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In the example of FIG. 1, icon 16c corresponds to fixture 12, as indicated by arrow 18. Icon 16c provides access to a specified (e.g., retailer or manufacturer-specified) configuration for fixture 12. The specified configuration may include metadata 20 associated therewith, as indicated by arrow 22. Metadata 22 may be information about, e.g., the types and locations of items (e.g. products) included on the specified configuration fixture 12. The metadata associated with floorplan 14 may be part of metadata 20, and may also be associated with each fixture icon 16a to 16c (and, thus, with each specified fixture configuration).

In this example, a user 24 of computing device 10 accesses floorplan 14 via a secure Web site. User 24 selects icon 16c to display the specified configuration 26 of fixture 12 via the graphics system, including the display screen 28, of computing device 10. This is shown in FIG. 2. The actual configuration of fixture 12 is compared to the specified configuration 26 displayed on computing device 10. In the example of FIG. 2, the comparison is performed manually. That is, user 24 visually compares the specified configuration 26 to the actual configuration 12. In an alternative implementation, the comparison may be performed automatically using, e.g., image recognition code executing on computing device 10 or elsewhere on a network connected to the computing device (e.g., in a cloud computing context, this functionality would be implemented in "the cloud"). For example, user 24 may take a picture of fixture 12 using, e.g., an outward-facing camera 30 included on computing device 10. Appropriate image recognition code, in conjunction with information available on a network, such as the Internet, may be used to identify the items displayed on fixture 12, along with their locations. This information may be compared to the metadata 20 associated with the specified configuration in order to determine if the actual configuration matches the specified configuration.

In any case, if the actual configuration of fixture 12 is identical, or substantially similar, to the specified configuration, fixture 12 is deemed to be in compliance with the specified configuration. In this context, "substantially similar" may indicate that a certain percentage of items in the specified configuration are in the actual configuration and/or that a certain percentage of items in the actual configuration are at the locations in the fixture specified by the specified configuration.

Following comparison, user 24 may take a picture of the actual configuration of fixture 12 using the camera on computing device 10 (assuming that a picture has not already been taken). The resulting image may be associated with metadata for the specified configuration, and the combination sent to compliance server 32 (FIG. 3). If it has been determined that the actual configuration is compliant, then the image may be sent along with a message indicating that the actual configuration is in compliance. If it has been determined that the actual configuration is not in compliance, then the image may be sent along with a message indicating that the actual configuration is not in compliance. If available, the message may specify what, in the actual configuration, deviates from the specified configuration. In either case, the message may include appropriate metadata that is indicative of compliance or non-compliance, and that may be stored with the image.

The foregoing process is depicted conceptually in FIG. 3. Specifically, FIG. 3 shows computing device 10 taking a picture 34 ("fixture image") of the actual configuration of fixture 12, and sending the resulting image to compliance server 32. As shown in FIG. 3, metadata, such as metadata 20 or other metadata described herein, is associated with image 34. The metadata may be associated with image 34 by computing device 10. For example, computing device 10 may download the metadata and append the metadata to image 34 prior to sending image 34 to compliance server 32. Alternatively, computing device 10 may instruct a server (not shown) containing the metadata for a particular fixture to send that metadata to compliance server 32, along with a fixture-specific identifier. Computing device 10 may append that same identifier to image 34. Compliance server 32 may then associate image 34 with the appropriate metadata using the identifier. An advantage of this configuration is that it reduces the amount of processing required by computing device 10.

User 24 interacts with computing device 10 through a user interface (UI) that is generated by code that controls and/or implements the processes of FIGS. 1 to 3. The UI may include one or more fields that accept user input (e.g., a "comments" field). The user input may include any information, such as information about the store, the user, the fixture, and the like. This user-input information may be stored as metadata to be associated with an image of the fixture, e.g., with an image of the actual configuration taken by the camera.













