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(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): BRITISH TELECOMMUNICATIONS PUBLIC LIMITED COMPANY [GB/GB]; 81 Newgate Street, London EC1A 7AJ (GB).

(72) Inventor; and

(75) Inventor/Applicant (for US only): COTTER, David [GB/GB]; 23 Moorfield Road, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 4JN (GB).

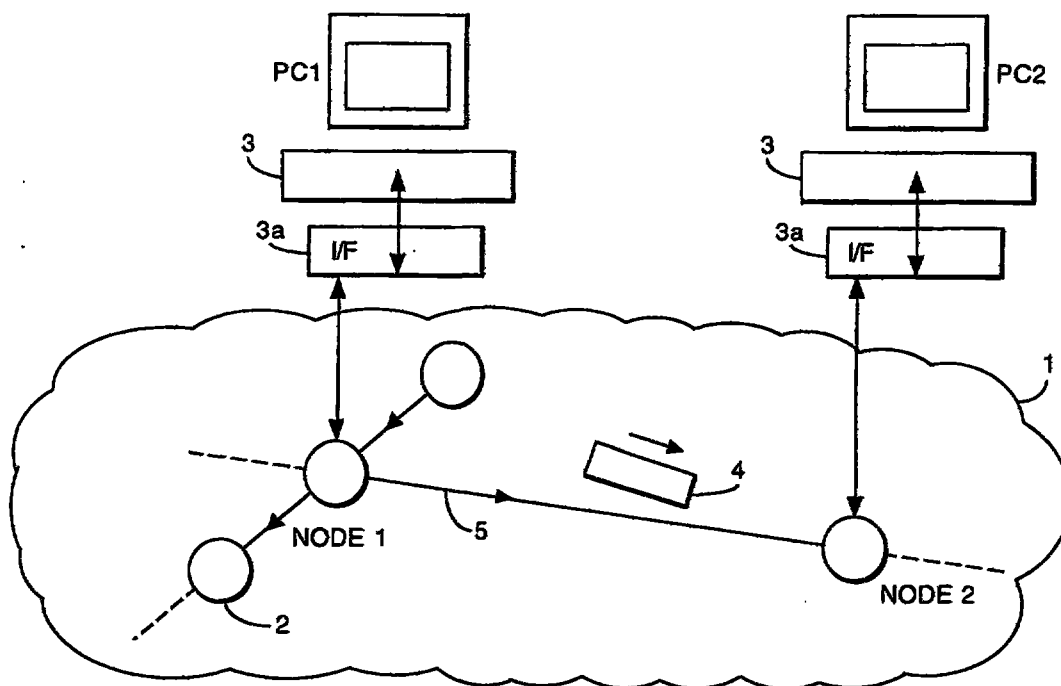
(74) Agent: WELLS, David; BT Group Legal Services, Intellectual Property Dept., Holborn Centre, 8th floor, 120 Holborn, London EC1N 2TE (GB).

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(54) Title: COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK



(57) Abstract

In a communications network, which may be a broadband optical network, a packet is transmitted from a source node to a destination node on a looped signal path. A return signal, which may function as an acknowledgement of the original signal, is transmitted back to the source node from the destination node in the time slot which was occupied by the original packet.