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(54) Title: HYBRID ACCESS PROTOCOL FOR NETWORK NODES

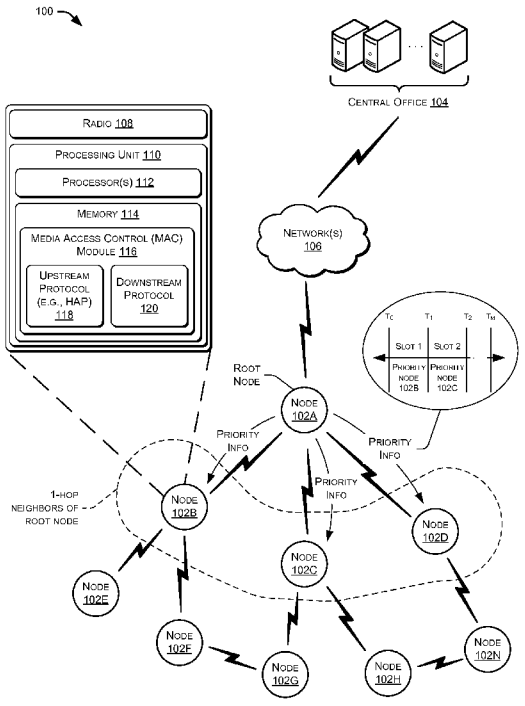


FIG. 1

(57) Abstract: A hybrid access protocol (HAP) controls access of nodes of a network to a communication medium, such as a radio frequency communication channel. In one example, a one-hop neighbor of a root node receives priority information from the root node, which includes a list of communication time slots, and an indication of one or more of the communication time slots during which the one -hop neighbor has communication priority relative to other one -hop neighbors of the root node. If the one-hop neighbor has information to transmit to the root node, it waits a predetermined period of time before transmitting the information to the root node. While waiting, the one-hop neighbor listens for transmissions by other nodes. In response to expiration of the predetermined period of time without overhearing transmissions by other nodes, the one-hop neighbor transmits its data to the root node.

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