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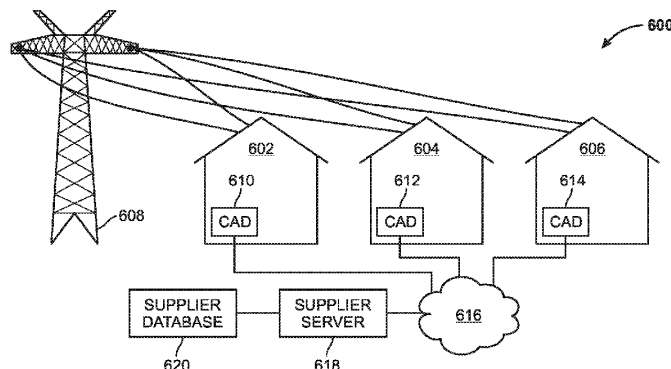


FIG. 6

(57) Abstract: A Consumer Access Device (CAD) (610) is arranged to obtain utility (608) consumption data from, for example, a smart meter (not shown). The CAD (610) is also programmed to link to further CADs (612), (614) located at other premises and the linking process may be managed by a utility supplier server (618). Once linked, the CADs may communicate via the server or via a peer-to-peer arrangement. Applications executed on the CADs allow consumers to interact with other households over their energy usage - for example to compete over reducing such usage. In a preferred embodiment, the CAD may be programmed to download applications from an online store.

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