



- [54] MANIPULATING RIGHTS-TO-EXECUTE IN CONNECTION WITH A SOFTWARE COPY PROTECTION MECHANISM
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Related U.S. Application Data

- [63] Continuation of Ser. No. 927,299, Nov. 5, 1986, abandoned.
- [51] Int. Cl.<sup>5</sup> ..... H04L 9/00
- [52] U.S. Cl. .... 380/4
- [58] Field of Search ..... 380/4; 364/200, 900

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ABSTRACT

[57] A software asset protection mechanism segregates the right to execute software from the software itself. The rights to execute, when installed on a composite computing system, are stored in a coprocessor element of the composite computing system. The software asset protection mechanism is enhanced as described herein by providing for the manipulation of those rights to execute. More particularly, the rights to execute can be conditioned at least in terms of a valid period of execution at least in terms of a valid period of execution or a valid number of executions. The rights to execute can be safely transferred from one coprocessor to another, or can be returned to the software vendor. Finally, a method of backing up the rights to execute to provide the user with the rights to execute in case the coprocessor element of the composite computing system fails.

43 Claims, 19 Drawing Sheets

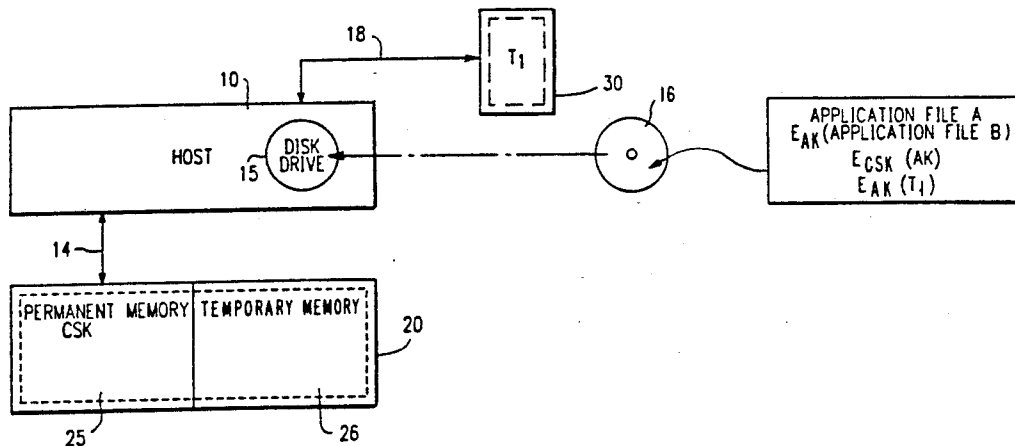


FIG. 1

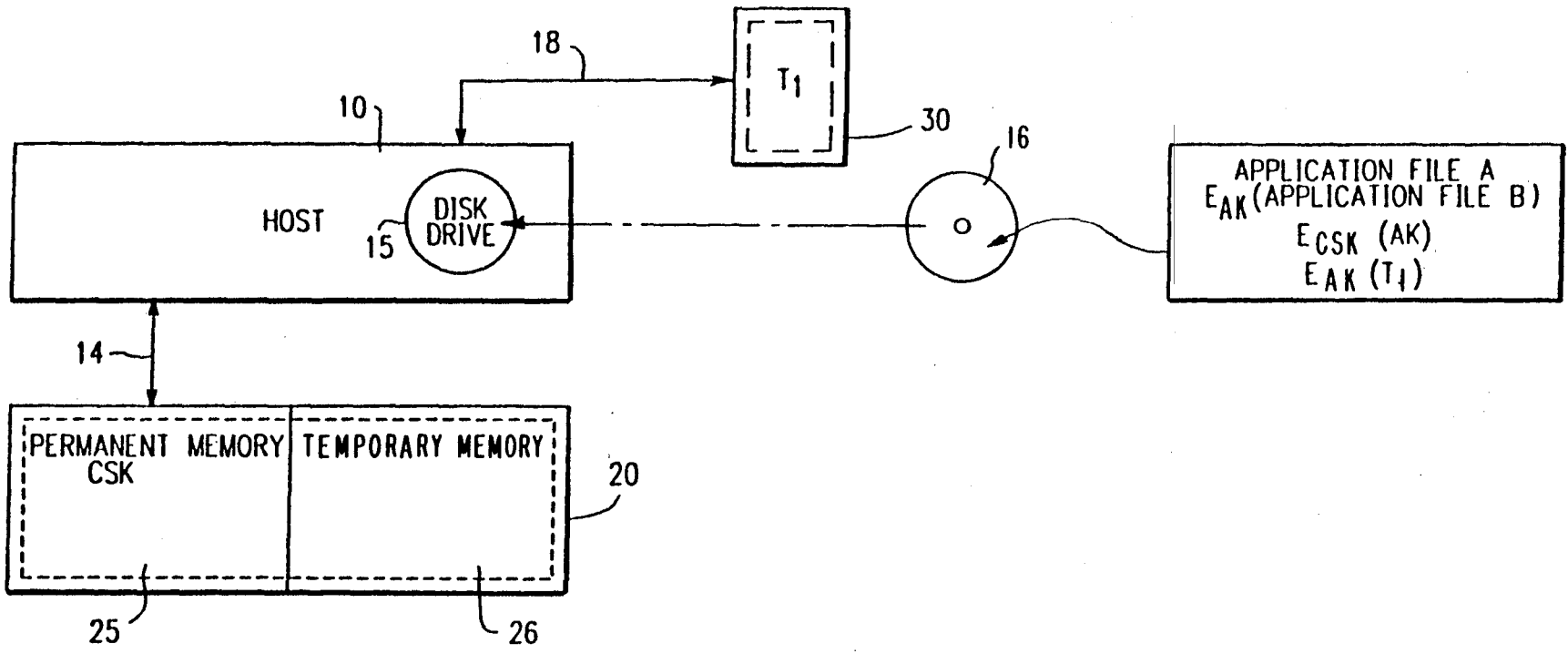


FIG. 2

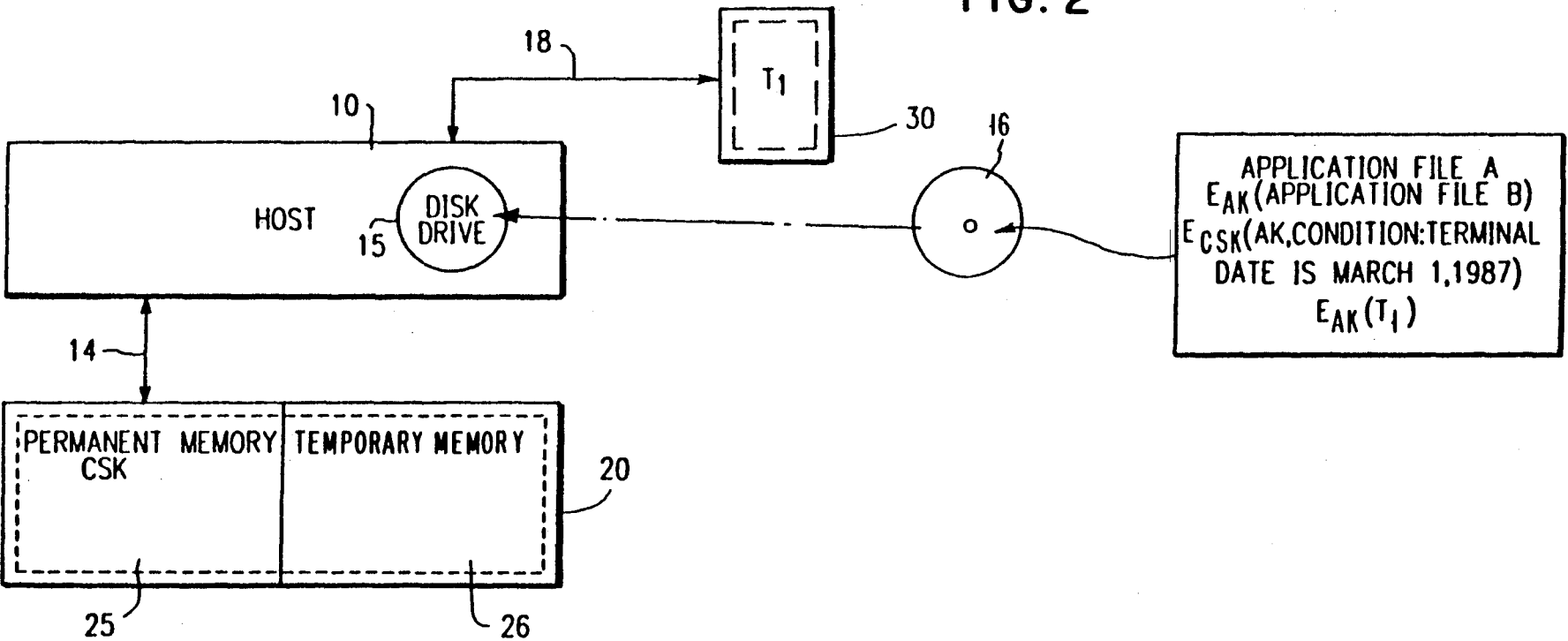


FIG. 3

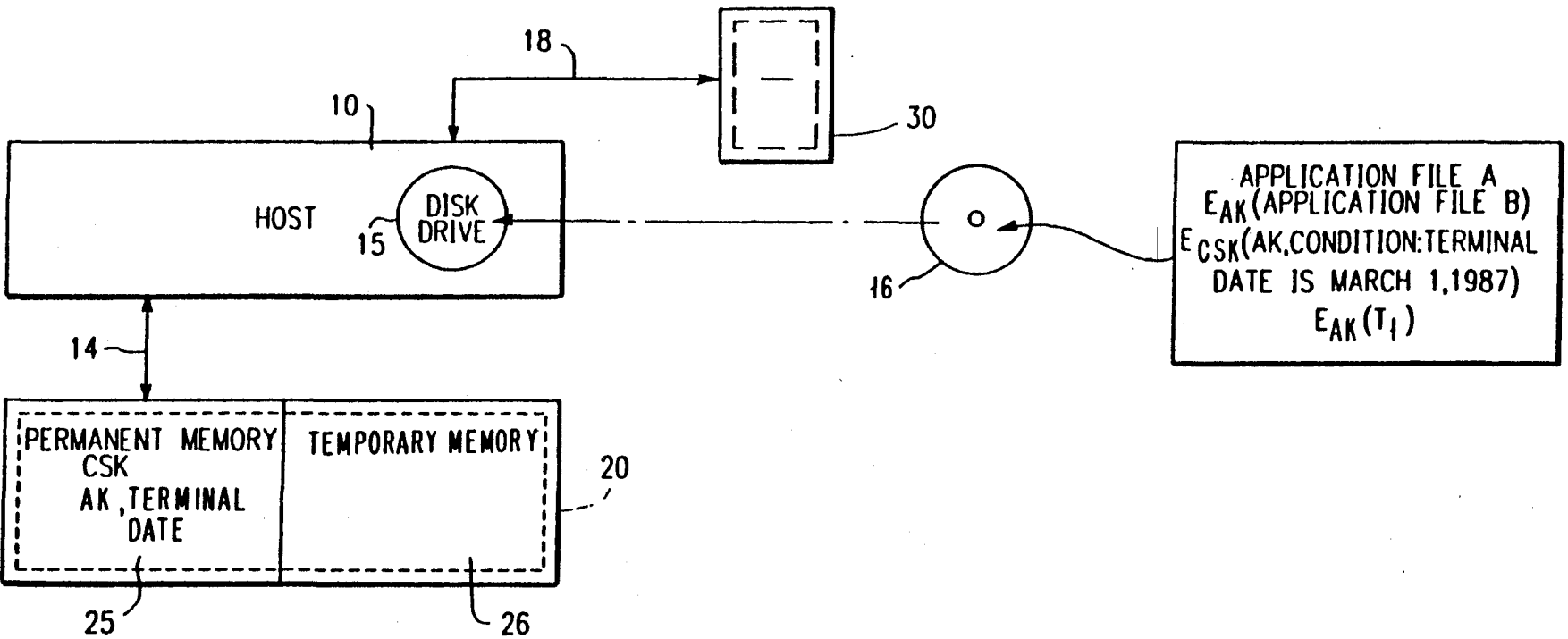
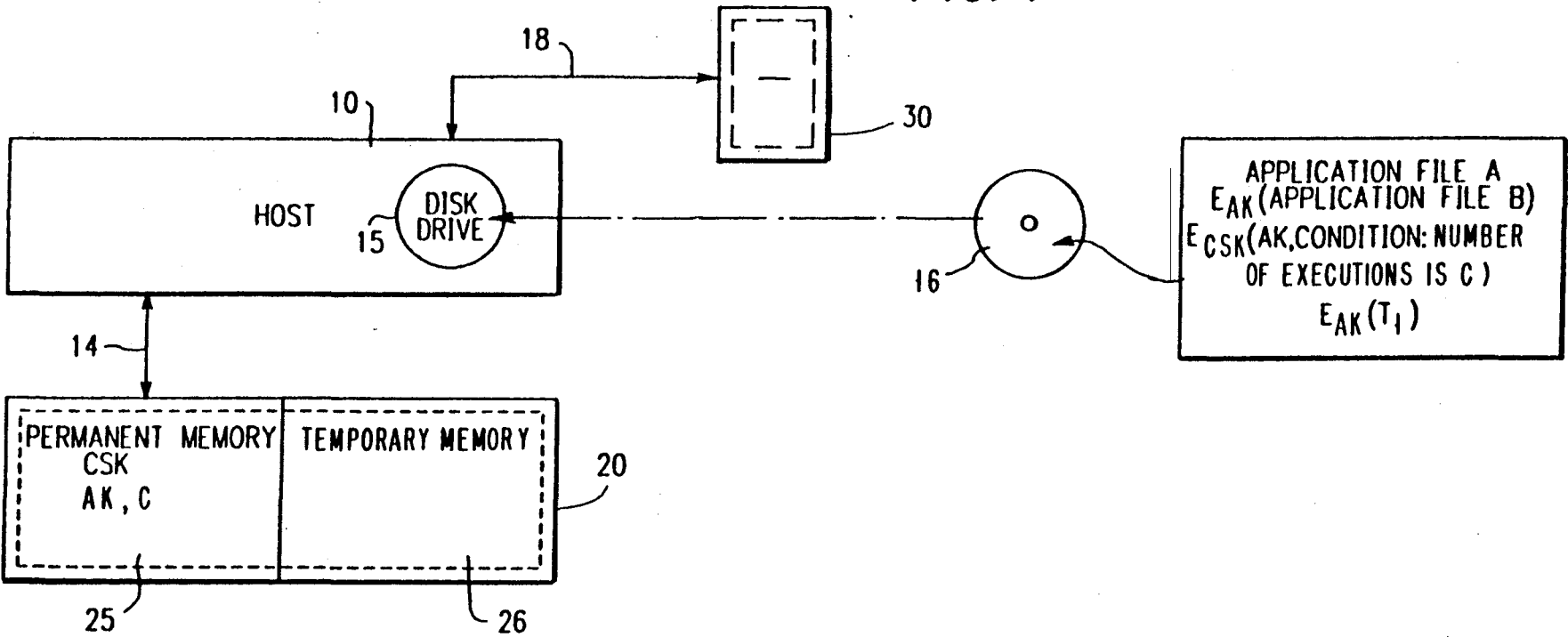


FIG. 4



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