

Method for Allocating and Managing Unique Identification Numeral in a Network Environment

Field of the Invention

This invention is applicable to network session application, which requires session ID allocation, server ID allocation, client ID allocation, and transaction ID allocation; communication channel ID allocation and many other applications that require unique whole number for identification. This invention allows the distributed and central control and management of numeric ID on the network environment. The invention enhances scalability and efficiency of flag storage, search and assignment and reduces the probability of ID collision

Background

Unique whole number identification numbers are required in many areas for identification. They can be used as session ID and transaction ID in network session controls and communication channel ID in communication controls.

A very simple way of generating the identification numbers is by using a counter only. In this implementation, the counter is incremented and assigned as the identification number whenever an identification number is requested. There is no management of the identification numbers. This implementation does not support reusability of the identification number which can easily run out and is vulnerable to conflicts in identification number assignment if the counter value were to be reused.

Another existing method of identification number generation is by using a counter and a list of identification numbers. The counter is used to generate the identification number and the list contains the identification numbers in use. Whenever there is a request for the identification number, the counter is incremented and its value is checked against the list of allocated identification numbers. If the counter value is found in the list, the counter is

incremented again and its new value is checked. These steps are repeated until the new counter value is not found in the list so that this value can be assigned and then added to the list. This implementation provides reusability of the identification numbers but it incurs a tremendous amount of time in searching as well as a large storage memory especially when many identification numbers are being allocated. To enhance search in this method, background sorting of the identification numbers in the list is used. However, this enhancement merely transfers the processing from foreground to background, which does not actually lighten the processing load of the processor.

A third known method is by using a random number generator. This method has been employed in the in many communication protocol, for instance, in IETF's RTCP (real-time transport control protocol), the SSRC field of the RTCP communication primitives are generated using the MD5 routines published in RFC 1321[1]. This method also does not ensure that the identification number assigned is unique and there is a possibility of conflicts.

Summary

In accordance with one aspect of the invention, there is provided a method of allocating and managing whole number identification (ID) numbers, the method including the steps of maintaining an array table of flags to indicate whether the ID numbers are in use; assigning the smallest available the ID numbers as the highest priority to be allocated; monitoring the number of the ID numbers being released; and reusing the released ID numbers.

In accordance with another aspect of the invention, there is provided an apparatus for managing and controlling the range of identification (ID) numbers in a distributed environment, the apparatus including an array table session handler to act as an interface for the communication between network nodes in the distributed environment and also to provide a communicative service for allocation and de-allocation of the numerical range for ID numbers; an array table manager to manage and control a set of array table for

various protocol layers required at a network node; and a protocol stack service manager that maintains the interface and handle request between the protocol stack layers and the array table.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Figure 1 is a mapping of identification numbers and the array table of bits. This figure depicts how the identification numbers are associated to the array table of bits. It assumes that the current size of each byte in the table is 8 bits. In fact, it can be used with any byte size greater than zero and the greater the byte size, the greater the memory saving.

Figure 2 is an example of a scalable array table with some identification numbers being released. This figure depicts the scalable array table with five released identification numbers and the biggest three identification numbers not allocated. '0' indicates released or unassigned identification number whereas '1' indicates that the identification number is assigned.

Figure 3 is a flow chart for the case when an identification number is being requested.

Figure 4 shows the creation of a new byte in the array table when an identification number is requested. Figure 4a depicts the situation before the identification number is allocated whereas Figure 4b depicts the updated array table after the identification number has been assigned.

Figure 5 is a flow chart for the case when an identification number is to be released.

Figure 6 shows the deletion of the last byte in the array table when an identification number is released. Figure 6a depicts the situation before the identification number is released whereas Figure 6b depicts the situation when the corresponding bit is unset and Figure 6c depicts the final updated array table after the identification number has been released.

Figure 7 is a flow chart for the case when a desired identification number is requested.

Figure 8 shows the creation of new bytes in the array table when an identification number is desired. Figure 8a depicts the situation before the identification number of 35 is allocated whereas Figure 8b depicts the updated array table after the identification number of 35 has been assigned.

Figure 9 shows a schematic view of a distributed management of Array table network node in a network environment.

Figure 10 shows a list of ID reservation communicative primitives used for reservation of numeral range.

Figure 11 shows an Array Table with entires from the Base Address Table. Is is used to generate a numeral ID that by the Array Table of the communication node.

Figure 12 shows the ID reservation session engaged in allocation of elements of a specified Array Table. The diagram is the state transistion diagram for allocating Array Table elements.

Figure 13 shows the ID reservation session engaged in the dellocation of elements of a specified Array Table. The diagram is a state transistion diagram for dellocating Array Table elements.

Detailed Description

Most methods available either require large utilization of resources such as memories and computation for generating unique and reusable IDs or do not ensure that all IDs generated are unique. The present invention supports reusability of unique identification (ID) number,

thereby reducing the probability of non-uniqueness of the identification number being allocated and running out of identification number. Besides, it provides an efficient use of memory space for the flags, which are used to indicate whether the identification number is being allocated, by assigning a bit for a flag and maintaining a scalable array table that can expand or contract in size depending on the largest identification number being allocated. In addition, it also provides an easy and efficient method of checking and accessing the flag by means of a look-up table in which the flag that is associated to a particular identification number, can be determined from that identification number. This reduces the processing time necessary for sorting and searching.

Most communication protocol primitives requires a unique numeral ID to mark the singleness of the message or a session the communication primitives seek to obtain for one or more network nodes. Having similar ID in the communication primitives at the same time causes collision. In many communication protocol, for example IETF's RTCP (real-time transport control protocol), a unique ID is used for the SSRC field of the RTCP communication primitives. The SSRC field is used to identifies the synchronization source. Collisions occur if protocol primitives with similiar SSRC fields are used and detected by the sending network node. The occurrence of collision of SSRC fields increases as the number of messages in the nework increases. To resolve the collisions, each network node capable of generating messages with SSRC fields needs to have collision detection and resolution capabilities. As a result of collision, network resources such as bandwidth and the computation resources of the network node will be wasted. The present invention provides methods to avoid such collision even in a congested network environment for each network node. These methods for collision avoidance can be applied to both distributed and centrally control and management of unique numeral ID.

To resolve the problems outlined hereinabove, the invented method provides a scalable array table of bits to indicate the allocated identification numbers; a means to associate the identification number to a bit in the table to act as flag so as to enhance flag checking and access; a means to reuse the released identification number by using the scalable array table

of bits to ensure only unassigned identification number is allocated; a means of reserving identification in a distributed network node environment.

This invention involves mapping the identification numbers to an array table of bits based on the bit positions as shown in Figure 1. Each bit acts as a flag to indicate whether the identification number is in use. The mapping function provides a simple and efficient access of the flag by computing the RowIndex and ColumnIndex using the identification number and the size of each byte in the array table. The identification number is allocated with the smallest available value first to ensure that all the lower bytes in the array table are set before new byte is created. This is to facilitate the implementation of a scalable array table for efficient memory usage. The availability of an identification number is either indicated by the unset bit (0) in the array table as shown in Figure 2 or there is no bit being assigned to it yet. An identification number is released by unsetting the bit corresponding to it and it is ready for reuse. To provide identification number collision avoidance to marked a unique session for a set of network nodes, a set of communication protocol primitives is used. This communication protocol primitives are exchange between network nodes for the reservation of numeral ID range such that ID collisions protocol layers are minimized.

The invention will be best understood by reading the following detailed description of an illustrative embodiment with reference to the accompanying drawings. Figure 1 to Figure 8, in essence, also give an illustration of a central controlled identification number provided the management and control of array table as mentioned in Figure 1 is managed from a logical network node.

As shown in Figure 1, the identification number is generated from the RowIndex and ColumnIndex of the unset flag in the array table using the following relationship:

$$ID = RowIndex * ByteSize + ColumnIndex \quad (1)$$

where ID denotes the value of the specified identification number

ByteSize denotes the number of bits in each byte in the array table.

This invention supports the range of identification number from 0 to $(\text{ByteSize} * \text{NoOfRowAllocated} - 1)$. Note that NoOfRowAllocated denotes the number of rows that are allocated dynamically.

Figure 3 depicts the flow chart for the case when an identification number is being requested. This request will first lead to the check, marked by literal 3.1, for any released identification number available. This is done by means of a ReleasedID counter, which monitors the number of identification numbers being released. It is incremented whenever an identification number is released and decremented whenever a released identification number is being reallocated. A positive value of the ReleasedID counter will lead to literal 3.2 in which the array table will be searched byte by byte from the first byte of the array table, until the byte, which contains at least one unset bit (0) is first found. This byte will in turn be searched bit by bit from its first bit for the unset flag, which indicates the first unassigned identification number present. The first found unset flag, which corresponds to the smallest unallocated identification number, will be set to indicate that the identification number is assigned. The value of the identification number assigned is computed using the RowIndex and ColumnIndex of the location of the flag in the array table with the aid of Equation (1). On the other hand, if there is no released identification number available, the last byte in the array table will be checked for any unassigned identification number, marked by literal 3.3. If there are unassigned identification numbers available, the smallest value determined using Equation (1) will be assigned and its corresponding flag will be set, literal 3.4. The actions in literal 3.5 will be performed if there is no unset bit in the last byte of the array table as depicted in Figure 4a. Note that all the bits in the array table are set (1) showing that there is no released and unassigned identification numbers. This will lead to the creation of a new byte in the array table to serve as the flag for the to-be assigned identification number. The updated array table with the lowest significant bit set is shown in Figure 4b and the value of the newly assigned

identification number is determined using Equation (1).

The flow chart for the case when release of a specified identification number is requested is shown in Figure 5. As depicted in literal 5.1, the specified identification number is checked whether it is being assigned. The flag in the array table that indicates whether the specified identification number is assigned can be determined by the following relationships:

$$\text{RowIndex} = \text{ID} / \text{ByteSize} \quad (2)$$

$$\text{ColumnIndex} = \text{ID} \bmod \text{ByteSize} \quad (3)$$

where ID denotes the value of the specified identification number

/ denotes the integer division

ByteSize denotes the number of bits in each byte in the array table

mod denotes modulo

The flag is thus $\text{bit}[\text{RowIndex}, \text{ColumnIndex}]$. If this bit were not set or does not exist, the specified identification number not found error will be reported as marked in literal 5.2. If the specified identification number has been assigned, the $\text{bit}[\text{RowIndex}, \text{ColumnIndex}]$ will be unset (0), literal 5.3. Next, the last byte in the array table is checked whether it is zero, as in literal 5.4. A zero value of last byte will be deleted as depicted in literal 5.5 and pictorially shown in Figure 6. The new last byte is again checked and literal 5.4 and literal 5.5 are repeated until a non-zero last byte is encountered.

Figure 7 shows the case when a desired identification number is being requested. Literal 7.1 depicts that the current size of the array table is used to determine whether it can support the desired identification number. This can be performed by using Equation (2) to obtain the RowIndex and comparing it with the number of rows (bytes) created in the array table. Note that the value of n-1 for RowIndex indicates that there are n rows required since

the RowIndex begins with 0. Literal 7.2 handles the case when there are sufficient rows in the array table to support the desired identification number and the corresponding bit[RowIndex,ColumnIndex] is set. If the current array table could not support the desired identification number, new rows will be created in the array table with the corresponding bit[RowIndex,ColumnIndex] set, as marked in literal 7.3. This is further illustrated in Figure 8, which depicts the situation in which two more bytes are necessary to be added into the array table in order to support the desired identification number. However, limitation in the number of bytes to be added to the array table can be easily imposed in the implementation by exiting the flow once Literal 7.1 fails or the number of bytes required to be added exceed certain value.

The ID numeral management and allocation can also be created in a distributed manner which means that each network node manages its own set of array table individually in a network environment as illustrated in Figure 9. Figure 9 shows an environment where there are N number of network nodes connected to the network, as marked by literal 9.8, where each node manages its own array table such that a unique numeral can be generated within the maximum range as defined for the array table. The unique numeral generated using the Array Table of the network node are used by the communication primitives of the Protocol Stack if required, as marked by literal 9.2, supported at the network node. This unique number is generated to prevent the same numeral being generated by 2 or more individual network nodes. For allocation, initialization and deletion of any members of the Array Table, ID reservations communication primitives, as listed in table in Figure 10, issued to other network nodes connected to the network by the Session Protocol Handler, as marked by literal 9.7. Depending on the network types supported by the network node, the messages are exchanged by encapsulating it into the appropriate network primitives supported by the protocol stack available on the network node. The selection of the protocol layer to be used for transmitting and receiving the ID reservation messages is determined and managed by the Protocol Stack Service manager. Communication for reservation of ID is performed by passing the ID reservation message as a data to the service access point of the Protocol Stack, as marked by literal 9.2. The Protocol Stack, 9.2, based on the service required will encapsulate the data message using the appropriate

network layer. For each of the messages received and transmitted, the data parameters of the messages generated and received by the Session Protocol Handler are interpreted by the Array Table Session Handler.

The Array Table Session Handler decides if elements in the Array Table, as marked by literal 9.4, should be added or deleted. Each element in the Array Table represent one numerical space for the numeral ID to be generated. The decision for deletion or addition of Array Table elements is passed from the Array Session Handler to the Array Table Manager where the actual deletion or addition is being performed. The Array Table Manager also manages and updates the entries of the Base Address Table for each Array Tables within the network Node. Each Array Table are link to a Base Address table consisting of an array of numeral or it's representatives. Each of the numeral location in the Base Address table has three parameters, $\langle \text{START_ADDR}, \text{SIZE}, \text{ARRAY_TABLE_}\#\rangle$. The START_ADDR is used to give the offset of the Array Table to start generating the ID based on the specific location using the equation(4). The SIZE parameter gives the range of ID can be generated starting from the START_ADD. The ARRAY_TABLE_# specifies the Array Table managed by the Array Table Manager. Figure 11 show how each elements of the Array Table are link to the Base address table. To reduce the memory utilization only the elements that begins with START_ADDR, as marked by literal 11.2, are link to the one elements of the Base Table as marked by literal 11.3. The rest of the elements within the range as indicated by the patameter SIZE are represented by a continuous stream of Array Table elements. The last of the array element of Array table that are associated with the Base Address Table entry are determined by the parameter, SIZE, as marked by literal 11.4.

$$\text{ID} = \text{START_ADDR} + \text{RowIndex} * \text{ByteSize} + \text{ColumnIndex} \quad (4)$$

Each ID reservation session is created to handle an Array Table as marked by literal 9.4. One ID reservation session only handles deletion or addition of elements in one Array Table only. The life span of each session is controlled by the Array Table Session Handler.

Each session is created by requests initiated by the Array Table Manager, as marked by literal 9.3 where requests for items to be added to or deleted from the Array Table are made and maintained. For each Session initiated by the Array Table Manager, this session is managed by the Array Table Session Handler and it will control how the ID reservation communication primitive is send through the Session protocol handler. This allows the range of ID to be generated from the Array Table to be increased or decreased. The source for request to increase the elements in the Array table within the network node comes from either the Array Table Manager or the Procotol Stack Service Manager, as marked by literal 9.5. Protocol Stack Service Manager manages the ID generated from the Array Table and passed to the Protocol Stack. It also serves as an interface between the Array Table and the Protocol Stack. Each Array Table generates unique number for a single layer of protocol stack using the elements in the Array Table. Generated ID from the Array Table for each layer of the protocol stack is managed by the Protocol Stack Service Manager. If the new ID is required by the protocol stack, the Array Table Manager will either search for unused elements in the Array Table for each protocol stack layer to create a new ID or to request for more Array Table elements via Array Table Session Handler.

There are 2 stages where the request of Array Table Manager can allocate Array Table elements:-

- (1) Boot-up stage where the network node just joined the network. The request for elements in the Array Table originates from the Array Table manager.
- (2) Run-time stage when the Protocol Stack request for more ID because all elements of the Array Table are used.

Deletion of elements within the Array Table are initiated on 2 occasions :-

- (1) When an the network node's Array Table Session Handler detected that another node requires more elements in the Array Table. The unused area will be deleted from the Array Table of the protocol stack layer.

- (2) When there is contention detected by the protocol stack, the entire range of the Array table will be relocated to another base address.

Figure 12 illustrates the state machine in allocating elements for a single Array Table element. This state machine can be implemented in the Array Table Session Handler layer. When the state machine received a request in the form of **Alloc_Mem** signal, as marked by literal 12.2, for more Array Table elements to be reserved from the Protocol Stack Service Manager, 9.5, or the Array Table Manager, 9.3, the state machine transit to **REQ_ALLOC** state, as marked by literal 12.3. At this state, the Session Protocol Handler send out the message, **Broad_Alloc**, specifying in the parameters of the communication primitive the amount of elements required. After sending the **Broad_Alloc** message, the Array Table Session Handler waits for acknowledgements that may be received by listening to the service access point created in the protocol stack. At the **WAIT_ACK** state, as marked by literal 12.5, if the first **Free_DeAlloc**, as marked by literal 12.7 is received, the state machine will proceed to the **ALLOC_ARR** state, as marked by literal 12.8, that allows allocation of the specified Array Table to be conducted by the Array Table Manager. The Array Table elements allocation is performed based on the size of elements released indicated in the parameters of the **Free_DeAlloc** message received. If a specific time has elapse while in the **WAIT_ACK** state, which may indicates the network node using the same Array Table element is no longer in the network or no longer requires it, the state machine will transit to the **ALLOC_ARR** state. While still in the **WAIT_ACK** state, more than one **Reject_Alloc** messages can be received and none **Free_DeAlloc** message as marked by literal 12.6. Under this circumstance, the state machine transit back to **REQ_ALLOC** state to allocate another range of memory required using different parameter for the **Broad_Alloc** message. After successful allocation of Array Table elements, the state machine goes into the **IDLE** state as indicated by literal 12.1 from **ALLOC_ARR** state.

Figure 13 illustrates the delocation of the Array Table element at run time and boot time. Upon detection of a **Broad_Alloc**, as marked by literal 13.2, the state machine transit to **CONT_DET** stage, as marked by literal 13.3. In the **CONT_DET** state, the parameters of

the **Broad_Alloc**, are checked if the Array Table elements requested contend with current used Array Elements. If Array Table Elements request contention with all the elements used, the **Reject_Alloc** message is sent back to the sender and the state machine transit back to the **IDLE** state, as marked by literal 13.1. If some or all of the requested Array Table elements are unused, it marked no contention is detected and gives the **No_Content** signal, as marked by literal 13.5. The state machine transit to **DE_ALLOC** state, as marked by literal 13.5. In the **DE_ALLOC** state, the Array Table Manager frees the unused Array Table elements. The size of freed Array Table elements are reflected in the parameters of the **Free_DeAlloc** message, as marked by literal 13.7, send back to the Network node that request for the release of the Array Table elements. After successful deallocation of the message, the state machine transit back to **IDLE** state from **DE_ALLOC** state.

Reference

1. Rivest, R., "The MD5 Message-Digest Algorithm", RFC 1321, MIT Laboratory for Computer Science and RSA Data Security, Inc., April 1992.

Appendices

This section provides an evaluation of the performance based on prior art compared to the invention. The identification number generating method, which employs a counter and a list that contains the identification numbers in use, will be used as the prior art for comparison. The reason is because this method is free from conflict in identification number generation whereas the other two methods mentioned in Section 3.2 are susceptible to conflicts in identification number generation, thus they are not suitable to act as a basis for comparison.

Appendix A: Memory performance based on prior art compared to the invention

In the prior art, the list, that contains the identification numbers in use, is made up of a one-dimensional array of identification numbers. Each identification number can be a byte, integer or unsigned long which has four bytes. This constitutes a relative large amount of memory as compared to the invention, which only requires a bit to indicate whether the identification number is being allocated. The ratio of memory used for indicating whether the identification number is allocated in invention to prior art is 1:8 or more, depending on the number of bits required to represent each identification number.

Appendix B: Search performance based on prior art compared to the invention

In the prior art, the search for whether the identification number is in use is performed by comparing the counter value and each element in the list of allocated identification numbers, one at a time. However, in the invention, the array table is searched first byte level until the byte that contains at least one unset bit is first encountered. For instance, if the ByteSize is eight, each byte in the array table is compared with 0xff. A value not equal to 0xff indicates that the byte in the array table contains at least one unset bit. Once this byte is found, it will be searched bit by bit from its non-significant bit for the first unset bit present. The invention is thus more efficient as the search is done eight at a time in the case where the ByteSize is eight.

Claims

1. A method of allocating and managing whole number identification (ID) numbers, said method including the steps of:

maintaining an array table of flags to indicate whether said ID numbers are in use;

assigning the smallest available said ID number as the highest priority to be allocated;

monitoring the number of said ID numbers being released; and

reusing said released ID numbers.
2. The method as in claim 1, further including the step of reducing memory storage for said flags by employing bits in each byte of said array table as flags for indicating whether said ID numbers are being used.
3. The method as in claim 2, further including the step of associating one of said ID numbers to one of said bits in said array table according to the position of said bit in said array table.
4. The method as in claim 3, further including the step of maintaining a scalable array table, wherein said step includes:

monitoring the number of bytes being created in said array table;

creating a new byte to indicate that a newly allocated ID number is in use if all the existing bytes in said scalable array table are all set; and

releasing the last byte in said scalable array table if all the bits in said last byte are all unset.

5. The method as in claim 4, further including the step of accessing said flags in said array table for each of said ID numbers by using row and column indices that can be computed from each of said ID numbers and the size of a byte in said array table.
6. The method as in claim 5, further including the step of supporting reusability of said ID numbers by using said array table of flags to ensure that unique ID numbers are being allocated.
7. The method as in claim 6, further including the step of controlling the range of ID numbers being generated.
8. An apparatus for managing and controlling the range of identification (ID) numbers in a distributed network environment, said apparatus including:

an array table session handler for providing an interface for the communication between network nodes in said distributed network environment and a communicative service for allocation and de-allocation of the numerical range for said ID numbers;

an array table manager to manage and control a set of array tables for various protocol stack layers required at a network node; and

a protocol stack service manager that maintains said interface and handle request between said protocol stack layers and said array tables.
9. The apparatus as in Claim 8, further including a session protocol handler device wherein said device initiates the exchange of communication primitives that are used for initialization and management of the numerical range of said array tables by communicating with other network nodes using a set of communication primitives.
10. The apparatus as in claim 9, wherein said set of communication primitives handled by said apparatus is used for allocating and de-allocating a specific numerical range and

to set up an ID reservation session by encapsulating said set of communication primitives using protocol primitives supported by said host network node.

11. The apparatus as in Claim 8, further including a contention detection and resolution means for resolving contention in the numerical range of a similar indexed array table of at least two separate network nodes by exchanging communication primitives.
12. The apparatus as in Claim 11, further including an array table management means using a base array table to manage elements of said array table within said distributed network environment.
13. The apparatus as in claim 12, further including means for managing the exchange of communication primitives for reservation of the numerical range for said ID numbers and management of said array table elements by using allocation and de-allocation state machines.
14. The apparatus as in claim 13, further including means for detecting unused said ID numbers and reusing the numerical range for said ID numbers using the parameters of said communication primitives used in said ID reservation sessions.
15. The apparatus as in claim 14, wherein the contention detection and resolution means further includes:

means for checking all received broadcast ID reservation session communication primitives for duplications in array table element reservations; and

means for sending an ID reservation session communication primitive to reject allocation of said array table elements based on the current utilization of said array table elements if contentions are detected
16. An apparatus for allocating and managing whole number identification (ID) numbers, said apparatus including:

means for maintaining an array table of flags to indicate whether said ID numbers are in use;

means for assigning the smallest available said ID number as the highest priority to be allocated;

means for monitoring the number of said ID numbers being released; and

means for reusing said released ID numbers.

17. The apparatus as in claim 16, further including means for reducing memory storage for said flags by employing bits in each byte of said array table as flags for indicating whether said ID numbers are being used.

18. The apparatus as in claim 17, further including means for associating one of said ID numbers to one of said bits in said array table according to the position of said bit in said array table.

19. The apparatus as in claim 18, further including means for maintaining a scalable array table, wherein said means further includes:

means for monitoring the number of bytes being created in said array table;

means for creating a new byte to indicate that a newly allocated ID number is in use if all the existing bytes in said scalable array table are all set; and

means releasing the last byte in said scalable array table if all the bits in said last byte are all unset.

20. The apparatus as in claim 19, further including means for accessing said flags in said array table for each of said ID numbers by using row and column indices that can be computed from each of said ID numbers and the size of a byte in said array table.
21. The apparatus as in claim 20, further including means for supporting reusability of said ID numbers by using said array table of flags to ensure that unique ID numbers are being allocated.
22. The apparatus as in claim 21, further including means for controlling the range of ID numbers being generated.
23. A method for managing and controlling the range of identification (ID) numbers in a distributed network environment, said method including the steps of:

providing an interface for the communication between network nodes in said distributed network environment and a communicative service for allocation and de-allocation of the numerical range for ID numbers;

managing and controlling a set of array tables for various protocol stack layers required at a network node; and

maintaining said interface and handle request between said protocol stack layers and said array tables.
24. The method as in claim 23, further including the step of initiating the exchange of communication primitives that are used for initialization and management of the numerical range of said array tables by communicating with other network nodes using a set of communication primitives.
25. The method as in claim 24, wherein said communicating step further includes allocating and de-allocating a specific numerical range and to set up an ID reservation session by encapsulating said set of communication primitives using protocol primitives supported by said host network node.

26. The method as in claim 23, further including the step of detecting and resolving contention in the numerical range of a similar indexed array table of at least two separate network nodes by exchanging communication primitives.
27. The method as in claim 26, further including the step of using a base array table to manage elements of said array table within said distributed network environment.
28. The method as in claim 27, further including the step of managing the exchange of communication primitives for reservation of the numerical range for said ID numbers and management of said array table elements by using allocation and de-allocation state machines.
29. The method as in claim 28, further including the set of detecting unused said ID numbers and reusing the numerical range for said ID numbers using the parameters of said communication primitives used in said ID reservation sessions.
30. The method as in claim 29, wherein the detecting and resolving step further includes:

checking all received broadcast ID reservation session communication primitives for duplications in array table element reservations; and

sending an ID reservation session communication primitive to reject allocation of said array table elements based on the current utilization of said array table elements if contentions are detected.