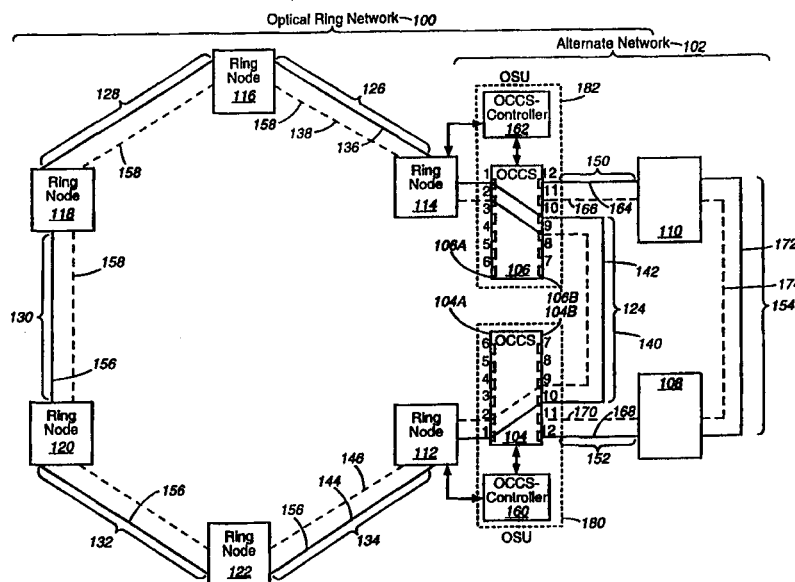




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(54) Title: SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR INCREASING THE ROBUSTNESS OF AN OPTICAL RING NETWORK



(57) Abstract

A system and method for increasing the robustness of an optical ring network having a plurality of ring nodes. Optical data traffic is transmitted between a plurality of ring nodes (112, 114, 116, 118, 120, 122) via optical links (154, 158). A first optical cross connect switch (104) and a second optical cross connect switch (106) are coupled to an alternate network (150, 152, 154). The first optical cross connect switch is coupled to a first ring node. When a failure is detected in the first optical link, then the first optical cross connect switch couples the first ring node to an alternate path (152) of the alternate network, and the second optical cross connects switch couples the second ring node to the alternate path such that optical data traffic is transmitted between the first ring node and the second ring node via the alternate path.

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