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- (71) **Applicant:** SWAG TECHNOLOGIES SDN BHD [MY/MY]; Level 41, Vista Tower, The Intermark, Kuala Lumpur, 50400 (MY).
- (72) **Inventors:** MANNADIAR, Raphael; Level 41, Vista Tower, The Intermark, Kuala Lumpur, 50400 (MY). ALADDIN, Rami; Level 41, Vista Tower, The Intermark, Kuala Lumpur, 50400 (MY).
- (74) **Agent:** ANDREW, SIEW ONN THIUN; Henry Goh & Co Sdn Bhd, 217 Jalan Imbi, 55100 Kuala Lumpur (MY).
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(54) **Title:** A SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR CONCEALED CONNECTION MERGING THROUGH COORDINATED AND DYNAMIC VIRTUAL PROXY ALLOCATION

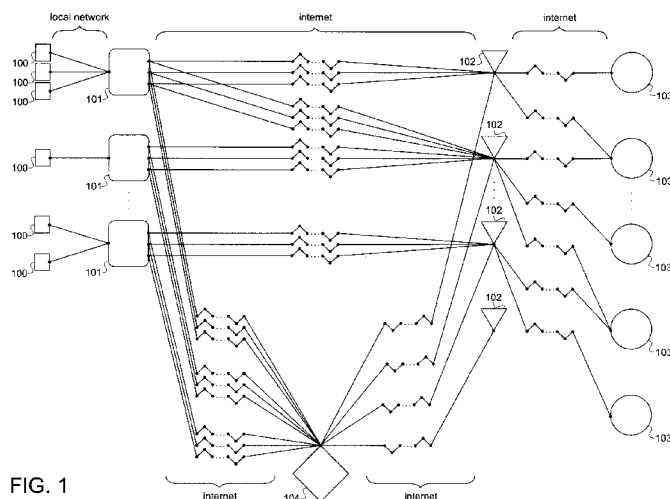


FIG. 1

(57) **Abstract:** Specialized Internet gateway apparatuses 101 provide Internet access to conventional network-enabled client devices 100 through multiple disjoint segments of the Internet simultaneously by means of multiple Internet access devices and of a "connection-merging protocol". Virtual relay servers 102, which also implement the connection-merging protocol, act as proxies between the gateway apparatuses 101 and the conventional network-enabled application servers 103 the client devices 100 connected to said gateway apparatuses 101 wish to communicate with. A virtual resource allocation and information server 104 aggregates status and routing information relevant to the gateway apparatuses 101, and dynamically adjusts the number, location and/or performance specifications of running virtual relay servers 102. As a result, a system and method for demand-driven, flexible-topology and intelligently-enabled communication between conventional network-enabled client devices 100 and conventional network-enabled application servers 103 concurrently over multiple conventional segments of the Internet is realized.