

(19) World Intellectual Property
Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
7 July 2005 (07.07.2005)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 2005/062536 A3

(51) International Patent Classification⁷: **H04L 12/28**,
12/56

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(21) International Application Number:
PCT/IB2004/004109

(22) International Filing Date:
14 December 2004 (14.12.2004)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
60/531,309 19 December 2003 (19.12.2003) US

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(81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every
kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM,
AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN,
CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI,
GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE,
KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD,
MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NA, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG,
PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SY, TJ, TM,
TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, YU, ZA, ZM,
ZW.

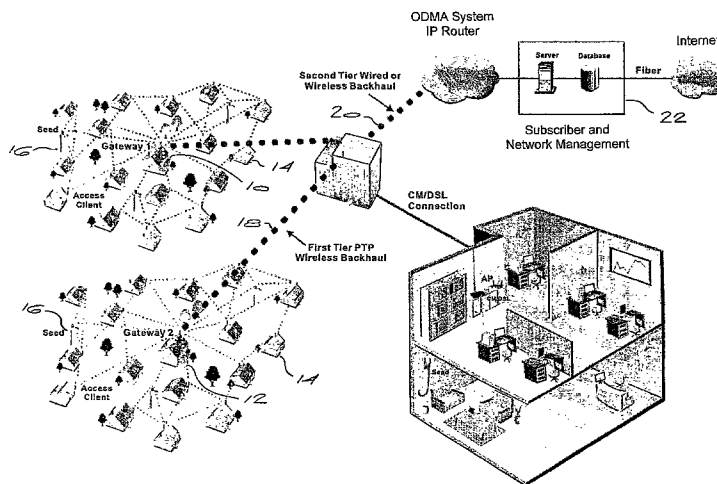
(84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every
kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH,
GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, NA, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM,
ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM),
European (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI,
FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, MC, NL, PL, PT, RO,
SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN,
GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:

— with international search report

[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: DATA TRANSPORT PROTOCOL FOR A MULTI-STATION NETWORK



(57) Abstract: The invention relates to a method of operating a communication network, the network comprising a plurality of stations which are able to transmit data to and receive data from one another so that a message comprising a plurality of data packets is sent from an originating station to a destination station via at least one opportunistically selected intermediate station. The method makes use of probe signals transmitted from each station on a selected probing channel to which other stations respond to indicate their availability as destination or intermediate stations. A Request to Send message is sent, with a Clear to Send message returned by an available station. The station with data to send opportunistically selects an available station and the selected station uses a Packet Acknowledge message to confirm successful reception of the transmitted data packet. An End-to-End Acknowledge message is sent by the originating station, directly or indirectly, to confirm receipt of said data packets.

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— *before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of receipt of amendments*

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

(88) Date of publication of the international search report:

11 August 2005