METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR LOAD DISTRIBUTION

A system and method are provided for distributing the processing of network traffic received at a multiprocessor computer system. A packet is received from a network entity at a network interface circuit. A header portion of the packet is parsed to retrieve information stored in one or more protocol headers, such as source and destination identifiers or a virtual communication connection identifier. A source identifier and a destination identifier may be combined to form a flow key that is then subjected to a hash function. The modulus of the result of the hash function over the number of processors in the multiprocessor computer is then calculated. The result identifies a host processor to which the packet is submitted for processing. In another embodiment a modulus operation is performed on the packet's virtual communication connection identifier. The result of the modulus operation identifies the processor to service the packet.
**INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT**

**A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER**

| IPC    | H04L29/06 |

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)

| IPC    | H04L |

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 practical, search terms used)

**EPO–Internal**

**C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages</th>
<th>Relevant to claim No.</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>EP 0 865 180 A (LUCENT TECHNOLOGIES INC) 16 September 1998 (1998-09-16) abstract column 4, line 38 -column 6, line 12 column 8, line 35 -column 10, line 27</td>
<td>1-7, 12-18</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<td>19-22</td>
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** Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C. X Patent family members are listed in annex.**

* Special categories of cited documents:
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**Date of the actual completion of the international search**

21 September 2000

**Date of mailing of the international search report**

28/09/2000

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<tr>
<td>EP 0865180 A</td>
<td>16-09-1998</td>
<td>CA 2230550 A</td>
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