

component 186 occurs, but the user is off-line, then the FIG. 16C3 primary sub-component is not used, but the alternate sub-component identified by FIG. 15C4 is launched, which in this case results in a textual message being displayed.

5 The above example is intended to show how robust the enhanced e-mail message enhancement apparatus according to the present invention actually is. By being able to be sent as an attachment through e-mail, the appearance of the e-mail message can be enhanced at the option of the sender, and the recipient will be ensured of being able to receive it in the intended form, since the executable recipient program instructions are preferably transmitted as part of the attachment.

10 Furthermore, even though the executable recipient program instructions can ensure receipt of the message in its intended form, the architecture of the present invention also provides that if a more robust program or hardware element exists on the recipient computer 30, which can even further enhance the content that is transmitted by the sender, then that more robust program or hardware element exists on the recipient computer 30 can be used instead of the
15 executable recipient program instructions that were transmitted by the sender.

While the invention has been particularly shown and described with reference to the preferred embodiments, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that various changes in form and detail may be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention.