

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
14 February 2008 (14.02.2008)

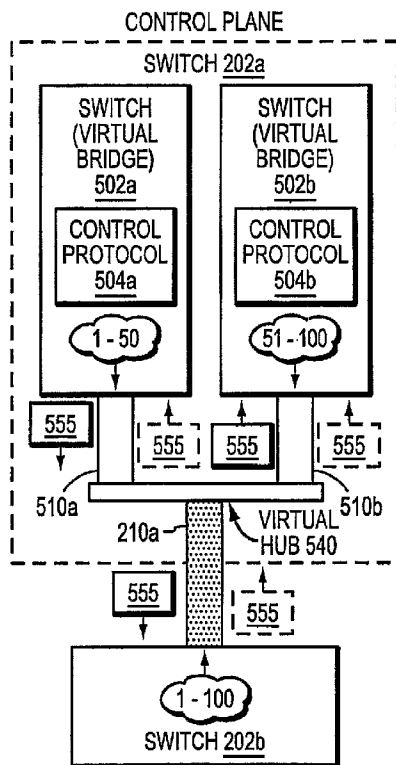
PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 2008/018991 A3

- (51) **International Patent Classification:**
H04L 12/28 (2006.01)
- (21) **International Application Number:**
PCT/US2007/0 16741
- (22) **International Filing Date:** 26 July 2007 (26.07.2007)
- (25) **Filing Language:** English
- (26) **Publication Language:** English
- (30) **Priority Data:**
11/499,556 4 August 2006 (04.08.2006) US
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- (81) **Designated States** (unless otherwise indicated, for every
kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM,
AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BH, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH,
CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DO, DZ, EC, EE, EG,
ES, FT, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, GT, HN, HR, HU, ID, IL,
IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KM, KN, KP, KR, KZ, LA, LC, LK,
LR, LS, LT, LU, LY, MA, MD, ME, MG, MK, MN, MW,
MX, MY, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL,
PT, RO, RS, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SM, SV, SY,
TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, UZ, VC, VN, ZA, ZM,
ZW
- (84) **Designated States** (unless otherwise indicated, for every
kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH,
GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, NA, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM,
ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM),
European (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI,
FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MC, MT, NL, PL,

[Continued on next page]

(54) **Title:** SHARING A PHYSICAL PORT AMONG VIRTUAL BRIDGES ON A SWITCH



(57) **Abstract:** A technique shares a port (e.g., a physical port) among a plurality of virtual bridges on a switch in a computer network. According to the novel technique, two or more virtual bridges are established on the switch, and are each assigned respective sets of Virtual Local Area Networks (VLANs). Each virtual bridge has a virtual interface corresponding to the physical port (a "shared trunk"), the virtual bridges regarding the virtual interfaces as though they were physical ports. Control messages transmitted by the virtual bridges on the virtual interfaces are sent over the physical port and to each other virtual interface of the port (the shared trunk), such as, e.g., by a virtual hub of the shared trunk. Also, control messages received on the physical port are sent over each virtual interface to each virtual bridge (e.g., by the virtual hub).

WO 2008/018991 A3



PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM,
GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:

— *with international search report*

(88) Date of publication of the international search report:

9 October 2008

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US07/16741

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
 IPC: H04L 12/28(2006.01)

USPC. 370/401

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
 U.S. 370/401

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)
 EAST

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 6,188,694 (FINE et al) 13 February 2001 (13.02.2001), whole document.	1-20

Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. See patent family annex

* Special categories of cited documents	"T"
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"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	"Y" document of particular relevance, the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means	"&" document member of the same patent family
"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed	

Date of the actual completion of the international search 12 June 2008 (12.06.2008)	Date of mailing of the international search report 21 JUL 2008
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