

14, i.e., the Internet. The corporate network 102 provides a communication bus for a client computer 104 as well as numerous other client and server computers 106.

It should be noted that a typical corporate network, or intranet, of a large corporation is actually quite like the previously described Internet in that a great variety of networks and equipment are linked together through a variety of sub-networks and routers. Again, like the Internet, there is almost no method in such a network to install or de-install software across subnets, and certainly not across different networks.

In this embodiment, the user of the client computer 104 wishes to purchase a new software application. The installation and payment can proceed exactly as previously described for a non-networked computer if so desired. Generally though, a corporate network has network administrators who try to keep software applications uniform and purchasing departments, which try to govern spending. Therefore, in such an installation, the corporate server 100 contains on its hard disk 108 multiple software applications 110, 112, each having an agent module embedded therein as previously described.

The system administrator for the corporate network 102 would generally purchase a predetermined number of licenses for the software application 110 using a method similar to that previously described or upload them directly from a vendor's disk. The user would then access the software application 110 using the client computer 104 via the corporate network 102. Requesting installation of the applications software 110 causes the agent contained therein to contact a server module 114 which, in this embodiment, is stored on the hard disk 108 of the corporate server 100. The server module 114 monitors the number of licenses and, if more are available, then enables the installation.

If additional licenses are required, the server module 114 contacts the remote server 24 and requests additional licenses 116. If the system administrator has approved the transaction, for example by having a standing pre-approval of no more than two additional license without confirmation, then the license 116 is downloaded and a message is sent to the system administrator.