

Where an Asynchronous Transfer Mode (ATM) multiplexed data stream is terminated at a functional unit, virtual channel data being carried in cells in the data stream, a depacketiser has a plurality of cell buffers, each buffer storing the payload data contained in a single cell, the buffers being loaded in sequence in accordance with a message sequence number carried by each cell and emptied in accordance with a depacketiser algorithm to form a noncontinuous data stream; a fillin cell format generator which on the failure of a valid cell to arrive causes the replacement of the missing cell by a fillin cell in the noncontinuous data stream and a timeout function generator which is started after each cell has been depacketised and sometimes after fillin replacement cells have been generated.

