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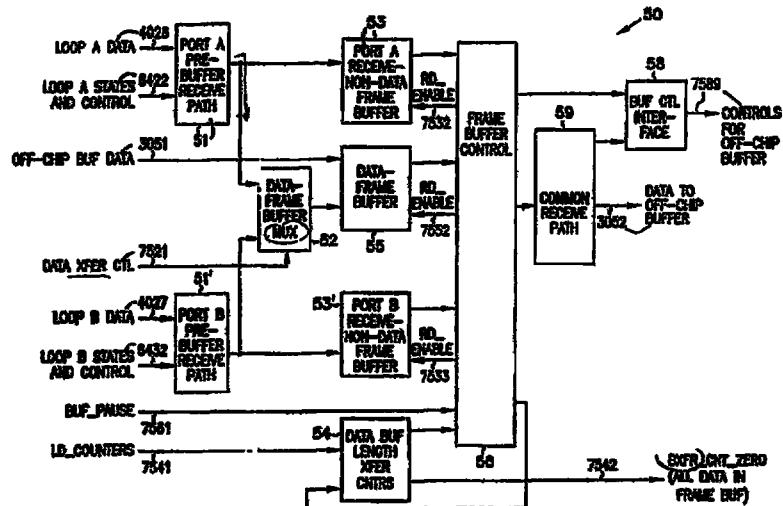


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(54) Title: METHOD AND DEDICATED FRAME BUFFERS FOR RECEIVING FRAMES



(57) Abstract

Dedicated receive buffers for receiving non-data frames are provided for each port of a two-port node in a fibre-channel arbitrated-loop serial communications channel design. The improved communications channel system and method includes a channel node having dual ports each supporting a communications channel, both ports interfaced from a single interface chip, and a dedicated on-chip frame buffer located on the chip for receiving frames. The dedicated on-chip frame buffer includes two inbound non-data buffers (53, 53'), one coupled to each of two ports, wherein inbound non-data frames from each port are received into the respective inbound non-data buffer. The system further includes an off-chip buffer, wherein received non-data frames are received into one of the non-data-frame buffers and transferred from the non-data-frame buffer to the off-chip buffer. A data-frame buffer (55) is operatively coupled to both ports to receive data frames from the ports, and move the data frames to the off-chip buffer. In addition, a method for receiving frames using the dedicated buffer is described.