FLEXIBLE SERVICE NETWORK FOR COMPUTER SYSTEMS

ABSTRACT

A service network has several computer systems connected together. A computer system can either be a "Service Requestor" (SR) (110), a "Service Provider" (SP) (150), or a hybrid of the two, a "Service Provider/Requestor" (SP/R) (140). Once the service network is established, a SR can automatically detect problems with it's components (hardware, software, or microcode), build a service request describing the problem, select a SP/R responsible for fixing the problem, and send the service request to that SP/R. The SP/R responsible for fixing the problem receives the service request, verifies that the SR is entitled to receive service, and checks a solution log to see if it has the solution for the problem. If so, solution information describing the fix for the problem, accompanied by one or more software components, microcode components, hardware parts order, and/or textual instructions, is sent down to the SR. If the responsible SP/R cannot fix the problem, it checks to see if it receives support for this problem from any other SPs or SP/Rs to which it is connected. If so, it sends the service request on to this SP or SP/R, which may in turn send the service request on to other SPs or SP/Rs until a fix is found. The SP or SP/R can also perform remote problem detection and determination on a SR.

FIGURE : 1A