

provided by the auditor and to verify that the installer is known to the auditor. To perform the verification, the user would enter a code which might be a checksum for the installer and the software application 20 of the installer, would appear on the user screen 10. Using this code, the auditor would verify that the installer is certified by the auditor. At this stage, the user also has the option of registering with the installer by entering user information such as name, address and phone number, regardless of whether the user will purchase a software application from the installer. After the verification, the user would also have the option of terminating the installation.

The user then inputs billing information 44. The billing information can be credit card numbers, debit card numbers, a pre-established account number, or a bank account number or any of various other finance related numbers or forms of electronic commerce.

At this stage, the user has the option of entering user information such as name, address and phone number, so that ultimately the installer can track who is using the software application 20. The plug-in module 23 at this point also extracts from the remote computer 10 serial number information or any other information particular to that remote computer 10 that is software accessible. In the preferred embodiment, the other information includes hardware and configuration information of the machine. The remote server 24 via the server module 26 is used to determine whether or not the remote computer 10 is capable of running the software application 20 which the user intends to purchase. Often such serial number information is retrievable simply by making a call to the BIOS of the remote computer 10. Both the information specific to the remote computer 10 and the user of the remote computer 10 may be stored on the data storage apparatus 25 as identification information.

The billing information is then transferred back to the server module 26, which verifies the billing information 46. Such verification in the preferred embodiment is done by communicating the numbers to a central source of verification in much the same manner as is done for conventional transactions. That is, the credit card number is transmitted to a