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(54) **Title:** SYSTEM AND METHODS FOR CONTROLLING NETWORK TRAFFIC THROUGH VIRTUAL SWITCHES

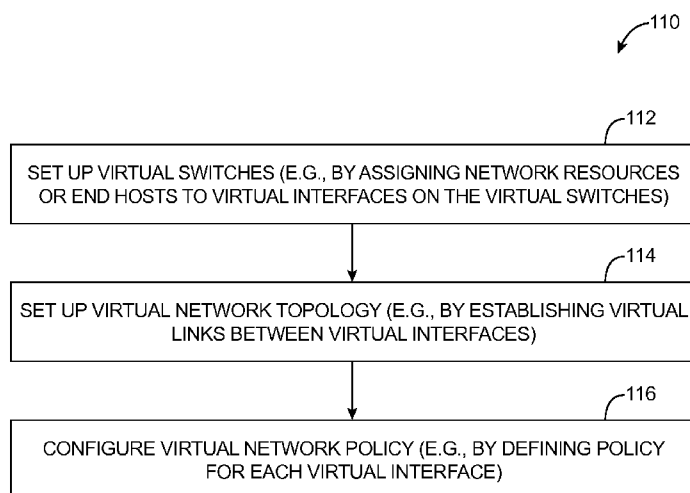


FIG. 11

(57) **Abstract:** A network may include network switches with network switch ports that may be coupled to end hosts. The network switches may be controlled by a controller such as a controller server. Virtual switches may be formed using the controller from groups of the network switch ports and the end hosts. Each virtual switch may include virtual interfaces associated with end hosts or network switches. Virtual links may be formed that define network connections between the virtual interfaces and end hosts or between two virtual interfaces. Virtual network policies such as selective packet forwarding, packet dropping, packet redirection, packet modification, or packet logging may be implemented at selected virtual interfaces to control traffic through the communications network. The controller may translate the virtual network policies into network switch forwarding paths that satisfy the virtual network policies.