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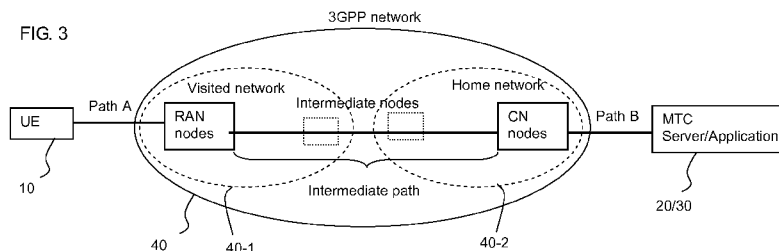
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SSON (PUBL) [SE/SE]; SE-164 83 Stockholm (SE).(72) Inventors: LEHTOVIRTA, Vesa; Veininmäki 10B, FI-
02620 Espoo (FI). HEDMAN, Peter; Växjövägen 7E, SE-
252 51 Helsingborg (SE). WIFVESSON, Monica;
Kruthornsgränden 3, SE-226 52 Lund (SE).(74) Agent: LIND, Robert; c/o Marks & Clerk LLP, Fletcher
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(54) Title: SECURING DATA COMMUNICATIONS IN A COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK



(57) **Abstract:** A method is described of securing data communications between a first node (10) attached to a first network (40-1) and a second node (20/30) attached to a second network (40-2). The method comprises at the second node (20/30): receiving (S1) first information (I1) on whether the first network (40-1) has a secure network layer path to the first node (10) or is known to use a secure network layer path to attached nodes; receiving (S2) second information (I2) on whether the second node (20/30) has a secure network layer path to the second network (40-2) or is known to use a secure network layer path to the second network (40-2); and receiving (S3) third information (I3) on whether the first network (40-1) has a secure internal network layer path and, where the first and second networks (40-1, 40-2) are different, on whether the first network (40-1) has a secure network layer path to the second network (40-2) or is known to use a secure network layer path to the second network (40-2). It is determined (S5) from the first, second and third information (I1, I2, I3) whether the entire path between the first node (10) and the second node (20/30) is secured at the network layer level, and based on that determination it is decided whether to establish (S6t, S7r) application layer security for data communications between the first node (10) and the second node (20/30), or whether to proceed without application layer security (S8t, S8r).