WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for routing signals in a hybrid network, the method comprising:

receiving return-link data at a user terminal routing system from consumer premises equipment, the return-link data indicating an associated destination node for the return-link data,

the user terminal routing system communicatively coupled with a plurality of networks having different network characteristics and comprising a routing table populated according to forward-link communications received by the user terminal routing system from a at least one of the plurality of networks, such that the routing table has, stored thereon, a plurality of mappings, each between a respective one of a plurality of routing table entries and one of the plurality of networks, each routing table entry identifying at least a forward-link content source (FLCS) identifier;

identifying one of the mappings in the routing table as having the routing table entry that identifies the FLCS identifier that corresponds to the destination node associated with the return-link data; and

routing the return-link data over one of the plurality of networks according to the identified one of the mappings for the FLCS identifier corresponding to the return-link data.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving forward-link data at the user terminal via a first of the plurality of networks prior to receiving the return-link data, the forward-link data indicating a source node for the forward-link data; and

updating the routing table with an updated mapping according to the received forward-link data,

wherein the identifying comprises determining that the destination node for the return-link data corresponds to the source node for the forward-link data, such that the identified one of the mappings is the updated mapping, and

the routing comprises routing the return-link data over the first network according to the updated mapping.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein:

the updating comprises mapping the first network to a routing table entry for the source node; and

the routing comprises routing the return-link data over the first network according to the updated mapping.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving a control message at the user terminal via one of the plurality of networks, the control message indicating at least one routing table update; and

updating the routing table according to the at least one routing table update.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein each routing table entry comprises a five-tuple that identifies a source Internet protocol (IP) address, a source port, a destination IP address, a destination port, and a data communication protocol.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein:

the return-link data comprises a return-link routing tuple that indicates the associated destination node for the return-link data.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the return-link routing tuple further indicates a destination Internet protocol (IP) address, and a destination port.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein:

one of the plurality of networks is a satellite network; and

the routing table is populated according to forward-link communications received by the user terminal routing system from a provider-side core node of the satellite network.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the core node is communicatively coupled with multiple of the plurality of networks.

10. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving a plurality of forward-link data packets at the user terminal via at least one of the plurality of networks, each forward-link data packet indicating a respective source node for the forward-link packet;

detecting receipt of at least a threshold number of the forward-link data packets that all have a same respective source node and are all received over a first network of the plurality of networks; and

updating the routing table with an updated mapping in response to the detecting, the updating comprising mapping the first network to a routing table entry corresponding to the same respective source node.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein:

routing the return-link data according to the identified one of the mappings comprises routing according to a routing rule-base that defines a set of routing criteria and an alternate network of the plurality of networks, such that, in accordance with whether the set of routing criteria is met, the routing of the return-link data is either over the one of the plurality of networks mapped in the routing table to the destination node of the return-link data or over the alternate network.

12. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

determining, by the user terminal routing system, whether the identified one of the mappings is presently valid according to a validity window associated with the identified one of the mappings; and

routing the return-link data according to the identified one of the mappings only when the identified one of the mappings is presently valid.

13. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving forward-link data at the user terminal via one of the plurality of networks, the forward-link data indicating a source node for the forward-link data;

identifying a corresponding one of the mappings of the routing table as corresponding to the indicated source node;

determining, by the user terminal routing system, whether the corresponding mapping is presently enforced according to a validity window associated with the identified one of the mappings; and

updating the corresponding mapping according to the received forward-link data only when the corresponding mapping is not presently enforced.

14. A user terminal routing system comprising:

a local network interface operable to couple with a local user network;

a hybrid network interface comprising a plurality of network interfaces, each operable to couple with a respective one of a plurality of communications networks of a hybrid network;

a routing table having stored thereon a plurality of mappings populated according to forward-link communications received via at least one of the plurality of networks, each mapping associating a respective one of a plurality of routing table entries with one of the plurality of communications networks, each routing table entry identifying at least a forward-link content source (FLCS) identifier; and

a routing state machine coupled between the local network interface and the hybrid network interface, the routing state machine comprising a routing state output computed according to the routing table in response to receiving return-link data via the local network interface, such that:

the received return-link data indicates a destination node corresponding to the FLCS identifier of an identified one of the mappings, and

the routing state output directs routing of the received return-link data over a selected one of the plurality of communications networks via the hybrid network interface in accordance with the identified one of the mappings for the FLCS identifier corresponding to the return-link data.

15. The user terminal routing system of claim 14, further comprising: a routing table updater coupled between the hybrid network interface and the routing table, and having an update output generated according to the forward-link communications received via at least one of the plurality of networks, at least some of the mappings updated in response to the update output.

16. The user terminal routing system of claim 15, wherein:

the update output is generable in response to receiving forward-link data flows via the hybrid network interface, each forward-link data flow indicating a respective source node and received via a respective one of the communications networks, such that each of the at least some of the mappings is updated according to a respective one of the received forward-link data flows to map the respective source node with the respective one of the communications networks.

17. The user terminal routing system of claim 15, wherein:

the update output is generable in response to receiving control messages via one of the plurality of networks, the control messages indicating respective routing table updates, such that each of at least some of the mappings is updated according a respective routing table update.

18. The user terminal routing system of claim 14, wherein each FLCS identifier comprises an Internet protocol address.

19. The user terminal routing system of claim 14, wherein:

the state machine comprises a stored routing rule-base that defines a set of routing criteria and an alternate network of the plurality of networks, such that, in accordance with whether the set of routing criteria is met, the routing state output direct routing of the return-link data either over the one of the plurality of networks mapped in the routing table to the destination node of the return-link data or over the alternate network.

20. The user terminal routing system of claim 19, wherein:

the stored rule-base defines respective validity windows for at least some of the mappings; and

the routing state output directs routing of the return-link data further according to the respective validity windows.

21. The user terminal routing system of claim 14, wherein the routing table comprises a plurality of preloaded default mappings.

22. The user terminal routing system of claim 14, wherein the local user network comprises at least one customer premises equipment (CPE) device.

23. A hybrid communications network comprising:

a plurality of communications networks having different network characteristics;

a plurality of user terminal routing systems, each coupled between the plurality of communications networks and a respective local user network, each comprising a routing table having stored thereon a plurality of mappings populated according to forward-link communications received via at least one of the plurality of networks, each mapping associating a forward-link content source identifier (FLCS) of a respective one of the forward-link communications received and a respective one of the plurality of communications networks via which the respective one of the forward-link communications was received, each routing table entry identifying at least a forward-link content source (FLCS) identifier,

wherein each user terminal routing system operates to receive return-link data from its respective local user network, the received return-link data indicating a destination node corresponding to the FLCS identifier of an identified one of the mappings, and to route the received return-link data over a selected one of the plurality of communications networks via the hybrid network interface in accordance with the identified one of the mappings for the FLCS identifier corresponding to the return-link data.

24. The hybrid communications network of claim 23, wherein the plurality of communications networks comprises a satellite communications network, and a terrestrial communications network.

25. The hybrid communications network of claim 23, further comprising:

a provider-sider core node remote from the user terminal routing systems and coupled with the plurality of communications networks,

wherein the routing table is populated according to forward-link communications received from the provider-side core node.

26. The hybrid communications network of claim 23, wherein:

the routing table is updated at least in part according to forward-link data flows received via the hybrid network interface, each forward-link data flow indicating a respective source node and received via a respective one of the communications networks, such that each of the at least some of the mappings is updated according to a respective one of the received forward-link data flows to map the respective source node with the respective one of the communications networks.

27. The hybrid communications network of claim 23, wherein:

the routing table is updated at least in part according to control messages received via one of the plurality of networks, the control messages indicating respective routing table updates, such that each of at least some of the mappings is updated according a respective routing table update.

28. The hybrid communications network of claim 23, wherein:

each user terminal routing system operates to route the received return-link data further in accordance with a stored routing rule-base that defines a set of routing criteria and an alternate network of the plurality of networks, such that, in accordance with whether the set of routing criteria is met, the routing of the return-link data is either over the one of the plurality of networks mapped in the routing table to the destination node of the return-link data or over the alternate network.

29. The hybrid communications network of claim 23, each routing table comprises a plurality of preloaded default mappings.

30. A method for routing signals in a hybrid network, the method comprising:

receiving return-link data at a user terminal routing system from consumer premises equipment, the return-link data indicating an associated destination node for the return-link data,

the user terminal routing system communicatively coupled with a plurality of networks and comprising a routing table populated according to forward-link communications received by the user terminal routing system from a at least one of the plurality of networks, such that the routing table has, stored thereon, a plurality of mappings, each between a respective one of a plurality of routing table entries and one of the plurality of networks, each routing table entry identifying at least a forward-link content source (FLCS) identifier;

identifying one of the mappings in the routing table as having the routing table entry that corresponds to the destination node associated with the return-link data; and

routing the return-link data over one of the plurality of networks according to the identified one of the mappings;

receiving forward-link data at the user terminal via a first network of the plurality of networks, the forward-link data indicating a source node for the forward-link data;

identifying a corresponding one of the mappings of the routing table as corresponding to the indicated source node;

determining, by the user terminal routing system, that the corresponding mapping presently directs routing over a second network of the plurality of networks; and

updating the corresponding mapping to direct routing over the first network only when the second network is a primary network of the plurality of networks, and the first network is not the primary network of the plurality of networks.

31. A method for routing signals in a hybrid network, the method comprising:

receiving return-link data at a user terminal routing system from consumer premises equipment, the return-link data indicating an associated destination node for the return-link data,

the user terminal routing system communicatively coupled with a plurality of networks and comprising a routing table populated according to forward-link communications received by the user terminal routing system from a at least one of the plurality of networks, such that the routing table has, stored thereon, a plurality of mappings, each between a respective one of a plurality of routing table entries and one of the plurality of networks, each routing table entry identifying at least a forward-link content source (FLCS) identifier;

identifying one of the mappings in the routing table as having the routing table entry that corresponds to the destination node associated with the return-link data; and

routing the return-link data over one of the plurality of networks according to the identified one of the mappings;

wherein at least one of the routing table entries indicates a return-link destination Internet-protocol (IP) address, and further comprising:

generating at least one of the mappings by:

determining, by the user terminal routing system, a content host corresponding to the return-link destination IP address indicated by the at least one routing table entry;

identifying a pre-stored association between the content host and a routing network of the plurality of networks; and

generating the at least one mapping to associate the routing table entry with the identified routing network.

32. The method of claim 31, wherein the determining comprises performing a reverse domain name server (DNS) lookup.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein the reverse DNS lookup is performed by the user terminal routing system as a background task concurrently with the identifying and the routing.

34. A method for routing signals in a hybrid network, the method comprising:

receiving return-link data at a user terminal routing system from consumer premises equipment, the return-link data indicating an associated destination node for the return-link data,

the user terminal routing system communicatively coupled with a plurality of networks and comprising a routing table populated according to forward-link communications received by the user terminal routing system from a at least one of the plurality of networks, such that the routing table has, stored thereon, a plurality of mappings, each between a respective one of a plurality of routing table entries and one of the plurality of networks, each routing table entry identifying at least a forward-link content source (FLCS) identifier;

identifying one of the mappings in the routing table as having the routing table entry that corresponds to the destination node associated with the return-link data; and

routing the return-link data over one of the plurality of networks according to the identified one of the mappings;

wherein the routing table is preloaded with a plurality of preloaded mappings prior to the receiving and wherein each of at least a portion of the preloaded mappings is preloaded by:

selecting one of a plurality of pre-stored associations between a corresponding content host and a corresponding one of the plurality of networks;

performing a domain name server (DNS) lookup to determine a destination Internet protocol (IP) address associated with the corresponding content host; and

generating the preloaded mapping to associate the corresponding one of the plurality of networks with a routing table entry comprising the destination IP address.