The third-party vendor uses the content server 16 to sell software by using a virtual store 18. The virtual store 18 generally provides a large listing of available software from which a potential purchaser can choose. When a user of the remote computer 10 decides to purchase a software application 20 from the virtual store 18, the remote computer 10 sends

5   a message via the electrical connection 12 over the network 14 and through another electrical connection 12 to the content server 16. Since the virtual store 18 is simply an application running on the content server 16, the content server 16 actuates the installation functions of the virtual store 18 for the selected software application 20. The installation functions on the content server 16 are generally governed by an agent module which the user of the

10   remote computer 10 is using to access the virtual store 18.

In one embodiment, an agent module 22 is embedded in the software application 20. The agent module 22 is actuatable by the remote computer 10 to access the virtual store 18. The agent module 22 is embedded into the software application 20 by a developer of the software application simply by incorporating a library of functions which make up the agent

15   module 22.

In another embodiment, the agent module 22 embedded in the software application 20 is inactive until after the installation of the software application 20 on the remote computer 10. In this embodiment, a second agent module, a plug-in module 23, is installed on the remote computer 10 and used to access the virtual store 18. The plug-in module 23

20   is made available on the Internet or other well known resources or by other well known methods, for installation on the remote computer 10 by the user. The plug-in module 23 is preferably disposed in a software package 19, a browser, which the user of the remote computer 10 uses to access the virtual store 18. When the agent module 22 is actuated the agent module 22 and the plug-in module 23 have the same functionality, and the agent

25   module 22 and plug-in module 23 are used interchangeably by this invention, although for clarity the embodiments will refer to one or the other module.