

5 blacklist at 226 each time. If the access code is invalid or on the blacklist, the returned software is terminated or continued with a reduced feature set at 228. If the access code is valid and not in the blacklist, the software is continued with the full set of features at 230. This prevents the user from re-entering the original access code after the product return process.

10 The invention can be employed for the return of any software or other information. While it has been described above in an implementation for software that has been purchased with an unlock method, it could also be employed with suitable modification for software that is purchased in packaged form on a separate storage medium. In practice, the invention is desirably implemented with the  
15 computer controlled telephony software that is the subject matter of commonly assigned Paul E. Hurley et al., Application Serial No. 08/582,611, entitled "System, Method and User Interface for Computer Controlled Telephony," filed January 3, 1996, the disclosure of which is incorporated by reference herein in its entirety.

It should now be readily apparent to those skilled in the art that a novel  
20 system, method and article of manufacture for product return of software and other information capable of achieving the stated objects of the invention has been provided. The system, method and article of manufacture of this invention provides a confirmed method for a user to effectively return a product that has been purchased electronically or otherwise, without requiring return of a storage medium. The  
25 invention provides a method of confirming that software that has been returned is not used unless it is repurchased. The invention provides a mechanism to allow customers to effectively return electronically distributed software by preventing them from using the software after it has been returned.

The invention makes it more cost effective for manufacturers to use electronic or  
30 other distribution methods that do not require separate packaged physical media for software and other information.

It should further be apparent to those skilled in the art that various changes in form and details of the invention as shown and described may be made. It is intended that such changes be included within the spirit and scope of the claims appended  
35 hereto.