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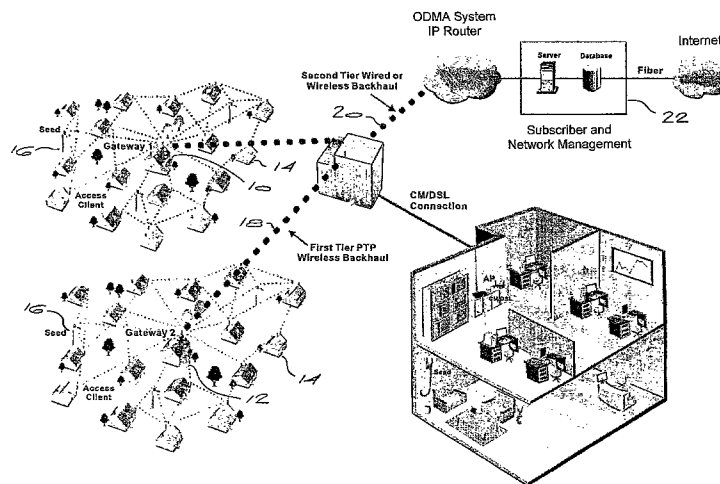
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- (74) Agents: **DONALD, Heather, June** et al.; Spoor & Fisher, P. O. Box 41312, Craighall, 2146 Morningside (ZA).
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- (71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): **IWICS INC** [US/US]; 19125 North Creek Parkway, Suite 201, Bothell, Washington 98011 (US).
- (72) Inventors; and
- (75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): **LARSEN, James, David** [ZA/US]; 22023 78th Place West, Edmonds, Washington 98026 (US). **RODMAN, Paul, Jopnathan** [US/US]; 12221 NE 82nd Lane, Kirkland, Washington 98033 (US).

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(54) Title: DATA TRANSPORT PROTOCOL FOR A MULTI-STATION NETWORK



(57) Abstract: The invention relates to a method of operating a communication network, the network comprising a plurality of stations which are able to transmit data to and receive data from one another so that a message comprising a plurality of data packets is sent from an originating station to a destination station via at least one opportunistically selected intermediate station. The method makes use of probe signals transmitted from each station on a selected probing channel to which other stations respond to indicate their availability as destination or intermediate stations. A Request to Send message is sent, with a Clear to Send message returned by an available station. The station with data to send opportunistically selects an available station and the selected station uses a Packet Acknowledge message to confirm successful reception of the transmitted data packet. An End-to-End Acknowledge message is sent by the originating station, directly or indirectly, to confirm receipt of said data packets.

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