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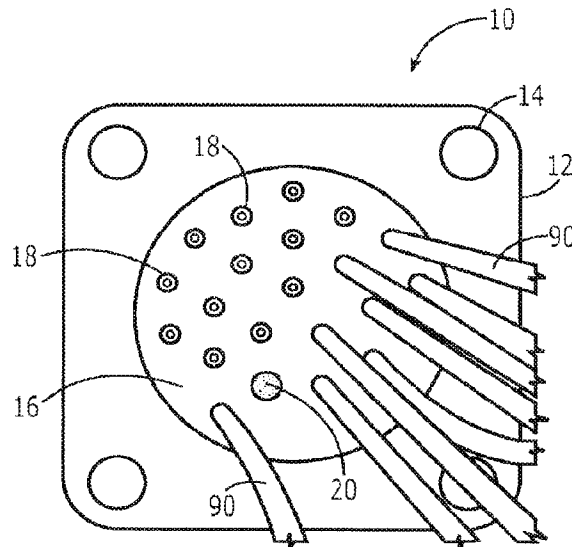
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(54) Titre : METHODE ET SYSTEME D'IDENTIFICATION DES TROUS D'INSERTION DE CONTACT DE CABLE D'UN CONNECTEUR

(54) Title: METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR IDENTIFYING WIRE CONTACT INSERTION HOLES OF A CONNECTOR



(57) **Abrégé/Abstract:**

A method, system and computer program product are provided for identifying wire contact insertion holes of a connector to facilitate the automated insertion of the wire ends of a wire bundle assembly into the wire contact insertion holes of a connector. In the context of a method, each of a plurality of pixels of an image of the connector is analyzed to identify one or more candidate contact insertion holes for the connector. The method also determines whether the one or more candidate contact insertion holes are to be consolidated and, if so, consolidates the one or more candidate contact insertion holes. The method further includes assigning contact identification numbers of the connector to the one or more candidate contact insertion holes.

ABSTRACT

A method, system and computer program product are provided for identifying wire contact insertion holes of a connector to facilitate the automated insertion of the wire ends of a wire bundle assembly into the wire contact insertion holes of a connector. In the context of a method, each of a plurality of pixels of an image of the connector is analyzed to identify one or more candidate contact insertion holes for the connector. The method also determines whether the one or more candidate contact insertion holes are to be consolidated and, if so, consolidates the one or more candidate contact insertion holes. The method further includes assigning contact identification numbers of the connector to the one or more candidate contact insertion holes.

TECHNICAL FIELD

5 **[0001]** A method, system and computer program product are provided in accordance with an example embodiment in order to identify wire contact insertion holes of a connector to facilitate, for example, automated insertion of wire ends into respective wire contact insertion holes of a connector.

10 BACKGROUND

[0003] The wire ends of a wire bundle assembly may be manually inserted into the respective wire contact insertion holes defined by a connector. As wire bundle assemblies commonly include hundreds of wires, this manual connection process may be relatively time consuming and error prone and, as a result, may increase the cost of the overall assembly including the wire bundle assembly. As such, automated techniques to insert the wire ends of a wire bundle assembly into the wire contact insertion holes of a connector have been developed in an effort to reduce the time expended to make the connections and to correspondingly reduce the cost of the resulting assembly. However, wire bundle assembly machines generally require the connectors to be in a very restricted and controlled set of locations in order to increase the likelihood that the wire ends of the wire bundle assembly may be properly inserted into the wire contact insertion holes of the connector. As such, wire bundle assembly machines limit the flexibility with which connectors may be presented and, as such, are not suitable for all scenarios.

BRIEF SUMMARY

[0004] A method, system and computer program product are provided for identifying wire contact insertion holes of a connector so as to facilitate the automated insertion of the wire ends of a wire bundle assembly into the wire contact insertion holes of a connector. By facilitating the automated insertion of the wire ends of a wire bundle assembly into the wire contact insertion holes of a connector, the time required to establish such connections and correspondingly the cost associated with the resulting assembly may be reduced while reducing the error rate associated with the connections. The method, system and computer program product of an example embodiment provide substantial flexibility in relation to the manner in which the connector may be located, while still permitting the wire ends of a wire bundle assembly to be securely inserted into and electrically connected to the appropriate wire contact insertion holes of the connector.

[0005] In an example embodiment, a method for identifying wire contact insertion holes defined by a connector is provided that includes analyzing each of a plurality of pixels of an image of the connector to identify one or more candidate contact insertion holes for the connector. The method also determines whether the one or more candidate contact insertion holes are to be consolidated and, if so, consolidates the one or more candidate contact insertion holes. Following consolidation, the method further includes assigning contact identification (ID) numbers of the connector to the one or more candidate contact insertion holes.

[0006] The method of an example embodiment additionally includes determining whether the one or more candidate contact insertion holes include one or more outliers, and if so, eliminating the one or more candidate contact insertion holes that is the outlier from further consideration. Additionally or alternatively, the method of an example embodiment eliminates one or more outliers during or after assigning contact ID numbers of the connector to the one or more candidate contact insertion holes. The method of an example embodiment also includes assigning locations in a connector-based coordinate system to the one or more candidate contact insertion holes following consolidation and elimination of the one or more outliers. The method of this example embodiment also includes determining the candidate contact insertion hole into which a wire end is to be inserted based upon the contact ID number of the candidate contact insertion hole and determining a position of a robotic end-effector utilized to insert the wire end into the candidate contact

insertion hole based upon the location of the candidate contact insertion hole in the connector-based coordinate system.

[0007] The method of an example embodiment analyzes each of the plurality of pixels of the image by identifying a pixel as a candidate contact insertion hole in an instance
5 in which the pixel has a color that satisfies a predefined criteria and is at least partially surrounded by a plurality of pixels that have a color that is different than the color of the pixel and that satisfies a second predefined condition. The second predefined condition is different than the first predefined condition. In this regard, the second predefined condition may be defined based upon the color of the pixel such that the pixel identified as a
10 candidate contact insertion hole is darker than the plurality of pixels that at least partially surround the pixel. The method of an example embodiment consolidates the one or more candidate contact insertion holes by consolidating a plurality of neighboring candidate contact insertion holes to a single candidate contact having a location based upon a combination of locations of the plurality of candidate contact insertion holes that are
15 consolidated. In an example embodiment, the method assigns contact ID numbers by comparing a predetermined template of contact locations of the connector to the candidate contact insertion holes. In this example embodiment, the method compares the predetermined template of contact locations of the connector to the candidate contact insertion holes by modifying a position of the predetermined template relative to the
20 candidate contact insertion holes to identify a closest match between the predetermined template and the candidate contact insertion holes.

[0008] In another example embodiment, a system is provided for identifying wire contact insertion holes defined by a connector. The system includes a camera configured to capture an image of the connector. The system also includes a computing device
25 configured to analyze each of a plurality of pixels of the image of the connector to identify one or more candidate contact insertion holes for the connector. The computing device is also configured to determine whether the one or more candidate contact insertion holes are to be consolidated and, if so, to consolidate the one or more candidate contact insertion holes. Following consolidation, the computing device is further configured to assign contact
30 ID numbers of the connector to the one or more candidate contact insertion holes.

[0009] The computing device of an example embodiment is additionally configured to determine whether the one or more candidate contact insertion holes include one or more

outliers and, if so, to eliminate the one or more candidate contact insertion holes that is the outlier from further consideration. In an example embodiment, the computing device is further configured to further eliminate one or more outliers during or after assigning contact ID numbers of the connector to the one or more candidate contact insertion holes. The
5 computing device of the system of an example embodiment is also configured to assign locations in a connector-based coordinate system to the one on one candidate contact insertion holes following consolidation and elimination of the one or more outliers. In this regard, the computing device is also configured to determine the candidate contact insertion hole into which a wire end is to be inserted based upon the contact ID number of the
10 candidate contact insertion hole and to determine a position of a robotic end-effector that is utilized to insert the wire end into the candidate contact insertion hole based upon the location of the candidate contact insertion hole in the connector-based coordinate system.

[0010] The computing device of the system of an example embodiment is configured to analyze each of the plurality of pixels of the image by identifying the pixel as a candidate
15 contact insertion hole in an instance in which the pixel has a color that satisfy a first predefined criteria and is at least partially surrounded by a plurality of pixels that have a color that is different than the color of the pixel and that satisfy a second predefined criteria, different than the first predefined criteria. The second predefined criteria is defined based upon the color of the pixel such that the pixel identified as a candidate contact insertion hole
20 is darker than the plurality of pixels that at least partially surround the pixel. The computing device of a system of an example embodiment is configured to consolidate the one or more candidate contact insertion holes by consolidating a plurality of neighboring candidate contact insertion holes to a single candidate contact insertion hole having a location based upon a combination of locations to the plurality of candidate contact insertion holes that are
25 consolidated. The computing device of the system of an example embodiment is configured to assign contact ID numbers by comparing a predetermined template of contact locations of the connector to the candidate contact insertion holes. The computing device of this example embodiment is configured to compare the predetermined template of contact locations of the connector to the candidate contact insertion holes. The computing device of
30 this example embodiment is configured to compare the predetermined template of contact locations of the connector to the candidate contact insertion holes by modifying a position of the predetermined template relative to the candidate contact insertion holes to identify the

closest match between the predetermined template and the candidate contact insertion holes.

[0011] In a further example embodiment, a computer program product is provided for identifying wire contact insertion holes defined by a connector. The computer program product includes at least one non-transitory computer-readable storage medium having computer-executable program code instructions stored therein. The computer-executable program code instructions include program code instructions to analyze each of a plurality of pixels of an image of a connector to identify one or more candidate contact insertion holes for the connector. The computer-executable program code instructions also include program code instructions to determine whether the one or more candidate contact insertion holes are to be consolidated and, if so, to consolidate the one or more candidate contact insertion holes. The computer-executable program code instructions additionally include program code instructions to assign, following consolidation and elimination of one or more outliers, contact identification (ID) numbers to the one or more candidate contact insertion holes.

[0012] The computer-executable program code instructions of an example embodiment further include program code instructions to determine whether the one or more candidate contact insertion holes include one or more outliers, and, if so, to eliminate the one or more candidate contact insertion holes that is the outlier from further consideration. The computing device is further configured to further eliminate one or more outliers during or after assigning contact ID numbers of the connector to the one or more candidate contact insertion holes. The computer-executable program code instructions of an example embodiment also include program code instructions to assign locations in a connector-based coordinate system to the one or more candidate contact insertion holes following consolidation and elimination of the one or more outliers. In this example embodiment, the computer-executable program code instructions further include program code instructions to determine the candidate contact insertion hole into which a wire end is to be inserted based upon the ID number of the candidate contact insertion hole and to determine a position of a robotic end-effector that is utilized to insert the wire end into the candidate contact insertion hole based upon the location of the candidate contact insertion hole in the connector-based coordinate system. In an example embodiment, the program code instructions to analyze each of the plurality of pixels of the image include program code instructions to identify a

pixel as a candidate contact insertion hole in an instance in which the pixel has a color that satisfies a predefined criteria and is at least partially surrounded by a plurality of pixels that have a color that is different than the color of the pixel and that satisfy a second predefined criteria, different than the first predefined criteria.

5 **[0013]** In a further example embodiment, an apparatus is provided for identifying wire contact insertion holes defined by a connector that includes means for analyzing each of a plurality of pixels of an image of the connector to identify one or more candidate contact insertion holes for the connector. The apparatus also includes means for determining whether the one or more candidate contact insertion holes are to be consolidated and, if so, means for
10 consolidating the one or more candidate contact insertion holes. The apparatus additionally includes means for determining whether the one or more candidate contact insertion holes include one or more outliers, and if so, means for eliminating the one or more candidate contact insertion holes that is the outlier from further consideration. Following consolidation and elimination of one or more outliers, the apparatus further includes means for assigning
15 contact identification (ID) numbers of the connector to the one or more candidate contact insertion holes.

[0013a] In one embodiment, there is provided a method for identifying wire contact insertion holes defined by a connector. The method involves capturing an image of the connector using a camera. The method further involves causing at least one processor to
20 analyze each of a plurality of pixels of the image to identify one or more candidate contact insertion holes for the connector by: causing the at least one processor to identify a first pixel of the plurality of pixels of the image that has an intensity value that satisfies a first predefined intensity criteria and, following identification of the first pixel that satisfies the first predefined intensity criteria, determine whether the first pixel is at least partially surrounded by a ring of
25 pixels that satisfy a second predefined intensity criteria. The ring of pixels has a radius between an inner diameter and an outer diameter. The outer diameter of the ring of pixels is defined based upon a size of an outer diameter of the one or more candidate contact insertion holes. The method further involves causing the at least one processor to assign contact identification (ID) numbers of the connector to the one or more candidate contact insertion
30 holes.

[0013b] In another embodiment, there is provided a system for identifying wire contact insertion holes defined by a connector. The system includes a camera configured to capture an image of the connector. The system further includes a computing device configured to analyze each of a plurality of pixels of the image to identify one or more candidate contact insertion holes for the connector by being configured to: identify a first pixel of the plurality of pixels of the image that has an intensity value that satisfies a first predefined intensity criteria and, following identification of the first pixel that satisfies the first predefined intensity criteria, determine whether the first pixel is at least partially surrounded by a ring of pixels that satisfy a second predefined intensity criteria. The ring of pixels has a radius between an inner diameter and an outer diameter. The outer diameter of the ring of pixels is defined based upon a size of an outer diameter of the one or more candidate contact insertion holes. The computing device is further configured to assign contact identification (ID) numbers of the connector to the one or more candidate contact insertion holes.

[0013c] In another embodiment, there is provided a system including a camera configured to capture an image of a connector and computer program product for identifying wire contact insertion holes defined by the connector, the computer program product including at least one non-transitory computer-readable storage medium having computer-executable program code instructions stored therein. The computer-executable program code instructions include program code instructions that, when executed by a computing device, cause the computing device to analyze each of a plurality of pixels of the image to identify one or more candidate contact insertion holes for the connector by: identifying a first pixel of the plurality of pixels that has an intensity value that satisfies a first predefined intensity criteria and, following identification of the first pixel that satisfies the first predefined intensity criteria, determining whether the first pixel is at least partially surrounded by a ring of pixels that satisfy a second predefined intensity criteria. The ring of pixels has a radius between an inner diameter and an outer diameter. The outer diameter of the ring of pixels is defined based upon a size of an outer diameter of the one or more candidate contact insertion holes for the connector. The computer product further includes program code instructions that, when executed by the computing device, cause the computing device to assign contact identification (ID) numbers of the connector to the one or more candidate contact insertion holes.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

- [0014] Having thus described certain example embodiments of the present disclosure in general terms, reference will hereinafter be made to the accompanying drawings which are not necessarily drawn to scale, and wherein:
- 5 [0015] Figure 1 is a perspective view of a rubber grommet connector;
- [0016] Figure 2 is a front view of the rubber grommet connector of Figure 1;
- [0017] Figure 3 is a block diagram of the system that may be specifically configured in accordance with an example embodiment of the present disclosure;
- 10 [0018] Figure 4 is a flow chart illustrating operations performed, such as by the system of Figure 3, for identifying wire contact insertion holes of a connector in accordance with an example embodiment of the present disclosure;
- [0019] Figure 5 illustrates a predetermined template of contact locations and depicts the manner in which the template may be scaled, translated or rotated during a comparison with the candidate contact insertion holes for a connector in accordance with an example
- 15 embodiment of the present disclosure;
- [0020] Figure 6 is a flow chart illustrating operations performed in order to insert a wire end into a candidate contact insertion hole of a connector in accordance with an example embodiment of the present disclosure; and
- [0021] Figure 7 is a perspective view of a rubber grommet connector in which a
- 20 plurality of wire ends have been inserted into respective candidate contact insertion holes in accordance with an example embodiment of the present disclosure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0022] The present disclosure now will be described more fully hereinafter with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which some, but not all aspects are shown. Indeed, the disclosure may be embodied in many different forms and should not be construed as limited to the aspects set forth herein. Rather, these aspects are provided so that this disclosure will satisfy applicable legal requirements. Like numbers refer to like elements throughout.

[0023] A method, system and computer program product are provided in accordance with an example embodiment in order to identify wire contact insertion holes defined by a connector. Although the method, system and computer program product may be configured to identify the wire contact insertion holes of a variety of different types of connectors, the connectors generally define a plurality of wire contact insertion holes within a housing with the wire contact insertion holes being arranged in a predefined configuration. Different connectors may include different numbers of wire contact insertion holes and may include wire contact insertion holes arranged in different configurations.

[0024] One example of a connector is depicted in Figures 1 and 2 in the form of a rubber grommet connector 10. As shown, the rubber grommet connector 10 includes a housing 12 and a rubber grommet 16 disposed therein. Although the housing 12 may be configured differently for other types of connectors, the housing of the rubber grommet connector 10 of the embodiment of Figures 1 and 2 is externally threaded to facilitate, for example, the secure threaded engagement of a wire bundle assembly or another connector therewith. The rubber grommet connector 10 of Figures 1 and 2 also includes a radially extending flange defining a plurality of openings 14, such as for receiving screws or other fasteners for mounting the connector to an assembly. Although the rubber grommet connector 10 of Figure 1 has a cylindrical shape, the connector of other example embodiments may have different sizes and shapes. In regards to the example connector of Figures 1 and 2, a rubber grommet 16 is disposed within the housing and the rubber grommet defines a plurality of wire contact insertion holes 18. The wire contact insertion holes 18 defined by the rubber grommet 16 are configured, e.g., sized and shaped, such that a wire end consisting of a wire contact connected, e.g., crimped, to the end of a wire, is inserted into and mechanically retained within the wire contact insertion hole 18. In some, but not all embodiments, the rubber grommet may also include a plurality of wire contacts in

alignment with respective wire contact insertion holes defined by the rubber grommet such that the wire end may be brought into secure electrical contact with a respective wire contact of the connector.

[0025] As shown by the example of the rubber grommet connector **10** of Figures **1** and **2**, the plurality of wire contact insertion holes **18** defined by the rubber grommet **16**, are arranged in a predefined pattern. In some embodiments, not all of the wire contact insertion holes of a connector **10** will be utilized and, instead, only a subset of the wire contact insertion holes will receive and make electrical connection with corresponding wire ends of the wire bundle assembly. As illustrated in Figure **2**, the wire contact insertion holes **18** defined by the rubber grommet **16** that are not to be utilized in conjunction with a particular application may be eliminated from further consideration by the insertion a plug **20** into the respective wire contact insertion hole defined by the rubber grommet. Although a rubber grommet connector **10** that may be analyzed in accordance with an example embodiment of the present disclosure is depicted in Figures **1** and **2** and will be described hereinafter, the method, system and computer program product of an example embodiment may be utilized in conjunction with a wide variety of other connectors and the rubber grommet connector is illustrated and described by way of example, but not of limitation.

[0026] Referring now to Figure **3**, a system for identifying wire contact insertion holes of a connector **10** is depicted. As shown, the system **30** includes a camera **32** configured to capture an image of the connector **10**. The camera **32** may be configured to capture a gray scale image of the connector **10**. Alternatively, the camera **32** may be configured to capture a color image of the connector **10**. In an embodiment in which a color image of the connector **10** is captured, the image associated with each different color channel of the camera **32**, such as the red, green and blue color channels, may be averaged to create a composite image for subsequent analysis and review. Alternatively, the different color channels of the camera **32** may be separately analyzed. The camera **32** is generally configured to capture an image of the front face of the connector **10**, such as shown in Figure **2**, such that the plurality of wire contact insertion holes **18** defined by the rubber grommet **16** are clearly visible. As such, the image captured by the camera **32** of an example embodiment coincides with or is parallel to a plane defined by the front face of the connector **10**, such as defined by the front face of the rubber grommet **16** of the connector. Alternatively, the image plane of the image captured by the camera **32** of another example

embodiment may be angularly offset from the plane defined by the front face of the connector **10**, such as a front face defined by the rubber grommet **16** of the connector by no more than a predefined maximum angular offset, such as +/- **15°**.

[0027] In addition to the camera **32**, the system **30** of Figure **3** includes a computing device **34** configured to analyze the image of the connector **10** captured by the camera and to identify wire contact insertion holes of the connector. As also shown in Figure **3**, the system **30** of an example embodiment also includes or is in communication with a robot **44** and, more particularly, a robotic end effector that is utilized to insert wire ends into respective candidate contact insertion holes of the connector **10** based upon the identification of the wire contact insertion holes of the connector by the computing device **34**.

[0028] The computing device **34** may be configured in various manners and, as such, may be embodied as a personal computer, a tablet computer, a computer workstation, a mobile computing device such as a smartphone, a server or the like. Regardless of the manner in which the computing device **34** is embodied, the computing device of an example embodiment includes or is otherwise associated with processing circuitry **36**, memory **38**, and optionally a user interface **40** and a communication interface **42** for performing the various functions herein described. The processing circuitry **36** may, for example, be embodied as various means including one or more microprocessors, one or more coprocessors, one or more multi-core processors, one or more controllers, one or more computers, various other processing elements including integrated circuits such as, for example, an ASIC (application specific integrated circuit) or FPGA (field programmable gate array), or some combination thereof. In some example embodiments, the processing circuitry **36** is configured to execute instructions stored in the memory **38** or otherwise accessible to the processing circuitry. These instructions, when executed by the processing circuitry **36**, may cause the computing device **34** and, in turn, the system **30** to perform one or more of the functionalities described herein. As such, the computing device **34** may comprise an entity capable of performing operations according to an example embodiment of the present disclosure while configured accordingly. Thus, for example, when the processing circuitry **36** is embodied as an ASIC, FPGA or the like, the processing circuitry and, correspondingly, the computing device **34** may comprise specifically configured hardware for conducting one or more operations described herein. Alternatively, as another example, when the processing circuitry **36** is embodied as an executor of instructions, such

as may be stored in the memory 38 the instructions may specifically configure the processing circuitry and, in turn, the computing device 34 to perform one or more algorithms and operations described herein.

[0029] The memory 38 may include, for example, volatile and/or non-volatile memory. The memory 38 may comprise, for example, a hard disk, random access memory, cache memory, flash memory, an optical disc (e.g., a compact disc read only memory (CD-ROM), digital versatile disc read only memory (DVD-ROM), or the like), circuitry configured to store information, or some combination thereof. In this regard, the memory 38 may comprise any non-transitory computer readable storage medium. The memory 38 may be configured to store information, data, applications, instructions, or the like for enabling the computing device 34 to carry out various functions in accordance with example embodiments of the present disclosure. For example, the memory 38 may be configured to store program instructions for execution by the processing circuitry 36.

[0030] The user interface 40 may be in communication with the processing circuitry 36 and the memory 38 to receive user input and/or to provide an audible, visual, mechanical, or other output to a user. As such, the user interface 40 may include, for example, a display for providing an image captured by the camera 32 and/or an image visually depicting the closest match between the candidate contacts and a predetermined template as described below. Other examples of the user interface 40 include a keyboard, a mouse, a joystick, a microphone and/or other input/output mechanisms.

[0031] The communication interface 42 may be in communication with the processing circuitry 36 and the memory 38 and may be configured to receive and/or transmit data, such as by receiving images from the camera 32 and transmitting information, such as a list of candidate contact insertion holes, contact ID numbers and locations of the candidate contact insertion holes in a connector-based coordinate system, to a robot 44 and/or a robotic end-effector. Although referenced herein as candidate contact insertion holes, contact ID numbers and locations of the candidate contact insertion holes, the list of candidate contact insertion holes, contact ID numbers and locations of the candidate contact insertion holes is to be interpreted so as to be associated with the candidate contact insertion holes themselves and/or wire contacts aligned with the respective candidate contact insertion holes in those embodiments that include such wire contacts. The communication interface 42 may include, for example, one or more antennas and supporting

hardware and/or software for enabling communications with a wireless communication network. Additionally or alternatively, the communication interface **42** may include the circuitry for interacting with the antenna(s) to cause transmission of signals via the antenna(s) or to handle receipt of signals received via the antenna(s). In some
5 environments, the communication interface **42** may alternatively or also support wired communication.

[0032] Referring now to Figure **4**, the operations performed, such as by the computing device **34** of Figure **3**, are depicted. Initially, the contact features are matched. As shown in block **50** of Figure **4**, the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry
10 **36**, is configured to match the contact features by separately analyzing each of a plurality of pixels of the image of the connector **10** captured by the camera **32** to identify one or more candidate contact insertion holes for the connector. In this regard, the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, is configured in accordance with an example embodiment to separately analyze each of the plurality of pixels of the image by identifying a
15 pixel as a candidate contact insertion hole in an instance in which the pixel (the central pixel) has a color that satisfies a first predefined criteria and is at least partially surrounded by a plurality of pixels (the surrounding pixels) that have a color that is different than the color of the central pixel and that have satisfied second predefined criteria, different than the first predefined criteria. For example, the second predefined criteria may be defined based upon
20 the color of the pixels such that the pixel identified as a candidate contact insertion hole is darker than the plurality of pixels that at least partially surround the central pixel.

[0033] Although the criteria utilized in the analysis of the image to identify one or more candidate contact insertion holes of the connector **10** may vary based upon various factors, such as the color of the rubber grommet **16**, the size of the wire contact insertion
25 holes **18** defined by the rubber grommet or the like, the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, of an example embodiment is configured to identify candidate contact insertion holes for the connector from the image by identifying pixels that appear relatively dark and that are surrounded by a ring of more lightly colored pixels. This example analysis is largely premised on the appearance of the connector **10** as shown in Figure **2** in
30 which each wire contact insertion hole **18** defined by the rubber grommet **16** and correspondingly each candidate contact insertion hole of the connector **10** appears as a dark disk within the more lightly colored, rubber grommet.

[0034] As such, the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, of this example embodiment is configured to analyze each pixel of the image to identify whether the pixel has an intensity that satisfies a first predefined criteria. While the first predefined criteria may be defined in various manners, the first predefined criteria of an example embodiment is set to an intermediate value between the values associated with black and white pixels with the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, configured to identify those pixels having an intensity between the intermediate value and the value associated with a black pixel as pixels that satisfy the first predefined criteria. The intermediate value may be differently defined in various embodiments, but in one example embodiment is set to a predefined value of **0.21** on a scale of pixel intensities from **0** to **1** with **0** representing a black pixel and **1** representing a white pixel.

[0035] In an instance in which the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, identifies a pixel to satisfy the first predefined criteria, the computing device, such as the processing circuitry, then determines if the central pixel is at least partially surrounded by a ring of pixels of a predefined radius that satisfy the second predefined criteria, such as by having intensities that differ from the intensity of the central pixel by at least a predetermined threshold. Although the predetermined threshold by which the intensity of the pixels surrounding the central pixel differs from the intensity of the central pixel may vary in different embodiments, the predetermined threshold of an example embodiment is **0.05** on a scale of **0** to **1** with **0** representing a black pixel and **1** representing a white pixel. Thus, the intensity value of the pixels surrounding the central pixel must exceed the intensity value of the central pixel by at least **0.05** to merit further consideration.

[0036] In order to increase the efficiency with which the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, analyzes the pixels surrounding the central pixel to determine if the central pixel is at least partially surrounded by a ring of more lightly colored pixels as evidenced by surrounding pixels having intensity values that exceed the intensity value of the central pixel by the predetermined threshold, the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, of an example embodiment is configured not to analyze all of the pixels of the image but, instead, to analyze the pixels within a predefined distance, such as a predefined radius, of the pixel in question. The distance, such as the radius, may vary depending upon the size of the wire contact insertion holes **18** defined by the rubber grommet **16**. In an example embodiment, however, a ring of pixels between an inner radius

and an outer radius may be defined for purposes of further consideration. While the inner and outer diameters of the ring of pixels may be defined in various manners, the outer diameter of the ring may be defined based upon the size of the outer diameter of indentations defined by the rubber grommet **16** in association with the wire contact insertion holes **18** defined thereby. For example, a ring of pixels between an inner radius of **7** pixels from the central pixel and an outer radius of **15** pixels from the central pixel may be analyzed in an example embodiment in which a circle have a radius of **15** pixels is approximately equal in size to the outer diameter of the indentations defined by the rubber grommet **16** in association with the wire contact insertion holes **18** defined thereby.

[0037] In this example embodiment, the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, is then configured to analyze the intensity of the pixels within the ring defined about the central pixel and to determine whether the intensity of the pixels within the ring differ from the intensity of the central pixel by at least the predetermined threshold, such as by at least **0.05** in an example embodiment. The computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, of an example embodiment does not require every pixel within the ring to have an intensity that varies from the intensity of the central pixel by at least the predetermined threshold. Instead, the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, of an example embodiment requires at least a predetermined number of pixels, such as **30** pixels, or a predetermined percentage of pixels in the ring to have an intensity that differs from the intensity of the central pixel by at least a predetermined threshold in order to conclude that the central pixel is surrounded by a ring of more lightly colored pixels. The number of surrounding pixels required to have an intensity that differs from the intensity of the central pixel by at least a predetermined threshold may be set to different values. However, the number of surrounding pixels of an example embodiment is set to a value that does not exceed $2\pi r$ wherein r is the inner radius in terms of the number of pixels.

[0038] As described above, the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, of this example embodiment is configured to identify pixels that vary in color relative to a ring of pixels that surround the central pixel, such as being darker than a surrounding ring of more lightly colored pixels. The central pixel may not be entirely surrounded by pixels of a different color, such as more lightly colored pixels. Instead, the central pixel must be at least partially surrounded by a plurality of pixels having a different color, such as defined by the predetermined number or percentage of pixels within the ring

that must satisfy the predetermined threshold. Following the identification of pixels as candidate contact insertion holes, the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, is configured to revise the image and/or a copy of the image accordingly. In an example embodiment, the pixels that are identified as candidate contact insertion holes continue to have their original intensity, while all other pixels that have not been identified as candidate contact insertion holes are set to an intensity that is equal to white, such as an intensity of **1**.

[0039] In instances in which the camera **32** has captured a color image, the different color channels of the camera may be combined as described above as to define a single image that may be analyzed as described above and in the same manner as a gray scale image. However, in an embodiment in which the image to be analyzed comprises two or more, such as three differently colored images, such as a red image, a green image and a blue image, the image having a color corresponding to the color of the rubber grommet **16**, such as the red image in an embodiment in which the rubber grommet is red, is analyzed by the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, as described above in order to identify whether a ring of pixels that satisfies the predetermined threshold surrounds a central pixel without correspondingly analyzing the other images, such as the green and blue images. In this example embodiment, the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, is also configured to determine whether the image of the same or similar color as the rubber grommet **16**, such as the red image, has an intensity that exceeds the intensities of the other images, such as the green and blue images, by at least a predefined threshold, such as **0.1**, in order to identify a pixel as a candidate contact insertion hole.

[0040] After matching the contact features, candidate contact insertion holes are consolidated in instances in which two or more pixels of the image that have been identified as candidate contact insertion holes for the connector **10** are determined to represent the same candidate contact insertion hole. In this regard, the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, is configured to determine whether the one or more candidate contact insertion holes that have been identified by analysis of the image are to be consolidated as shown in block **52** of Figure **4**. In an instance in which a determination is made that one or more candidate contact insertion holes are to be consolidated, the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, is configured to consolidate the one or more candidate contact insertion holes into a single candidate contact insertion hole as shown in block **54** of Figure **4**. In an example embodiment, the computing device **34**,

such as the processing circuitry **36**, is configured to consolidate the one or more candidate contact insertion holes by consolidating a plurality of neighboring candidate contact insertion holes into a single candidate contact insertion hole having a location based upon a combination of locations of the plurality of candidate contact insertion holes that are consolidated. For example, the location of the single candidate contact insertion hole following consolidation may be the average location of the plurality of the neighboring candidate contact insertion holes that are consolidated.

[0041] Building upon the foregoing example in which all pixels that have not been identified as being a candidate contact insertion hole have been set to have an intensity of **1**, the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, of an example embodiment considers each pixel in turn. For each pixel having an intensity that is other than white, such as an intensity of less than **1**, the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, defines a window of neighboring pixels for subsequent analysis. The window may be defined to have different sizes and, in some embodiments, different dimensions in both the vertical and horizontal dimensions. In an example embodiment, however, the window of neighboring pixels to be investigated has a size of +/- **10** pixels in both the vertical and horizontal dimensions. Within the window of neighboring pixels, the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, is configured to remove any pixels both having an intensity representative of a color other than white, such as an intensity of less than **1**, and lacking any direct neighboring pixel having an intensity representative of a color other than white, such as an intensity of less than **1**, as such isolated pixels may be considered to represent noise in the image. In this regard, the removal of a pixel may be accomplished by setting the intensity of the pixel to be removed to be representative of a white pixel, such as by setting the intensity to equal **1**.

[0042] For all other pixels within the window having both an intensity representative of a color other than white, such as an intensity of less than **1**, and at least one neighboring pixel that is also representative of a color other than white, such as by having an intensity of less than **1**, the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, determines the average location of the neighboring pixels. In regards to the determination of the average location, the location of each pixel to be included within the average may be weighted based upon the corresponding intensity of the pixel. For example, the weight assigned to a respective pixel may be defined as: $\text{weight} = (1 - \text{intensity})$. In an instance in which the

number of neighboring pixels that are included within the average satisfies a predefined threshold, such as by being two or more pixels, the average location of the neighboring pixels may be stored, such as in the memory **38**, as a candidate contact insertion hole. Following processing of a window of neighboring pixels, the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, may be configured to set the intensity for all pixels within the window to correspond to pixels of a white color, such as by setting the intensity of all pixels within the window to equal **1**. As such, the pixels within the neighboring window will not be considered during the analysis of another neighboring window about another pixel of the image, thereby avoiding double counting of pixels within nearby overlapping windows.

[0043] Following the consolidation of candidate contact insertion holes, outliers may optionally be discarded. Outliers are generally considered to be candidate contact insertion holes that are not, in fact, wire contact insertion holes. In this regard, a shaded area adjacent to wire plug **20** may appear during the image processing to be a candidate contact insertion hole, but is not, in fact, a candidate contact insertion hole. In this regard, the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, of an example embodiment is configured to determine whether the one or more candidate contact insertion holes include one or more outliers as shown in block **56** of Figure **4**. In an instance in which the one or more candidate contact insertion holes include one or more outliers, the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, of this example embodiment is configured to eliminate the one or more candidate contact insertion holes that is an outlier from further consideration. See block **58** of Figure **4**.

[0044] In order to identify an outlier so as to facilitate the subsequent elimination of the outlier, the visual appearance of each candidate contact insertion hole location is analyzed. In an example embodiment, the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, is configured to identify and store the intensity values of each pixel that defines a predetermined shape, such as a circle of a predefined radius, e.g., **7** pixels, around the location of a candidate contact insertion hole. This array of intensity values effectively provides a fingerprint of the location of the candidate contact insertion hole which may then be further evaluated as wire contact insertion holes generally have relatively common or similar fingerprint. In an example embodiment, the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, is configured to express each array as a vector in a multi-dimensional space and to then normalize each vector to have a unit length. In an example

embodiment, the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, is configured to compare the vector to a predefined prototypical vector representative of a wire contact insertion hole. While the comparison may be performed in various manners, the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, of an example embodiment is configured to
5 compare the vector to a predefined prototypical vector by computing the Euclidean distances between the vectors in the multi-dimensional space. In this example embodiment, a candidate contact insertion hole for which the Euclidean distance exceeds a predefined threshold, such as **0.25**, is identified as an outlier and is subsequently eliminated from further consideration, such as by being removed from the list of candidate contact insertion
10 holes.

[0045] The predefined prototypical vector may be defined in various manners. In an example embodiment, the prototypical vector is determined from the candidate contact insertion hole having the largest sum of pixel weights (as determined in conjunction with the determination of the average location of a plurality of neighboring candidate contact insertion
15 holes) since this candidate contact insertion hole is likely the most visible candidate contact insertion hole. Alternatively, the prototypical vector may be predefined without relation to the analysis of the connector **10** at issue. Still further, the prototypical vector may be defined from a distribution of points representative of true wire contact insertion holes, such as by utilizing a Gaussian mixture model with the Euclidean distances then determined relative to
20 such a distribution.

[0046] Once the outliers have been discarded, contact identification (ID) numbers may be assigned to the one or more candidate contact insertion holes. In this regard, following consolidation and the optional elimination of one or more outliers, the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, is configured to assign contact ID numbers of
25 the connector **10** to the one or more candidate contacts. See block **60** of Figure **4**. In order to assign contact ID numbers, a template of the known locations of the contacts of a connector **10** of the same type as that being subjected to analysis may be compared to the locations of the candidate contacts in order to determine a best match of the template to the locations of the candidate contacts. Wire contacts or the openings defined by the rubber
30 grommet into which plugs are inserted may be removed from the template of known locations prior to the assignment of contact ID numbers. Once matched, the contact ID

numbers of the different wire contacts of the template may be used to assign the contact ID numbers of the corresponding candidate contacts of the connector **10** under analysis.

[0047] In this regard, the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, of an example embodiment is configured to assign contact ID numbers by comparing a predetermined template of contact locations of the connector **10** to the candidate contact insertion holes. In comparing the predetermined template, such as defined by a computer aided design (CAD) drawing, the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, of an example embodiment is configured to modify the position of the predetermined template relative to the candidate contact insertion holes to identify a closest match between the predetermined template and the candidate contact insertion holes. The position of the predetermined template may be modified in various manners. As shown in Figure **5**, a predetermined template **70** of the wire contact insertion holes of a connector **10** of the type under analysis is depicted. In relation to the modification of the position of the predetermined template **70** in order determine the closest match between the predetermined template and the candidate contact insertion holes, the predetermined template may be scaled so as to be larger or smaller as indicated by the outwardly facing arrows **72** about the periphery of the predetermined template of Figure **5**. Additionally or alternatively, the predetermined template **70** may be translated, such as by being moved in a horizontal direction, a vertical direction or a combination of the horizontal and vertical directions as indicated by the double headed horizontal and vertical arrows **74** in the center of the predetermined template of Figure **5**. Additionally or alternatively, the predetermined template **70** may be rotated as indicated by the arcuate double headed arrow **76** of Figure **5**. By scaling, translating and/or rotating the predetermined template **70** in various manners, the computing device **34**, such the processing circuitry **36**, is configured to identify the position of the predetermined template, that is, the scale, the translation and the rotation of the predetermined template, relative to the candidate contact insertion holes that create the closest match between the predetermined template and the candidate contact insertion holes.

[0048] The closest match may be defined in various manners. In an example embodiment, however, the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, is configured to determine a cost function that is the sum of square distances between each candidate location and the closest corresponding location of a wire contact insertion hole as

defined by the predetermined template **70**. This cost function may be determined for each different position of the predetermined template **70**. The position of the predetermined template **70** that most closely matches the candidate contact insertion holes is then identified based upon the optimization of the cost function, such as by Powell's method.

5 **[0049]** Once the position of the predetermined template **70** relative to the candidate contact insertion holes is determined in terms of scale, translation and rotation that causes the closest match between the predetermined template and the candidate contact insertion holes, each candidate contact is assigned a contact ID number based upon the contact ID number of the corresponding wire contact insertion hole of the predetermined template.

10 Additionally, the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry, of an example embodiment is configured to assign a location in a connector-based coordinate system to each candidate contact insertion hole following the consolidation or elimination of one or more outliers and, more particularly, following the identification of a closest match between the predetermined template **70** and the candidate contact insertion holes. See block **62** of

15 Figure **4**. The location assigned to a candidate contact insertion hole in a connector-based coordinate systems assigns a location in terms of the real-world coordinate system, as opposed to the image coordinates. For example, for a predefined type of connector, the location assigned to a candidate contact insertion hole identifies the (x,y) position of the candidate contact insertion hole for a coordinate system defined by the connector. As such,

20 a list of candidate contact insertion holes with associated contact ID numbers and locations in the connector-based coordinate system, that is, in real-world coordinates, may be stored, such as by the memory **38**.

[0050] In conjunction with or following the assignment of locations to the candidate contact insertion holes, the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, may

25 be configured to additionally remove candidate contact insertion holes that are an outlier, but that were not previously identified as an outlier. In this regard, candidate contact insertion holes that do not closely match a corresponding wire contact insertion hole of the predetermined template **70** may be identified as an outlier and removed from subsequent consideration. For example, the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**,

30 may be configured to identify a candidate contact insertion hole having a distance in image coordinates that exceeds a predefined threshold, such as **7** pixels, to the nearest corresponding location of a wire contact insertion hole in the predetermined template **70** and

may label such a candidate contact insertion hole as an outlier for subsequent removal from the list of candidate contact insertion holes.

[0051] The resulting list of candidate contact insertion holes and associated contact ID numbers and locations in the connector-based coordinate system may then be utilized to facilitate insertion of wire ends into respective wire contact insertion holes **18** of the connector **10**. In this regard, a wire may be identified by a wiring diagram or the like to be inserted into a particular wire contact insertion hole **18** of the connector **10** (and, in some embodiments, also into electrical contact with a respective wire contact that is aligned with the wire contact insertion hole) with the particular wire contact insertion hole being identified by a contact ID number. Prior to insertion into the wire contact insertion hole of the connector **10**, a wire contact is generally connected to, e.g., crimped upon, a bare end of the wire to form a wire end. Based upon the contact ID numbers and corresponding locations of the candidate contact insertion hole for the connector **10**, a wire end may be inserted into the connector at the location associated with a candidate contact insertion hole having the contact ID number of the wire contact insertion hole **18** into which the wire is to be inserted. As shown in block **80** of Figure **6**, the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, is configured to determine the candidate contact insertion hole into which a wire is to be inserted based upon the contact ID number of a candidate contact insertion hole, such as based upon correspondence between the contact ID number of a candidate contact insertion hole and the contact ID number of the wire contact insertion hole **18** into which the wire end is to be inserted as defined by a wiring diagram or the like. The computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, is also configured to determine the position of a robot **44** and, more particularly, a robotic end-effector utilized to insert the wire end into the candidate contact insertion hole based upon the location of the candidate contact insertion hole in the connector-based coordinate system. See block **82** of Figure **6**. As such, the computing device **34**, such as the processing circuitry **36**, may effectively drive a robot **44**, such as a robotic end-effector, or otherwise provide information, such as a list of candidate contact insertion holes, contact ID numbers and corresponding locations in the connector-based coordinate system, to the robot sufficient to drive the robotic end-effector in such a manner as to insert the wire ends of a wire bundle assembly into corresponding wire contact insertion holes **18**. See, for example, Figure **7** in which a plurality of wires **90** have been inserted into respective wire contact insertion holes **18** of the connector **10** in order to

establish mechanical connection between the wire ends and the connector **10**. By facilitating the automation of the connection process associated with a wire bundle assembly, the system **30**, method and computer program product of an example embodiment increase the efficiency with which wire ends of a wire bundle assembly may be mechanically connected to a connector **10** and correspondingly reduce the error rate and cost of the resulting assembly.

[0052] As described above, Figures **4** and **6** illustrate flowcharts of a system **30**, method, and computer program product according to example embodiments of the present disclosure. It will be understood that each block of the flowcharts, and combinations of blocks in the flowcharts, may be implemented by various means, such as hardware, firmware, processor, circuitry, and/or other devices associated with execution of software including one or more computer program instructions. For example, one or more of the procedures described above may be embodied by computer program instructions. In this regard, the computer program instructions which embody the procedures described above may be stored by the memory **38** of a system **30** employing an embodiment of the present disclosure and executed by the processing circuitry **36** of the system **30**. As will be appreciated, any such computer program instructions may be loaded onto a computer or other programmable apparatus (e.g., hardware) to produce a machine, such that the resulting computer or other programmable apparatus implements the functions specified in the flowchart blocks. These computer program instructions may also be stored in a computer-readable memory that may direct a computer or other programmable apparatus to function in a particular manner, such that the instructions stored in the computer-readable memory produce an article of manufacture the execution of which implements the function specified in the flowchart blocks. The computer program instructions may also be loaded onto a computer or other programmable apparatus to cause a series of operations to be performed on the computer or other programmable apparatus to produce a computer-implemented process such that the instructions which execute on the computer or other programmable apparatus provide operations for implementing the functions specified in the flowchart blocks.

[0053] Accordingly, blocks of the flowcharts support combinations of means for performing the specified functions and combinations of operations for performing the specified functions for performing the specified functions. It will also be understood that one

or more blocks of the flowcharts, and combinations of blocks in the flowcharts, can be implemented by special purpose hardware-based computer systems which perform the specified functions, or combinations of special purpose hardware and computer instructions.

[0054] In some embodiments, certain ones of the operations above may be modified

5 or further amplified. Furthermore, in some embodiments, additional optional operations may be included. Modifications, additions, or amplifications to the operations above may be performed in any order and in any combination.

[0055] Many modifications and other embodiments of the inventions set forth herein

will come to mind to one skilled in the art having the benefit of the teachings presented in the
10 foregoing descriptions and the associated drawings. Therefore, it is to be understood that the present application is not to be limited to the specific embodiments disclosed and that modifications and other embodiments are intended to be included within the scope of the appended claims. Moreover, although the foregoing descriptions and the associated drawings describe example embodiments in the context of certain example combinations of
15 elements and/or functions, it should be appreciated that different combinations of elements and/or functions may be provided by alternative embodiments without departing from the scope of the appended claims. In this regard, for example, different combinations of elements and/or functions than those explicitly described above are also contemplated as may be set forth in some of the appended claims. Although specific terms are employed
20 herein, they are used in a generic and descriptive sense only and not for purposes of limitation.

**EMBODIMENTS IN WHICH AN EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OR PRIVILEGE IS CLAIMED
ARE DEFINED AS FOLLOWS:**

1. A method for identifying wire contact insertion holes defined by a connector, the
5 method comprising:

capturing an image of the connector using a camera;

10 causing at least one processor to analyze each of a plurality of pixels of the
image to identify one or more candidate contact insertion holes for the
connector by causing the at least one processor to:

15 identify a first pixel of the plurality of pixels of the image that has an
intensity value that satisfies a first predefined intensity criteria; and

20 following identification of the first pixel that satisfies the first predefined
intensity criteria, determine whether the first pixel is at least partially
surrounded by a ring of pixels that satisfy a second predefined intensity
criteria, wherein the ring of pixels has a radius between an inner
diameter and an outer diameter, wherein the outer diameter of the ring
of pixels is defined based upon a size of an outer diameter of the one
or more candidate contact insertion holes; and

25 causing the at least one processor to assign contact identification (ID) numbers
of the connector to the one or more candidate contact insertion holes.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising causing the at least one processor to
determine whether the one or more candidate contact insertion holes include one or
more outliers and, if so, eliminating the one or more candidate contact insertion holes
30 that is the outlier from further consideration prior to assigning the contact ID numbers.

3. The method of claim 1 further comprising causing the at least one processor to eliminate one or more outliers during or after assigning the contact ID numbers to the one or more candidate contact insertion holes.
- 5 4. The method of claim 3 further comprising causing the at least one processor to assign locations in a connector-based coordinate system to the one or more candidate contact insertion holes following elimination of the one or more outliers.
- 10 5. The method of claim 4 further comprising causing the at least one processor to:
- determine which one of the one or more candidate contact insertion holes into which a wire end is to be inserted based upon the contact ID numbers of the one or more candidate contact insertion holes; and
- determine a position of a robotic end-effector utilized to insert the wire end into the one of the one or more candidate contact insertion holes based upon the location of the one of the one or more candidate contact insertion holes in the connector-based coordinate system.
- 20 6. The method of any one of claims 1 to 5 wherein causing the at least one processor to analyze each of the plurality of pixels of the image further comprises causing the at least one processor to:
- identify a pixel of the image as one of the one or more candidate contact insertion holes in an instance in which the pixel has a color that satisfies a first predefined color criteria and is at least partially surrounded by a plurality of pixels that have a color that is different than the color of the pixel and that satisfies a second predefined color criteria, wherein the second predefined color criteria is different than the first predefined color criteria.
- 30 7. The method of claim 6 wherein the second predefined color criteria is defined based upon the color of the pixel such that the pixel identified as the one of the one or more

candidate contact insertion holes is darker than the plurality of pixels that at least partially surround the pixel.

- 5 **8.** The method of any one of claims **1** to **7** wherein the ring of pixels satisfies the second predefined intensity criteria by having intensity values that differ from the intensity value of the first pixel by at least a predetermined threshold.
- 10 **9.** The method of any one of claims **1** to **8** further comprising causing the at least one processor to determine whether the one or more candidate contact insertion holes are to be consolidated by determining whether two or more pixels of the plurality of pixels of the image have been identified as a same candidate contact insertion hole.
- 15 **10.** The method of claim **9** further comprising, in response to determining that the one or more candidate contact insertion holes are to be consolidated, causing the at least one processor to consolidate the one or more candidate contact insertion holes.
- 20 **11.** The method of claim **10** wherein causing the at least one processor to consolidate the one or more candidate contact insertion holes comprises causing the at least one processor to consolidate a plurality of neighboring candidate contact insertion holes to a single candidate contact insertion hole having a location based upon a combination of locations of the plurality of neighboring candidate contact insertion holes.
- 25 **12.** The method of claim **10** or **11** wherein causing the at least one processor to consolidate the one or more candidate contact insertion holes comprises causing the at least one processor to consolidate the one or more candidate contact insertion holes prior to assigning the contact ID numbers.
- 30 **13.** The method of any one of claims **1** to **12** wherein causing the at least one processor to assign the contact ID numbers comprises causing the at least one processor to compare a predetermined template of contact locations of the connector to the one or more candidate contact insertion holes.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein causing the at least one processor to compare the predetermined template of contact locations to the one or more candidate contact insertion holes comprises causing the at least one processor to modify a position of the predetermined template relative to the one or more candidate contact insertion holes to identify a closest match between the predetermined template and the one or more candidate contact insertion holes.

15. A system for identifying wire contact insertion holes defined by a connector, the system comprising:

a camera configured to capture an image of the connector; and

a computing device configured to:

analyze each of a plurality of pixels of the image to identify one or more candidate contact insertion holes for the connector by being configured to:

identify a first pixel of the plurality of pixels of the image that has an intensity value that satisfies a first predefined intensity criteria; and

following identification of the first pixel that satisfies the first predefined intensity criteria, determine whether the first pixel is at least partially surrounded by a ring of pixels that satisfy a second predefined intensity criteria, wherein the ring of pixels has a radius between an inner diameter and an outer diameter, wherein the outer diameter of the ring of pixels is defined based upon a size of an outer diameter of the one or more candidate contact insertion holes; and

assign contact identification (ID) numbers of the connector to the one or more candidate contact insertion holes.

- 5 **16.** The system of claim **15** wherein the computing device is further configured to determine whether the one or more candidate contact insertion holes include one or more outliers and, if so, eliminate the one or more candidate contact insertion holes that is the outlier from further consideration prior to assigning the contact ID numbers.
- 10 **17.** The system of claim **15** wherein the computing device is further configured to eliminate one or more outliers during or after assigning the contact ID numbers to the one or more candidate contact insertion holes.
- 15 **18.** The system of claim **17** wherein the computing device is further configured to assign locations in a connector-based coordinate system to the one or more candidate contact insertion holes following elimination of the one or more outliers.
- 20 **19.** The system of claim **18** wherein the computing device is further configured to:
- 25 determine which one of the one or more candidate contact insertion holes into which a wire end is to be inserted based upon the contact ID numbers of the one or more candidate contact insertion holes; and
- 30 determine a position of a robotic end-effector utilized to insert the wire end into the one of the one or more candidate contact insertion holes based upon the location of the one of the one or more candidate contact insertion holes in the connector-based coordinate system.
- 35 **20.** The system of any one of claims **15** to **19** wherein the computing device is configured to analyze each of the plurality of pixels of the image by being configured to:
- 40 identify a pixel as one of the one or more candidate contact insertion holes in an instance in which the pixel has a color that satisfies a first predefined color criteria and is at least partially surrounded by a plurality of pixels that have a color that is different than the color of the pixel and that satisfies a second

predefined color criteria, wherein the second predefined color criteria is different than the first predefined color criteria.

- 5 **21.** The system of claim **20** wherein the second predefined color criteria is defined based upon the color of the pixel such that the pixel identified as the one of the one or more candidate contact insertion holes is darker than the plurality of pixels that at least partially surround the pixel.
- 10 **22.** The system of any one of claims **15** to **21** wherein the ring of pixels satisfies the second predefined intensity criteria by having intensity values that differ from the intensity value of the first pixel by at least a predetermined threshold.
- 15 **23.** The system of any one of claims **15** to **22** wherein the computing device is further configured to determine whether the one or more candidate contact insertion holes are to be consolidated by determining whether two or more pixels of the plurality of pixels of the image have been identified as a same candidate contact insertion hole.
- 20 **24.** The system of claim **23** wherein the computing device is further configured to consolidate the one or more candidate contact insertion holes in response to determining that the one or more candidate contact insertion holes are to be consolidated.
- 25 **25.** The system of claim **24** wherein the computing device is configured to consolidate the one or more candidate contact insertion holes by being configured to consolidate a plurality of neighboring candidate contact insertion holes to a single candidate contact insertion hole having a location based upon a combination of locations of the plurality of neighboring candidate contact insertion holes.
- 30 **26.** The system of claim **24** or **25** wherein the computing device is configured to consolidate the one or more candidate contact insertion holes prior to assigning the contact ID numbers.

27. The system of any one of claims **15** to **26** wherein the computing device is configured to assign the contact ID numbers by comparing a predetermined template of contact locations of the connector to the one or more candidate contact insertion holes.

5 **28.** A system comprising:

 a camera configured to capture an image of a connector; and

10 computer program product for identifying wire contact insertion holes defined by the connector, the computer program product comprising at least one non-transitory computer-readable storage medium having computer-executable program code instructions stored therein, the computer-executable program code instructions comprising program code instructions that, when executed by a computing device, cause the computing device to:

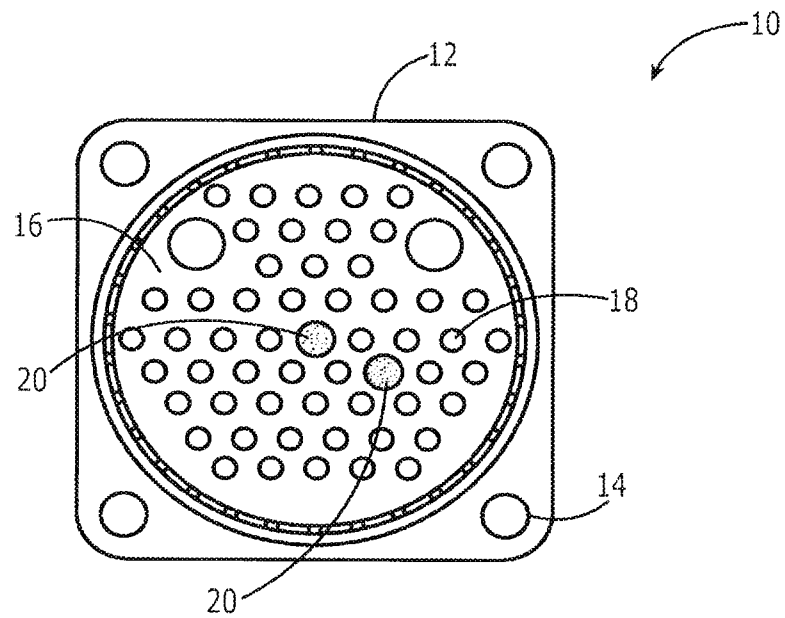
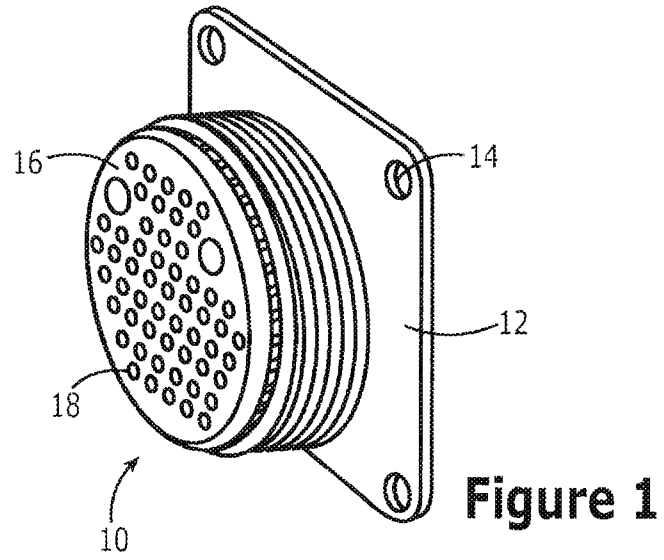
15 analyze each of a plurality of pixels of the image to identify one or more candidate contact insertion holes for the connector by:

20 identifying a first pixel of the plurality of pixels that has an intensity value that satisfies a first predefined intensity criteria; and

25 following identification of the first pixel that satisfies the first predefined intensity criteria, determining whether the first pixel is at least partially surrounded by a ring of pixels that satisfy a second predefined intensity criteria, wherein the ring of pixels has a radius between an inner diameter and an outer diameter, wherein the outer diameter of the ring of pixels is defined based upon a size of an outer diameter of the one or more candidate contact insertion holes for the connector; and

30

 assign contact identification (ID) numbers of the connector to the one or more candidate contact insertion holes.



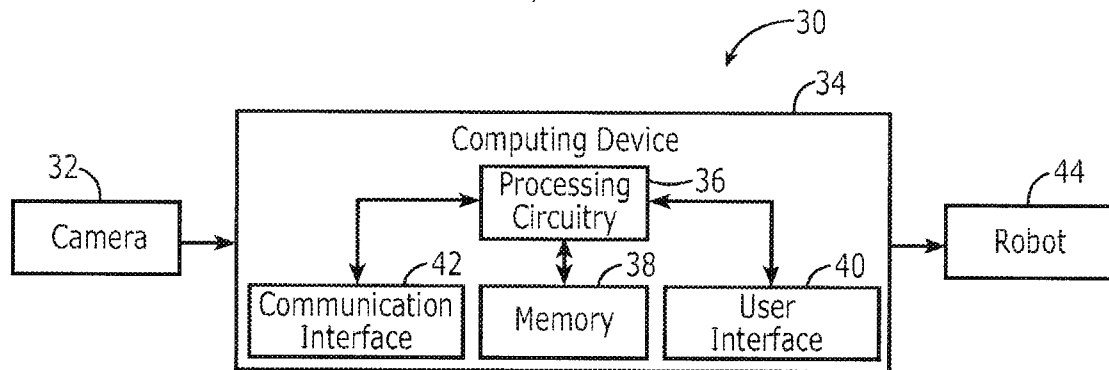


Figure 3

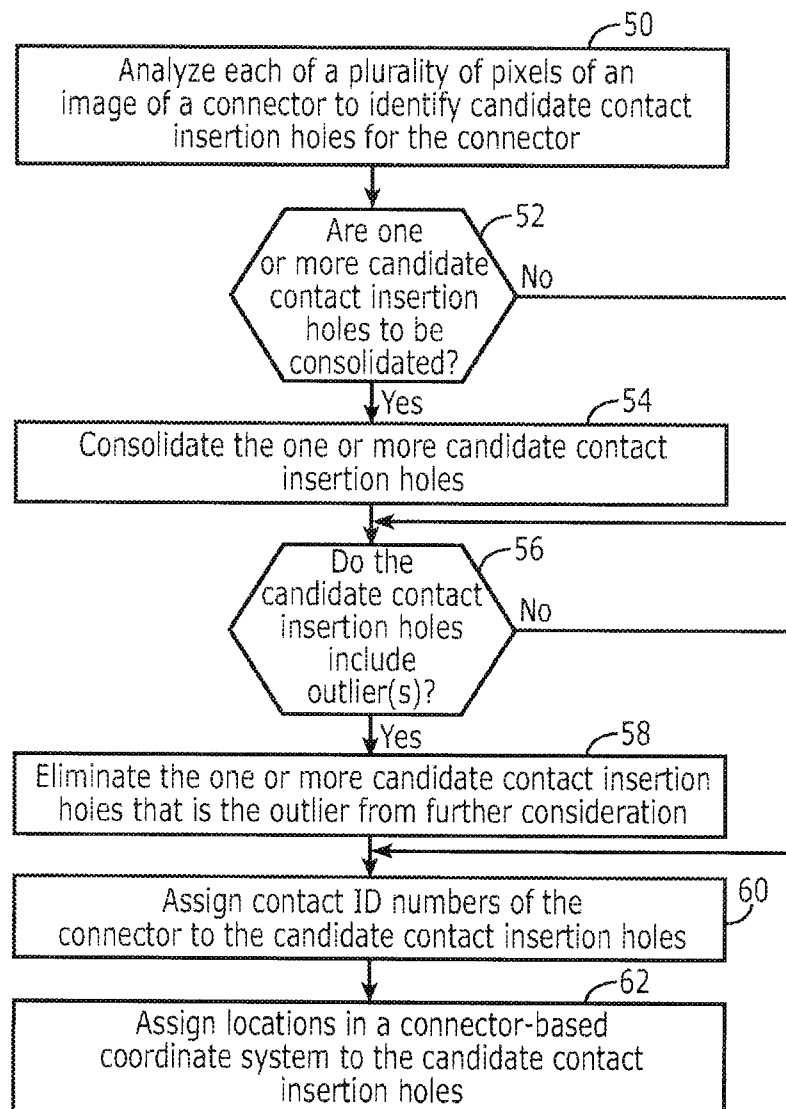


Figure 4

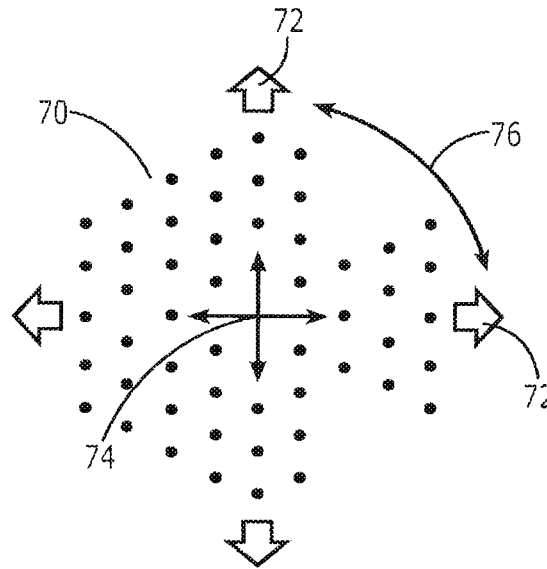


Figure 5

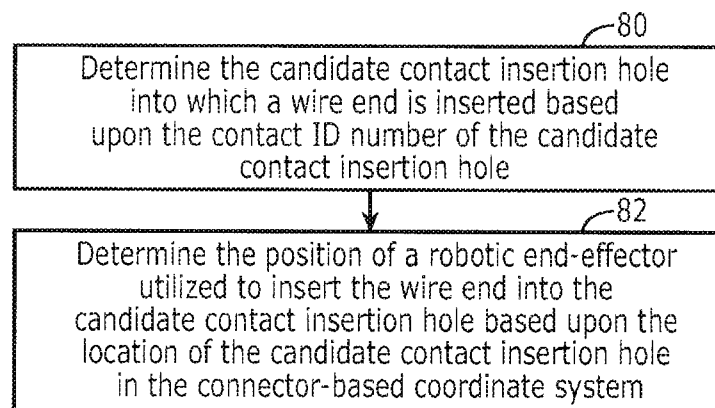


Figure 6

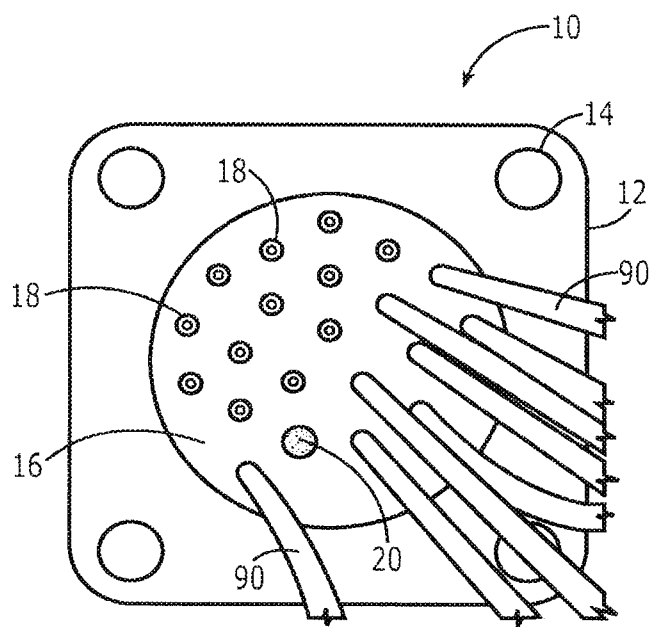


Figure 7

