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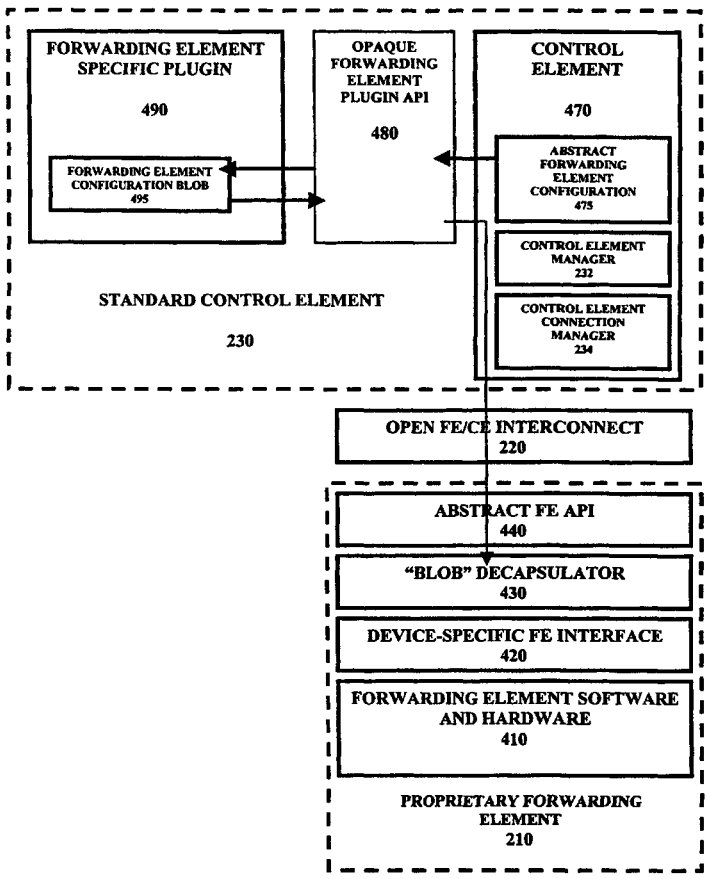
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(54) Title: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR PROPRIETARY DATA FORWARDING IN AN OPEN ARCHITECTURE FOR NETWORK DEVICES



(57) Abstract: A computer system for allowing proprietary forwarding elements to interoperate with standard control elements in an open network architecture. The computer system comprises a forwarding element that is adapted to perform data forwarding functions in a computer network. A control element is adapted to perform network signaling and control functions in the computer network. The control element is adapted to generate a standardized data set for configuring the forwarding element. An interconnecting element operatively connects the forwarding element to the control element. A forwarding element plugin is integrated with the control element for receiving the standardized data set from the control element, translating the standardized data set into a specialized data set, and transmitting the specialized data set to the forwarding element to configure the forwarding element. The forwarding element utilizes the specialized data set to configure the forwarding element for performing data forwarding in the computer network.

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