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(71) Applicant: **INTEL CORPORATION** [US/US]; 2200 Mission College Boulevard, m/s sc4-202, Santa Clara, CA 95052-8119 (US).

(72) Inventors: **PUTZOLU, David**; 1811 Sequoia Court, Forrest Grove, OR 97116 (US). **YAVATKAR, Raj**; 17134 North West Countryridge Drive, Portland, OR 97229 (US). **KEANY, Bernard, N.**; 13993 Amberwood Circle, Lake Oswego, OR 97035 (US).

(74) Agents: **WISE, Roger, R.** et al.; Pillsbury Madison & Sutro LLP, Suite 1200, 725 South Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, CA 90017-5443 (US).

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(54) Title: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR ALLOWING PROPRIETARY FORWARDING ELEMENTS TO INTEROPERATE WITH STANDARD CONTROL ELEMENTS IN AN OPEN ARCHITECTURE FOR NETWORK DEVICES

(57) Abstract: A computer system for allowing proprietary forwarding elements to interoperate with standard control elements in an open network architecture. The computer system comprises a forwarding element that is adapted to perform data forwarding functions in a computer network. A control element is adapted to perform network signaling and control functions in the computer network. The control element is adapted to generate a standardized data set for configuring the forwarding element. An interconnecting element operatively connects the forwarding element to the control element. A forwarding element plugin is integrated with the control element for receiving the standardized data set from the control element, translating the standardized data set into a specialized data set, and transmitting the specialized data set to the forwarding element to configure the forwarding element. The forwarding element utilizes the specialized data set to configure the forwarding element for performing data forwarding in the computer network.