Periodically, an auditing module 118 on the data storage apparatus 25 of the remote server 24 queries the corporate server 100 for information relating to licenses and installations. The server module 114 then transfers such information to the remote server 24.

5   The capability of being audited by an independent auditor provides a user assurance that the user's privacy will be protected. The auditing system herein described is physically and organizationally separate from a software developer, the virtual store, or, in the case of a corporate intranet, a department of the corporation. This separateness allows for a server to be dedicated to the sole task of installing software and for this server to be placed in a

10   physically secure setting. Thus, the remote server 24 can be situated in a locked room dedicated solely to the task of installing software. By periodically examining the disk of this server with software appropriate for this task, which is well known in the art, the data returned to this server could be verified not to contain any data other than that required to complete the installation.

15   Figure 5 shows a system configuration where the functions previously handled by the single remote server 24 have been divided among several servers and should, therefore, be read with continuing reference to Figure 1. A router 120 routes incoming data to appropriate servers. Initially, when an agent module contacts the router 120 the request is transferred to the receptionist server 122. The receptionist server 122 verifies that the request

20   is from an authorized agent module, and then transfers the request to server A 124 or server B 126. Servers A and B 124, 126 actually perform the installation.

The receptionist server 122 monitors which of servers A or B 124, 126 are currently busy and routes new requests to the less busy server 124,126. Thus, the use of the receptionist is useful to provide loading to other servers to maintain appropriate levels of

25   service and also provides for a configuration that is highly scalable, since additional capacity can be added simply by adding additional servers.