

Hutton et al.

[54] POINT-TO-POINT INTERNET PROTOCOL

- [75] Inventors: Glenn W. Hutton, Miami; Shane D. Mattaway, Boca Raton; Craig B. Strickland, Tamarac, all of Fla.
- [73] Assignee: NetSpeak Corporation, Boca Raton, Fla.
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- [52] U.S. Cl. 709/227; 709/204

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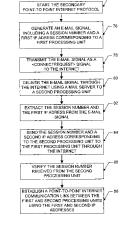
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Primary Examiner—Mark H. Rinehart Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Kudirka & Jobse, LLP

[57] ABSTRACT

A point-to-point Internet protocol exchanges Internet Protocol (IP) addresses between processing units to establish a point-to-point communication link between the processing units through the Internet. A first point-to-point Internet protocol includes the steps of (a) storing in a database a respective IP address of a set of processing units that have an on-line status with respect to the Internet; (b) transmitting a query from a first processing unit to a connection server to determine the on-line status of a second processing unit; and (c) retrieving the IP address of the second unit from the database using the connection server, in response to the determination of a positive on-line status of the second processing unit, for establishing a point-to-point communication link between the first and second processing units through the Internet. A second point-to-point Internet protocol includes the steps of (a) transmitting an E-mail signal, including a first IP address, from a first processing unit; (b) processing the E-mail signal through the Internet to deliver the E-mail signal to a second processing unit; and (c) transmitting a second IP address to the first processing unit for establishing a point-to-point communication link between the first and second processing units through the Internet.

44 Claims, 6 Drawing Sheets

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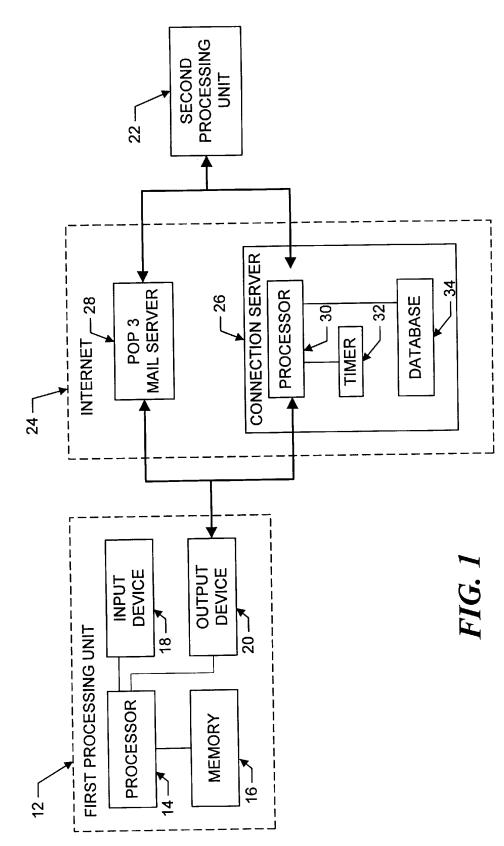
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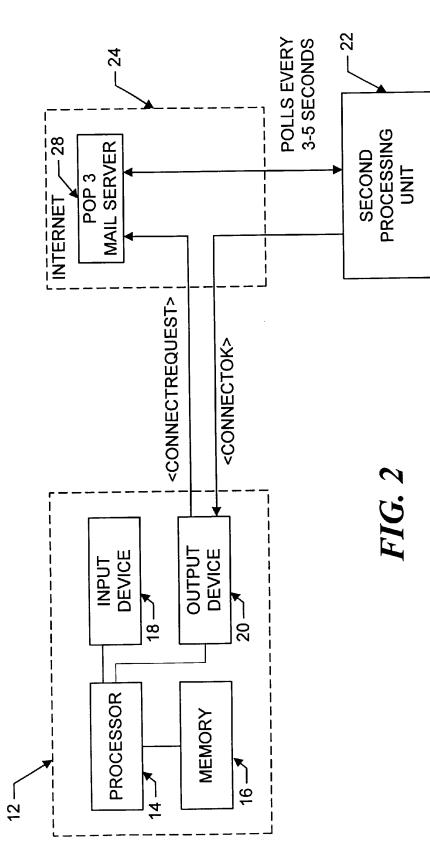
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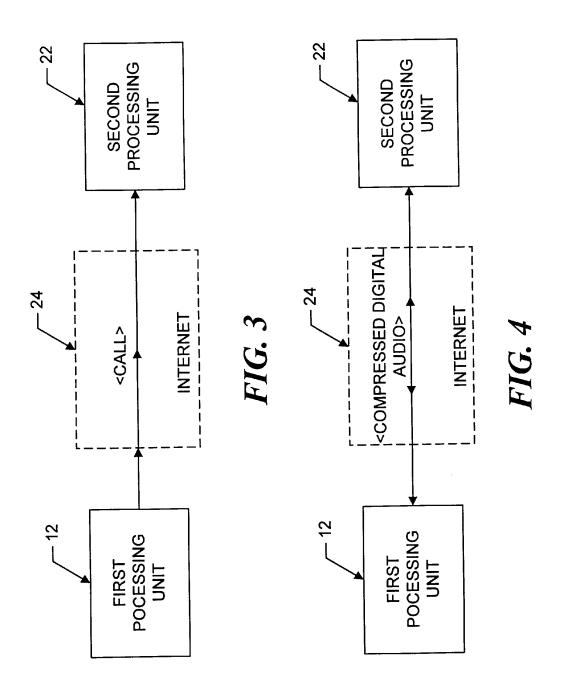
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