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(54) POWER MANAGEMENT FOR MULTIPLE PROCESSOR CORES

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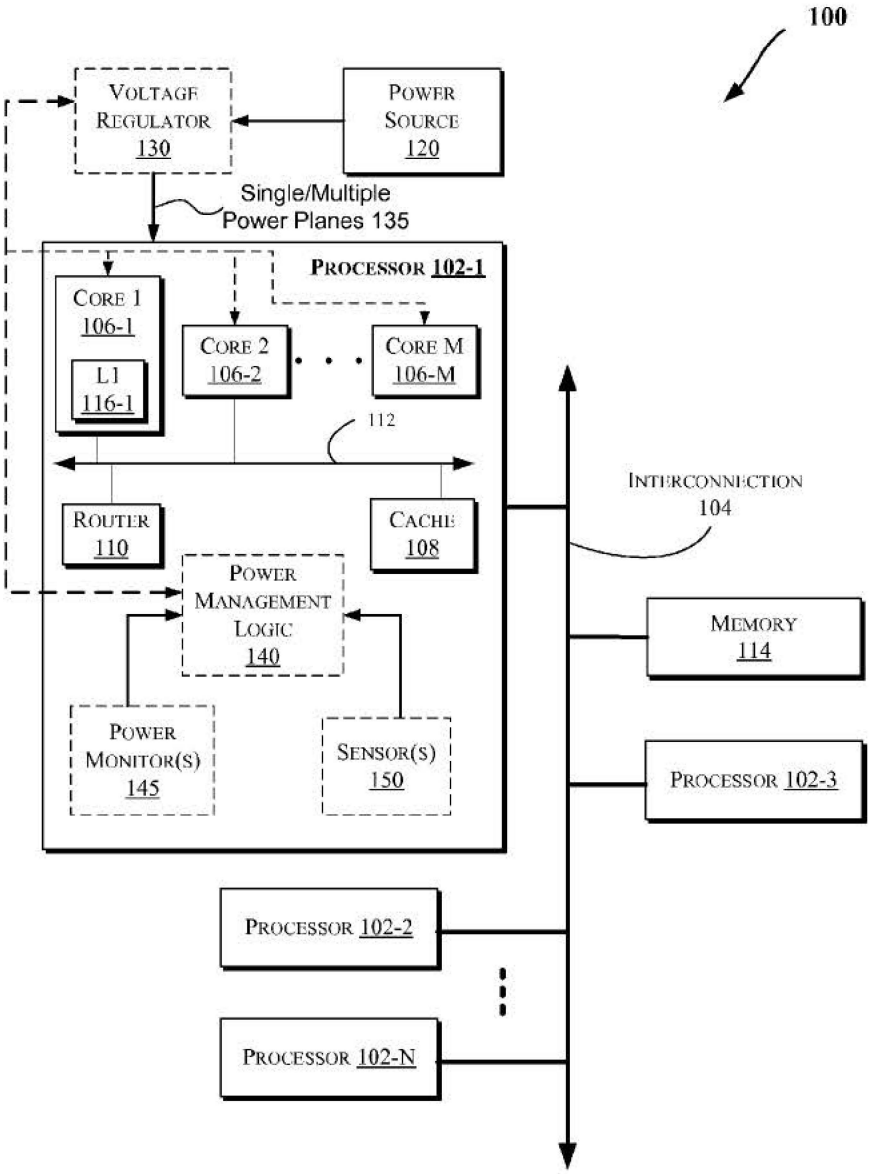
(57) **ABSTRACT**

Methods and apparatus relating to power management for multiple processor cores are described. In one embodiment, one or more techniques may be utilized locally (e.g., on a per core basis) to manage power consumption in a processor. In another embodiment, power may be distributed among different power planes of a processor based on energy-based considerations. Other embodiments are also disclosed and claimed.



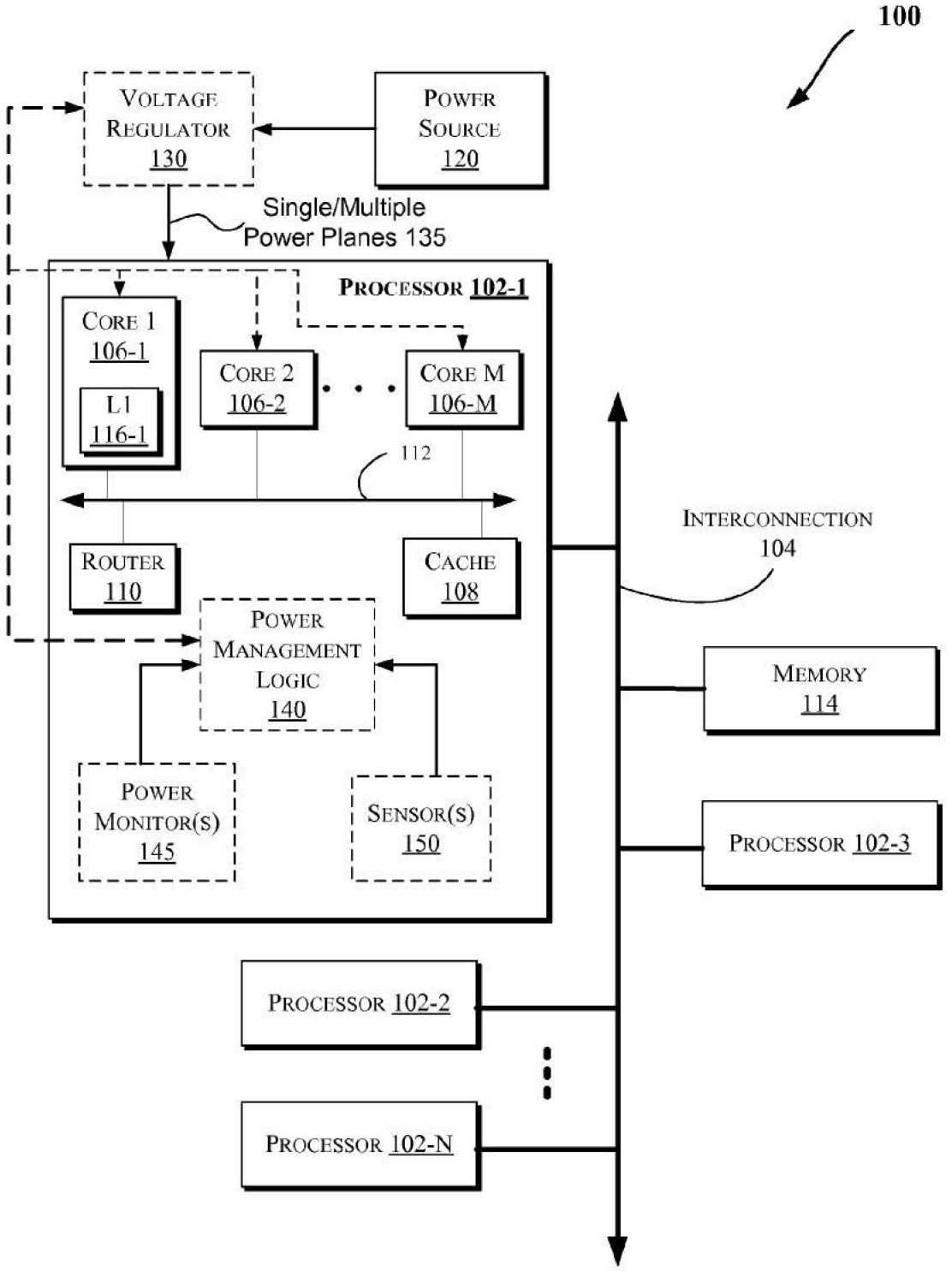

100
VOLTAGE REGULATOR 130
POWER SOURCE 120
Single/Multiple Power Planes 135
PROCESSOR 102-1
CORE 1 106-1
L1 116-1
CORE 2 106-2
CORE M 106-M
112
ROUTER 110
CACHE 108
POWER MANAGEMENT LOGIC 140
POWER MONITOR(S) 145
SENSOR(S) 150
INTERCONNECTION 104
MEMORY 114
PROCESSOR 102-3
PROCESSOR 102-2
PROCESSOR 102-N

FIG. 1

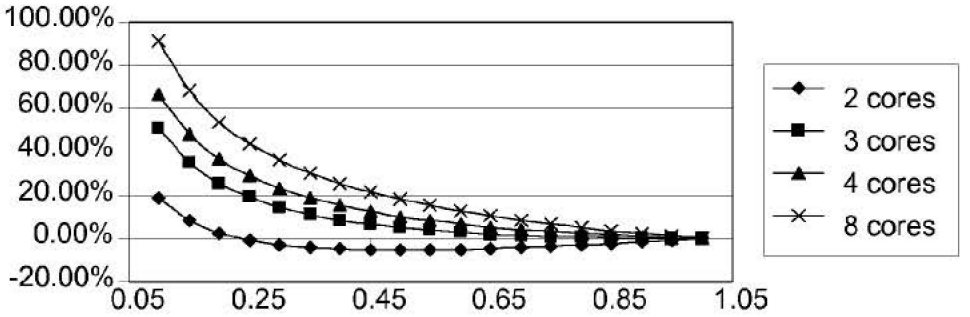

100.00%
80.00%
60.00%
40.00%
20.00%
0.00%
-20.00%
0.05
0.25
0.45
0.65
0.85
1.05
2 cores
3 cores
4 cores
8 cores

FIG. 2

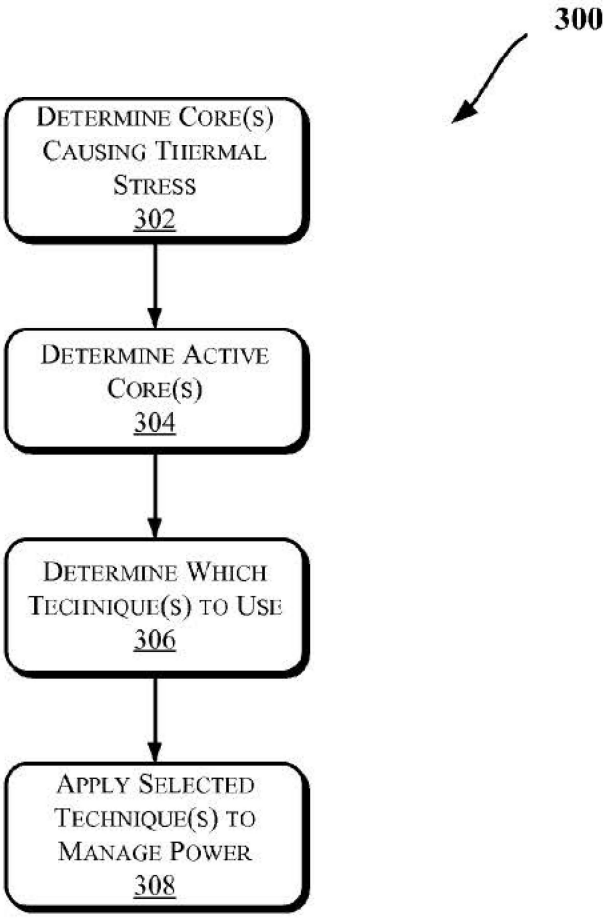

300
DETERMINE CORE(S) CAUSING THERMAL STRESS
302
DETERMINE ACTIVE CORE(S)
304
DETERMINE WHICH TECHNIQUE(S) TO USE
306
APPLY SELECTED TECHNIQUE(S) TO MANAGE POWER
308

FIG. 3

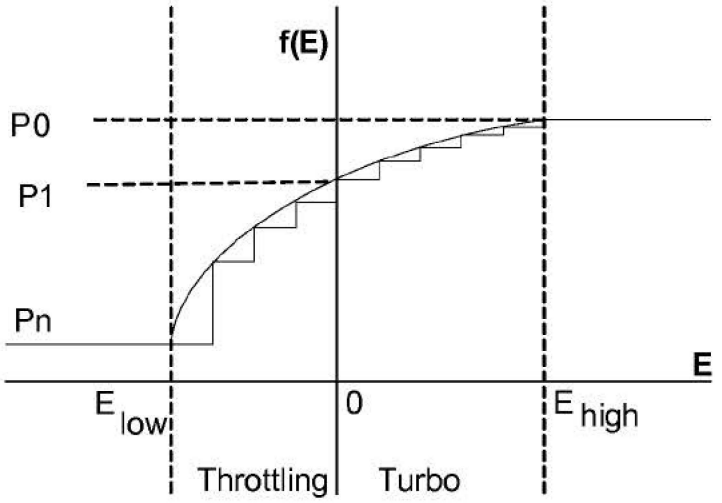

f(E)
P0
P1
Pn
E
E low
0
E high
Throttling
Turbo

FIG. 4

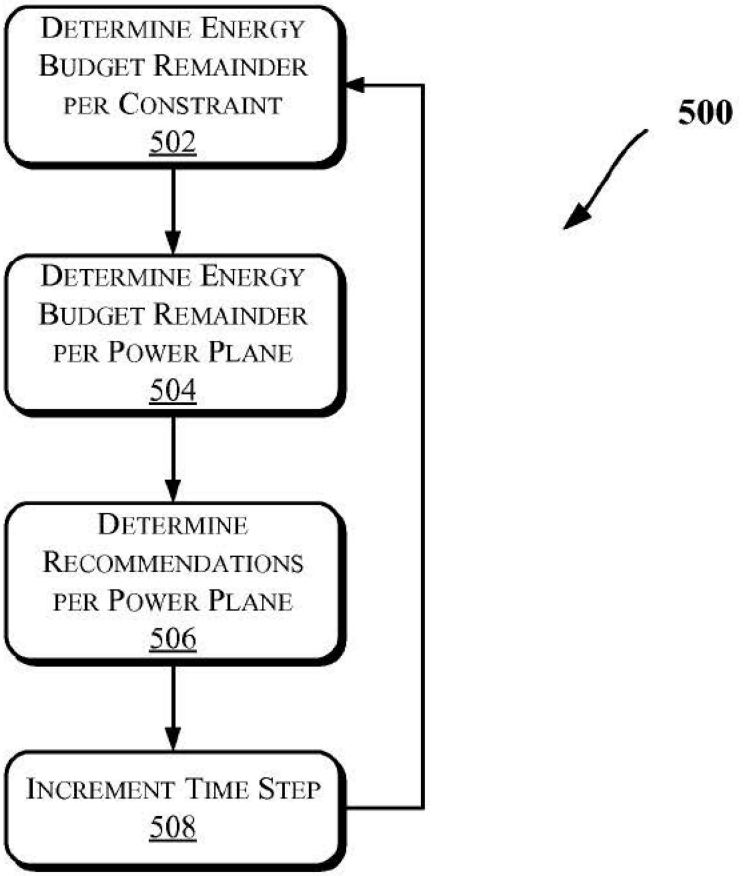

DETERMINE ENERGY BUDGET REMAINDER PER CONSTRAINT 502
DETERMINE ENERGY BUDGET REMAINDER PER POWER PLANE 504
DETERMINE RECOMMENDATIONS PER POWER PLANE 506
INCREMENT TIME STEP 508
500

FIG. 5

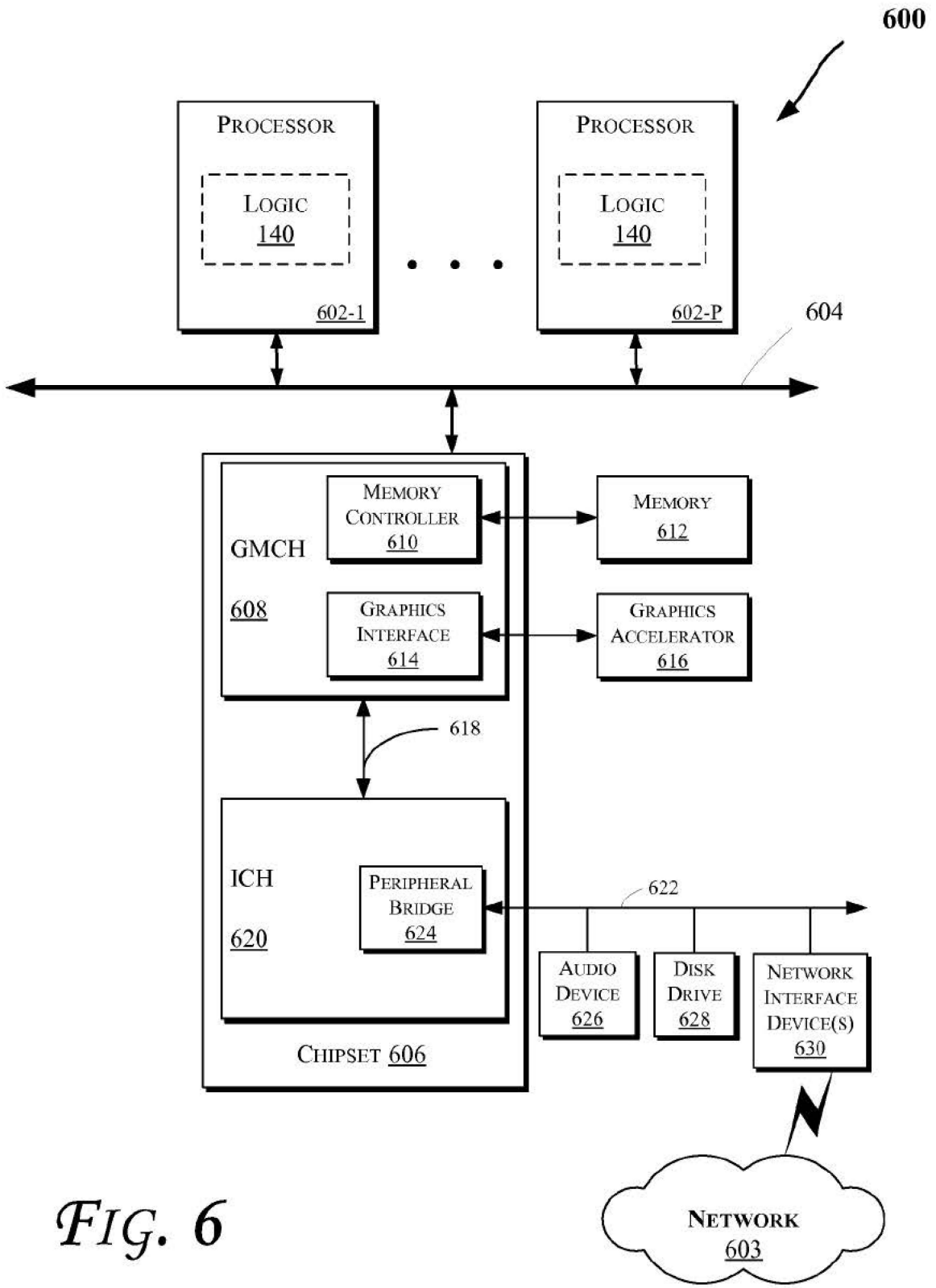

600
PROCESSOR
LOGIC
140
602-1
PROCESSOR
LOGIC
140
602-P
604
GMCH
608
MEMORY CONTROLLER
610
MEMORY
612
GRAPHICS INTERFACE
614
GRAPHICS ACCELERATOR
616
618
ICH
620
PERIPHERAL BRIDGE
624
622
AUDIO DEVICE
626
DISK DRIVE
628
NETWORK INTERFACE DEVICE(S)
630
CHIPSET 606
NETWORK
603

FIG. 6

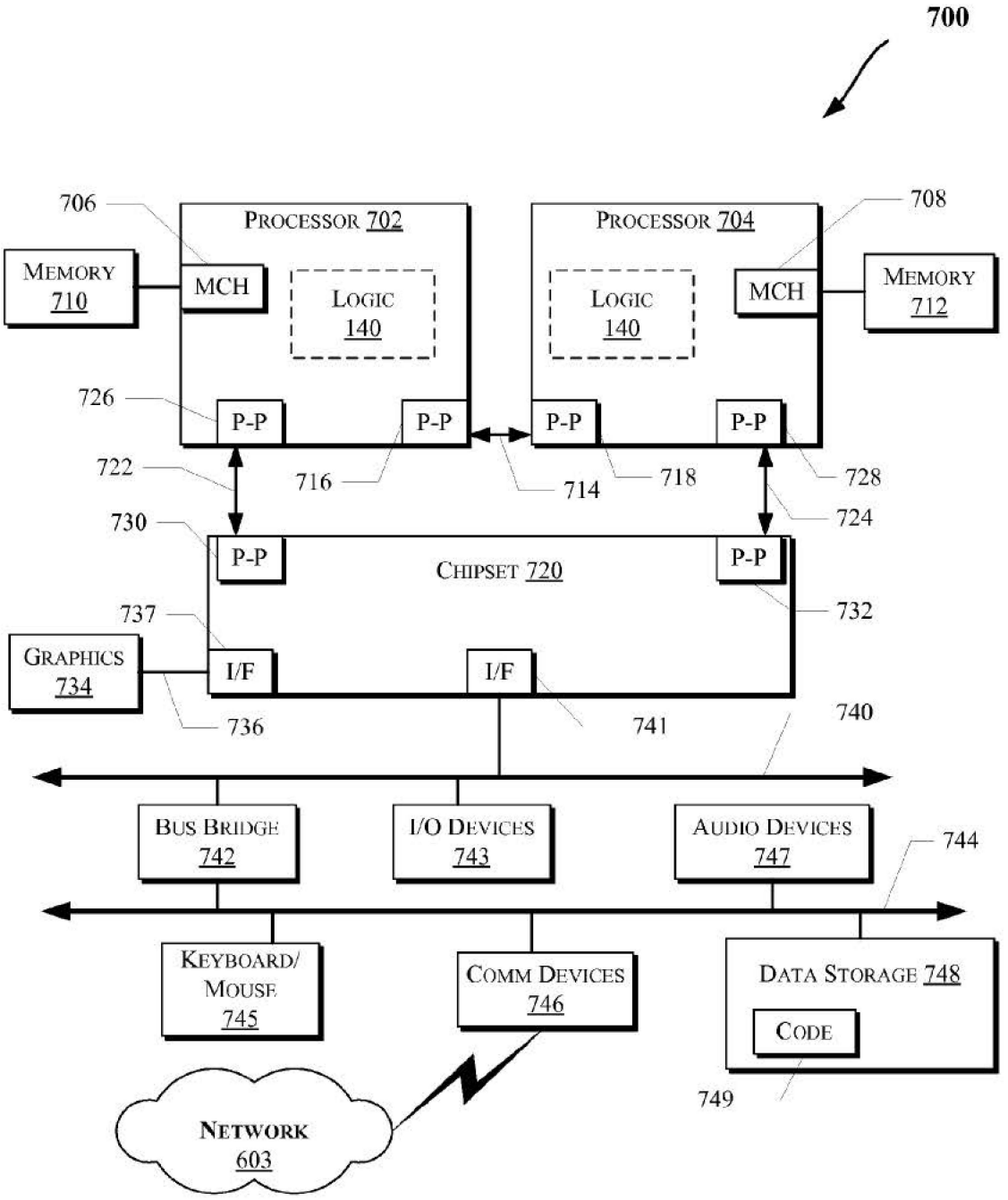

700
706
PROCESSOR 702
PROCESSOR 704
708
MEMORY 710
MCH
LOGIC 140
LOGIC 140
MCH
MEMORY 712
726
P-P
P-P
P-P
P-P
722
716
714
718
728
724
730
P-P
CHIPSET 720
P-P
737
732
GRAPHICS 734
I/F
I/F
736
741
740
BUS BRIDGE 742
I/O DEVICES 743
AUDIO DEVICES 747
744
KEYBOARD/ MOUSE 745
COMM DEVICES 746
DATA STORAGE 748
CODE
749
NETWORK 603

FIG. 7

POWER MANAGEMENT FOR MULTIPLE PROCESSOR CORES

FIELD

[0001] The present disclosure generally relates to the field of electronics. More particularly, an embodiment of the invention relates to power management for multiple processor cores.

BACKGROUND

[0002] As integrated circuit (IC) fabrication technology improves, manufacturers are able to integrate additional functionality onto a single silicon substrate. As the number of these functionalities increases, however, so does the number of components on a single IC chip. Additional components add additional signal switching, in turn, generating more heat. The additional heat may damage an IC chip by, for example, thermal expansion. Also, the additional heat may limit usage locations and/or applications of a computing device that includes such chips. For example, a portable computing device may solely rely on battery power. Hence, as additional functionality is integrated into portable computing devices, the need to reduce power consumption becomes increasingly important, for example, to maintain battery power for an extended period of time. Non-portable computing systems also face cooling and power generation issues as their IC components use more power and generate more heat.

[0003] To limit damage from thermal emergencies, one approach may utilize Dynamic Voltage Scaling (DVS). For example, when the temperature exceeds a certain threshold, the frequency and the voltage are dropped to a certain level, and then increased to another level (not necessarily the original one). In multiple core processor designs, however, such an approach would reduce performance as all cores may be penalized whether or not they are causing a thermal emergency. Another approach may use frequency throttling (which may only be a projection of DVS to frequency domain). However, the penalty for such an approach may be linear relative to the power reduction. For example, the penalty of DVS techniques may be less in part because reducing frequency by factor x is accompanied by reducing the voltage by the same factor, and the power is reduced by factor of x^3 as a result.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0004] The detailed description is provided with reference to the accompanying figures. In the figures, the left-most digit(s) of a reference number identifies the figure in which the reference number first appears. The use of the same reference numbers in different figures indicates similar or identical items.

[0005] FIGS. **1**, **6**, and **7** illustrate block diagrams of embodiments of computing systems, which may be utilized to implement various embodiments discussed herein.

[0006] FIGS. **2** and **4** illustrate graphs according to some embodiments.

[0007] FIGS. **3** and **5** illustrate flow diagrams of methods according to some embodiments.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0008] In the following description, numerous specific details are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding of various embodiments. However, various embodiments of the invention may be practiced without the specific details. In other instances, well-known methods, procedures, components, and circuits have not been described in detail so as not to obscure the particular embodiments of the invention. Further, various aspects of embodiments of the invention may be performed using various means, such as integrated semiconductor circuits ("hardware"), computer-readable instructions organized into one or more programs ("software"), or some combination of hardware and software. For the purposes of this disclosure reference to "logic" shall mean either hardware, software, or some combination thereof.

[0009] Some of the embodiments discussed herein may provide efficient power management for multiple processor cores. As discussed above, relying on DVS may reduce performance, as all cores may be penalized whether or not they are causing a thermal emergency. In an embodiment, one or more throttling techniques may be utilized locally (e.g., on a per core basis) for one or more processor cores (e.g., in a multiple core processor), for example, that share a single power plane, in response to detection of a thermal event (e.g., detection of excessive temperature at one or more of the cores). Also, in designs with multiple power planes, power may be distributed among different power planes under energy-based definitions in accordance with one embodiment. Moreover, some embodiments may be applied in computing systems that include one or more processors (e.g., with one or more processor cores), such as those discussed with reference to FIGS. **1-7**.

[0010] More particularly, FIG. **1** illustrates a block diagram of a computing system **100**, according to an embodiment of the invention. The system **100** may include one or more processors **102-1** through **102**-N (generally referred to herein as "processors **102**" or "processor **102**"). The processors **102** may communicate via an interconnection or bus **104**. Each processor may include various components some of which are only discussed with reference to processor **102-1** for clarity. Accordingly, each of the remaining processors **102-2** through **102**-N may include the same or similar components discussed with reference to the processor **102-1**.

[0011] In an embodiment, the processor **102-1** may include one or more processor cores **106-1** through **106**-M (referred to herein as "cores **106**," or "core **106**"), a cache **108**, and/or a router **110**. The processor cores **106** may be implemented on a single integrated circuit (IC) chip. Moreover, the chip may include one or more shared and/or private caches (such as cache **108**), buses or interconnections (such as a bus or interconnection **112**), graphics and/or memory controllers (such as those discussed with reference to FIGS. **6-7**), or other components.

[0012] In one embodiment, the router **110** may be used to communicate between various components of the processor **102-1** and/or system **100**. Moreover, the processor **102-1** may include more than one router **110**. Furthermore, the multitude of routers **110** may be in communication to enable data routing between various components inside or outside of the processor **102-1**.

[0013] The cache **108** may store data (e.g., including instructions) that are utilized by one or more components of the processor **102-1**, such as the cores **106**. For example, the cache **108** may locally cache data stored in a memory **114** for faster access by the components of the processor **102** (e.g., faster access by cores **106**). As shown in FIG. **1**, the memory **114** may communicate with the processors **102** via the interconnection **104**. In an embodiment, the cache **108** (that may

be shared) may be a mid-level cache (MLC), a last level cache (LLC), etc. Also, each of the cores **106** may include a level 1 (L1) cache (**116-1**) (generally referred to herein as "L1 cache **116**") or other levels of cache such as a level 2 (L2) cache. Moreover, various components of the processor **102-1** may communicate with the cache **108** directly, through a bus (e.g., the bus **112**), and/or a memory controller or hub.

[0014] The system **100** may also include a power source **120** (e.g., a direct current (DC) power source or an alternating current (AC) power source) to provide power to one or more components of the system **100**. In some embodiments, the power source **120** may include one or more battery packs. The power source **120** may be coupled to components of system **100** through a voltage regulator (VR) **130**. Moreover, even though FIG. **1** illustrates one power source **120** and one voltage regulator **130**, additional power sources and/or voltage regulators may be utilized. For example, each of the processors **102** may have corresponding voltage regulator(s) and/or power source(s). Also, the voltage regulator(s) **130** may be coupled to a single power plane **135** (e.g., supplying power to all the cores **106**) or to multiple power planes **135** (e.g., where each power plane may supply power to a different core or group of cores).

[0015] Additionally, while FIG. **1** illustrates the power source **120** and the voltage regulator **130** as separate components, the power source **120** and the voltage regulator **130** may be incorporated into other components of system **100**. For example, all or portions of the VR **130** may be incorporated into the power source **120** and/or processor **102**.

[0016] As shown in FIG. **1**, the processor **102** may further include a power management logic **140** to control supply of power to components of the processor **102** (e.g., cores **106**). Logic **140** may have access to one or more storage devices discussed herein to store information relating to operations of logic **140** such as information communicated with various components of system **100** as discussed here. As shown, the logic **140** may be coupled to the VR **130** and/or other components of system **100** (such as the cores **106**). For example, the logic **140** may be coupled to receive information (e.g., in the form of one or more bits or signals) to indicate status of one or more sensors **150** (where the sensor(s) **150** may be provided proximate to components of system **100** (or other computing systems discussed herein such as those discussed with reference to other figures including **4** and **5**, for example), such as the cores **106**, interconnections **104** or **112**, etc., to sense variations in temperature, operating frequency, operating voltage, power consumption, inter-core communication activity, etc.) and/or information from one or more power monitoring logics **145** (e.g., which may indicate the operational status of various components of system **100** such as operating temperature, operating frequency, operating voltage, operating status (e.g., active or inactive), power consumption (instantly or over a period of time), etc.). The logic **140** may instruct the VR **130**, power source **120**, and/or individual components of system **100** (such as the cores **106**) to modify their operations. In an embodiment, variations may be sensed in such a way to account for leakage versus active power. For example, logic **140** may indicate to the VR **130** and/or power source **120** to adjust their output. In some embodiments, logic **140** may request the cores **106** to modify their operating frequency, power consumption, etc. Even though components **140**, **145**, and **150** are shown to be included in processor **102-1**, these components may be provided elsewhere in the system **100**. For example, power management logic **140** may be provided in the VR **130**, in the power source **120**, directly coupled to the interconnection **104**, within one or more (or alternatively all) of the processors **102**, etc.

[0017] Assume that we have a system of n processors, and that there is a single hot core, whose power is to be reduced by a factor of β (i.e., to be multiplied by β, which may lie between 0 and 1) in order to prevent violating thermal constraints. We measure the total slowdown of the system as a weighted sum of slowdowns of each one of the processors. For example, if one core out of 4 is slowed down by 20%, the effective frequency factor may be determined to be (3+0.8)/4 or 95%.

[0018] In an embodiment, the slowdown for different thermal management methods (where S_{dvs} refers to slowdown for DVS and S_{ft} refers to slowdown for frequency control) may be determined as follows:

$$S_{dvs} = \sqrt[3]{\beta} \text{ (e.g., where all cores are penalized)}$$

$$S_{ft} = \frac{n-1}{n} \times 1 + \frac{1}{n}\beta \text{ (e.g., where one core is penalized)}$$

[0019] Referring to FIG. **2**, examples of relative gain of pure throttling versus DVS is illustrated, in accordance with an embodiment. As discussed herein, "pure" throttling refers to situations where only one of the following is used to reduce power consumption in a processor: frequency throttling (which generally refers to projection of DVS to frequency domain only), clock gating (e.g., which involves disabling portions of circuitry where flip-flops do not change state), and/or microarchitectural throttling (e.g., where an on-chip thermal unit monitors the junction temperature of a processor and dynamically adjusts processor operational voltage and/or frequency to provide maximum performance under changing environmental conditions).

[0020] More particularly, the relationship between pure throttling versus DVS may be described by the formula $S_{ft}/S_{dvs}-1$. As can be seen by reference to FIG. **2**, the gain increases with an increase in the number of cores. Note that for two cores DVS may still be more attractive for reasonable values of β in some embodiments. In an embodiment, DVS and/or throttling may be selectively applied to cores of a processor, as will be further discussed herein, e.g., with reference to FIG. **3**.

[0021] In some embodiments, the determination of whether to use one or more of DVS and/or throttling may be based on the number of cores. For example, such techniques may be applied in processors with more than 2 cores. However, such techniques may also be applied to processors with less than 3 cores.

[0022] FIG. **3** illustrates a flow diagram of an embodiment of a method **300** to apply one or more selected techniques to multiple cores of a processor to mange power. In an embodiment, various components discussed with reference to FIGS. **1-2** and **6-7** may be utilized to perform one or more of the operations discussed with reference to FIG. **3**.

[0023] Referring to FIGS. **1-3**, at an operation **302**, it may be determined which (and/or how many) core(s) in a multi-core processor are causing thermal issues (such as thermal stress or excessive operating temperature). For example, logic **140** may receive information from sensors **150** proximate to the cores **106**. Alternatively, this may be done by

estimating power consumption, e.g., via power monitor(s) **145** combined with thermal sensor(s) **150** readings.

[0024] At an operation **304**, it may be determined how many cores in a processor are active and cold (e.g., at a temperature value that is below an excessive threshold temperature value, for example, as detected by the sensor(s) **150**). For example, logic **140** may consider statistics (e.g., provided by monitor(s) **145**, sensor(s) **150**, and/or cores **106** themselves) on operating states of the cores **106** to determine which cores **106** are active and cold. At an operation **306**, the information of operations **302** and/or **304** may be taken into account (including various penalties such as those discussed with reference to FIG. **2**, including for example, voltage transitions penalty for DVS, etc.), and possible constraints (e.g., we may not desire to decrease the frequency of a hot core too much to maintain smooth operation of critical applications) to determine which technique(s) to use to manage power consumption in a multi-core processor. At an operation **308**, the selected technique(s) may be applied to throttle or modify an operational characteristic of one or more of the cores **106** (such as an operating voltage and/or an operating frequency of a processor core **106**). For example, logic **140** may consider DVS, pure throttling techniques, or some combinations thereof to control the power consumption of processors **102**. Moreover, in one embodiment, operation **308** may apply a combination of the techniques, e.g., where DVS reduces all the cores to a certain power state (P-state), and the hot core is additionally slowed down by one of the pure throttling techniques.

[0025] In an embodiment, the operations of method **300** may be repeated continuously (or on a periodic basis), e.g., after operation **308**, operation **302** may be resumed without delay (or after elapsing of a time period, e.g., set by a timer logic). In some embodiments, method **300** may allow a processor to decrease the thermal management performance penalty in thermally limited applications for multiple cores sharing the same power plane.

[0026] Additional power management challenges may however be present with respect to processors having multiple power planes. For example, if multiple power planes sharing the same power source **120** are present in system **100**, power management may need to be satisfied for both individual constraints per power plane and global constraints per package. By doing so, it is possible to share a common package power/energy budget and allow for use of, for example, unused processor core power for more Graphics Effect(s) (GFX) performance in a GFX intensive workload, when processor resources are not fully utilized. However, the techniques discussed herein with reference to multiple power planes may also be applied to implementations that may utilize a single power plane.

[0027] Some current power-based management schemes may miss the temporal aspect of power management, since they generally address only the current point of time. Accordingly, in some embodiments, an energy budget per power plane may be used that permits: (1) to define both individual component (e.g., individual processor core) and shared constraints (e.g., shared amongst multiple components or processor cores) in a way that takes temporal aspects into account; (2) to express effective constraints corresponding to different time constants; (3) to handle the case of on-line changes in the constrains. In an embodiment, power distribution may be managed among different power planes and under energy-based definition(s).

[0028] In some embodiments, energy budget may be managed and/or power setting(s) (e.g., voltage and/or frequency changes) may be made accordingly to a current budget. Energy-based power management may be performed by controlling the energy budget defined iteratively as follows:

$$E_{n+1}=\alpha E_n+(TDP_n-P_n)\Delta t_n \quad (1),$$

[0029] where TDP_n is the Thermal Design Power (TDP) power limit on step n; P_n is the power spent on step n over time Δt_n, and α is the decay component. For example, using α=0.999 corresponds to the window size of seconds, while using α=0.9 corresponds to much smaller window size. The expression for E_n corresponds to the energy "remainder" which is the amount of energy not consumed by the system. The value of the decay component is defined by the requirements of the time window size. Also, the TDP values may be provided by a software application or user in some embodiments.

[0030] Such energy budget corresponds to imposing an exponential mask on the difference between TDP at each time moment and the power spent at this moment, namely:

$$E(t)=\int_0^t \alpha^{t-x}(TDP(x)-P(x))\,dx.$$

[0031] Accordingly, the system (e.g., logic **140**) may set TDP constraints on each of the power planes separately, or/and set TDP constraints on the whole IC package. According to the imposed constraints, multiple budgets may be maintained in some embodiments, for example per power plane for individual constraints and/or per package for shared constraints. Moreover, different budgets power per window size (expressed by α) and/or per TDP constraints may be maintained. Note this framework smoothly handles a case when TDP is changed on-the-fly (e.g., by a software application or a user) in some embodiments. In an embodiment, a set of energy budgets, E_n^k may be maintained, e.g., where k corresponds to a specific constraint, and n to the time step. One goal of such power management mechanisms is to keep the energy budgets positive, while maximizing performance.

[0032] In an embodiment, a controller budget may be defined (e.g., implemented by the logic **140**). Per power plane i, we define a controller function, denoted by $f^i(E)$, which maps energy budget onto the discrete set of power states. In one embodiment, a controller, which is required to be a non-decreasing function, maps a range $[E_{low}^i, E_{high}^i]$ onto the discrete range of $[P_n^i, P_0^i]$, where P_0^i is the maximal turbo state for this power plane, and P_n^i is the maximal efficiency state. Budget values below E_{low}^i are mapped into P_n^i, while budget values above E_{high}^i are mapped onto P_0^i. Other requirements may include meeting some requirements in anchor points—for example, the zero budget corresponds to the guaranteed power state called P_1:

$$f^i(E)=P_n^i, E\leq E_{low}^i$$

$$f^i(0)=P_1^1$$

$$f^i(E)=P_0^i, E\geq E_{high}^i$$

[0033] In accordance with one embodiment, an example of a controller function is shown in FIG. **4**. The concrete controller may take into account the requirements of a specific power plane (such the penalty on transitions between P-states).

[0034] Regarding the constraints, assume existence of m controllers, $f^i(E)$ corresponding to different power planes. For constraint k, user (or application defined) preferences that describe how budget E^k is distributed among power planes may be determined. For example, such information may be provided as an input in the form of vectors W_k of length m, such that entry i corresponds to the portion of the budget that goes to power plane i. For individual constraints, a single power plane may obtain the entire budget, so the corresponding weight vector is a unit vector. In the general case, power plane i may obtain the portion of the budget:

$$E^{k,i}=W_{ki}E^k \tag{2}$$

[0035] In some cases, we may have that for a power plane i, its portion $W_{ki}E^k$ is high enough to provide maximal turbo (namely, $W_{ki}E^k \geqq E_{high}^i$). In this case, the "unused" budget for this power plane, $W_{ki}E^k - E_{high}^i$ may be distributed among the rest of the power planes proportionally to their weights.

[0036] Let us denote by $E_n^{k,i}$ the portion of the budget E^k that receives power plane i at step t_n, then the resulting P-state recommendation on this step for power plane i may be written as:

$$u_n^i = \min_k f^i(E_n^{k,i}) \tag{3}$$

[0037] Collecting the recommendations over all the constraints may provide the resulting setup per power plane. Note that the result may be an upper bound and may be further modified by other algorithms in some embodiments. Moreover, in accordance with an embodiment of the invention, an example of a flow chart for energy-based power management is shown in FIG. **5**.

[0038] More particularly, FIG. **5** illustrates a flow diagram of an embodiment of a method **500** to apply one or more selected techniques power management operations to multiple cores of a processor. In an embodiment, various components discussed with reference to FIGS. **1-4** and **6-7** may be utilized to perform one or more of the operations discussed with reference to FIG. **5**.

[0039] Referring to FIGS. **1-5**, at an operation **502**, the energy budget remainder per constraint E_n^k may be determined (e.g., by the logic **140** in accordance with formula (1) above). At an operation **504**, the energy budget remainder per power plane $E_n^{k,i}$ may be determined (e.g., by the logic **140** in accordance with formula (2) above). At an operation **506**, controller recommendations per power plane u_n^i may be determined (e.g., by the logic **140** in accordance with formula (3) above). At operation **508**, the time step may be incremented (e.g., by logic **140**), e.g., to determine future values for each power plane budget during a next time period.

[0040] In an embodiment, the operations of method **300** may be repeated continuously (or on a periodic basis), e.g., after operation **308**, operation **302** may be resumed without delay (or after elapsing of a time period, e.g., set by a timer logic).

[0041] In an embodiment, the operations of method **500** may be repeated continuously (or on a periodic basis), e.g., after operation **508**, operation **502** may be resumed without delay (or after elapsing of a time period, e.g., set by a timer logic). In an embodiment, techniques discussed with reference to FIGS. **2-3** may be combined with FIGS. **4-5**. For example, the techniques discussed with reference to FIGS. **2-3** may be applied to multiple power plane processors. Also, the techniques discussed with reference to FIGS. **4-5** may be applied to single power plane processor.

[0042] FIG. **6** illustrates a block diagram of a computing system **600** in accordance with an embodiment of the invention. The computing system **600** may include one or more central processing unit(s) (CPUs) or processors **602-1** through **602**-P (which may be referred to herein as "processors **602**" or "processor **602**"). The processors **602** may communicate via an interconnection network (or bus) **604**. The processors **602** may include a general purpose processor, a network processor (that processes data communicated over a computer network **603**), or other types of a processor (including a reduced instruction set computer (RISC) processor or a complex instruction set computer (CISC)). Moreover, the processors **602** may have a single or multiple core design. The processors **602** with a multiple core design may integrate different types of processor cores on the same integrated circuit (IC) die. Also, the processors **602** with a multiple core design may be implemented as symmetrical or asymmetrical multiprocessors. In an embodiment, one or more of the processors **602** may be the same or similar to the processors **102** of FIG. **1**. In some embodiments, one or more of the processors **602** may include one or more of the cores **106**, logic **140**, sensor(s) **150**, and/or power monitor(s) **145** of FIG. **1**. Also, the operations discussed with reference to FIGS. **1-5** may be performed by one or more components of the system **600**. For example, a voltage regulator (such as VR **130** of FIG. **1**) may regulate voltage supplied to one or more components of FIG. **6** at the direction of logic **140**.

[0043] A chipset **606** may also communicate with the interconnection network **604**. The chipset **606** may include a graphics and memory control hub (GMCH) **608**. The GMCH **608** may include a memory controller **610** that communicates with a memory **612**. The memory **612** may store data, including sequences of instructions that are executed by the processor **602**, or any other device included in the computing system **600**. In one embodiment of the invention, the memory **612** may include one or more volatile storage (or memory) devices such as random access memory (RAM), dynamic RAM (DRAM), synchronous DRAM (SDRAM), static RAM (SRAM), or other types of storage devices. Nonvolatile memory may also be utilized such as a hard disk. Additional devices may communicate via the interconnection network **604**, such as multiple CPUs and/or multiple system memories.

[0044] The GMCH **608** may also include a graphics interface **614** that communicates with a graphics accelerator **616**. In one embodiment of the invention, the graphics interface **614** may communicate with the graphics accelerator **616** via an accelerated graphics port (AGP). In an embodiment of the invention, a display (such as a flat panel display, a cathode ray tube (CRT), a projection screen, etc.) may communicate with the graphics interface **614** through, for example, a signal converter that translates a digital representation of an image stored in a storage device such as video memory or system memory into display signals that are interpreted and displayed by the display. The display signals produced by the display device may pass through various control devices before being interpreted by and subsequently displayed on the display.

[0045] A hub interface **618** may allow the GMCH **608** and an input/output control hub (ICH) **620** to communicate. The ICH **620** may provide an interface to I/O devices that com-

municate with the computing system **600**. The ICH **620** may communicate with a bus **622** through a peripheral bridge (or controller) **624**, such as a peripheral component interconnect (PCI) bridge, a universal serial bus (USB) controller, or other types of peripheral bridges or controllers. The bridge **624** may provide a data path between the processor **602** and peripheral devices. Other types of topologies may be utilized. Also, multiple buses may communicate with the ICH **620**, e.g., through multiple bridges or controllers. Moreover, other peripherals in communication with the ICH **620** may include, in various embodiments of the invention, integrated drive electronics (IDE) or small computer system interface (SCSI) hard drive(s), USB port(s), a keyboard, a mouse, parallel port(s), serial port(s), floppy disk drive(s), digital output support (e.g., digital video interface (DVI)), or other devices.

[0046] The bus **622** may communicate with an audio device **626**, one or more disk drive(s) **628**, and one or more network interface device(s) **630** (which is in communication with the computer network **603**). Other devices may communicate via the bus **622**. Also, various components (such as the network interface device **630**) may communicate with the GMCH **608** in some embodiments of the invention. In addition, the processor **602** and the GMCH **608** may be combined to form a single chip. Furthermore, the graphics accelerator **616** may be included within the GMCH **608** in other embodiments of the invention.

[0047] Furthermore, the computing system **600** may include volatile and/or nonvolatile memory (or storage). For example, nonvolatile memory may include one or more of the following: read-only memory (ROM), programmable ROM (PROM), erasable PROM (EPROM), electrically EPROM (EEPROM), a disk drive (e.g., **628**), a floppy disk, a compact disk ROM (CD-ROM), a digital versatile disk (DVD), flash memory, a magneto-optical disk, or other types of nonvolatile machine-readable media that are capable of storing electronic data (e.g., including instructions). In an embodiment, components of the system **600** may be arranged in a point-to-point (PtP) configuration. For example, processors, memory, and/or input/output devices may be interconnected by a number of point-to-point interfaces.

[0048] FIG. **7** illustrates a computing system **700** that is arranged in a point-to-point (PtP) configuration, according to an embodiment of the invention. In particular, FIG. **7** shows a system where processors, memory, and input/output devices are interconnected by a number of point-to-point interfaces. The operations discussed with reference to FIGS. **1-6** may be performed by one or more components of the system **700**. For example, a voltage regulator (such as VR **130** of FIG. **1**) may regulate voltage supplied to one or more components of FIG. **7**.

[0049] As illustrated in FIG. **7**, the system **700** may include several processors, of which only two, processors **702** and **704** are shown for clarity. The processors **702** and **704** may each include a local memory controller hub (MCH) **706** and **708** to enable communication with memories **710** and **712**. The memories **710** and/or **712** may store various data such as those discussed with reference to the memory **612** of FIG. **6**. Also, the processors **702** and **704** may include one or more of the cores **106**, logic **140**, sensor(s) **150**, and/or power monitor (s) **145** of FIG. **1**.

[0050] In an embodiment, the processors **702** and **704** may be one of the processors **602** discussed with reference to FIG. **6**. The processors **702** and **704** may exchange data via a point-to-point (PtP) interface **714** using PtP interface circuits **716** and **718**, respectively. Also, the processors **702** and **704** may each exchange data with a chipset **720** via individual PtP interfaces **722** and **724** using point-to-point interface circuits **726**, **728**, **730**, and **732**. The chipset **720** may further exchange data with a high-performance graphics circuit **734** via a high-performance graphics interface **736**, e.g., using a PtP interface circuit **737**.

[0051] In at least one embodiment, one or more operations discussed with reference to FIGS. **1-6** may be performed by the processors **702** or **704** and/or other components of the system **700** such as those communicating via a bus **740**. Other embodiments of the invention, however, may exist in other circuits, logic units, or devices within the system **700** of FIG. **7**. Furthermore, some embodiments of the invention may be distributed throughout several circuits, logic units, or devices illustrated in FIG. **7**.

[0052] Chipset **720** may communicate with the bus **740** using a PtP interface circuit **741**. The bus **740** may have one or more devices that communicate with it, such as a bus bridge **742** and I/O devices **743**. Via a bus **744**, the bus bridge **742** may communicate with other devices such as a keyboard/mouse **745**, communication devices **746** (such as modems, network interface devices, or other communication devices that may communicate with the computer network **603**), audio I/O device, and/or a data storage device **748**. The data storage device **748** may store code **749** that may be executed by the processors **702** and/or **704**.

[0053] In various embodiments of the invention, the operations discussed herein, e.g., with reference to FIGS. **1-7**, may be implemented as hardware (e.g., logic circuitry), software, firmware, or combinations thereof, which may be provided as a computer program product, e.g., including a machine-readable or computer-readable medium having stored thereon instructions (or software procedures) used to program a computer to perform a process discussed herein. The machine-readable medium may include a storage device such as those discussed with respect to FIGS. **1-7**. Additionally, such computer-readable media may be downloaded as a computer program product, wherein the program may be transferred from a remote computer (e.g., a server) to a requesting computer (e.g., a client) by way of data signals provided in a carrier wave or other propagation medium via a communication link (e.g., a bus, a modem, or a network connection).

[0054] Reference in the specification to "one embodiment" or "an embodiment" means that a particular feature, structure, and/or characteristic described in connection with the embodiment may be included in at least an implementation. The appearances of the phrase "in one embodiment" in various places in the specification may or may not be all referring to the same embodiment. Also, in the description and claims, the terms "coupled" and "connected," along with their derivatives, may be used. In some embodiments of the invention, "connected" may be used to indicate that two or more elements are in direct physical or electrical contact with each other. "Coupled" may mean that two or more elements are in direct physical or electrical contact. However, "coupled" may also mean that two or more elements may not be in direct contact with each other, but may still cooperate or interact with each other.

[0055] Thus, although embodiments of the invention have been described in language specific to structural features and/or methodological acts, it is to be understood that claimed subject matter may not be limited to the specific features or

acts described. Rather, the specific features and acts are disclosed as sample forms of implementing the claimed subject matter.

1. An apparatus comprising:
a processor having a plurality of processor cores;
a single power plane to supply power to more than one of the plurality of processor cores; and
a power management logic to cause a modification to an operational characteristic of at least one processor core of the plurality of processor cores in response to:
a detection of excessive temperature at the least one processor core; and
a determination of which one of the other processor cores of the plurality of processor cores are active and at a temperature value.

2. The apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the temperature value is below an excessive threshold temperature value.

3. The apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the power management logic is to cause: a reduction of voltage supplied to more than one cores of the processor and a reduction of the operational characteristic of the at least one processor core.

4. The apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the operation characteristic of the at least one processor core comprises one or more of: an operating voltage and an operating frequency.

5. The apparatus of claim **1**, further comprising one or more sensors to detect variations, corresponding to one or more of the plurality of processor cores, in one or more of: temperature, operating frequency, operating voltage, and power consumption.

6. The apparatus of claim **1**, further comprising a voltage regulator to supply power to more than one cores of the processor via the single power plane.

7. The apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the plurality of processor cores consist essentially of 3 or more processor cores.

8. The apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the processor and the power management logic are on a single integrated circuit.

9. The apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the power management logic is to determine an energy budget for each of a plurality of power planes based on:
an energy remainder of a corresponding power plane of a plurality of power planes that indicates how much energy remained unconsumed during a previous time period; and
one or more of a plurality of constraints corresponding to each of the plurality of power planes.

10. An apparatus comprising:
a processor having a plurality of processor cores;
a plurality of power planes to supply power to the plurality of processor cores; and
a power management logic to determine an energy budget for each of the plurality of power planes based on:
an energy remainder of a corresponding power plane of the plurality of power planes that indicates how much energy remained unconsumed during a previous time period; and
one or more of a plurality of constraints corresponding to each of the plurality of power planes.

11. The apparatus of claim **10**, wherein the power management logic is to determine the energy reminder based on a thermal design power (TDP) limit during the time period.

12. The apparatus of claim **10**, wherein the power management logic is to determine the energy reminder based on an amount of power spent over the time period.

13. The apparatus of claim **10**, wherein the power management logic is to determine the energy reminder based on a decay component.

14. The apparatus of claim **10**, wherein the power management logic is to determine an energy budget for each of the plurality of power planes based on all of the plurality of constraints.

15. The apparatus of claim **10**, further comprising one or more sensors to detect variations, corresponding to one or more of the plurality of processor cores, in one or more of: temperature, operating frequency, operating voltage, and power consumption.

16. The apparatus of claim **10**, further comprising a voltage regulator to supply power to the processor via the plurality of power planes.

17. The apparatus of claim **10**, wherein the power management logic to cause a modification to an operational characteristic of at least one processor core of the plurality of processor cores in response to:
a detection of excessive temperature at the least one processor core; and
a determination of which one of the other processor cores of the plurality of processor cores are active and at a temperature value.

18. The apparatus of claim **17**, wherein the temperature value is below an excessive threshold temperature value.

19. The apparatus of claim **17**, wherein the power management logic is to cause: a reduction of voltage supplied to more than one cores of the processor and a reduction of the operational characteristic of the at least one processor core.

20. A method comprising:
determining whether to modify an operational characteristic of at least one processor core of a plurality of processor cores in response to: a detection of excessive temperature at the least one processor core and a determination of which one of the other processor cores of the plurality of processor cores are active and at a temperature value; and
determining an energy budget for one or more power planes, coupled to supply power to the plurality of processor cores, based on: an energy remainder of a corresponding power plane of the one or more power planes that indicates how much energy remained unconsumed during a previous time period and one or more constraints corresponding to each of the one or more power planes.

21. The method of claim **20**, wherein the temperature value is below an excessive threshold temperature value.

22. The method of claim **20**, wherein the operation characteristic of the at least one processor core comprises one or more of: an operating voltage and an operating frequency.

23. The method of claim **20**, further comprising detecting variations, corresponding to one or more of the plurality of processor cores, in one or more of: temperature, operating frequency, operating voltage, and power consumption.

24. The method of claim **20**, wherein determining the energy budget for one or more power planes is performed based on one or more of:
a thermal design power (TDP) limit during the time period;
an amount of power spent over the time period; and
a decay component.

25. A system comprising:

a processor having a plurality of processor cores;

one or more power planes to supply power to the plurality of processor cores;

a voltage regulator to supply power to the plurality of processor cores via the one or more power planes; and

a power management logic to:

determine whether to modify an operational characteristic of at least one processor core of a plurality of processor cores in response to: a detection of excessive temperature at the least one processor core and a determination of which one of the other processor cores of the plurality of processor cores are active and at a temperature value; and

determine an energy budget for one or more power planes, coupled to supply power to the plurality of processor cores, based on: an energy remainder of a corresponding power plane of the one or more power planes that indicates how much energy remained unconsumed during a previous time period and one or more constraints corresponding to each of the one or more power planes.

26. The system of claim **25**, further comprising one or more sensors to detect variations, corresponding to one or more of the plurality of processor cores, in one or more of: temperature, operating frequency, operating voltage, and power consumption.

27. The system of claim **25**, wherein the temperature value is below an excessive threshold temperature value.

28. The system of claim **25**, wherein the power management logic is to cause: a reduction of voltage supplied to more than one cores of the processor and a reduction of the operational characteristic of the at least one processor core.

29. The system of claim **25**, wherein the power management logic is to determine the energy remainder based on one or more of:

a thermal design power (TDP) limit during the time period;

an amount of power spent over the time period; and

a decay component.

30. The system of claim **25**, further comprising an audio device.

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