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(19) (CA) **APPLICATION FOR CANADIAN PATENT** (12)

(54) Method of Tracking Information from Media Sources

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5,094,0/49

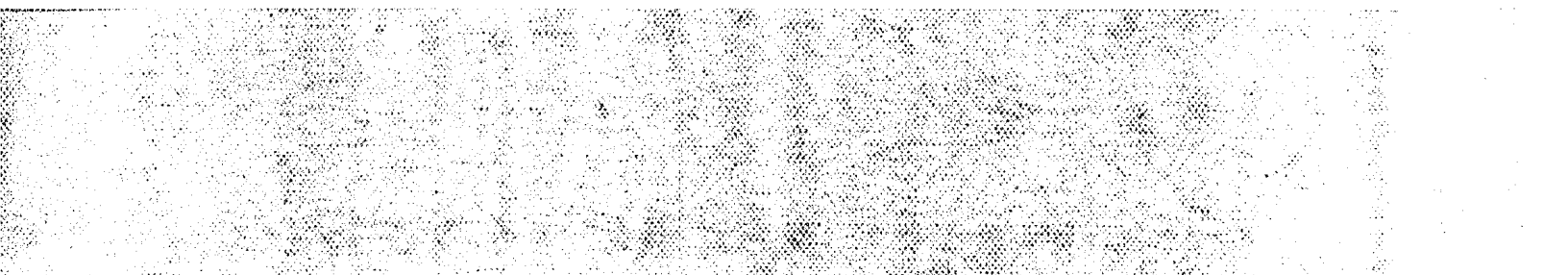
Notice: This application is as filed and may therefore contain an incomplete specification.



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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method for tracking information comprises the steps of collecting a plurality of "free" press media information and then selecting clips from this information which relate to a desired client. The clips are then reviewed and rated as either positive, neutral or negative. At least one media market definition area for the clip is determined and category information is obtained from the clip. The associated client, the rating, the media market definition area and the category information for the selected clip can be placed into a client file in a database. A client can then be selected and data from the database compiled for each selected clip which is associated with the selected client and one or more selected areas of dominant influence. The rating totals can be tallied and the tallies as well as other information can be reported to the client. The media information which is input comes from print and electronic sources and includes editorials, news stories, columns and letters to the editor, interviews on entertainment shows, radio interviews, etc. This media information is considered "free" press or earned press. The instant method allows the client to track this "free" press in a particular media market definition area and to thereby compare it with their sales, marketing, grass roots, merchandising and/or advertising strategies.

TITLE OF THE INVENTION
METHOD OF TRACKING INFORMATION
FROM MEDIA SOURCES

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a method of tracking information from media sources. In particular, the method allows a client to track the "free" press (earned press) in a particular area of dominant
5 influence and compare this press with their sales, marketing, grass roots, merchandising and advertising strategies. The instant method also allows for tracking by congressional districts and state legislative districts.

10 DESCRIPTION OF THE BACKGROUND ART

Various tracking services are known for aiding a company in planning their sales strategies. However, no invention currently tracks "free" press (earned press) by area of dominant influence in order for a client to
15 utilize this information in their sales strategies.

An area of dominant influence (ADI) is currently used to denote specific regions of the United States. The entire continental United States is now divided into 208 areas of dominant influence. This number of areas
20 of dominant influence can change from year to year. No areas of dominant influence overlap. Each area of dominant influence is a geographic market that defines each television market exclusive of others, based on

measured viewing patterns. Each market's area of dominance influence consist of all the counties in which the home market stations receive a preponderance of viewing. Every county in the continental United States is allocated exclusively to one area of dominant influence.

For example, the Chicago area of dominant influence not only covers the city of Chicago, but also the surrounding areas including Joliet and LaSalle, Ill. and Gary, Ind. The Chicago ADI reaches nearly 3 million households and covers 16 counties in Illinois and Indiana. The Chicago area of dominant influence is the third largest market in the U.S. New York and Los Angeles are the first and second, respectively.

Many smaller cities are included in larger areas of dominant influence. For example, New Haven, Connecticut is in Hartford's area of dominant influence and Pensacola, Florida is a part of the mobile Alabama area of dominant influence.

Throughout this application, the term "area of dominant influence" will be used, but is should be appreciated that any media market definition based on ratings can be used. For example, designated market areas could be used instead of areas of dominant influence.

While areas of dominant influence are defined, no method of tracking the "free" press (earned press) within an area of dominant influence is available. Such "free" or earned press includes articles about a company or other client in a newspaper, television reports, trade publication articles, radio interviews, etc. Such "free" press is not paid for but it can greatly influence the public's perception of a client. If a client is receiving a lot of favorable "free" (earned) press, then that client may want to consider reducing their advertising in that market. Alternatively, if there is a lot of negative publicity, the client may

want to increase advertising and/or public relations and/or community support.

5 Because advertising budgets are not limitless, a need exists for tracking the "free" press (earned press) to enable a client to better allocate their advertising, public relations and merchandising budgets.

10 Alternatively, a client may want to monitor the "free" press to gain information on a competitor or information on business strategies, such as labor relations and foreign or domestic competition. Real estate information found in the "free" press can also aid a client in determining where to build a store, hub terminal or retail office, for example. This real estate information is also useful for a client to
15 determine where to expand outlets, markets, etc.

Also, a client who will be affected by some legislative decision may want to track the "free" press and link this information with certain federal, state or local legislative activity of certain legislators.
20 Legislators themselves also have a need for tracking the "free" press. Accordingly, a need in the art exists for a simple and effective information tracking system (i.e., database management system or DBMS) for monitoring the "free" press (earned press).

25 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is a primary object of the present invention to provide a method of tracking information from media sources and in particular of tracking "free" press (earned press) in a database management system running
30 on a database machine.

It is another object of the present invention to correlate "free" press (earned press) with at least one area of dominant influence so that a client can determine the amount of "free" press received in a given
35 area. This "free" press can then be compared with the paid press (advertising) and/or sales figures in that area of dominant influence.

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