

- 21 -

1 3. The method of Claim 2 wherein each said bit mask includes a reserved bit for said error indication and wherein said step of transferring said error indication includes

5 setting, by said second software entity, said reserved bit in a bit mask containing said indications of features supported by said second software entity.

4. The method of Claim 2 further comprising  
10 including, in said first software entity, a hardcoded list of said bit masks containing said indications of features supported by said first software entity, and

including, in said second software entity, a  
15 hardcoded list of said bit masks containing said indications of features supported by said second software entity.

5. The method of Claim 4 wherein said features  
20 supported by said first software entity comprise required features of said first software entity and said features supported by said second software entity comprise required features of said second software entity.

25 6. The method of Claim 5 wherein one of said first and second software entities supports an optional feature, said method further comprising

including in said hardcoded list associated with  
said one software entity an indication of said optional  
30 feature and an indication that said optional feature is optional.

7. The method of Claim 6 wherein said hardcoded  
lists include indications that said required features  
35 are required.