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(54) **SYSTEM FOR USING A VIRTUAL TAPE ENCRYPTION FORMAT**

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(76) **Inventor: John E. G. Matze, Poway, CA (US)**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

Correspondence Address:
NYDEGGER & ASSOCIATES
348 OLIVE STREET
SAN DIEGO, CA 92103

A system and method for storing electronic data in accordance with the present invention, requires receipt of the data to be stored from a back-up server. The data is then compressed, encrypted and formatted by the system to create a virtual file. An encryption key and "meta-data", which includes information about the physical attributes of electronic data in the virtual file, are also created by the system. The virtual file, with meta-data, can then be held at a storage device without specifically formatting the virtual file for the device. The encryption key is held separately for subsequent use in file reconstruction.

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