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Abstract of the Disclosure

A digital communications system with fast facility protection is disclosed. The system includes at least one digital cross-connect (2) which is in bidirectional communication with east and west routes (EAST, WEST) of the network via east and west transmit ports (E_o , W_o) and east and west receive ports (E_r , W_r). The cross-connect (2) broadcasts a facility over both the east and west routes, and receives the return facility over one of the routes. The cross-connect (2) monitors the error status of the received facility (E_r) for hard error conditions and excessive error rates, by way of a distributed processor (16) in communication with the port (E_r). In the event of an error, the cross-connect blind switches the facility to the inactive port (W_r) by way of a receive-end switch, according to a first embodiment. According to another embodiment, a head-end switch is performed, thus allowing for improved flexibility for port assignment in the cross-connect (2).

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