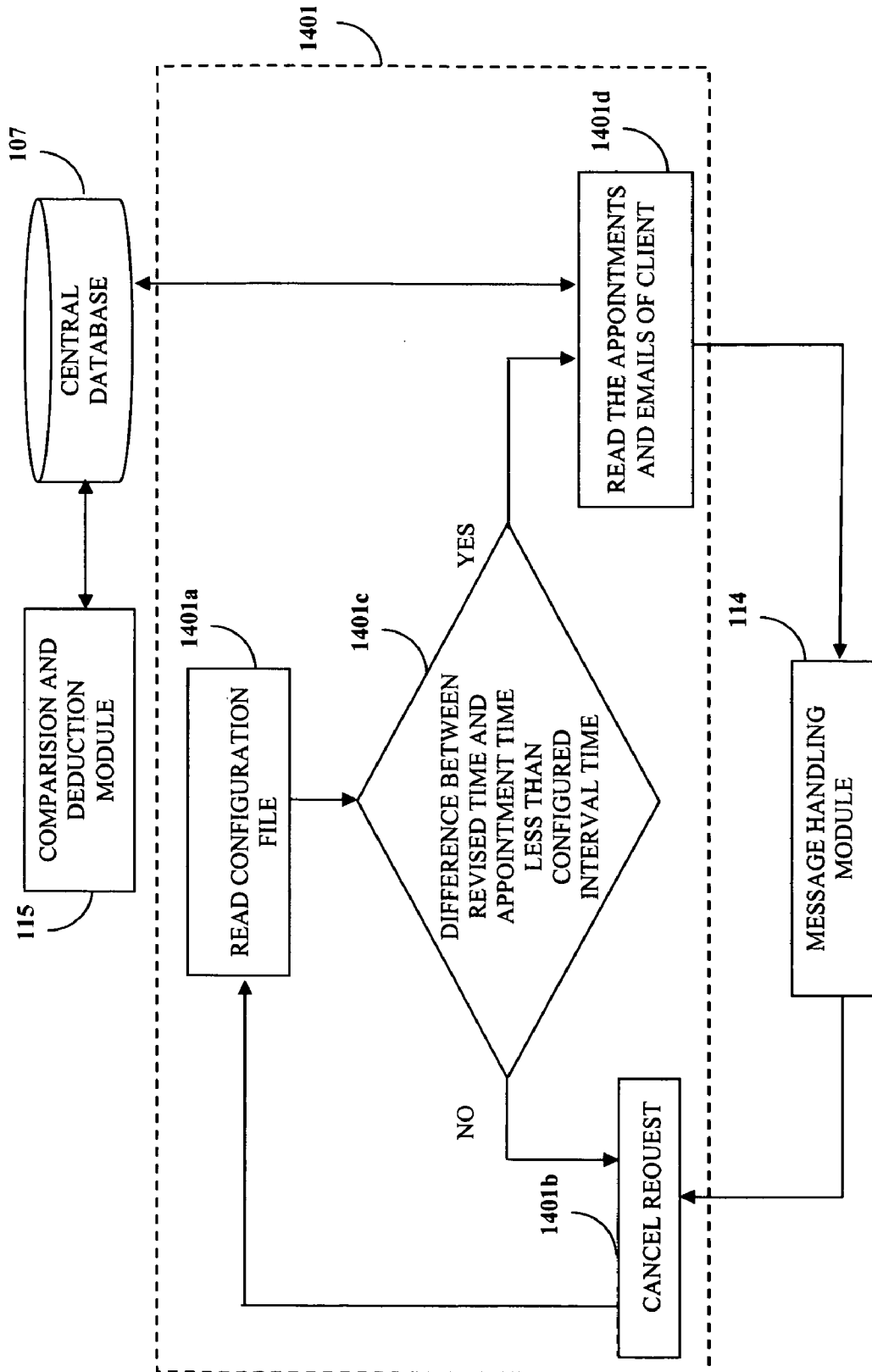


FIGURE 14

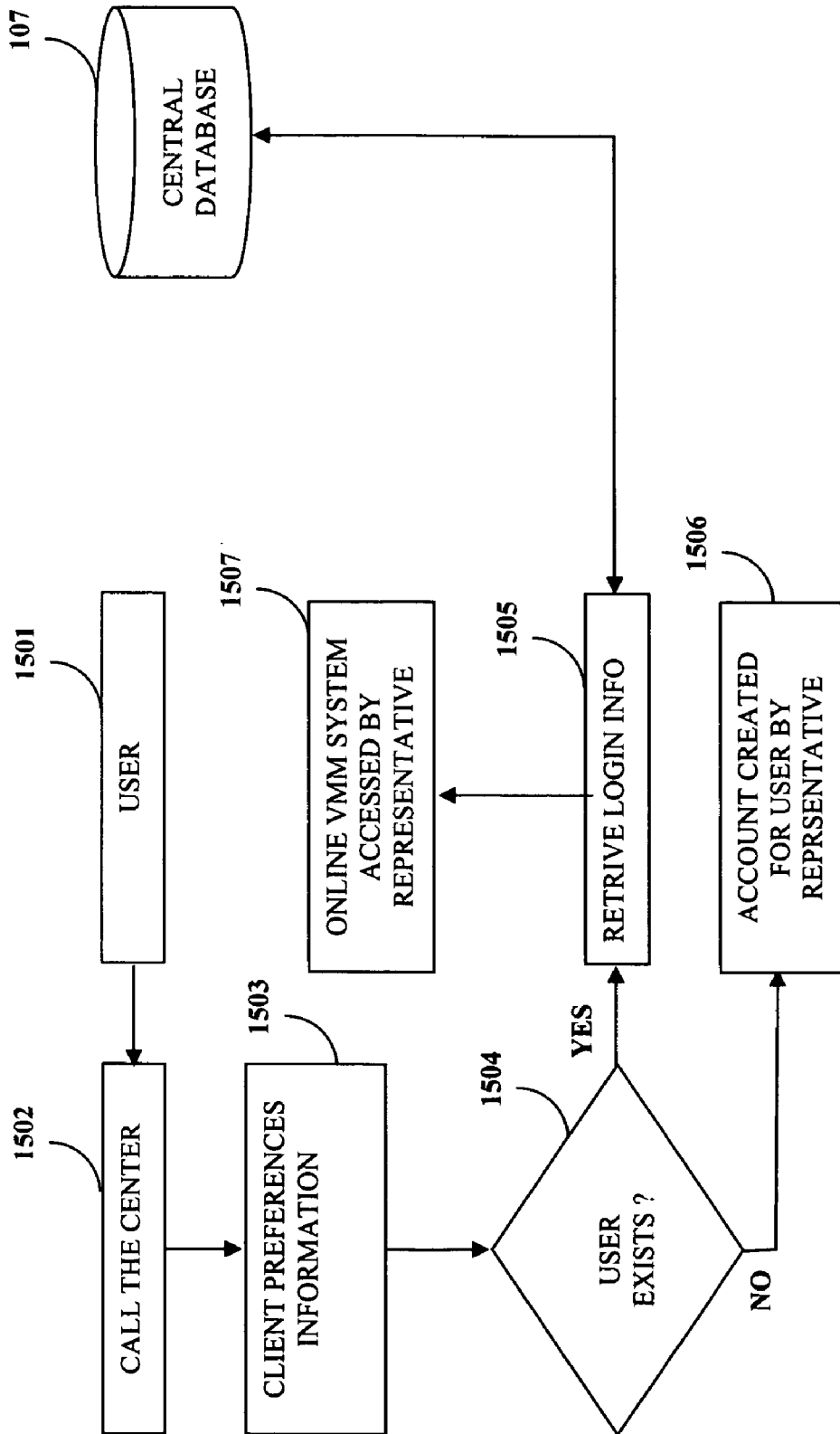


FIGURE 15

APPOINTMENT SCHEDULING SYSTEM

BACKGROUND

[0001] This invention, in general, relates to an on-line appointment system connected to the internet wherein the status or schedule of appointments between two or more parties, for example, a practitioner and clients or clients are monitored in real time, and alert messages are sent to by one party to the other party, for example by the practitioner and clients in the event of a change in the appointment schedule.

[0002] In an appointment based meeting system, if the practitioner were to arrive late or if a client spends excessive time with a practitioner, the entire appointment schedule gets pushed out. The appointment system currently used by practitioners are not efficient at advising clients regarding a delay in their appointments, or the rescheduled appointment, or the ability of the appointment system to inform the clients regarding the rescheduled appointment before the clients leave their home or office premises for the practitioner's office. There is an unmet market need for a notification system that informs the clients in a timely manner the rescheduled appointment with the practitioner.

[0003] Thus, there is an unmet market need to automatically monitor the schedule of appointments between a practitioner and clients or clients and send alerts to the practitioners and customers or clients in real-time of the change in appointments.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0004] Disclosed herein is a method and system for automatically alerting in real time the users of an appointment system, a change in the appointment schedule between practitioners and customers or clients. The practitioners, customers and clients, herein collectively referred to as users, are granted access to a central database by verifying the login information provided by the users for the purpose of scheduling an appointment. The users register themselves using a user registration module and the information provided by the user is stored in a central database. Once a user registers for the appointment system, and if the user chooses to schedule an appointment, then the appointment is confirmed by sending a confirmation message to the respective user by a message-handling module. The appointment system, at predetermined intervals of time will compare the status of preferred schedule of appointment to the existing schedule of appointments and if there is any change in the status of scheduled appointments, the change in the schedule of appointments is updated in the central database and an alert message is generated. The alert messages are sent to users who have registered for such a service and are informed via email or short messaging services (SMS) or a prerecorded voice message on their wireline phone.

[0005] The method and system disclosed herein alerts the users on a real time basis by constantly monitoring the central database for any changes in the appointment schedule. If there is change in the status or schedule of appointments, the system sends out a short message, or a prerecorded voice message, or email via internet, or the telephone network to the respective user informing about the change in the appointment schedule. Thereby, the user is made aware of the changes in the appointment schedule well in advance of the appointment time.

[0006] The method and system disclosed herein enables a user to add or cancel an appointment on a real time basis without having to come in person to make a change to a scheduled appointment. A user can add, cancel or reschedule an appointment using the appointment book provided to the users of the appointment system. This new appointment information will be stored and updated in the central database for the other users to view. An alert message will be generated and delivered to the users affected by the change in appointment schedule informing them about the addition or cancellation of the scheduled appointment via email or SMS or a prerecorded voice message.

[0007] The method and system of this invention enables user to change the schedule of an appointment. The changes to the appointment schedule are uploaded and stored in the centralized database and a confirmation message is sent to the respective users. Thus, the affected users are informed in real time about any changes in their appointment schedule.

[0008] The method and system disclosed herein allows user with an internet connection or a mobile device to remotely access their appointment book. The schedules appointments are stored in a centralized database located in a server connected to the internet.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] The foregoing summary, as well as the following detailed description of preferred embodiments, is better understood when read in conjunction with the appended drawings.

[0010] For the purpose of illustrating the invention, there is shown in the drawings exemplary constructions of the invention; however, the invention is not limited to the specific methods and instrumentalities disclosed.

[0011] FIG. 1A illustrates a method for alerting users of an appointment system of changes in the appointment schedule.

[0012] FIG. 1B illustrates the web-based appointment system.

[0013] FIG. 2 illustrates the practitioner registration module (PRM).

[0014] FIG. 3 illustrates the appointment book creation module (ACM).

[0015] FIG. 4 the practitioner appointment book access module (PAAM)

[0016] FIG. 5 illustrates the practitioner appointment addition module (PAADM) from the side.

[0017] FIG. 6 illustrates the practitioner appointment cancellation module (PACM).

[0018] FIG. 7 illustrates the client details module for the practitioner.

[0019] FIG. 8 illustrates the client registration module (CRM).

[0020] FIG. 9 illustrates the client appointment book access module (CAAM).

[0021] FIG. 10 illustrates the client appointment addition module (CADM).

[0022] FIG. 11 illustrates the client appointment cancellation module (CACM).

[0023] FIG. 12 illustrates the message-handling module.

[0024] FIG. 13 illustrates the rescheduling module.

[0025] FIG. 14 illustrates the automatic remainder module.

[0026] FIG. 15 illustrates the appointment additional system.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0027] FIG. 1A illustrates a method for alerting users of an appointment system of changes in the appointment schedule. The users of the appointment system comprise practitioners, clients and administrators. An example of an appointment scheduled under the method disclosed herein is an appointment scheduled between a practitioner and a client, which would comprise information on the time and subject of meeting. An example of an administrator would be the administrative assistant at the practitioner's office who is responsible for managing the practitioner's schedule. The practitioner or the client creates a preferred appointment schedule 101 by inputting into the appointment system the schedule of appointments, and the appointment time of a client. For example, consider the case where client John Smith schedules a meeting at 11:00 AM with a practitioner. Within a predetermined period from the time of the preferred appointment time, the availability status of the users of the appointment system who are scheduled for an appointment within the predetermined period are recorded into the appointment system 102. This creates a revised schedule of appointments. For example, assume at 9:00 AM on the day of the appointment, the administrative assistant in the practitioner's office observes that the appointments on the practitioners schedule are running late by 45 minutes. The administrative assistant logs into the online appointment system and enters information on this 45-minute delay, as a result of which the remaining appointments for that day are rescheduled and pushed back by 45 minutes. The appointment system automatically compares the status of preferred schedule of appointments, i.e., the earlier scheduled appointment against the revised schedule of appointments at predetermined intervals of time 103, and generates alert messages 104. The alert messages are automatically sent by the appointment system to each affected user indicating the change in status or the schedule of the user's appointment 105. In the current example, all the clients, including John Smith, who were scheduled to meet the practitioner between 9:00 AM and 12:00 PM are sent a short message service and/or e-mail notifying that their appointments have been rescheduled to a point 45 minutes later than their earlier scheduled appointment time.

[0028] FIG. 1B illustrates the web based appointment system for alerting the users of an appointment system of any changes in the appointment schedule. An appointment module creates preferred appointment schedules for the users 106 in the appointment system. Depending on whether the user 106 is a practitioner or a client, the user 106 is directed to either the practitioner registration module 116 or the client registration module 117 respectively. A new practitioner 110 is prompted to create a practitioner appointment book in the practitioner appointment book creation module 108. If the practitioner has already registered with the online appointment system, upon successful login, the practitioner is directed to the practitioner account 109. The practitioner can access the practitioner appointment book using the practitioner appointment book access module 111. If the user 106 who has successfully logged into the online appointment system is a client, the client is granted access to the client account 112. If the client is a new client 113 who has

not yet registered with the appointment system, the client is required to register with the appointment system using the client registration module 117. After the client has successfully logged into online appointment system, the client is directed to the client appointment book using the client appointment book access module (CAAM) 118. The appointment module records the availability status of the users 106 in the appointment systems who are scheduled for an appointment within a predetermined period of time. A comparison and deduction module 115 compares the status of preferred schedule of appointments against revised schedule of appointments at predetermined intervals of time. The steps of comparing the status of the preferred schedule and revised schedule of appointments is performed automatically by the appointment system as soon as the status of the appointments is updated in the appointment system by a user 106. The message-handling module 114 generates an alert message that contains the change in the status of schedule of appointments, and sends the alert messages to affected users. A central database 107 located on the internet stores user 106 and appointment related information. The registration module comprises a practitioner registration module 116 and a client registration module 117 that register the client and practitioner respectively. All the personal details, preferences and schedule of appointments provided by the users are stored in the central database 107.

[0029] FIG. 2 illustrates the practitioner registration module (PRM) 116. The practitioner registration module 116 receives the registration information in a system specified format from the practitioner 116a, verifies if the information provided is an acceptable format 116b, generates a unique username from the provided information 116d, verifies if the selected username is unique 116c, stores the information for the registered practitioner in the central database 107, and sends the registration information 201 to the message handling module 114.

[0030] The PRM 116 checks 116c with the central database 107 to verify that no other user with the same username exists to prevent the duplication of registration in the central database 107. Upon verifying that the username is unique 116c, the PRM 116 generates confirmation information indicating the successful confirmation of the registration process and sends the confirmation message to the message-handling module 114. The message-handling module 114 sends a message, for example, an email, short message service (SMS) via a mobile device or an automated voice message to the practitioner in order to confirm the registration.

[0031] FIG. 3 illustrates the appointment book creation module (ACM) 108. The ACM 108 assists the practitioner in creating an appointment book based on information provided by the practitioner. The ACM 108 accepts the following information from the practitioner: choice of working hours, lunch break hour's selection, off-days selection (Saturday/Sunday/Holidays), history keeping (30-60-90) days, color change for the appointment book, messages such as special announcements to be displayed to the clients, etc., 108a.

[0032] After the ACM 108 receives information from the practitioner 108a in a predetermined format 108b, it generates an appointment book layout 108d for the practitioner to review and makes corrections 108c. If the practitioner is not satisfied with the created appointment book layout, the ACM 108 redirects the practitioner to start the configuration

process from the beginning **108a**. If the practitioner is satisfied with the appointment book layout, the ACM configuration information **301** is saved by the ACM **108** in the central database **107**.

[0033] FIG. 4 illustrates the practitioner appointment book access module (PAAM) **111**. The appointment book access module **111** allows the practitioner to login to the appointment book, view the contents of the appointment book, edit personal registration information, download appointment history, view the calendar, add or cancel appointments and view client information.

[0034] The practitioner gains access to the PAAM **111** by inputting the username and password **111a**. The PAAM **111** verifies the username and password **111b** by consulting the central database **107**. If the login information, i.e., username and password provided by the practitioner is incorrect, the PAAM **111** prompts the practitioner to reenter the correct login information to grant access to the appropriate appointment book and generates a view of the appointment book for that particular day **111d**, and displays it to the user in a display menu **111c**. Optionally, for enhanced security, the PAAM **111** may restrict access to the appointment book by blocking login attempts after a predetermined number of successive unsuccessful login attempts. If the login information provided is correct, the PAAM **111** grants access to the appointment book corresponding to the appropriate practitioner. Upon successful login, the PAAM **111** generates a view of the appointment book for that particular day **111d** and presents a display menu **111c** using which the practitioner can change the registration details **404**, view current appointments, add appointments by sending information to the appointment addition module **402**, cancel appointments by sending information to the appointment cancellation module **403**, view details of clients using the appointment view module **401**, and send emails to clients using the message handling module **114**. Any change made to the data is stored in the central database **107**.

[0035] FIG. 5 illustrates the practitioner appointment addition module (PAADM) **402**. The PAADM **402** allows clients to add new appointments. Existing clients can add appointments using their "APPOINTMENT SYSTEM ID" to confirm the appointment; the remaining information, i.e., client details are retrieved from the central database **107**. New practitioners are required to enter their personal details such as name, telephone number, and email address **402a**. If the practitioner is a new practitioner **402c**, the PAADM generates a unique identifier for the practitioner **402b**.

[0036] After the practitioner has entered the login details, the PAADM **402** checks the central database **107** for prior appointments to avoid duplication of appointments. Upon confirming that no prior appointment exists **402g** with the appropriate practitioner at the preferred time, the PAADM **402** reserves the time slot selected by the client in the central database **107**. If the practitioner decides to cancel the appointment reservation **402d**, then the PAADM cancels the appointment request **402f**. Confirmation emails or SMS are sent to the practitioner and the client for the appointment through the message-handling module **114**. After the appointment is stored in database **107**, and the appointment book is updated to show this change, the color of the cell for the particular time slot is changed to indicate unavailability of the particular time slot **402e**.

[0037] FIG. 6 illustrates the practitioner appointment cancellation module (PACM) **403** used by the practitioner to

cancel appointments. The PACM **403** prompts the practitioner to verify the cancellation request **403a**. Upon receiving confirmation from the practitioner to cancel the appointment, the PACM **403** updates the central database **107** to store the cancellation information and changes the colour of the particular time slot **403b** to indicate that the appointment has been cancelled. If the client wishes to cancel the request to cancel the appointment, then the appointment cancel request is discarded **403c**.

[0038] FIG. 7 illustrates the client details module (CDM) **701**. Each cell in the appointment box is equipped with an option for viewing the client's registered details **701a**. When checked on the option to view the details, the client details module **701** retrieves the information from the central database **107** and displays the full name, telephone number and the email address of the client on the screen **701b**.

[0039] FIG. 8 illustrates the client registration module (CRM) **117**. The client registers with the appointment system using the client registration module (CRM) **117**. The client registration module **117** accepts information from the client such as contact information, account login information and billing information **117a**. The client registration module **117** is responsible for receiving the registration information in a system specified format from the client **117a**. The client registration module **117** also receives a list of preferred practitioners **117b** from the client. If the practitioner specified by the client is not in the list presented to the client **117c**, then the list is updated to contain the details of the new practitioner specified by the client **117d** and is presented to the client. The client registration module **117** verifies if the information provided by the client is in an acceptable format **117e**, and if it is in the prescribed format, it generates a unique username from the provided information **117g**, verifies if the selected username is unique **117f**, stores the information of the registered client in the central database **107**, and sends the registration information **801** to the message handling module **114**.

[0040] The CRM **117** verifies if the information provided by the client is in the format prescribed by the appointment system **117a**. If the information provided is not in the proper format, the CRM **117** attempts to accept the information in the correct format from the client **117a**. Based on the registration information provided by the client, the CRM generates a username for the client **117g**. The CRM **117** checks with the central database **107** to verify that no other user with the same username exists to prevent the duplication of registration **117f** in the central database **107**. Upon verifying that the username is unique, the CRM **117** generates confirmation information **801** indicating the successful confirmation of the registration process. The confirmation information **801** is sent to the message-handling module **114**. The message-handling module **114** uses the information provided by the CRM to send an email, SMS or voice message to the client. The client registration information is stored in the central database **107**.

[0041] FIG. 9 illustrates the client appointment book access module (CAAM) **118**. The client logs into the appointment book **118** using a username and password **118a**. The appointment system checks if the username and password information provided is correct **118b**. After a successful login, a list of preferred practitioners is displayed **118d** with a link to their respective appointment books; this list is retrieved from central database. The clients will be given an option to add new practitioners to their existing list of

practitioners. Once the client selects a particular practitioner, the appointment system checks if the practitioner is in the list **118e**. If the practitioner's name is in the list, an appointment book for that practitioner is displayed **118c** with the following features: calendar for date navigation, appointment addition option, list of unavailable appointments indicated by a color, and appointment cancellation and rescheduling options. The client can add an appointment with the practitioner using the appointment addition module **902**, cancel an appointment using the cancel appointment module **903**, reschedule an appointment **901**, and can edit their personal information **904**.

[0042] FIG. **10** illustrates the client appointment addition module (CADM) **902**. The appointment system presents the client with available time slots. The CADM **902** allows the client to create an appointment with the practitioner given the available time slots. Once the client selects a preferred time for appointment **902b**, the CADM presents the client with an updated list of available appointments **902a**, a confirmation message is displayed, and the client is asked if this is a preferred appointment time **902b**. If the time presented to the client is the preferred appointment time, then the CADM **902** checks the database **107** for other prior appointments of the client with the same practitioner, thereby preventing duplicate appointments. If the client has prior appointments **902c** with the same practitioner, then the CADM **902** asks the client if the prior appointment has to be cancelled **902e**. If the client does not want to cancel the prior appointment, the present appointment request is cancelled **902d**. If the client wants the prior appointment to be cancelled, then the information request is accepted **902g**. If no other prior appointments exist, then the appointment is confirmed and the database **107** is updated, and the color of the cell corresponding to the particular time slot is changed **902f**. The appointment addition information is passed on to the message-handling module **114**, and a confirmation email is sent to both the practitioner and the client.

[0043] FIG. **11** illustrates the client appointment cancellation module (CACM) **903**. If the client wishes to cancel the appointment with the practitioner, the CACM **903** verifies the request for cancellation by prompting the client for verification **903a**. If the client cancels the appointment, the CACM **903** queries the client if another appointment is to be made. If no other appointment is to be made, the request is cancelled **903b**. If an appointment is to be made, the CACM **903** presents the client with a list of preferred appointment schedules **903e** from which the client can select the preferred schedule of appointments **903c**. The appointment book will be updated only when the preferred appointment is available. If an appointment is not available at the time slot preferred by the client, the appointment is stored in the central database **107**. The client is notified by the message handling module **114** when the preferred appointment time slot is available. This allows a client to reserve an appointment with a practitioner even if the time slot is not available at the time of making the appointment.

[0044] The client can then choose to schedule another appointment with the practitioner. If the client confirms another time for appointment, or if the client wishes to cancel the appointment, then the cancellation information is passed to the message-handling module **114**. The message-handling module **114** then notifies the client and the practitioner that the appointment has been cancelled. The CACM **903** updates the central database **107** about the changes and

changes the color of the cell **903d** corresponding to the particular time slot to indicate that the time slot is free.

[0045] FIG. **12** illustrates the message-handling module **114**. The templates of the message-handling module **114** are indexed by a unique code. The template determines the basic structure for a document and contains document settings such as auto text entries, fonts, key assignments, macros, menus, page layout, special formatting, and styles. The message-handling module **114** is also provided with the "to" and "from" addresses, and the message-handling module **114** sends email using a secured mail server, or sends a SMS.

[0046] If a practitioner or client registers for the service, the message handling module **114** checks for the information provided by the practitioner or client in the centralized database **107** and retrieves the address and the email code **114a** or information on other communication modes, such as SMS from the central database **107**. The message-handling module **114** reads for the configuration of the message template that is to be used to send a message to a particular user and contacts the mail server **114b** for mailing the relevant template or a server for dispatching SMS. If the mail has been delivered successfully, the message-handling module **114d** logs that the mail was sent successfully **114e**; if not, it logs an error **114d** indicating the message was not sent to the concerned user.

[0047] FIG. **13** illustrates the rescheduling module **1301**. If the practitioner wants to reschedule a prior appointment with a client, the rescheduling module **1301** displays the time and date of prior appointment and seeks confirmation of rescheduling **1301a** from the practitioner. If the practitioner does not want to reschedule the appointment, the appointment request is cancelled **1301b**. If the practitioner confirms the cancellation, then a client appointment cancellation module **902** displays cancel confirmation screen to the clients. After the appointment cancellation, an option to add a new appointment is provided to the client **901**. If the client desires a new appointment, the client can then schedule a new appointment and information on the new appointment is updated in the centralized database **107**. The comparison and deduction module **115** deducts the change in schedule of appointments and sends a message to the message handling module **114** which in turn sends a message indicating the change in schedule of appointments to both the practitioner and the client via email, SMS or landline phone.

[0048] FIG. **14** illustrates the automatic reminder module **1401**. The automatic reminder module **1401** is an automatic server process that can be configured in the comparison and deduction module **115** to generate reminders for the appointments and notify clients before a predetermined time interval. The interval configuration information is obtained from the configuration file **1401a** in the central database **107**. This file also specifies the time interval between automatic executions of this server process. Additionally, at the time intervals specified by the configuration file, the comparison and deduction module will compare the current schedule of appointments and preferred schedule of appointments. The revised date and time is compared with the times and dates of appointments **1401d** from the centralized database **107**. If any difference exists between the appointments and the revised time and date **1401c**, a notification email/SMS is sent by the comparison and deduction module **115** to the clients associated with the qualifying appointments via message handling module **114**. If the comparison module **115** does not find any difference between the revised sched-

ule of appointments and the preferred schedule of appointments, then the request is cancelled **1401b**.

[0049] FIG. 15 illustrates the appointment additional system that assists clients of different demographic types. The appointment additional system will serve the needs of clients who do not have access to a computer, elderly clients who are not conversant with using computers, clients who need immediate assistance, and clients who do not have access to the internet. If a client **1501** wants to schedule an appointment with the practitioner, the client will contact the center **1502** and provide them with their contact information, their preferred practitioner information **1503**. If the information already exists **1504** in the central database **107**, then the login information is retrieved **1505** from the central database. If the login information does not exist, then the client registration information is created using module **117**, and provided to the client. The client can also use the telephone service to make appointments after providing their credentials. The appointment addition procedure option can be used by those clients who are unable or unwilling to use the online appointment system via the internet. An authorized representative at the practitioner premises can then either create an account for the client **1506** or access the online appointment system on behalf of the client **1507**.

[0050] Examples of practitioners in the system and method disclosed herein include, but are not restricted to doctors, lawyers, etc. In the foregoing specification, the invention has been described with reference to specific embodiments thereof. It will, however, be evident that various modifications and changes may be made thereto without departing from the broader spirit and scope of the invention. The specification and drawings are, accordingly, to be regarded in an illustrative rather than a restrictive sense.

I claim:

1. A method for alerting users of an appointment system of changes in an appointment schedule, wherein a user comprises a practitioner, a client or an administrator, and the appointment is scheduled between a practitioner and a client, the method comprising the steps of:

- creating preferred appointment schedules by the users in said appointment system;
- recording the availability status of the users over a predetermined period of time for user who are scheduled for the preferred appointment in the appointment system, thereby creating a revised schedule of appointments;
- comparing the status of preferred schedule of appointments against the revised schedule of appointments at predetermined intervals of time, wherein said step of comparing the status of the preferred schedule and constructing a revised schedule of appointments is performed automatically by the appointment system;
- generating alert messages that contains the change in the status or schedule of appointments, and
- sending said alert messages to affected users indicating the change in status or the schedule of appointments.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said users are required to be verified by the online appointment system for their identity prior to being granted access to the appointment system.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein said step of creating preferred appointment schedules further comprises the step

of registering the users and storing the information of the users in the appointment system.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein after the step of creating the preferred appointment schedule, a confirmation message of the preferred appointment schedule is sent to the users of said appointment schedule.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of authentication further comprises the steps of:

- collecting login information from the user comprising a unique user identifier and a password;
- comparing said login information collected from the user to login information stored in the appointment system;
- generating an error message to the user if the login information provided by the user is incorrect; and
- allowing access to the appointment system if the login information provided by the user matches the login information stored in the appointment system.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of creating preferred appointment schedules, further comprises the steps of registering the users of the appointment system.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein said alert messages are short messaging service messages sent to the mobile device of the affected users, and wherein said appointment system is in communication with the mobile device via the internet.

8. The method of claim 1, the appointment system sends said alert messages to affected users a prerecorded voice message played to the user on the user's wireline telephone connection.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein said alert messages are emails sent to the affected users.

10. The method of claim 7 wherein the method of recording the change in status or schedule of appointments from a user authorized to change said appointment further comprises:

- presenting a view of the appointment book to the client comprising a list of schedule of appointments of the clients with a particular practitioner;
- modifying the view of the appointment book and storing the modifications in the central database; and
- adding, rescheduling or canceling the appointments.

11. An online appointment system for alerting users of changes in an appointment schedule, wherein a user is a practitioner, client or administrator, and the appointment is scheduled between a practitioner and the client, the system comprising:

- a registration module for registering users in the appointment system;
- an appointment module for creating preferred appointment schedules by the users in said appointment system and for recording the availability status of the users in the appointment system who are scheduled for an appointment within a predetermined time period, wherein said recording is performed by the user;
- a comparison and deduction module for comparing the status of preferred schedule of appointments against the revised schedule of appointments at predetermined intervals of time, and constructing a revised schedule of appointments, wherein said step of comparing the status of the preferred schedule and constructing a revised schedule of appointments is performed automatically by the appointment system after said recording the availability status of the users;

a message handling module for generating alert messages that contains the change in the status or schedule of appointments, and sending said alert messages to affected users indicating the change in status or the schedule of appointments; and

a central database located on the internet for storing user and appointment related information.

12. The online appointment system of **11**, wherein the registration module further comprises a practitioner registration module and a client registration module.

13. The online appointment system of **11**, wherein the appointment module further comprises a practitioner appointment book creation module, a practitioner appointment book access module, a practitioner appointment addition module, a practitioner appointment cancellation module, a client appointment book access module, a client appointment addition module and a client appointment cancellation module.

* * * * *