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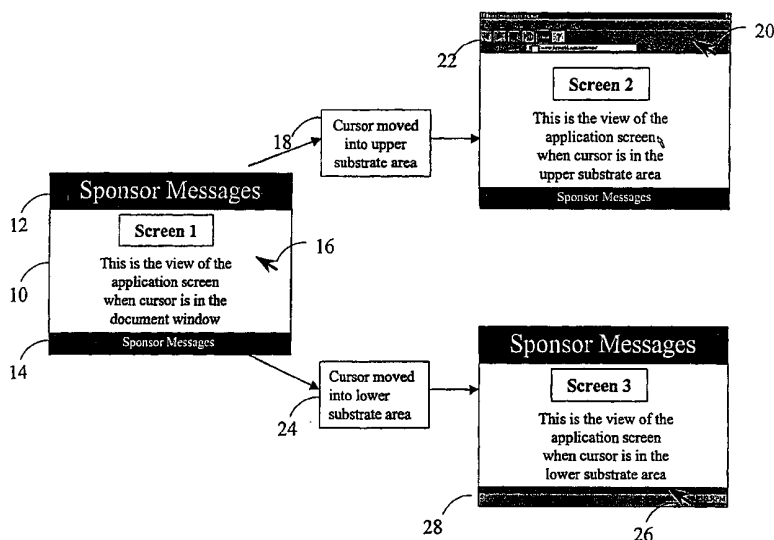
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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: METHOD AND SYSTEM OF CREATING FLOATING WINDOWS FOR DISPLAYING SPONSOR INFORMATION, MESSAGES OR PROGRAMS IN NON-OBTRUSIVE AREAS OF THE GRAPHIC USER INTERFACE OF A SOFTWARE APPLICATION



(57) Abstract: Most software applications of the present time have graphic user interface comprising of a document display window and a document supporting substrate area. The document display window is the area where the application user inputs the data and views the results. The substrate areas contain the menus, tools, controls and other accessories, which support the execution of the document. The focus of the application user most of the time is the document window. The substrate area is accessed only intermittently for using the menus, tools and other controls. Depending upon the type of application and the view settings, about 60 to 80 percent of the visible display area is covered by the document window. The remaining 40 to 20 percent is the substrate area. The

present invention uses the substrate areas of a software application for displaying sponsor messages / information, contained in one or more floating windows. Such floating windows, continuously display in a user friendly way, sponsor messages / information, in a programmed fashion, and also contain URL address for linking the user to the sponsor's web site via an Internet connection, activated by clicking a keyboard mouse combination or by key strike alone or by clicking a button in the corresponding substrate area. The menus, tools and other controls hiding behind the floating windows can be accessed in a non-intrusive manner in one of the several automatic cursor-responsive ways described in the embodiment, without having to manually move such floating windows. In another preferred embodiment, such cursor-responsive floating windows are not restricted to the substrate areas and can be located in the document area for displaying information in layers.



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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

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A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

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B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

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Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

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C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	EP 0 713 172 A (MICROSOFT CORP) 22 May 1996 (1996-05-22) the whole document	1,2,50, 90,131, 158
X	US 5 721 853 A (SMITH KIM C) 24 February 1998 (1998-02-24) column 4, last paragraph -column 6, paragraph 1; figures 1-7	1,2,50, 90,131, 158
A	US 5 657 049 A (LUDOLPH FRANK ET AL) 12 August 1997 (1997-08-12) abstract column 9, paragraph 3 figures 4A-10C	1,50,90, 131,158
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☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

* Special categories of cited documents :

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

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"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

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"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.

"&" document member of the same patent family

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International Application No

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C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US 4 586 035 A (BAKER DAVID C ET AL) 29 April 1986 (1986-04-29) column 2, line 41 -column 3, line 27; figures 3,4,8-10 ---	1,50,90, 131,158
A	EP 0 422 577 A (MICROSLATE INC) 17 April 1991 (1991-04-17) abstract figures 3B-8 ---	1,50,90, 131,158
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X	EP 0 822 535 A (AT & T CORP) 4 February 1998 (1998-02-04) column 7, paragraph 2 -column 13, paragraph 1; figures 5-11 ---	155-157, 201, 203-223, 228
X	US 5 890 172 A (SINGH C VINAY KUMAR ET AL) 30 March 1999 (1999-03-30) column 6, line 40 -column 9, line 21; figures 5A-6,8A-8C ---	155-157, 201,203, 223,228
A	US 5 809 242 A (MARSH BRIAN D ET AL) 15 September 1998 (1998-09-15) the whole document -----	155,201

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Int. tional application No.
PCT/GB 00/02109

Box I Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 1 of first sheet)

This International Search Report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:
2. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to parts of the International Application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful International Search can be carried out, specifically:
3. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box II Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

see additional sheet

1. ☒ As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this International Search Report covers all searchable claims.
2. ☐ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, this Authority did not invite payment of any additional fee.
3. ☐ As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this International Search Report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:
4. ☐ No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this International Search Report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

Remark on Protest

- ☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest.
- ☒ No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

FURTHER INFORMATION CONTINUED FROM PCT/ISA/ 210

This International Searching Authority found multiple (groups of) inventions in this international application, as follows:

1. Claims: 1-154,158-200

relating to a graphical user interface for a software application (and corresponding system) comprising document area for an application, a substrate area for the application, the substrate area operable to display a message when a cursor is in the document area and to display functions that support the document area in place of the message when the cursor is in the substrate area in which the document area comprising about 60 to 80 percent of the application window, the substrate area comprising 20 to 40 percent of the application window comprising 20 to 40 percent of the application window and the message displayed in the substrate area comprising substantially all of the substrate area.

2. Claims: 155-157,201-228

relating to a method for displaying information to a user of a graphical user interface comprising the steps of automatically retrieving a message over the Internet when the user is browsing the Internet; locally storing the message; displaying the message by default in a window masking underlying functions in a substrate area of an application; closing the window to expose the underlying functions in response to at least one of a keyboard command in the substrate area.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/GB 00/02109

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