

ABSTRACT

A communication system capable of reliably recovering its communication functions on its own when a fault occurs, and which can be used to construct a highly flexible network. This communication system is configured so that a plurality of node devices (12) supporting data generating sources are connected via communication paths (13) that use ATM technology to a plurality of center devices (11), just as if it possessed distributed ATM switch functions. When the communication paths (13) between two (2) node devices (12-2 and 12-3) are cut, the center device (11-2) detects the fault point, and autonomously recovers communication functions by transferring the node device (12-2) originally under its control to the control of the center device (11-1). When this happens, the center device 11-2) cannot communicate via the communication paths (13) due to the fault, and must use a local communication means such as a wide area network (16) to communicate with the center device (11-1).