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(54) **SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR IDENTIFYING
AND ASSESSING VULNERABILITIES ON A
MOBILE COMMUNICATIONS DEVICE**

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CPC **H04L 63/1433** (2013.01); **G06F 21/577**
(2013.01); **H04W 12/12** (2013.01)

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CPC ... **G06F 21/577**; **H04L 63/1433**; **H04W 12/12**
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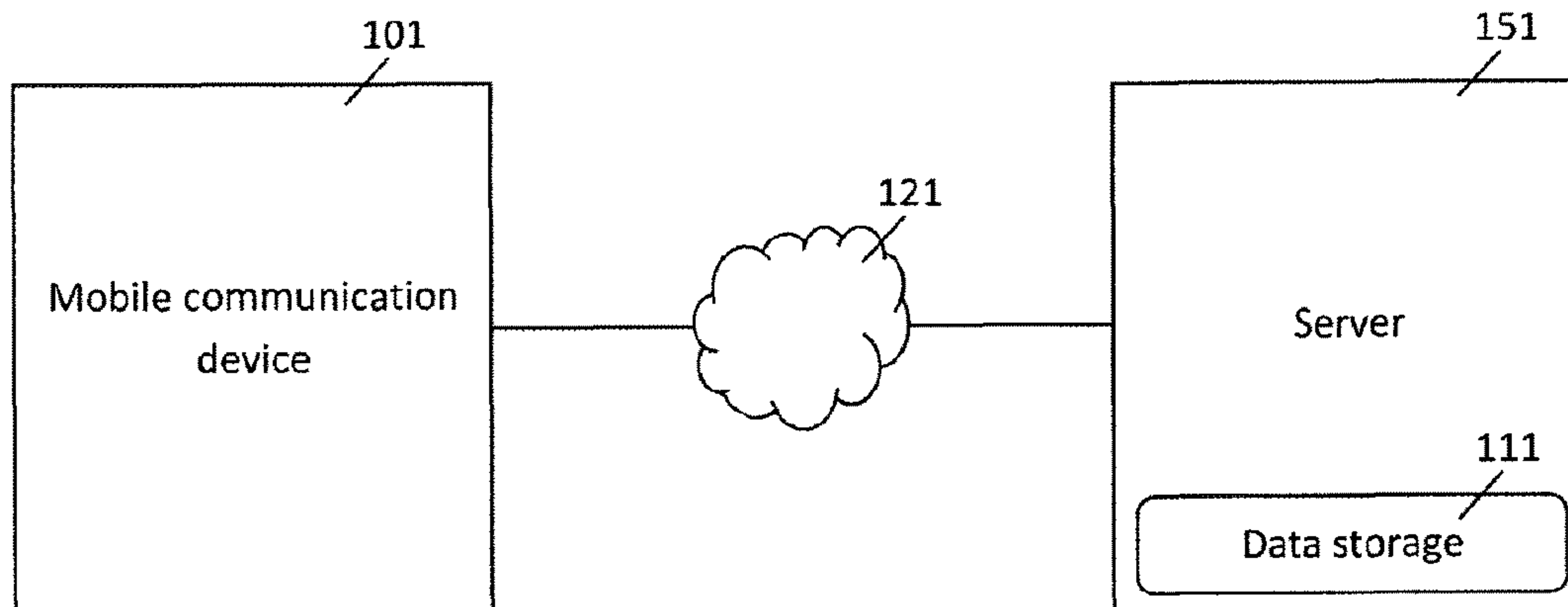
Primary Examiner — Majid A Banankhah

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

The invention is a system and method for identifying, assessing, and responding to vulnerabilities on a mobile communication device. Information about the mobile communication device, such as its operating system, firmware version, or software configuration, is transmitted to a server for assessment. The server accesses a data storage storing information about vulnerabilities. Based on the received information, the server may identify those vulnerabilities affecting the mobile communication device, and may transmit a notification to remediate those vulnerabilities. The server may also transmit result information about the vulnerabilities affecting the mobile communication device. The server may also store the received information about the device, so that in the event the server learns of new vulnerabilities, it may continue to assess whether the device is affected, and may accordingly notify or remediate the device. The server may provide an interface for an administrator to manage the system and respond to security issues.

72 Claims, 11 Drawing Sheets



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(58)	Field of Classification Search		8,031,657 B2	10/2011	Jones et al.
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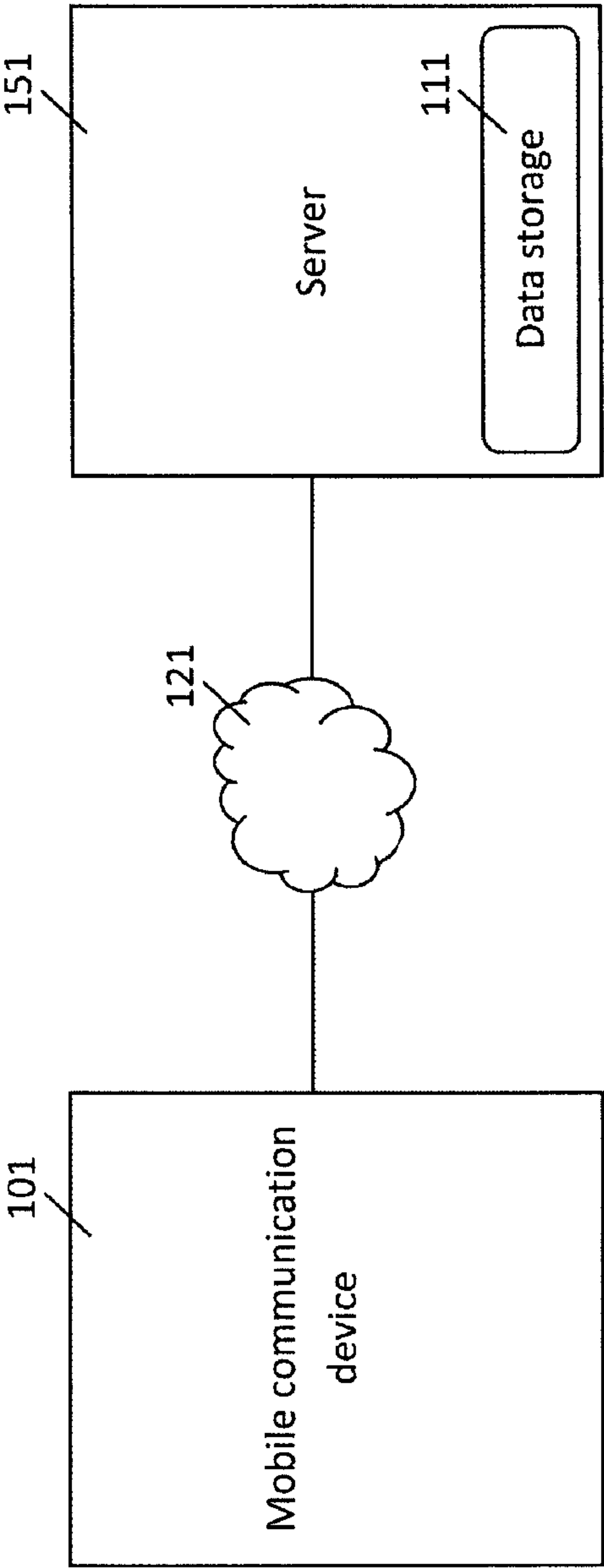


FIG. 1

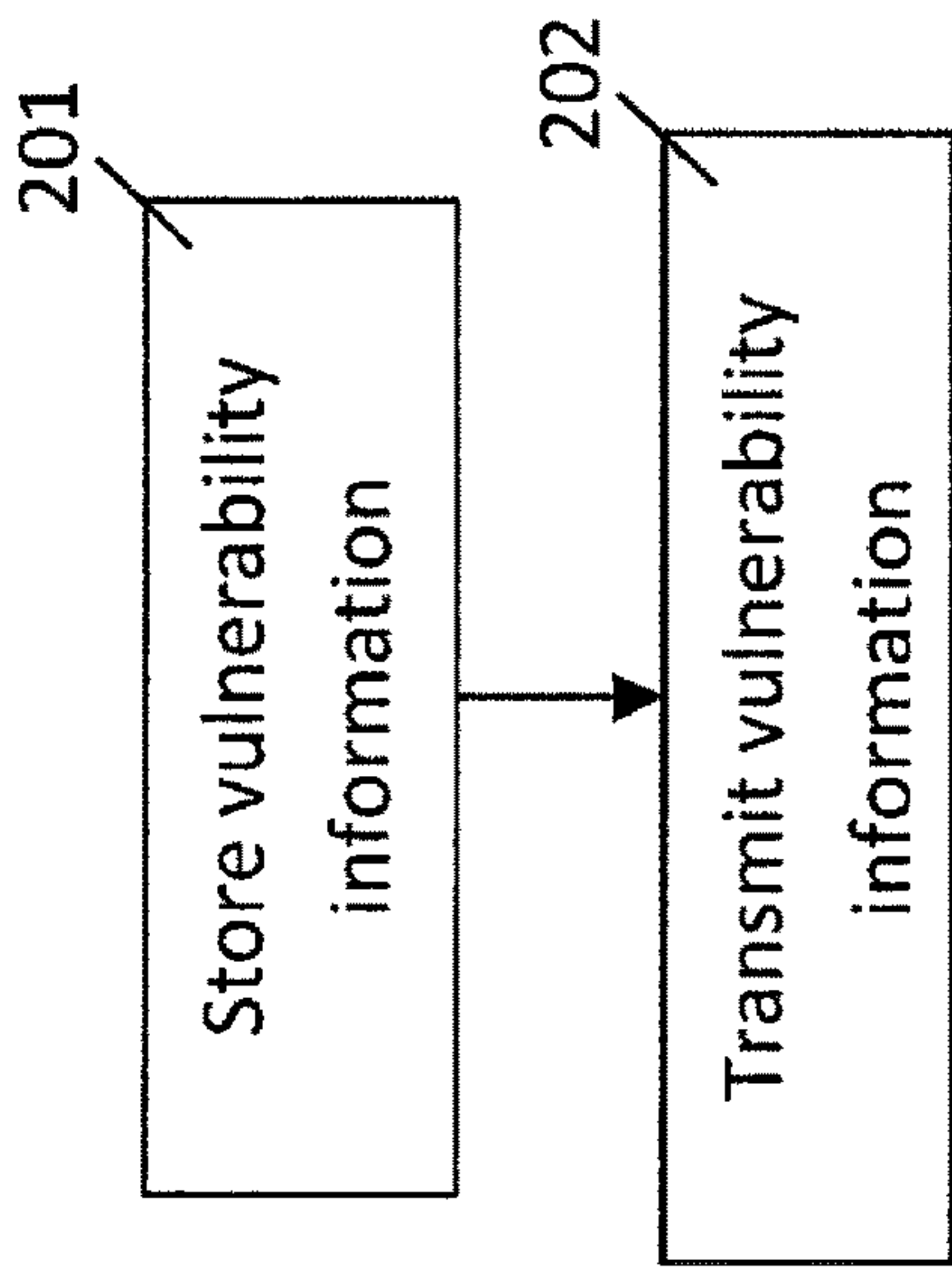


FIG. 2

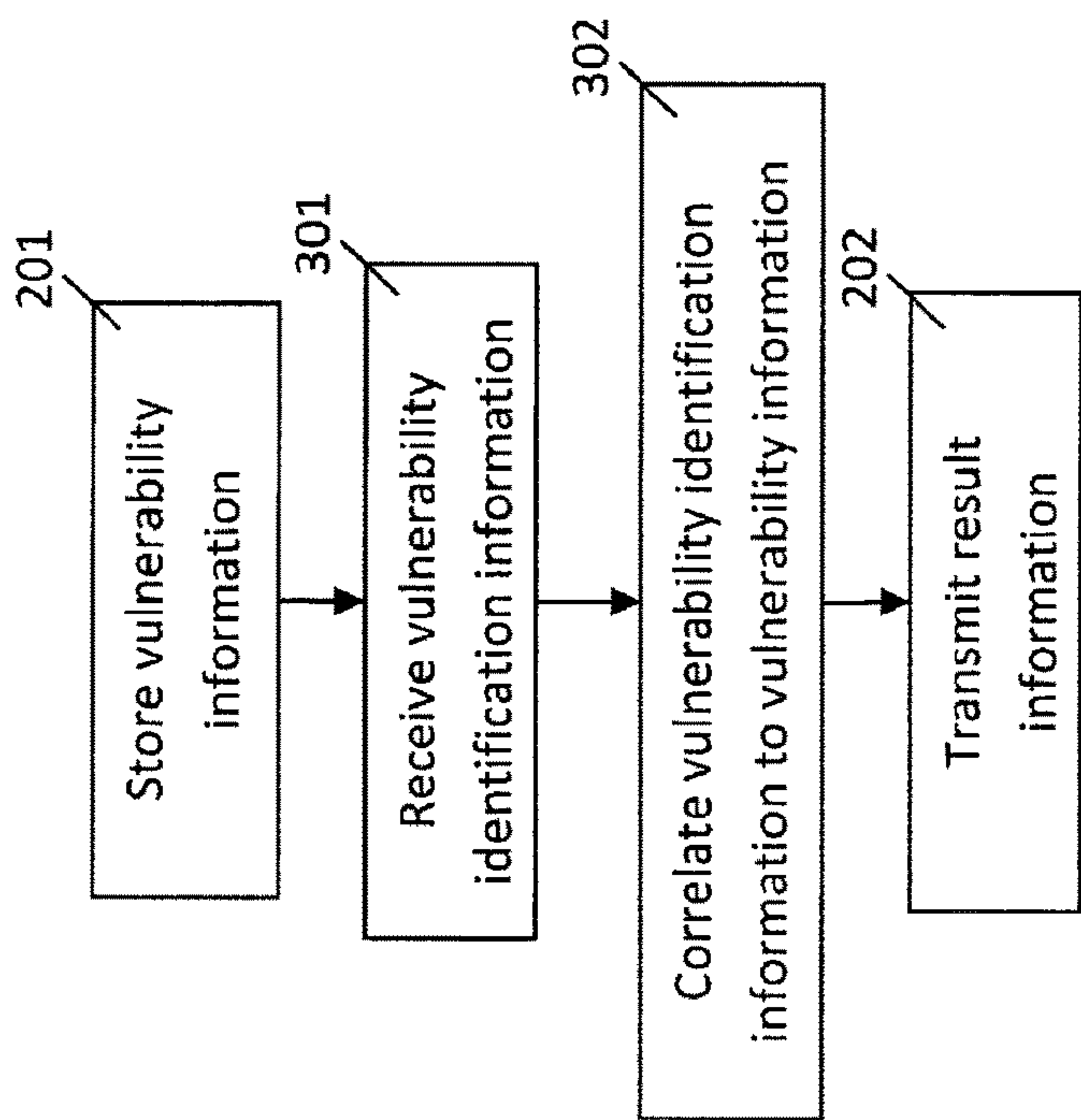


FIG. 3

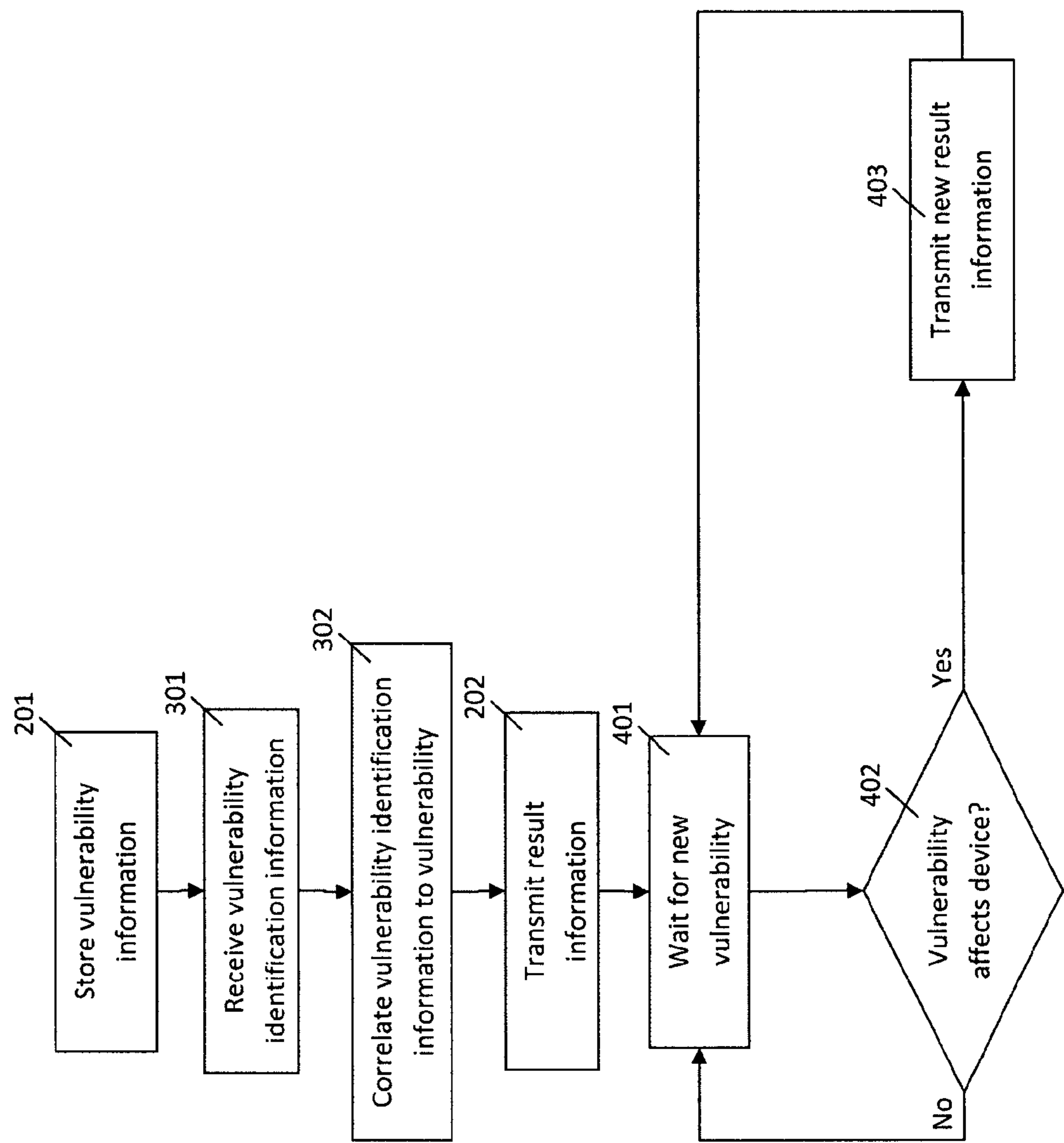


FIG. 4

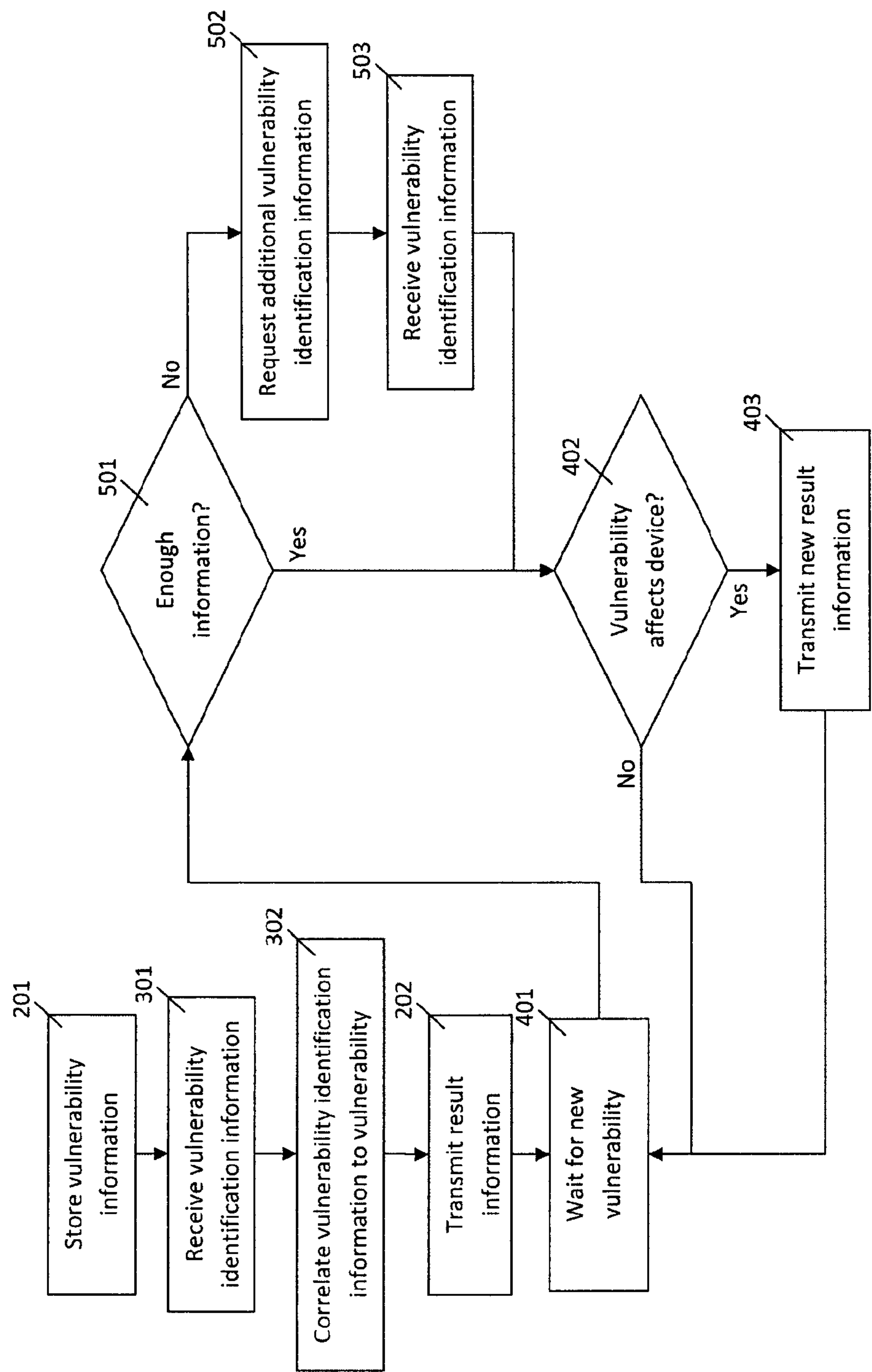


FIG. 5

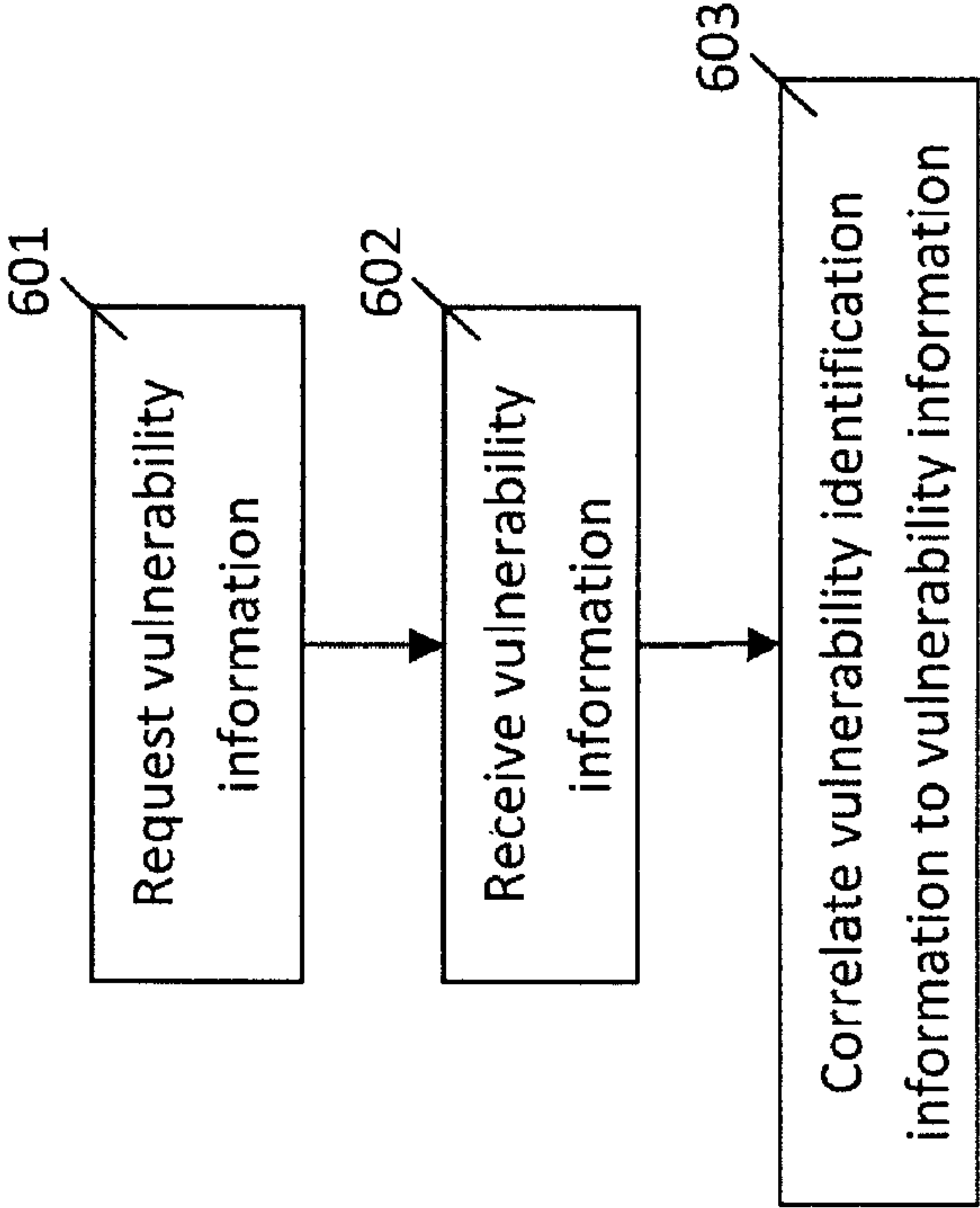


FIG. 6

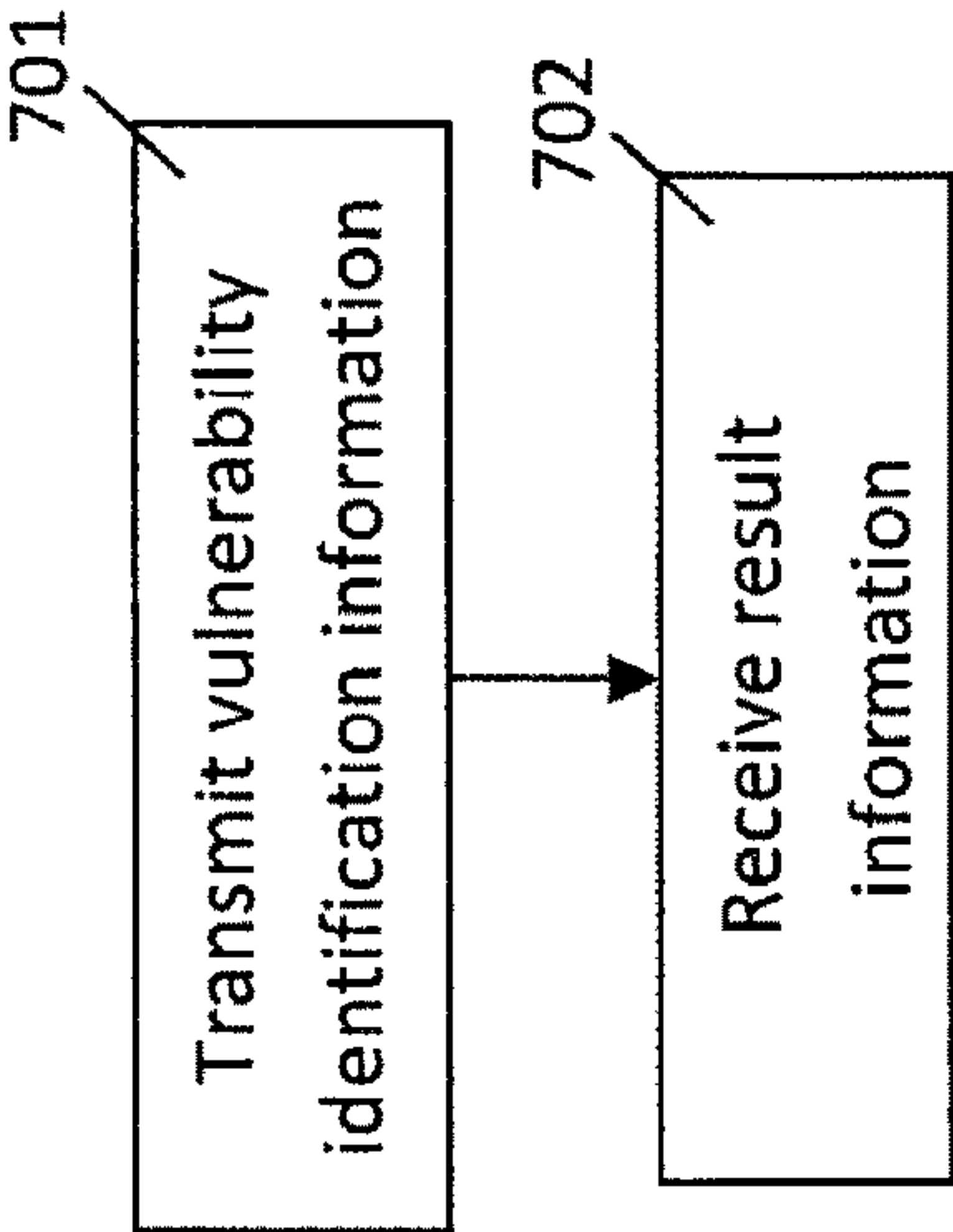


FIG. 7

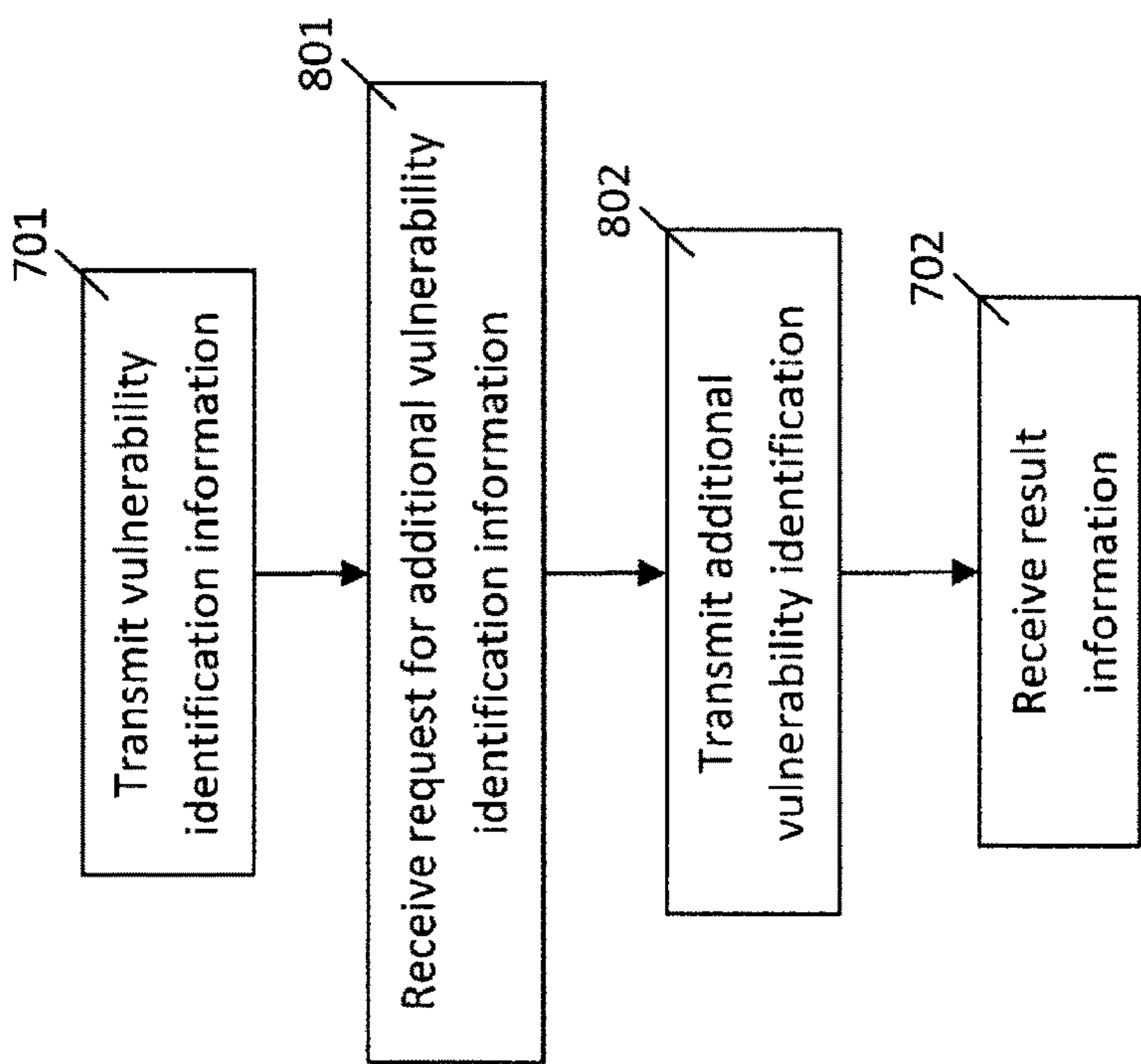


FIG. 8

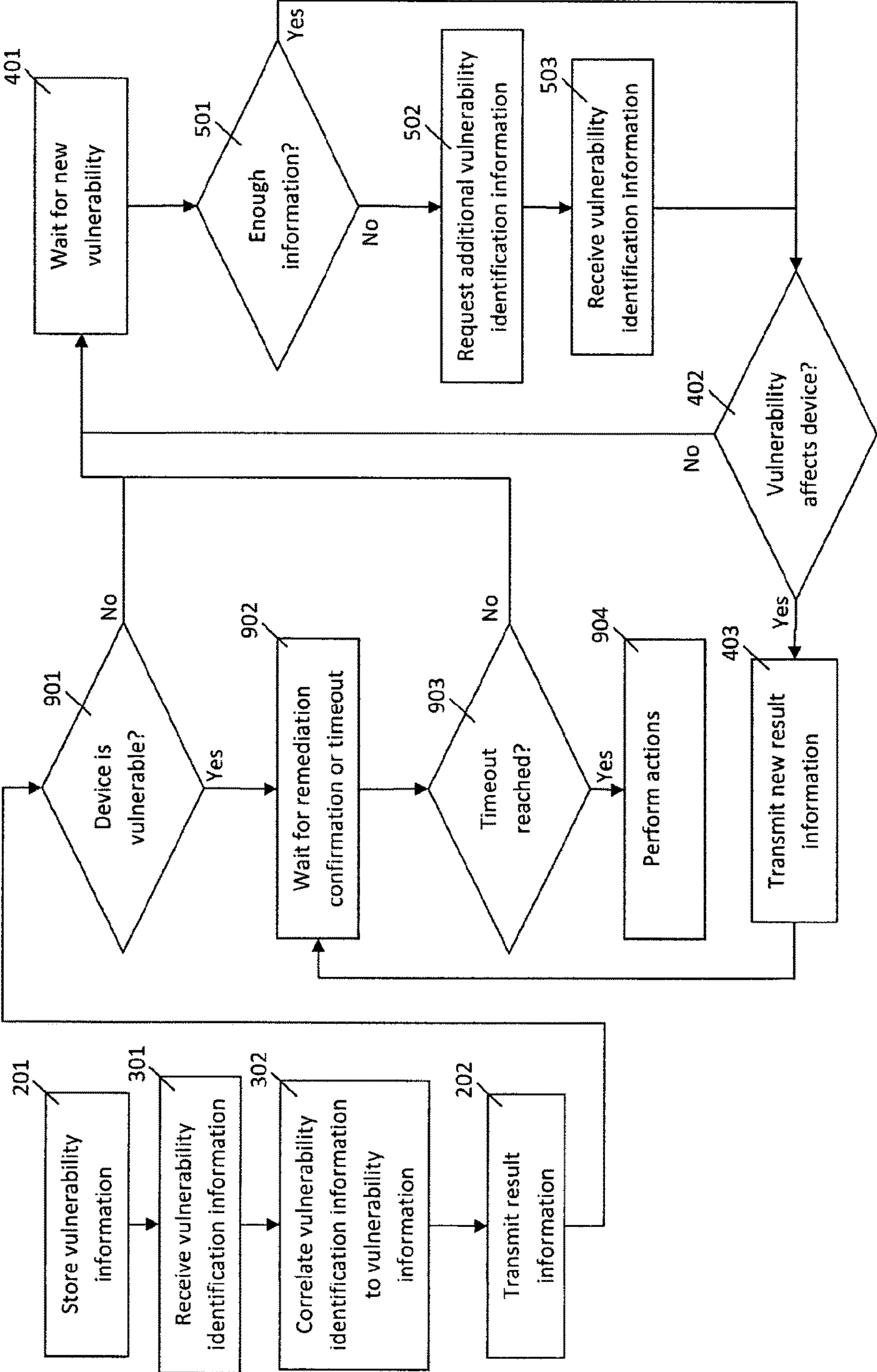


FIG. 9

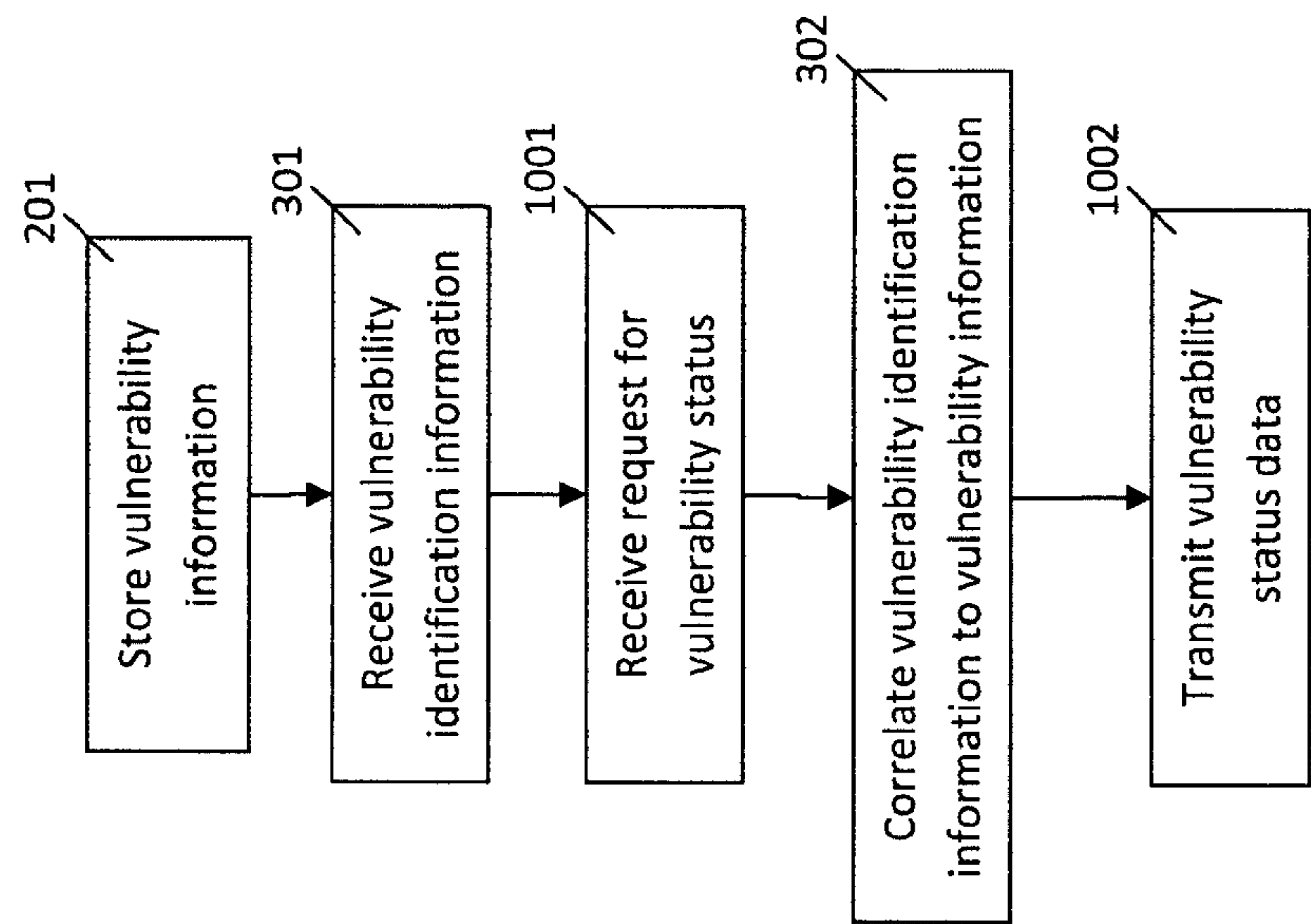


FIG. 10

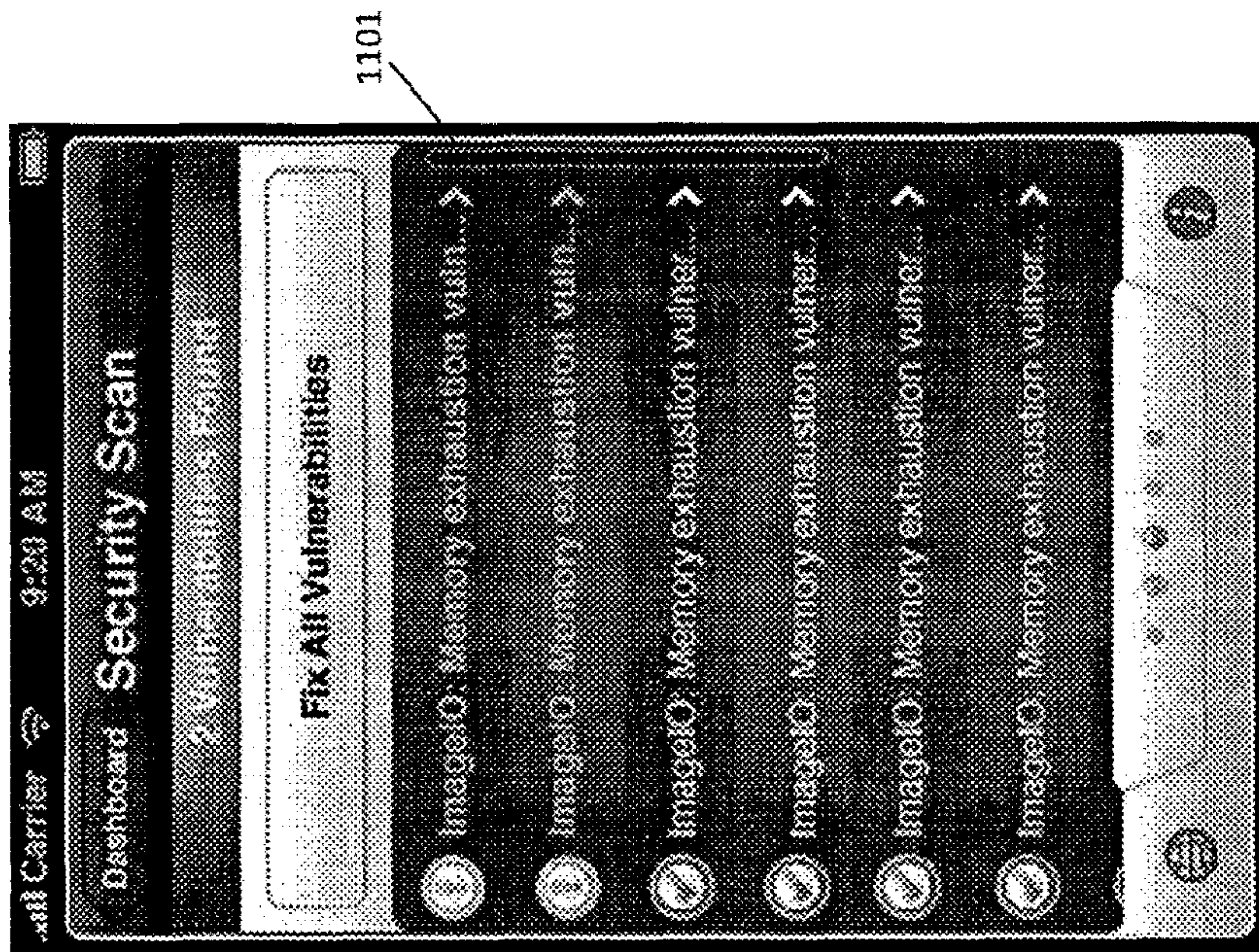


FIG. 11

SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR IDENTIFYING AND ASSESSING VULNERABILITIES ON A MOBILE COMMUNICATIONS DEVICE

Matter enclosed in heavy brackets [] appears in the original patent but forms no part of this reissue specification; matter printed in italics indicates the additions made by reissue; a claim printed with strikethrough indicates that the claim was canceled, disclaimed, or held invalid by a prior post-patent action or proceeding.

FIELD

The invention relates generally to mobile security, and specifically, to assessing the vulnerability of a mobile communication device.

BACKGROUND

Mobile communication devices or mobile devices, such as cellular telephones, smartphones, wireless-enabled personal data assistants, and the like, are becoming more popular as cellular and wireless network providers are able to expand coverage and increase bandwidth. Mobile devices have evolved beyond providing simple telephone functionality and are now highly complex multifunctional devices with capabilities rivaling those of desktop or laptop computers. In addition to voice communications, many mobile devices are capable of text messaging, e-mail communications, internet access, and the ability to run full-featured application software. Mobile devices can use these capabilities to perform online transactions such as banking, stock trading, payments, and other financial activities. Furthermore, a mobile device used by an individual, a business, or a government agency can often store confidential or private information in forms such as electronic documents, text messages, access codes, passwords, account numbers, e-mail addresses, personal communications, phone numbers, and financial information.

In turn, it is more important to protect those devices against malware, malicious attacks and other exploits. Specifically, it would be helpful to be able to identify vulnerabilities for a mobile communication device, so that the user of the mobile communication device can be alerted if his or her device suffers from any exploitable weaknesses. It is also important for an organization that relies on mobile devices to understand the state of their security and be able to respond to vulnerabilities on mobile devices in an efficient and effective manner.

Presently, current solutions for assessing the vulnerabilities of a computer on a network focus on a conventional desktop, laptop, server, or other computing devices that often enjoy more processing power and memory than a mobile communication device and generally have less restricted application environments than a mobile communication device. As such, these computing devices can often include local monitoring services that can run in the background without overly taxing valuable computing resources. In addition, conventional computing devices are often consistently tethered to a particular local network, such that devices can be remotely scanned over the local network for security weaknesses. Mobile communication devices, on the other hand, are often connected to public networks and switch between networks and network types, making remote, network-based security scans undesirable.

What is therefore needed is a way to provide similar protective services for mobile communication devices in a manner that does not overly tax resources on the mobile communication device, and that extends protective services even when the mobile communication device is not connected to a particular network or is not connected to any network.

There are many differences between mobile communication devices (e.g. operating systems, hardware capabilities, software configurations) that make it difficult to have a single system for accurately assessing the vulnerability of multiple types of devices. Additionally, many mobile communication devices are able to accept installation of various third-party software applications or "apps" that have been developed to extend the capabilities of the device. The installation of apps can alter the vulnerability state of a device, since each app may alter how and with which networks the mobile device communicates. What is therefore needed is a way to assess vulnerabilities of a mobile communication device that accounts for differences such as the operating system, the make, model, configuration, or any installed software on the mobile device. Also needed is a way for a user or administrator to view the security status of, remediate, and otherwise assess and manage the security of multiple different mobile communication devices.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

The invention is illustrated by way of example and not limitation in the figures of the accompanying drawings, in which like references indicate similar elements, and in which:

FIG. 1 is an exemplary block diagram depicting an embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 2 is an exemplary flow diagram illustrating the steps of an embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 3 is an exemplary flow diagram illustrating the steps of an embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 4 is an exemplary flow diagram illustrating the steps of an embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 5 is an exemplary flow diagram illustrating the steps of an embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 6 is an exemplary flow diagram illustrating the steps of an embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 7 is an exemplary flow diagram illustrating the steps of an embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 8 is an exemplary flow diagram illustrating the steps of an embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 9 is an exemplary flow diagram illustrating the steps of an embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 10 is an exemplary flow diagram illustrating the steps of an embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 11 is an exemplary screenshot illustrating an embodiment of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The invention is a system and a method for identifying, assessing, and responding to vulnerabilities on or affecting a mobile communication device. As will be discussed further below, a mobile communication device may transmit certain information to a server, and the server may transmit certain result information to the device that contains an assessment or identifies known or potential vulnerabilities affecting the device. Additionally or alternatively, the server may transmit notifications about possible or actual vulnerabilities affecting a mobile communication device, which

may include instructions for remediating any vulnerabilities identified as affecting the mobile communication device. Furthermore, the server may host a management console that allows an administrator to view the security status of multiple mobile communication devices and take action to secure them if necessary.

It should be appreciated that the invention can be implemented in numerous ways, including as a process, an apparatus, a system, a device, a method, a computer readable medium such as a computer readable storage medium containing computer readable instructions or computer program code, or as a computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having a computer readable program code embodied therein. One will appreciate that the mobile communication device described herein may include any computer or computing device running an operating system for use on handheld or mobile devices, such as smartphones, PDAs, mobile phones and the like. For example, a mobile communication device may include devices such as the Apple iPhone®, the Palm Pre™, or any device running the Android™ OS, Symbian OS®, Windows Mobile® OS, Palm OS® or Palm Web OS™.

In the context of this document, a computer usable medium or computer readable medium may be any medium that can contain or store the program for use by or in connection with the instruction execution system, apparatus or device. For example, the computer readable storage medium or computer usable medium may be, but is not limited to, a random access memory (RAM), read-only memory (ROM), or a persistent store, such as a mass storage device, hard drives, CDROM, DVDROM, tape, erasable programmable read-only memory (EPROM or flash memory), or any magnetic, electromagnetic, infrared, optical, or electrical system, apparatus or device for storing information. Alternatively or additionally, the computer readable storage medium or computer usable medium may be any combination of these devices or even paper or another suitable medium upon which the program code is printed, as the program code can be electronically captured, via, for instance, optical scanning of the paper or other medium, then compiled, interpreted, or otherwise processed in a suitable manner, if necessary, and then stored in a computer memory.

Applications, software programs or computer readable instructions may be referred to as components or modules. Applications may be hardwired or hard coded in hardware or take the form of software executing on a general purpose computer such that when the software is loaded into and/or executed by the computer, the computer becomes an apparatus for practicing the invention. Applications may also be downloaded in whole or in part through the use of a software development kit or toolkit that enables the creation and implementation of the invention. In this specification, these implementations, or any other form that the invention may take, may be referred to as techniques. In general, the order of the steps of disclosed processes may be altered within the scope of the invention.

FIG. 1 is a block diagram illustrating an embodiment of a system for identifying and assessing vulnerabilities on a mobile communication device. In an embodiment, the system may include one or more mobile communication devices **101** connected on a cellular, wireless Internet or other network **121**. One or more servers **151** may also have access to network **121**. The one or more servers **151** may receive one or more sets of vulnerability identification information from the one or more mobile communication devices **101**, and/or may transmit one or more sets of result

information to the one or more mobile communication devices **101**. In addition, the one or more servers **151** may have access to a data storage **111** that stores information about mobile communication device vulnerabilities. One will appreciate that data storage **111** may be a database, data table, file system or other memory store. Data storage **111** may be hosted on any of the one or more servers **151**, or may exist externally from the one or more servers **151**, so long as the one or more servers **151** have access to data storage **111**. One will also appreciate that the configuration of the system illustrated in FIG. 1 is merely exemplary, and that other configurations are possible without departing from this disclosure or the scope of the invention. For example, servers **151** or data storage **111** may be singular or plural, or may be physical or virtualized.

One will appreciate that communication between mobile communication device **101** and server **151** may utilize a variety of networking protocols and security measures. In an embodiment, server **151** operates as an HTTP server and the device **101** operates as an HTTP client. To secure the data in transit, mobile communication device **101** and server **151** may use Transaction Layer Security (“TLS”). Additionally, to ensure that mobile communication device **101** has authority to access server **151**, and/or to verify the identity of mobile communication device **101**, device **101** may send one or more authentication credentials to server **151**. For example, authentication credentials may include a username and password or any other data that identifies mobile communication device **101** to server **151**. Authentication may allow server **151** to store specific information, such as vulnerability identification information, about mobile communication device **101**, and may also provide a persistent view of the security status of mobile communication device **101**.

As previously mentioned, data storage **111** may be used to store sets of information about mobile communication device vulnerabilities (“vulnerability information”), which may be transmitted in whole or in part to one or more mobile communication devices in the form of “result information.” As used herein, a vulnerability may include an exploitable weakness on a mobile communication device that may result from the device hardware or software. Vulnerabilities may arise due to weaknesses in the device’s operating system, other software or hardware flaws in the device, protocol implementation or specification flaws, misconfiguration of the device, software applications installed or stored on the device, or services provided through, to or by the device. Vulnerabilities may arise from the features of the device, such as from the presence of Bluetooth, infrared or Internet capabilities on the device, or other communication interfaces and protocols available on the device. Vulnerabilities may arise from weaknesses in the device’s interaction with, flaws in, or misconfiguration of other services and systems such as text messaging, voice mail, telephony, or other services and systems accessed through a mobile communication device. Information about a vulnerability, i.e., vulnerability information, may be stored in data storage **111** and accessed by server **151** or mobile communication device **101**. Data storage **111** may store general information about mobile communication device vulnerabilities, or may store information about vulnerabilities specific to a mobile communication device. As will be discussed further below, sets of vulnerability information corresponding to vulnerabilities that could affect or actually affect the mobile communication device may be transmitted in the form of result information, notifications, or both.

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One will appreciate that as used herein, vulnerability information may include the name, description, severity rating, security impact summary and remediation instructions for a vulnerability. Vulnerability information may be included in the result information server **151** transmits to mobile communication device **101** or may be stored in data storage **111**. Result information may include a list of vulnerabilities that are known to affect mobile communication device **101**, a list of potential vulnerabilities that may affect mobile communication device **101**, and a list of vulnerabilities that are known not to affect mobile communication device **101**. Each entry in a list of vulnerabilities may include some or all of the set of vulnerability information for a vulnerability. As will be discussed in more detail below, the result information may also include a binary assessment of mobile communication device **101** (e.g., good or bad, “okay” or “not okay”), a threat score, remediation instructions for known or potential vulnerabilities, or may instruct display of a graduated icon that changes depending upon state (a sad face for a vulnerable mobile communication device, to a happy face for a “safe” mobile communication device). Vulnerability information may include criteria for determining if a mobile communication device **101** is affected. In an embodiment, vulnerability information may include information about a vulnerability such as a title, a description, a security impact summary, human or computer readable remediation instructions or a severity rating for the vulnerability.

As used herein, “vulnerability identification information” or “identification information” includes data that server **151** may use to determine if mobile communication device **101** is susceptible to any vulnerabilities. Such vulnerability identification information may include the operating system and version for mobile communication device **101**; the firmware version of the mobile communication device **101**; the device model for mobile communication device **101**; carrier information for mobile communication device **101**; authentication information; and/or user information for the user of mobile communication device **101**. Vulnerability identification information may also include a list of files, software components, libraries and/or a list of the applications or other software installed on mobile communication device **101**, as well as other information related to these applications and software such as version and configuration information, configuration information about the mobile communication device **101**, communications interfaces and protocols in use by mobile communication device **101** (e.g., WiFi, Bluetooth, IR, SMS, MMS), cellular network information, cellular carrier information, the make and model of mobile communication device **101**, and the like.

In an embodiment, vulnerability information stored in data storage **111** may have associated information that includes a description, a title, an overview of the security impact, remediation instructions, and criteria for affected firmware versions. In an embodiment, mobile communication device **101** sends vulnerability identification information to server **151** that includes the device’s firmware version. Server **151** may utilize data storage **111** to examine the vulnerability information stored therein and determine if the firmware version for mobile communication device **101** matches the firmware version criteria for any vulnerabilities. If any vulnerabilities match, server **151** may determine that mobile communication device **101** is vulnerable. Server **151** may then transmit result information to the mobile communication device **101**, as described herein and shown in the Figures. In an embodiment, server **151** only transmits result information corresponding to vulnerabilities that affect

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mobile communication device **101**. In an embodiment, server **151** transmits result information for all vulnerabilities that may affect device **101**. In an embodiment, server **151** transmits result information which contains all vulnerabilities that may affect device **101** and which of those vulnerabilities actually do affect device **101**. In an embodiment, the firmware version criteria for being affected by a vulnerability includes the version of the firmware in which the vulnerability was fixed. One will appreciate that some vulnerabilities may only affect certain firmware versions, and that once firmware has been updated to a new version, some vulnerabilities which affected previous versions may no longer be of issue. In order to account for variations in firmware, server **151** may detect and transmit information for vulnerabilities regardless of the firmware version on mobile communication device **101**, thereby adding extra precautions. Alternatively, server **151** may only send result information for those vulnerabilities that affect the version of firmware installed on mobile communication device **101**, thereby being more specific.

For example, a certain vulnerability may affect a mobile communication device having firmware version 1.0, but not a mobile communication device with firmware version 2.0. Server **151** may receive information about the firmware version of mobile communication device **101**, and if the firmware version is earlier than version 2.0, then mobile communication device **101** is determined to be susceptible to the certain vulnerability. However, if the firmware version for mobile communication device **101** is 2.0 or higher, then mobile communication device **101** may not be susceptible to the certain vulnerability. One will appreciate that other variations are possible, and that the determination of whether to send more or less result information may be a setting specified by an administrator, or may involve the application of logic depending upon the severity of the vulnerability and the risks or benefits of transmitting an overabundance of result information to mobile communication device **101**. One will also appreciate that the amount of result information to transmit to mobile communication device **101** may also depend upon the capabilities of mobile communication device **101** or the bandwidth of the network.

In an embodiment, data storage **111** stores vulnerability information for at least two types of mobile devices **101**. The two mobile device types may have different operating systems, firmware versions, model numbers, carrier information, authentication information, user information, configuration information, states, software applications, and the like. As a result, the vulnerability identification information for each of the at least two mobile devices will differ in some aspect. As such, in an embodiment, data storage **111** may store vulnerability information for vulnerabilities that may affect both of the two device types, including vulnerabilities that may affect one device type but not the other. One will appreciate that data storage **111** may store vulnerability information for a variety of mobile communication devices, and will be able to provide information that will help identify, assess and remediate vulnerabilities for a variety of mobile communication devices.

When data storage **111** stores information about vulnerabilities that may affect multiple types of mobile communication devices, it is important that the transmitted result information not include information regarding vulnerabilities that a user may perceive as irrelevant to a particular device. As such it is important that the list of vulnerabilities that may affect a device not simply include all vulnerabilities stored by data storage **111**. In an embodiment, a vulnerability may affect a device if the device’s vulnerability identi-

fication information at least partially matches the vulnerability's criteria for affecting a device. Providing partially matching result information provides a conservative, or safer approach to detecting and identifying potential vulnerabilities, as it may provide a opportunity for further assessment and action (e.g. further analysis conducted by software on a device), rather than only providing full criteria matches.

In an embodiment, the partial match includes criteria related to a device that does not change, is unlikely to change, or is irrespective of particular software versions, firmware versions, updates, and configuration. Such criteria may include the device's operating system, model, carrier, software applications installed, hardware capabilities, and the like. For example, data storage 111 may store information about a vulnerability that affects a particular range of firmware versions of the Apple iPhone® OS. This vulnerability information may include criteria that it affects the Apple iPhone® OS and criteria that it affects specific firmware ranges of various device models. In an embodiment, the server 151 determines that the vulnerability does affect all devices running Apple iPhone® OS that match the vulnerability information's firmware version criteria, the vulnerability may affect devices running any firmware version containing Apple iPhone® OS, and the vulnerability may not affect any devices running Android™, Windows Mobile®, Symbian OS®, or other operating systems. One will appreciate that other methods of determining what vulnerabilities stored by data storage 111 may affect a device may be performed without departing from the scope of this disclosure.

FIGS. 2-10 are exemplary flow diagrams depicting various process embodiments. One will appreciate that the following figures and processes are merely exemplary, and that the invention may perform other processes without departing from the scope of this disclosure. One will also appreciate that unless otherwise stated, the performance of the steps in the disclosed processes are not constrained by time. The time between two successive steps may differ from the time between two other successive steps. Additionally, the time to perform each step may differ each time a step is performed. One will also appreciate that the amount of information as described herein is referred to as a "set of information" or a plurality of sets of information. A set of information may include at least one quanta, data point or other quantifiable amount of information, but is not designed to limit or constrain the amount of information discussed herein. In an embodiment, a set of vulnerability information may include multiple pieces of information that relate to a given vulnerability, such as a title, a description, a threat rating, and criteria for the vulnerability to affect a device. In an embodiment, a set of result information may include a security status for a device, and a list of vulnerabilities that the device is vulnerable to, each entry in the list comprising a set of vulnerability information.

FIG. 2 depicts an embodiment in which vulnerability information is transmitted to mobile communication device 101. In block 201, data storage 111 stores a plurality of sets of vulnerability information related to one or more mobile communication devices 101. In block 202, vulnerability information is transmitted to at least one mobile communication device 101 over network 121. One will appreciate that the transmission of vulnerability information to the at least one mobile communication device 101 may be controlled by server 151 having access to data storage 111. One will also appreciate that in block 202, the transmitted vulnerability information may also be termed result information.

FIG. 3 depicts an embodiment in which result information is transmitted to mobile communication device 101 after server 151 receives vulnerability identification information from mobile communication device 101. One will appreciate that the process illustrated in FIG. 3 and described herein may be performed in addition to any of the processes disclosed herein, or may be performed separately from any of the processes disclosed herein. In block 201, data storage 111 stores a plurality of sets of vulnerability information related to one or more mobile communication devices 101. In block 301, server 151 receives vulnerability identification information from at least one mobile communication device 101. In block 302, server 151 correlates the received set of vulnerability identification information to at least one of the plurality of sets of vulnerability information to generate a set of result information which contains information about vulnerabilities that affect or may affect the at least one mobile communication device 101. This may include accessing data storage 111 by server 151. In block 202, result information is transmitted to at least one mobile communication device 101 over network 121.

In an embodiment, the scope or type of result information transmitted by server 151 may be general information, or may be specific information about vulnerabilities that may specifically affect mobile communication device 101. As such, the result information transmitted to device 101 may include all of the vulnerability information stored in data storage 111, or may include a subset of all of the vulnerability information stored in data storage 111. The option to transmit general or specific result information may be an option set by an administrator, may depend upon the hardware or software constraints of the mobile communication device, or may depend upon the bandwidth of the network connecting server 151 to mobile communication device 101.

In an embodiment, determining which vulnerabilities specifically affect mobile communication device 101 may involve correlating the vulnerability identification information provided by mobile communication device 101 to the vulnerability information available to server 151. As used herein, "correlating" vulnerability identification information to vulnerability information may involve determining whether the vulnerability described by the vulnerability information affects a device, whether it may affect a device, or whether it does not affect a device. Determinations may be made through a variety of methods, including matching vulnerability identification information with vulnerability information and determining whether identification information satisfies one or more criteria for vulnerability. Correlating may be performed by server 151 and/or data storage 111, and may include applying logic, comparing operating systems, comparing version identifiers, checking for the presence of specific software or other data on the mobile communication device, and the like. In an embodiment, correlating may utilize an identification of the hardware or specifications of the mobile communication device. In an embodiment, correlating may also be performed by mobile device 101.

FIG. 4 is directed to a process in which data storage 111 is updated with new vulnerability information that may be transmitted as a new or second set of result information to affected mobile communication devices 101. As will be discussed in more detail below, this process may include the transmission of one or more notifications. One will appreciate that the process illustrated in FIG. 4 and described herein may be performed in addition to any of the processes disclosed herein, or may be performed separately from any of the processes disclosed herein. In block 201 of FIG. 4,

data storage 111 stores a plurality of sets of vulnerability information related to one or more mobile communication devices 101. In block 301 of FIG. 4, server 151 receives identification information for one of the one or more mobile communication devices 101. In an embodiment, server 151 stores this identification information in data storage 111. This stored information may be used in block 402 (discussed below) to determine if a newly received vulnerability affects devices 101. In an embodiment, the data is used to present a status or administrative interface for the device. One will appreciate that storing vulnerability identification received by server 151 may apply to the other processes as well. For example, any time server 151 receives vulnerability identification information, the server 151 may store the information for use in generating and transmitting user interfaces (e.g. web interfaces) or identifying whether a vulnerability affects a device 101 while the device 101 is not connected to server 151.

In block 302 of FIG. 4, server 151 performs a correlating step to identify vulnerabilities that affect or may affect the mobile communication device 101, which may include accessing data storage 111 by server 151. As a result of correlating step in block 302, server 151 may generate a set of result information. In block 202 of FIG. 4, the set of result information is transmitted to the affected mobile communication device 101 over network 121. In block 401, server 151 or data storage 111 waits for and receives new vulnerability information. One will appreciate that there may not be a set time interval as to when block 401 is performed. After new vulnerability information is received, server 151 makes a determination whether the newly received vulnerability information affects any known mobile communication device 101 having access to server 151 or data storage 111 (block 402). In an embodiment, the determination in block 402 may use the same method for determining if a vulnerability affects a device 101 as in the correlating block 302; however, instead of identifying which vulnerabilities affect a given device 101, the server 151 may identify which devices 101 are affected by the newly received vulnerability. In an embodiment, the server 151 determines which devices are vulnerable to the newly received vulnerability by correlating vulnerability identification information for each device stored in data storage 111 to the vulnerability criteria for the newly received vulnerability. If the new vulnerability information does affect any of the mobile communication devices 101 having access to server 151 or data storage 111, then in block 403, server 151 transmits a notification of the new vulnerability or transmits information about the new vulnerability to the affected mobile communication devices 101. If the new vulnerability information does not affect any of the mobile communication devices 101 having access to server 151 or data storage 111, then server 151 or data storage 111 will wait until new relevant vulnerability information is received (block 401).

Server 151 may transmit a notification to mobile communication device 101 via a variety of mechanisms. A notification may be sent via email, text messaging, or through a client-server communication system as described in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/372,719, entitled, "SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR REMOTELY SECURING OR RECOVERING A MOBILE DEVICE," and incorporated in full herein. A notification may provide information about a vulnerability, information about a potential vulnerability, the status of a mobile communication device, information about remediation instructions, or may request that the user of an affected mobile communication device perform some action to update the vulnerability information

on the mobile communication device, or perform some action to remediate the mobile communication device.

In an embodiment, a notification may contain information or an instruction indicating that the mobile communication device 101 needs to connect to server 151 in order to receive new vulnerability information. The notification may be directed to software resident on the mobile communication device 101, may include software readable remediation instructions, and may be in the form of an SMS or may be sent via a push notification service, such as that provided by Apple Computer Inc. to its iPhone® devices. For example, mobile communication device 101 may receive a notification with instructions that the device should be updated to protect against a new security risk. A specific application on the device may require an update, in which case the notification may also cause mobile communication device 101 to update the specific application without user intervention. In an embodiment, a notification may be directed to the user of the mobile communication device. This may include a text message, push notification, or e-mail message containing human-readable information, or a voicemail or other verbal communication directed to the user of mobile communication device 101. Notifying a mobile communication device 101 allows for rapid response to new vulnerabilities, thereby greatly increasing the effectiveness of systems that would otherwise rely on a scheduled or manually-initiated check for security vulnerabilities.

FIG. 5 illustrates an embodiment in which server 151 may require additional information about a mobile communication device 101 in order to confirm whether a vulnerability affects mobile communication device 101. One will appreciate that the process illustrated in FIG. 5 and described herein may build upon any of the processes discussed herein, or may be performed independently of any of the other processes discussed herein. In block 201 of FIG. 5, data storage 111 stores a plurality of sets of vulnerability information related to one or more mobile communication devices 101. One will appreciate that data storage 111 may be accessed by server 151. In block 301 of FIG. 5, server 151 receives identification information for a mobile communication device 101. In block 302 of FIG. 5, server 151 correlates the received identification information to the stored plurality of sets of vulnerability information to determine which vulnerabilities affect or may affect the mobile communication device 101, which may include accessing data storage 111 by server 151. Server 151 generates a set of result information that in block 202 of FIG. 5 is transmitted to the mobile communication device 101 over network 121.

In block 401 of FIG. 5, server 151 or data storage 111 waits for and receives new vulnerability information. In block 501, server 151 assess whether there is enough information to determine which mobile communication devices may be affected by the newly received vulnerability information. If there is not enough information, then in block 502, server 151 will request additional vulnerability identification information from one or more mobile communication devices 101, and will then receive the additional information from the one or more mobile communication devices 101 in block 503. One will appreciate that the request in block 502 may utilize notification mechanisms such as those described above or may be performed the next time the mobile communication device 101 connects to the server 151. Once the additional information is received, server 151 may make a determination whether the newly received vulnerability information affects any of the one or more mobile communication devices 101 having access to server 151 or data storage 111 (block 402). If the new vulnerability

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information does affect any of the one or more mobile communication devices **101** having access to server **151** or data storage **111**, then in block **403** of FIG. **5**, the server **151** will transmit a notification of the new vulnerability to the affected mobile communication devices **101**, or may transmit an updated, new or second set of result information regarding the new vulnerability. If the new vulnerability information does not affect any of the mobile communication devices **101** having access to server **151** or data storage **111**, then server **151** or data storage **111** may wait until new relevant vulnerability information is received (block **401** of FIG. **5**).

One will appreciate that the process illustrated in FIG. **5** includes a situation in which server **151** receives operating system information from a mobile communication device **101**. In an embodiment, this information is stored by server **151** in data storage **111** or other accessible storage. Later, after receiving new vulnerability information, server **151** may determine that based on the stored operating system information for mobile communication device **101**, the vulnerability could affect mobile communication device **101**. However, server **151** may require additional identification information from mobile communication device **101** in order to determine whether the device is actually affected. Server **151** may request additional configuration information from mobile communication device **101**. Server **151** will receive the requested identification information and then sends accurate vulnerability information to the device **101**.

FIG. **6** is directed to a process in which a mobile communication device **101** having access to server **151** or data storage **111** requests vulnerability information from server **151**. In block **601**, mobile communication device **101** transmits a request to server **151** for vulnerability information over network **121**. In block **602**, mobile communication device **101** receives vulnerability information from server **151**. One will appreciate that server **151** may access data storage **111** in order to gather and transmit the vulnerability information. In block **603**, mobile communication device **101** correlates the received vulnerability information to its own identification information, and makes a determination whether any of the received vulnerability information is relevant to the mobile communication device **101**. In this embodiment, vulnerability information processing may thereby be performed by the mobile communication device **101**. In an embodiment, both mobile communication device **101** and server **151** perform processing on vulnerability information. For example, the server **151** may send vulnerability information to mobile communication device **101** based on the operating system of mobile communication device **101**. In an embodiment, server **151** may use information sent by device **101** (e.g. HTTP header information) in the request **601** or information stored in data storage **111** to determine the operating system of the device **101**. The mobile communication device may then use additional information such as the applications installed on the device, configuration information, and the versions of software libraries to perform additional processing, correlating or analysis on the received vulnerability information. One will appreciate that a vulnerability may be rated as severe if the device's configuration makes the vulnerability exploitable by remote parties; however, the vulnerability may be rated as less severe if the device's configuration leaves the vulnerability as not remotely exploitable.

FIG. **7** is any exemplary flowchart of a process in which a mobile communication device **101** transmits vulnerability identification information to server **151** (block **701**), and in response, received result information on (block **702**). One

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will appreciate that this may require access to data storage **111** by server **151**. One will also appreciate that the process illustrated in FIG. **7** and described herein may be performed as part of any of the other processes described or illustrated herein, or may be performed independently of the other processes described or illustrated herein.

FIG. **8** is directed to a process in which a mobile communication device **101** transmits additional vulnerability identification information to server **151** in order to receive additional result information relevant to the mobile communication device **101**. One will appreciate that the process illustrated in FIG. **8** and disclosed herein may augment any of the other disclosed or illustrated processes. In block **701** of FIG. **8**, mobile communication device **101** transmits vulnerability identification information to server **151**. In block **801**, mobile communication device **101** receives a request for additional identification information from server **151**. In block **802**, mobile communication device **101** transmits additional vulnerability identification information to server **151**. In response, mobile communication device **101** receives correlated result information from server **151** in block **702** of FIG. **8**. One will appreciate that server **151** may access data storage **111** in order to provide the relevant result information for transmission to mobile communication device **101**.

One will appreciate that the process illustrated in FIG. **8** contemplates a situation in which a mobile communication device **101** first transmits its operating system information to a server **151**. Mobile communication device **101** may then receive a request from server **151** for version information pertaining to software libraries installed on the device **101**. Mobile communication device **101** may then send the requested information to server **151** and may receive result information correlated to the device's vulnerability given its specific software library version information. If the software library versions installed on mobile communication device **101** are not affected by a specific vulnerability, the result information received by mobile communication device **101** may indicate that the device **101** is not vulnerable to that vulnerability. If, however, the software library versions are affected by a specific vulnerability, then the result information received by mobile communication device **101** may indicate that mobile communication device **101** is vulnerable and may contain instructions for how to remediate the issue.

FIG. **9** illustrates a process in which vulnerabilities on a mobile communication device **101** are remediated. One will appreciate that the process illustrated in FIG. **9** and described herein may be combined with any of the processes discussed herein, or may be performed independently of any of the other processes discussed herein. In block **201** of FIG. **9**, data storage **111** stores a plurality of sets of vulnerability information related to one or more mobile communication devices **101**. In block **301** of FIG. **9**, server **151** receives vulnerability identification information for a mobile communication device **101**. In block **302** of FIG. **9**, server **151** correlates the received vulnerability identification information to vulnerability information in order to generate a set of result information about vulnerabilities affecting the mobile communication device **101**. This step may include accessing data storage **111** by server **151**. In block **202** of FIG. **9**, result information is transmitted to the mobile communication device **101** over network **121**. In an embodiment, the result information may include instructions for the user to remediate vulnerabilities that affect the device **101**.

In block **901** of FIG. **9**, a determination is made as to whether mobile communication device **101** is vulnerable.

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This determination may be made using logic resident on mobile communication device **101**, or server **151** may perform the analysis. In an embodiment, a device is only vulnerable if it is affected by vulnerabilities that have a certain level of severity. For example, if a device is only susceptible to locally-exploitable vulnerabilities, it may not be considered vulnerable in block **901**; however, if the device is vulnerable to remotely-exploitable vulnerabilities or has a virus installed, it may be considered vulnerable in block **901**. If mobile communication device **101** is vulnerable, then in block **902**, server **151** may be set to wait for confirmation that the mobile communication device **101** has been remediated. Server **151** may be conditioned to wait for confirmation for a certain period of time (block **903**).

If the time limit for receiving a remediation confirmation has been exceeded, then in block **904**, an action may be taken. For example, server **151** may notify an administrator about the vulnerable mobile communication device and that the user has not taken action in the specified period of time. In this example, an administrator may take manual action such as sending a personal email or otherwise notifying the user to secure the device **101**. In an embodiment, server **151** may automatically disable mobile communication device **101** in some fashion to prevent affecting other devices on the network **121** or to prevent further damage. For example, server **151** may prevent mobile communication device **101** from connecting to a specific network, email system, document repository, or other system. Alternatively, server **151** may disable mobile communication device **101** such that an administrator must verify that the device is safe before it is can be used again. Some mechanisms by which the disablement can take place are disclosed in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/372,719, entitled, "SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR REMOTELY SECURING OR RECOVERING A MOBILE DEVICE," and U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/255,632, entitled, "SECURE MOBILE PLATFORM SYSTEM," both of which are incorporated in full herein. In an embodiment, the user of mobile communication device **101** may be notified by server **151** via email, text message or other means of communication that the mobile communication device is vulnerable and that corrective action was not taken within the prescribed time. The notification may serve as a reminder to help the user take action and secure the device. In this fashion, the invention goes beyond simply updating a mobile communication device to ensure security, or periodically scanning mobile communication devices on the network for potential vulnerabilities. As described herein, the invention may provide a customized vulnerability assessment based upon the unique state and configuration of each mobile communication device on the network, and may provide notifications and remediation instructions based upon this unique state and configuration.

One will appreciate that other actions may be performed in order to optimally secure a mobile device once it is known to be vulnerable. The embodiments described herein may be combined as part of a security response process. In an example, a user may receive a direct reminder after one day if his or her device is determined to be vulnerable and is not yet remediated. After two additional days, if the device is still vulnerable, an administrator may be notified and the device disallowed access to email and the organization's VPN service. Once the device is remediated, the administrator may be notified and access to email and VPN may be automatically restored. Other examples are also possible without departing from this disclosure or the scope of the invention.

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If in block **903** of FIG. **9**, server **151** received confirmation that a vulnerability affecting mobile communication device **101** has been remediated, or if in block **901**, mobile communication device **101** is not vulnerable, then in block **401** of FIG. **9**, server **151** may wait for receipt of new vulnerability information. In block **501** of FIG. **9**, server **151** may assess whether there is enough information to determine if mobile communication device **101** is affected by the newly received vulnerability information. If there is not enough information, then in block **502** of FIG. **9**, server **151** will request additional vulnerability identification information from mobile communication device **101**, and will then receive the additional vulnerability identification information from mobile communication device **101** in block **503** of FIG. **9**. Once the additional vulnerability identification information is received, server **151** may make a determination whether the newly received vulnerability information affects mobile communication device **101** (block **402** of FIG. **9**), thereby generating a new, updated or second set of result information. If the new vulnerability information does affect mobile communication device **101**, then in block **403** of FIG. **9**, server **151** may send a notification of the new vulnerability information to the affected mobile communication device **101**, or may send information relating to the new vulnerability to mobile communication device **101**. If the new vulnerability information does not affect mobile communication device **101**, then server **151** or data storage **111** will wait until new relevant vulnerability information is received (block **401** of FIG. **9**). One will appreciate that the portions of the process for remediating vulnerabilities present on the mobile communication device **101** may be performed in conjunction with any of the other processes disclosed herein.

FIG. **10** is directed to a process for generating data for display, e.g. on a web interface. In an embodiment, a user of the mobile communication device **101**, administrator for a group of mobile communication devices **101**, administrator for server **151**, or other party may wish to check the security status of mobile communication devices **101** connected to the network **121**. This may be helpful for identifying which mobile communication devices are vulnerable, identifying which need manual remediation or intervention from an administrator, determining the risk posed by a new vulnerability, and performing other actions relevant to securing a group of mobile communication devices. It may also be helpful to provide a single graphical user interface that displays information on mobile communication devices having access to server **151**.

In block **201** of FIG. **10**, data storage **111** stores a plurality of sets of vulnerability information that may be accessed by server **151**. In block **301** of FIG. **10**, server **151** receives vulnerability identification information for one or more mobile communication devices **101** connected to network **121**. In block **1001**, server **151** receives a request for the status of vulnerabilities for the one or more mobile communication devices **101**. This request may originate from one of the one or more mobile communication devices **101**, or from a web interface. In block **302** of FIG. **10**, server **151** correlates the received set of vulnerability identification information to at least one of the plurality of sets of vulnerability information to identify vulnerabilities that affect or may affect any of the one or more mobile communication devices **101** connected to server **151** on network **121**. In block **1002**, server **151** transmits the status of vulnerabilities for any of the one or more mobile communication devices **101** for display on a web page or other interface. One will appreciate that the status may include

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whether any of the vulnerabilities have been remediated, and if not, which mobile communication device **101** still suffers from vulnerabilities that have not been remediated. The actions in block **302** may be performed before server **151** receives a request for vulnerability status. The result of the correlation may be stored by the server **151** so that when the server receives a request for vulnerability status, the server **151** recalls the previous results. The storage may be in a database, in-memory cache, or other method of storing and recalling data available to server **151**.

In an embodiment, the data transmitted by server **151** in block **1002** of FIG. **10** may pertain to an individual mobile communication device, multiple devices, or a group of devices. The data may include information about specific individual devices or aggregated information relating to multiple devices. The information about an individual device may include the device's security status (e.g. vulnerable/not vulnerable, severity of vulnerability, number of unremediated vulnerabilities), software version information, phone number, count of security events in a time period, or last time communicating with server **151**. Aggregated information relating to a group of devices may include the percentage of devices in the group that are vulnerable, the number of devices in the group that are vulnerable, the overall risk level of the group, or other information that can be combined between specific devices in the group. Server **151** may automatically group devices using criteria such as common characteristics (e.g. operating system type, operating system version, having the presence of certain software, having a certain configuration, etc.), or common security statuses (e.g. being vulnerable, being not vulnerable, being affected by a specific vulnerability, being out of compliance, awaiting remediation, etc.).

In an embodiment, the data transmitted by server **151** in block **1002** of FIG. **10** may be selected by receiving searching or sorting information in the request **1001**. The search or sort may reference any information stored by the server relating to specific devices. For example, a user may search for all devices with a specific piece of software installed or may sort devices based on highest severity. In an embodiment, the data transmitted by server **151** in block **1002** includes a prioritized list of current security issues. This list may also include recommended actions to remediate the issues and the ability to initiate such actions. For example, in a large mobile device deployment, the list of current issues may include iPhone® vulnerability that is severe and affects 1000 devices, an Android™ vulnerability that is of moderate severity and affects 1200 devices, a Windows Mobile vulnerability that is severe and affects 100 devices, and a Blackberry vulnerability that is of low severity and affects 3000 devices. The prioritization in this case takes into account both the severity of the vulnerability and the number of devices that are part of the deployment and affected by the vulnerability.

In an embodiment, server **151** may transmit reports based on security status information available at the server. The reports may show changes in security status over time or show a current summary. Some example reports include the number of vulnerable of devices with respect to time, the current number of vulnerable devices with each severity level, the current number of vulnerable devices broken down by operating system type, and a list of contact information for users with the most severely vulnerable devices.

In an embodiment, server **151** may transmit security related events that are generated both by clients and by server **151** due to automatic or administrative action. The events may be displayed, gathered, processed, or otherwise

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interacted with as disclosed in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/255,635, entitled, "SECURITY STATUS AND INFORMATION DISPLAY SYSTEM," which is incorporated in full herein.

In an embodiment, server **151** allows an administrator to perform actions related to a device or group of devices. Actions that may be performed include notifying the user of the device via a push notification, text message, email, or another messaging system; disabling the device; disabling the device's access to a service, potentially using a mechanism disclosed in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/255,632, entitled, "SECURE MOBILE PLATFORM SYSTEM"; or those disclosed in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/372,719, entitled, "SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR REMOTELY SECURING OR RECOVERING A MOBILE DEVICE," both of which are incorporated in full herein.

In an embodiment, server **151** allows an administrator to configure how the server operates. One such configuration may include custom triggers or alerts on certain events (e.g. devices not remediating in a period of time) that will result in logging and administrator notification via email, text message, or other messaging medium. Other examples of configuration options include: the time period the server waits before notifying an administrator of an un-remediated vulnerable device, the email address or addresses administrators should be notified at, how often to remind users of vulnerable devices that they need to take remediation actions, what method of contact server **151** should use to remind users (e.g. SMS, E-mail, push notification service), how the server interacts with e-mail or VPN services to disable access for a specific vulnerable device, and other ways of controlling the functionality disclosed herein.

In an embodiment, vulnerability identification information is stored by server **151** so that, in the case of a new vulnerability, server **151** can determine whether the device is vulnerable, not vulnerable, or potentially vulnerable based on the information it has. In an embodiment, the server stores vulnerability identification information on data storage **111**. This allows an IT admin to get an instant picture of the security risk of their device deployment in the case of a new emerging vulnerability. Such rapid understanding is critical to prioritize response effort in the case of a rapidly spreading worm or severe vulnerability.

FIG. **11** is an exemplary screenshot of result information being displayed on a mobile communication device **101**. As shown, two vulnerabilities have been identified as affecting the mobile communication device. One will appreciate that these vulnerabilities may have been identified by server **151** after receipt of vulnerability identification information from mobile communication device **101**, as described above and illustrated in the Figures. As previously discussed, the identified vulnerabilities may specifically affect mobile communication device **101** because of its particular operating system version, firmware version, or software, or may be a general vulnerability that affects all similar makes and models of mobile communication device **101**. As shown, multiple vulnerabilities are shown to not affect the mobile communication device **101**. In an embodiment, these vulnerabilities are vulnerabilities that may affect similar makes and models of mobile device but do not affect the specific device **101**. In an embodiment, result information display **1101** may link to another screen or to a website with more information on a vulnerability, including instructions on how to remediate the vulnerability. In an embodiment, the result information display **1101** may occur due to the result of the device **101** receiving result information sent by the server in response to a request from the device **101**. In an

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embodiment, the result information display 1101 may occur due to the device receiving a notification that the device 101 is vulnerable. One will appreciate that other situations may prompt the display of result information on device 101 without departing from this disclosure. One will appreciate that other screen layouts are possible, and that the screen depicted in FIG. 11 is not meant to limit the invention in any fashion.

In the description above and throughout, numerous specific details are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding of the invention. It will be evident, however, to one of ordinary skill in the art, that the invention may be practiced without these specific details. In other instances, well-known structures and devices are shown in block diagram form to facilitate explanation. The description of the preferred embodiments is not intended to limit the scope of the claims appended hereto. Further, in the methods disclosed herein, various steps are disclosed illustrating some of the functions of the invention. One will appreciate that these steps are merely exemplary and are not meant to be limiting in any way. Other steps and functions may be contemplated without departing from this disclosure or the scope of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising:

- a) providing at least one server that accesses a data storage storing a plurality of sets of vulnerability information, *the vulnerability information including descriptions of known vulnerabilities*;
- b) receiving, at the at least one server, a set of vulnerability identification information about a mobile [communication] communications device;
- c) correlating, by the at least one server, the received set of vulnerability identification information to at least one of the plurality of sets of vulnerability information *accessed from the data storage* to generate a first set of result information; and[.]
- d) transmitting, by the at least one server *to the mobile communications device, a first subset of the first set of result information, an amount of the first set of result information included in the first subset of result information being determined by a setting provided to the server by an input from an administrator, and the first subset of result information including instructions for remediating at least one vulnerability of the mobile communications device.*

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the vulnerability identification information is information selected from the group consisting of an operating system type, an operating system version, a firmware version, a device model, carrier information, authentication information, user information, configuration information for the mobile [communication] communications device, hardware information, a list of files, a list of software components, a list of libraries, and a list of software applications on the mobile [communication] communications device.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein vulnerability information is information selected from the group consisting of a name, a description, a remediation instruction, a severity rating, a security impact summary, and a criterion for being vulnerable.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:

- e) transmitting, by the at least one server to the mobile [communication] communications device, a notification about the first set of result information.

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5. The method of claim 4, wherein the notification includes an instruction related to the first set of result information.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

- e) updating at least one of the plurality of sets of vulnerability information on the data storage to form a plurality of updated sets of vulnerability information;
- f) after the step of transmitting, by the at least one server, the first [set] subset of result information, correlating, by the at least one server, the received set of vulnerability identification information to the plurality of updated sets of vulnerability information to generate a second set of result information; and,
- g) transmitting, by the at least one server *to the mobile communications device, a second subset of the second set of result information, an amount of the second set of result information included in the second subset of result information being determined by the setting provided to the server by the input from the administrator.*

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

- e) updating at least one of the plurality of sets of vulnerability information on the data storage to form a plurality of updated sets of vulnerability information;
- f) after the step of transmitting, by the at least one server, the first [set] subset of result information, correlating, by the at least one server, the received set of vulnerability identification information to the plurality of updated sets of vulnerability information to generate a second set of result information; and,
- g) transmitting, by the at least one server to the mobile [communication] communications device, a notification about the second set of result information.

8. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

- e) receiving, at the data storage, a new set of vulnerability information to form an updated plurality of sets of vulnerability information;
- f) after the step of transmitting, by the at least one server, the first [set] subset of result information, correlating, by the at least one server, the received set of vulnerability identification information to the updated plurality of sets of vulnerability information to generate a second set of result information; and,
- g) transmitting, by the at least one server, the second set of result information.

9. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

- e) receiving, at the data storage, a new set of vulnerability information to form an updated plurality of sets of vulnerability information;
- f) after the step of transmitting, by the at least one server, the first [set] subset of result information, correlating, by the at least one server, the received set of vulnerability identification information to the updated plurality of sets of vulnerability information to generate a second set of result information; and,
- g) transmitting, by the at least one server to the mobile [communication] communications device, a notification about the second set of result information.

10. A method comprising:

- a) transmitting, from a mobile [communication] communications device, a set of vulnerability identification information to at least one server that accesses a data storage storing a plurality of sets of vulnerability information, *the vulnerability information including descriptions of known vulnerabilities*; and[.]
- b) receiving, at the mobile [communication] communications device from the at least one server, a subset of a

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first set of result information [that correlates to],
*wherein the first set of result information is generated
 by correlating the transmitted set of vulnerability iden-
 tification information to at least one of the plurality of
 sets of vulnerability information stored on the data* 5
*storage, and wherein an amount of the first set of result
 information included in the subset of result information
 being determined by a setting provided to the server by
 an input from an administrator, and wherein the subset* 10
*of result information includes instructions for remedi-
 ating at least one vulnerability of the mobile commu-
 nications device.*

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the vulnerability
 identification information is information selected from the
 group consisting of an operating system type, an operating 15
 system version, a firmware version, a device model, carrier
 information, authentication information, user information,
 configuration information for the mobile [communication]
 communications device, hardware information, a list of files,
 a list of software components, a list of libraries, and a list of 20
 software applications on the mobile [communication] com-
 munications device.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein vulnerability infor-
 mation is information selected from the group consisting of
 a name, a description, a remediation instruction, a severity 25
 rating, a security impact summary, and a criterion for being
 vulnerable.

13. The method of claim 10, further comprising the step
 of:

c) receiving, at the mobile [communication] communi- 30
 cations device from the at least one server, a notification
 about the first set of result information.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the notification
 includes an instruction related to the first set of result
 information.

15. The method of claim 13, further comprising the step
 of:

d) displaying, on the mobile [communication] communi- 40
 cations device, at least a portion of the received noti-
 fication.

16. The method of claim 10, further comprising the step
 of:

c) receiving, at the mobile [communication] communi- 45
 cations device from the at least one server, a notification
 about a second set of result information.

17. A method comprising:

a) providing at least one server that accesses a data storage
 storing a plurality of sets of vulnerability information,
the vulnerability information including descriptions of 50
known vulnerabilities;

b) receiving, at the at least one server, a first set of
 vulnerability identification information about a first
 mobile [communication] communications device;

c) correlating, by the at least one server, the first set of
 vulnerability identification information to at least one 55
 of the plurality of sets of vulnerability information
*accessed from the data storage to generate a first set of
 result information; [and,]*

d) transmitting, by the at least one server to the mobile
 communications device, a first subset of the first set of 60
 result information, *an amount of the first set of result
 information included in the first subset of result infor-
 mation being determined by a setting provided to the
 server by an input from an administrator, and the first* 65
subset of result information including instructions for
remediating at least one vulnerability of the mobile
communications device;

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e) receiving, at the at least one server, a second set of
 vulnerability identification information about a second
 mobile [communication] communications device,
 wherein the second set of vulnerability identification
 information differs from the first set of vulnerability
 identification information;

f) correlating, by the at least one server, the second set of
 vulnerability identification information to at least one
 of the plurality of sets of vulnerability information to
 generate a second set of result information; and[.]

g) transmitting, by the at least one server to the mobile
 communications device, a second subset of the second
 set of result information, *an amount of the second set*
of result information included in the second subset of
result information being determined by the setting
*provided to the server by the input from the adminis-
 trator.*

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the vulnerability
 identification information is information selected from the
 group consisting of an operating system type, an operating
 system version, a firmware version, a device model, carrier
 information, authentication information, user information,
 configuration information for the mobile [communication]
 communications device, hardware information, a list of files,
 a list of software components, a list of libraries, and a list of 20
 software applications on the mobile [communication] com-
 munications device.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein vulnerability infor-
 mation is information selected from the group consisting of
 a name, a description, a remediation instruction, a severity
 rating, a security impact summary, and a criterion for being
 vulnerable.

20. A system comprising:

a data storage storing a plurality of sets of vulnerability
 information, *the vulnerability information including*
descriptions of known vulnerabilities;

a server for accessing the data storage, for receiving one
 or more sets of vulnerability identification information
 about one or more mobile [communication] communi-
 cations devices, for correlating the one or more sets of
 received vulnerability identification information to at
 least one of the plurality of sets of vulnerability infor-
 mation *accessed from the data storage to generate one*
or more sets of result information, for transmitting one
or more subsets of the one or more sets of result
information, and for transmitting one or more notifi-
cations about the one or more sets of result information,
wherein an amount of the one or more sets of result
information included in the one or more subsets of
result information is determined by a setting provided
to the server by an input from an administrator, and
wherein at least one of the one or more subsets of result
information includes instructions for remediating at
least one vulnerability of the mobile communication
device; and[.]

a network connecting the at least one server, data storage,
 and the [plurality of] one or more mobile [communi-
 cation] communications devices.

21. The system of claim 20, further comprising a user
 interface for monitoring the [plurality of] one or more
 mobile [communication] communications devices to iden-
 tify which of the [plurality of] one or more mobile [com-
 munication] communications devices is vulnerable.

22. The system of claim 20, wherein vulnerability infor-
 mation is information selected from the group consisting of
 a name, a description, one or more remediation instructions,

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a severity rating, a security impact summary, and one or more criteria for being vulnerable.

23. A method comprising:

- a) providing at least one server that accesses a data storage storing a plurality of sets of vulnerability information, *the vulnerability information including descriptions of known vulnerabilities*;
- b) receiving, at the at least one server, a set of vulnerability identification information about a mobile [communication] communications device;
- c) correlating, by the at least one server, the received set of vulnerability identification information to at least one of the plurality of sets of vulnerability information accessed from the data storage to generate a first set of result information; and
- d) transmitting, by the at least one server to the mobile [communication] communications device, a first subset of the first set of result information and a notification about the first subset of the first set of result information, wherein an amount of the first set of result information included in the first subset of result information is determined by a setting provided to the server by an input from an administrator, and wherein the first subset of result information includes instructions for remediating at least one vulnerability of the mobile communications device.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein the vulnerability identification information is information selected from the group consisting of an operating system type, an operating system version, a firmware version, a device model, carrier information, authentication information, user information, configuration information for the mobile [communication] communications device, hardware information, a list of files, a list of software components, a list of libraries, and a list of software applications on the mobile [communication] communications device.

25. The method of claim 23, wherein vulnerability information is information selected from the group consisting of a name, a description, a remediation instruction, a severity rating, a security impact summary, and a criterion for being vulnerable.

26. The method of claim 23, further comprising the steps of:

- e) receiving, at the data storage, a new set of vulnerability information to form an updated plurality of sets of vulnerability information;
- f) correlating, by the at least one server, the received set of vulnerability identification information to the updated plurality of sets of vulnerability information to generate a second set of result information; and,
- g) transmitting, by the at least one server to the mobile communications device, a second subset of the second set of result information, an amount of the second set of result information included in the second subset of result information being determined by the setting provided to the server by the input from the administrator.

27. The method of claim 23, further comprising the steps of:

- e) receiving, at the data storage, a new set of vulnerability information to form an updated plurality of sets of vulnerability information;
- f) correlating, by the at least one server, the received set of vulnerability identification information to the updated plurality of sets of vulnerability information to generate a second set of result information; and,

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- g) transmitting, by the at least one server to the mobile [communication] communications device, a notification about the second set of result information.

28. A method comprising:

- a) storing a plurality of sets of vulnerability information on a data storage accessible by at least one server, the vulnerability information including descriptions of known vulnerabilities;
- b) receiving, at the at least one server, a set of vulnerability identification information about a mobile communications device;
- c) correlating, by the at least one server, the received set of vulnerability identification information to at least one of the plurality of sets of vulnerability information accessed from the data storage to generate a first set of result information; and
- d) transmitting, by the at least one server to the mobile communications device, a first subset of the first set of result information, an amount of the first set of result information being determined by a setting provided to the server by an input from an administrator, and the first subset of result information including instructions for remediating at least one vulnerability of the mobile communications device.

29. The method of claim 28, wherein the vulnerability identification information is information selected from the group consisting of an operating system type, an operating system version, a firmware version, a device model, carrier information, authentication information, user information, configuration information for the mobile communications device, hardware information, a list of files, a list of software components, a list of libraries, and a list of software applications on the mobile communications device.

30. The method of claim 28, wherein vulnerability information is information selected from the group consisting of a name, a description, a remediation instruction, a severity rating, a security impact summary, and a criterion for being vulnerable.

31. The method of claim 28, further comprising the step of:

- e) transmitting, by the at least one server to the mobile communications device, a notification about the first set of result information.

32. The method of claim 31, wherein the notification includes an instruction related to the first set of result information.

33. The method of claim 28, further comprising the steps of:

- e) updating at least one of the plurality of sets of vulnerability information on the data storage to form a plurality of updated sets of vulnerability information;
- f) after the step of transmitting, by the at least one server, the first subset of result information, correlating, by the at least one server, the received set of vulnerability identification information to the plurality of updated sets of vulnerability information to generate a second set of result information; and,
- g) transmitting, by the at least one server to the mobile communications device, a second subset of the second set of result information, an amount of the second set of result information included in the second subset of result information being determined by the setting provided to the server by the input from the administrator.

34. The method of claim 28, further comprising the steps of:

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- e) updating at least one of the plurality of sets of vulnerability information on the data storage to form a plurality of updated sets of vulnerability information;
 - f) after the step of transmitting, by the at least one server, the first subset of result information, correlating, by the at least one server, the received set of vulnerability identification information to the plurality of updated sets of vulnerability information to generate a second set of result information; and,
 - g) transmitting, by the at least one server to the mobile communications device, a notification about the second set of result information.
35. The method of claim 28, further comprising the steps of:
- e) receiving, at the data storage, a new set of vulnerability information to form an updated plurality of sets of vulnerability information;
 - f) after the step of transmitting, by the at least one server, the first subset of result information, correlating, by the at least one server, the received set of vulnerability identification information to the updated plurality of sets of vulnerability information to generate a second set of result information; and,
 - g) transmitting, by the at least one server, the second set of result information.
36. The method of claim 28, further comprising the steps of:
- e) receiving, at the data storage, a new set of vulnerability information to form an updated plurality of sets of vulnerability information;
 - f) after the step of transmitting, by the at least one server, the first subset of result information, correlating, by the at least one server, the received set of vulnerability identification information to the updated plurality of sets of vulnerability information to generate a second set of result information; and,
 - g) transmitting, by the at least one server to the mobile communications device, a notification about the second set of result information.
37. A method comprising:
- a) storing a plurality of sets of vulnerability information on a data storage accessible by at least one server, the vulnerability information including descriptions of known vulnerabilities;
 - b) receiving, at the at least one server, a first set of vulnerability identification information about a first mobile communications device;
 - c) correlating, by the at least one server, the first set of vulnerability identification information to at least one of the plurality of sets of vulnerability information accessed from the data storage to generate a first set of result information;
 - d) transmitting, by the at least one server to the first mobile communications device, a first subset of the first set of result information, an amount of the first set of result information being limited by a setting specified by an administrator, and the first subset of result information including instructions for remediating at least one vulnerability of the mobile communications device;
 - e) receiving, at the at least one server, a second set of vulnerability identification information about a second mobile communications device, wherein the second set of vulnerability identification information differs from the first set of vulnerability identification information;
 - f) correlating, by the at least one server, the second set of vulnerability identification information to at least one

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- of the plurality of sets of vulnerability information to generate a second set of result information; and,
 - g) transmitting, by the at least one server to the second mobile communications device, a second subset of the second set of result information, an amount of the second set of result information included in the second subset of result information being determined by the setting provided to the server by the input from the administrator.
38. The method of claim 37, wherein the vulnerability identification information is information selected from the group consisting of an operating system type, an operating system version, a firmware version, a device model, carrier information, authentication information, user information, configuration information for the mobile communications device, hardware information, a list of files, a list of software components, a list of libraries, and a list of software applications on the mobile communications device.
39. The method of claim 37, wherein vulnerability information is information selected from the group consisting of a name, a description, a remediation instruction, a severity rating, a security impact summary, and a criterion for being vulnerable.
40. A method comprising:
- a) storing a plurality of sets of vulnerability information on a data storage accessible by at least one server, the vulnerability information including descriptions of known vulnerabilities;
 - b) receiving, at the at least one server, a set of vulnerability identification information about a mobile communications device;
 - c) correlating, by the at least one server, the received set of vulnerability identification information to at least one of the plurality of sets of vulnerability information accessed from the data storage to generate a first set of result information;
 - d) transmitting, by the at least one server to the mobile communications device, a notification about the first set of result information; and
 - e) transmitting, by the at least one server to the mobile communications device, a first subset of the first set of result information, the first subset of result information being selected from the first set of result information based on a determined vulnerability risk of each item of the result information, and the first subset of result information including instructions for remediating at least one vulnerability of the mobile communications device.
41. The method of claim 40, wherein the vulnerability identification information is information selected from the group consisting of an operating system type, an operating system version, a firmware version, a device model, carrier information, authentication information, user information, configuration information for the mobile communications device, hardware information, a list of files, a list of software components, a list of libraries, and a list of software applications on the mobile communications device.
42. The method of claim 40, wherein vulnerability information is information selected from the group consisting of a name, a description, a remediation instruction, a severity rating, a security impact summary, and a criterion for being vulnerable.
43. The method of claim 40, further comprising the steps of:
- f) receiving, at the data storage, a new set of vulnerability information to form an updated plurality of sets of vulnerability information;

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- g) correlating, by the at least one server, the received set of vulnerability identification information to the updated plurality of sets of vulnerability information to generate a second set of result information; and,
- h) transmitting, by the at least one server to the mobile communications device, a second subset of the second set of result information, the second subset of result information being selected from the second set of result information based on a determined vulnerability risk of each item of the result information.
44. The method of claim 40, further comprising the steps of:
- f) receiving, at the data storage, a new set of vulnerability information to form an updated plurality of sets of vulnerability information;
- g) correlating, by the at least one server, the received set of vulnerability identification information to the updated plurality of sets of vulnerability information to generate a second set of result information; and,
- h) transmitting, by the at least one server to the mobile communications device, a notification about the second set of result information.
45. A method comprising:
- a) storing a plurality of sets of vulnerability information on a data storage accessible by a server, the vulnerability information including descriptions of known vulnerabilities;
- b) receiving, at the server a plurality of sets of vulnerability identification information about a plurality of mobile communications devices, each vulnerability identification information set associated with a single mobile communications device;
- c) correlating, by the server, the received plurality of vulnerability identification information sets to the stored plurality of vulnerability information accessed from the data storage to generate a plurality of sets of assessment result information;
- d) transmitting the plurality of sets of assessment result information for display on a management console; and
- e) transmitting, by the server to each of the plurality of mobile communications devices, a subset of a corresponding set of assessment result information, the subset being selected from the corresponding set of assessment result information based on a determined vulnerability risk of each item of the corresponding assessment result information, and the subset including instructions for remediating at least one vulnerability of the plurality of mobile communications devices.
46. The method of claim 45 further comprising the steps of:
- at the server, receiving from an administrator for the plurality of mobile communications devices configuration instructions for the correlating and transmitting steps.
47. The method of claim 46 wherein the configuration instructions are selected from the group consisting of custom triggers for transmission of the plurality of sets of assessment result information to the management console, the time period the server waits before transmitting the plurality of sets of assessment result information, the email address where the plurality of sets of assessment result information should be sent, and the type of service that the server should use to transmit the plurality of sets of assessment result information.
48. The method of claim 45 wherein the set of vulnerability information about the mobile communications device is selected from the group of information consisting of weak-

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nesses in the mobile communications device's operating system, other software or hardware flaws in the mobile communications device, protocol implementation or specification flaws in the mobile communications device, misconfiguration of the mobile communications device, software applications installed or stored on the mobile communications device, services provided through, to or by the mobile communications device, the presence of Bluetooth, infrared or Internet capabilities on the mobile communications device, and weaknesses in the mobile communications device's interaction with, flaws in, or misconfiguration of text messaging, voice mail, and telephony.

49. A method comprising:

- a) on a server accessing data storage containing a plurality of sets of vulnerability criteria, the vulnerability criteria including descriptions of known vulnerabilities, receiving a set of vulnerability identification information from a mobile communications device;
- b) at the server, correlating the received set of vulnerability identification information to the stored plurality of sets of vulnerability criteria to determine if there is a partial match between the received set and at least one of the plurality of stored sets of vulnerability criteria accessed from the data storage, and to generate a set of result information; and
- c) when the server determines there is a partial match between the received set and at least one of the plurality of stored sets of vulnerability criteria, transmitting by the server to the mobile communications device a subset of the set of result information related to the vulnerability criteria, the subset of result information being selected from the set of result information based on a determined vulnerability risk of each item of the result information, and the subset of result information including instructions for remediating at least one vulnerability of the mobile communications device.

50. The method of claim 49 wherein the vulnerability identification information is selected from the group consisting of an operating system type, an operating system version, a firmware version, a device model, carrier information, authentication information, user information, configuration information for the mobile communications device, hardware information, and a list of software applications running on the mobile communications device, and combinations thereof.

51. The method of claim 49 wherein the set of vulnerability information about the mobile communications device is selected from the group of information consisting of weaknesses in the mobile communications device's operating system, other software or hardware flaws in the mobile communications device, protocol implementation or specification flaws in the mobile communications device, misconfiguration of the mobile communications device, software applications installed or stored on the mobile communications device, services provided through, to or by the mobile communications device, the presence of Bluetooth, infrared or Internet capabilities on the mobile communications device, and weaknesses in the mobile communications device's interaction with, flaws in, or misconfiguration of text messaging, voice mail, and telephony.

52. A method comprising:

- a) storing a plurality of sets of vulnerability information on a data storage accessible by a server, the vulnerability information including descriptions of known vulnerabilities;

- b) receiving, at the server, a first set of vulnerability identification information about a mobile communications device;
- c) correlating, by the server, the received set of vulnerability identification information to the plurality of sets of vulnerability information accessed from the data storage to generate a first set of result information;
- d) transmitting to the mobile communications device, by the server, a first subset of the first set of result information and a request for a second set of vulnerability identification information about the mobile communications device, wherein the first subset of result information is selected from the first set of result information based on a determined vulnerability risk of each item of the result information, and wherein the first subset of result information includes instructions for remediating at least one vulnerability of the mobile communications device;
- e) receiving at the server the requested second set of vulnerability identification information;
- f) correlating, by the server, the received second set of vulnerability identification information to the plurality of sets of vulnerability information to generate a second set of result information; and
- d) transmitting to the mobile communications device, by the server, a second subset of the second set of result information, wherein the second subset of result information is selected from the second set of result information based on the determined vulnerability risk of each item of the result information.

53. The method of claim 52, further comprising the step of:

- e) transmitting by the server to the mobile communications device, a notification about the second set of result information.

54. The method of claim 52, wherein the notification includes an instruction related to the second set of result information.

55. The method of claim 52 wherein the set of vulnerability information about the mobile communications device is selected from the group of information consisting of weaknesses in the mobile communications device's operating system, other software or hardware flaws in the mobile communications device, protocol implementation or specification flaws in the mobile communications device, misconfiguration of the mobile communications device, software applications installed or stored on the mobile communications device, services provided through, to or by the mobile communications device, the presence of Bluetooth, infrared or Internet capabilities on the mobile communications device, and weaknesses in the mobile communications device's interaction with, flaws in, or misconfiguration of text messaging, voice mail, and telephony.

56. A method comprising:

- a) receiving at a mobile communications device from a server a first set of vulnerability information about the mobile communications device, the first set of vulnerability information being accessed from a data storage device of the server, the vulnerability information including descriptions of known vulnerabilities, an amount of information included in the first set of vulnerability information being determined by a setting provided to the server by an input from an administrator; and
- b) correlating by the mobile communications device the received first set of vulnerability information to a set of vulnerability identification information about the

mobile communications device to determine whether the received vulnerability information is relevant to the mobile communications device to generate a first set of vulnerability result information, the first set of vulnerability result information including instructions for remediating at least one vulnerability of the mobile communications device.

57. The method of claim 56 further comprising the steps of:

- transmitting, from the mobile communications device to the server, a set of vulnerability identification information about the mobile communications device; and
- at the mobile communications device, receiving from the server a second set of vulnerability result information generated by the server, an amount of information included in second set of vulnerability information being determined by the setting provided to the server by the input from the administrator.

58. The method of claim 56 wherein the first set of vulnerability information received from the server is based upon the mobile communications device operating system.

59. The method of claim 56 wherein the set of vulnerability information about the mobile communications device is selected from the group of information consisting of weaknesses in the mobile communications device's operating system, other software or hardware flaws in the mobile communications device, protocol implementation or specification flaws in the mobile communications device, misconfiguration of the mobile communications device, software applications installed or stored on the mobile communications device, services provided through, to or by the mobile communications device, the presence of Bluetooth, infrared or Internet capabilities on the mobile communications device, and weaknesses in the mobile communications device's interaction with, flaws in, or misconfiguration of text messaging, voice mail, and telephony.

60. A method comprising:

- a) at a server, determining whether a vulnerability of a mobile communications device exceeds a threshold level based on a prioritized list of vulnerability risks;
- b) at a server, determining that the mobile communications device requires remediation when the vulnerability is determined to exceed the threshold level;
- c) at the server, transmitting instructions to the mobile communications device to remediate the vulnerability of the mobile communications device determined to exceed the threshold level;
- d) at the server, determining whether a remediation confirmation has been received from the mobile communications device in response to the transmitted instructions within a preset time period; and
- e) when the server determines that the remediation confirmation has not been received within the preset time period, taking, at the server, an action step to facilitate remediating the determined vulnerability.

61. The method of claim 60 wherein the action step is selected from the group of actions consisting of notifying an administrator of the mobile communications device about the determined vulnerability, disabling the mobile communications device such that an administrator of the mobile communications device must verify that the determined vulnerability has been remediated before the mobile communications device can be used again, and notifying the user of the mobile communications device via email or text that the mobile communications device has been determined vulnerable.

62. The method of claim 60 wherein the set of vulnerability information about the mobile communications device is selected from the group of information consisting of weaknesses in the mobile communications device's operating system, other software or hardware flaws in the mobile communications device, protocol implementation or specification flaws in the mobile communications device, misconfiguration of the mobile communications device, software applications installed or stored on the mobile communications device, services provided through, to or by the mobile communications device, the presence of Bluetooth, infrared or Internet capabilities on the mobile communications device, and weaknesses in the mobile communications device's interaction with, flaws in, or misconfiguration of text messaging, voice mail, and telephony.

63. A method comprising:

storing, in a data store accessible by a server, vulnerability information based on applications available for installation on mobile communications devices, the vulnerability information including descriptions of known vulnerabilities;

receiving, at the server, first information and second information from a mobile communications device, wherein the first information identifies an application downloaded to the mobile communications device, and the second information identifies an operating system of the mobile communications device;

analyzing, at the server, the stored vulnerability information, and the first and second information;

based on the analysis, making a vulnerability assessment;

transmitting a subset of the vulnerability assessment from the server to the mobile communications device, the subset of the vulnerability assessment being selected from the vulnerability assessment based on a determined vulnerability risk of each item of the vulnerability assessment; and

based on the vulnerability assessment, transmitting from the server to the mobile communications device instructions for remediating at least one vulnerability of the mobile communications device.

64. The method of claim 63 wherein the set of vulnerability information about the mobile communications device is selected from the group of information consisting of weaknesses in the mobile communications device's operating system, other software or hardware flaws in the mobile communications device, protocol implementation or specification flaws in the mobile communications device, misconfiguration of the mobile communications device, software applications installed or stored on the mobile communications device, services provided through, to or by the mobile communications device, the presence of Bluetooth, infrared or Internet capabilities on the mobile communications device, and weaknesses in the mobile communications device's interaction with, flaws in, or misconfiguration of text messaging, voice mail, and telephony.

65. The method of claim 63 wherein the mobile communications device displays the first subset of the vulnerability assessment on the mobile communications device using an icon whose image changes depending upon the content of the first set of vulnerability assessment.

66. A method:

a) on a mobile communications device, transmitting vulnerability identification information to a server; and

b) on the mobile communications device, receiving a first subset of a first set of vulnerability result information from the server, wherein the first set of vulnerability result information is generated based on a correlation

between the transmitted vulnerability identification information and at least one of a plurality of sets of vulnerability information accessed from a data storage device of the server, the vulnerability information including descriptions of known vulnerabilities, and wherein the first subset of vulnerability result information is selected from the first set of vulnerability result information based on a determined vulnerability risk of each item of the vulnerability result information, and wherein the first subset of vulnerability result information includes instructions for remediating at least one vulnerability of the mobile communications device.

67. The method of claim 66 wherein the first subset of vulnerability result information is used by the mobile communications device to generate a display on the mobile communications device.

68. The method of claim 67 wherein the display generated using the first subset of vulnerability result information on the mobile communications device displays an icon whose image changes depending upon the content of the first subset of vulnerability result information.

69. A method comprising:

at an administrator server in communication with a plurality of mobile communications devices, receiving a plurality of sets of vulnerability result information, each set associated with one of the plurality of mobile communications devices, wherein the plurality of sets of vulnerability result information is generated based on correlating, for each of the plurality of mobile communications devices, a received set of vulnerability identification information to at least one of a plurality of sets of vulnerability information accessed from a data storage of the administrator server, the vulnerability information including descriptions of known vulnerabilities;

at the administrator server, based upon the received plurality of sets of vulnerability result information, performing actions directed to the mobile communications devices identified in the sets of vulnerability result information as having vulnerabilities; and

at the administrator server, based upon the received plurality of sets of vulnerability result information, transmitting to each of the plurality of mobile communications devices identified in the sets of vulnerability result information as having vulnerabilities, a subset of a corresponding set of vulnerability result information, the subset being selected from the corresponding set of vulnerability result information based on a determined vulnerability risk of each item of the corresponding vulnerability result information, and the subset of the corresponding set of vulnerability result information including instructions for remediating at least one vulnerability of the mobile communications device.

70. The method of claim 69 wherein the actions are selected from the group of actions consisting of notifying the user of the mobile communications device about the vulnerability via push notification, text message, or email, disabling the mobile communications device, and disabling the ability of the mobile communications device to access a service.

71. The method of claim 69 wherein the administrator server accesses data storage containing a plurality of sets of vulnerability identification information, each set associated with one of the plurality of mobile communications devices, and wherein the actions performed are based upon a priority of vulnerabilities set according to the plurality of sets of vulnerability identification information.

72. The method of claim 69 wherein the set of vulnerabil-
ity information about the mobile communications device is
selected from the group of information consisting of weak-
nesses in the mobile communications device's operating
system, other software or hardware flaws in the mobile 5
communications device, protocol implementation or speci-
fication flaws in the mobile communications device, miscon-
figuration of the mobile communications device, software
applications installed or stored on the mobile communica-
tions device, services provided through, to or by the mobile 10
communications device, the presence of Bluetooth, infrared
or Internet capabilities on the mobile communications
device, and weaknesses in the mobile communications
device's interaction with, flaws in, or misconfiguration of
text messaging, voice mail, and telephony. 15

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