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Dowling et al.

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(54) **VIRTUAL CONNECTION OF A REMOTE UNIT TO A SERVER**

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 668 days.

This patent is subject to a terminal disclaimer.

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(52) **U.S. Cl.** **709/203; 709/200; 370/349**
(58) **Field of Classification Search** **709/200, 709/203; 370/349**

See application file for complete search history.

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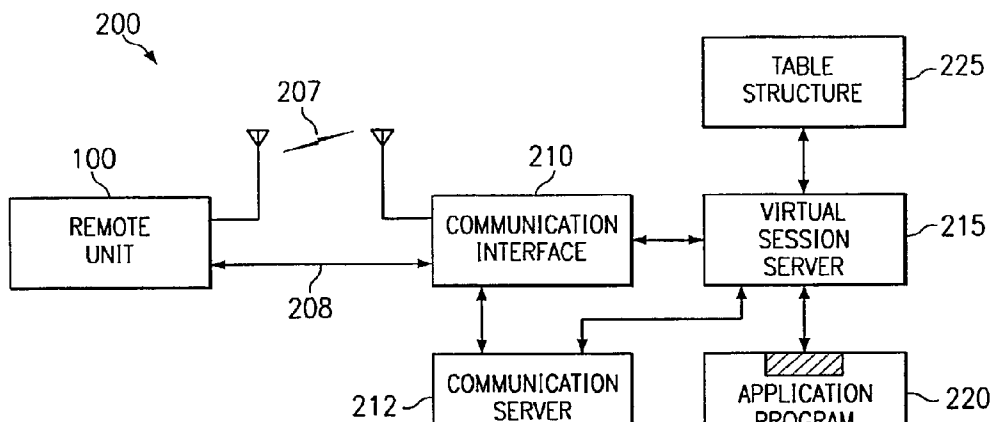
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

Apparatus and associated methods are provided which allow a remote user to maintain a virtual session with a server. A virtual session allows a remote and possibly mobile user to maintain a virtual presence in an office environment without actually being present. Using the present invention, a remote user can access a central application program such as an Internet service provider, a database system, an inventory system or billing system. Likewise, the remote user can receive calls and other forms of communications as though he or she were present in an office environment. A virtual session does not require a physical connection to be continuously present in order to provide a virtual connectivity. This is especially important for mobile applications where the remote user may incur long distance and/or wireless toll charges. Also, methods are presented to allow a remote unit to rapidly reconnect in a transparent and seamless way without burdening the user with the need to connect and reconnect or to upload and download information. Related methods are provided to allow the virtual session to be established, operated and maintained.

22 Claims, 4 Drawing Sheets



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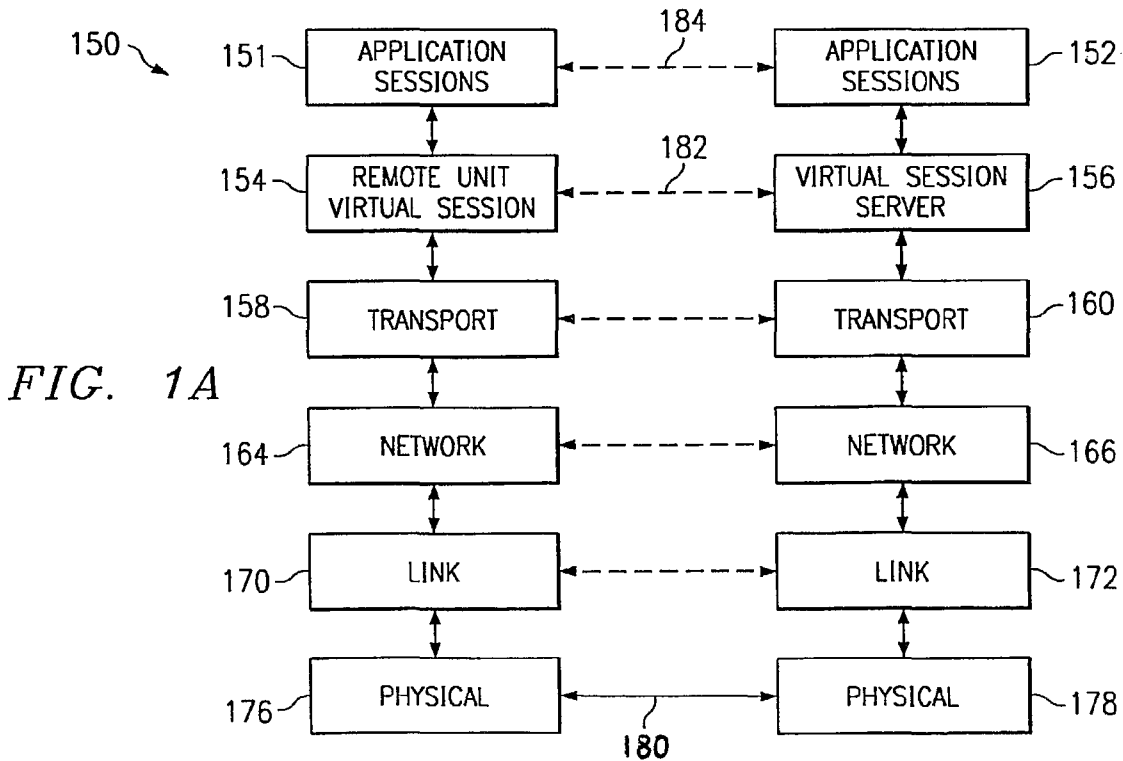
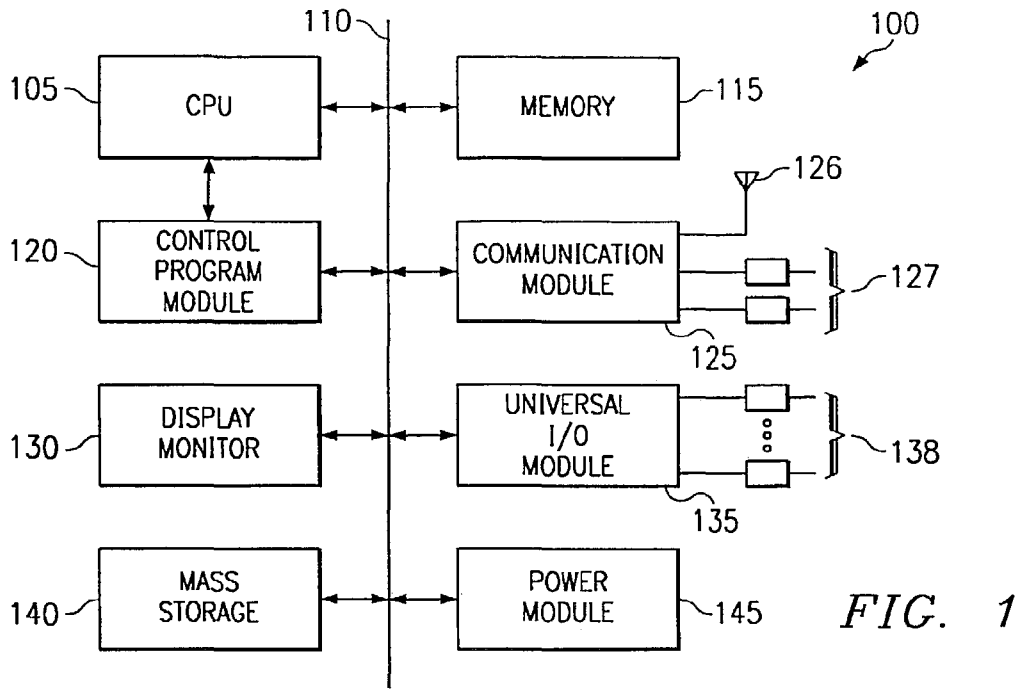
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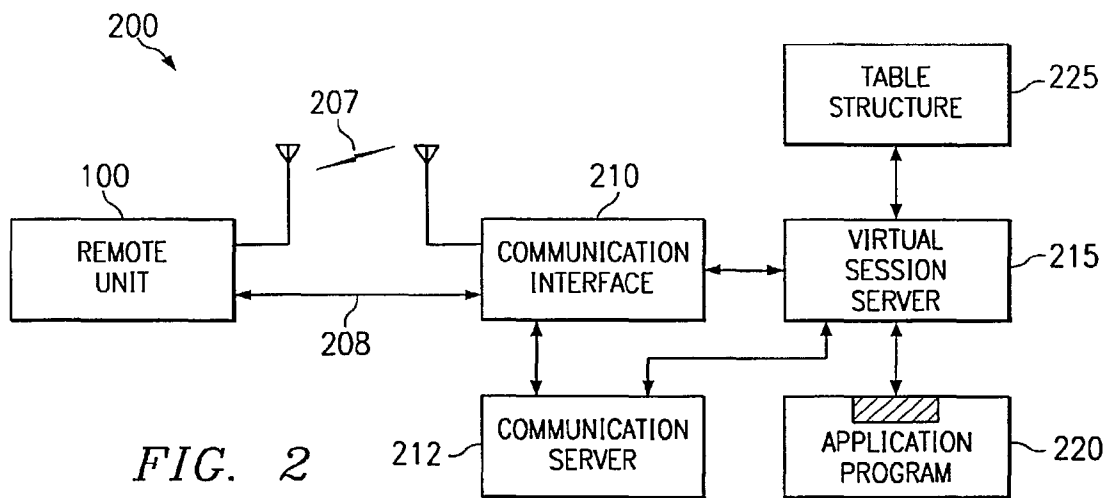


FIG. 2

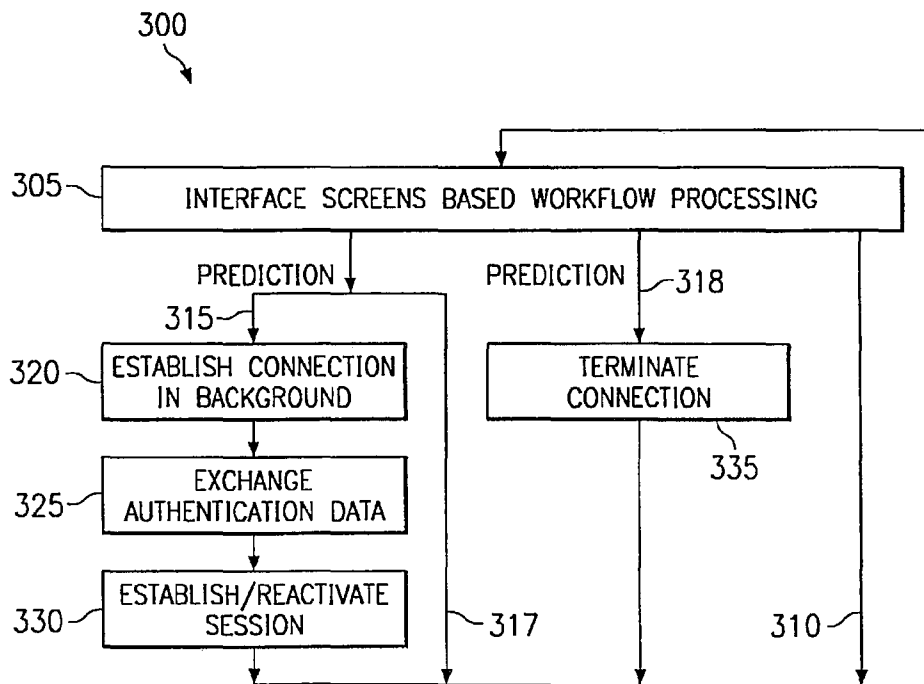


FIG. 3

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