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- 1 12. In a computer system having a first and a second  
software entity, each supporting one or more features,  
feature exchange apparatus comprising:  
means for transferring, from said first to said  
5 second software entity, indications of features supported  
by said first software entity,  
means for comparing, by said second software  
entity, said indications of features supported by said  
first software entity with indications of features  
10 supported by said second software entity,  
means for transferring, from said second software  
entity to said first software entity, said indications  
of features supported by said second software entity,  
said means for transferring from said second  
15 software entity to said first software entity including  
means for transferring an error indication if said first  
software entity does not support a feature required by  
said second software entity, and  
means for comparing, by said first software  
20 entity, said indications of features supported by said  
second software entity with said indications of features  
supported by said first software entity,  
said first software entity taking an error action  
if said second software entity does not support a feature  
25 required by said first software entity or if said first  
software entity receives said error indication.

13. The apparatus of Claim 12 wherein  
said indications of features supported by said  
30 first software entity and said indications of features  
supported by said second software entity comprise bit  
masks where a bit thereof represents a feature, and  
each said comparing means is operative to perform  
a bitwise comparison of said bit masks.

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