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(54) Title: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR ENABLING FLOW CONTROL OVER MULTIPLE NETWORKS HAVING DISPARATE FLOW CONTROL CAPABILITY

(57) Abstract

Method and apparatus for extending lower-layer flow control end-to-end, transparent to network host systems, between network hosts attached to legacy networks without requiring any changes to the host networks or hosts themselves. In a first embodiment, a source host and a destination host, each residing on a respective LAN, communicate via an intermediate network supporting the lower-layer flow control. A higher-layer, end-to-end flow control protocol exists between the hosts. The lower-layer flow control protocol accounts for loss of bandwidth between each hop within the intermediate network. To extend the lower-layer flow control protocol to the hosts, an intelligent edge device of the intermediate network adjusts observed higher-layer flow control parameters based upon the state of the lower-layer flow control. No modifications to the legacy network or hosts is required, and the extension of low control is transparent to the legacy networks.