



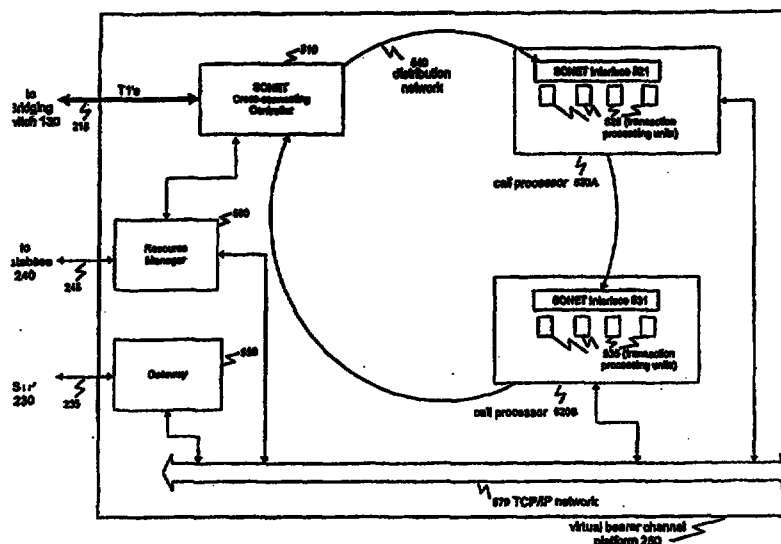
INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification ⁶ : H04J 1/00, 3/00, 3/12, H04M 1/24, 3/00, 3/42		A1	(11) International Publication Number: WO 99/35773
			(43) International Publication Date: 15 July 1999 (15.07.99)
(21) International Application Number: PCT/US99/00275		(81) Designated States: CA, JP, MX, SG, European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE).	
(22) International Filing Date: 6 January 1999 (06.01.99)		Published With international search report.	
(30) Priority Data: 09/004,153 7 January 1998 (07.01.98) US			
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200003737-4

22 SEP 2000

(54) Title: VIRTUAL BEARER CHANNEL PLATFORM FOR PROCESSING SERVICE REQUESTS RECEIVED IN THE FORM OF CHANNEL DATA



(57) Abstract

A virtual bearer channel platform (150) includes a plurality of transaction processing units (161-164). Each transaction processing unit processes one or more service requests received as a call on a bearer channel. The call data is distributed to individual transaction processing units using a high-speed network such as a SONET-type network (215). In one embodiment, the standard SONET format is modified to eliminate fields which contain data of no significance to the present environment. In another embodiment, the standard SONET format, itself, is used. The platform includes a resource manager for allocating the newly received calls to individual transaction processing units. The resource manager (560) sets up outbound calls when requested by a transaction processing unit. A gateway interfaces (550) with the resource manager and the external communication network for assisting in call setup in both inbound and outbound directions.