SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR DELIVERING PREPARED FOOD PRODUCTS

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Appl. No.: 13/873,079

Filed: Apr. 29, 2013

Related U.S. Application Data

Continuation of application No. 13/301,390, filed on Nov. 21, 2011.

Publication Classification

Int. Cl.
G06Q 50/12 (2006.01)

ABSTRACT
Systems and methods are provided for ordering prepared food products via a network using an electronic device. A menu of available prepared food products may be presented on a display, and one of the prepared food products may be selected using an interface of the device. A menu of bread items available may be presented including visual representations of each available bread item. One of the bread items may be selected, whereupon a visual representation of the selected bread may be presented. One or more ingredients may be selected using the interface, whereupon visual representations of the ingredients are superimposed on the visual representation of the selected bread item. The systems and methods may provide an enhanced visual experience similar to ordering the product in person and watching the product being made.
110. Launch Application

120. Select Vendor Location

130. Download Updates

140. Select Items for Order

150. Transmit Order

End

Fig. 3
Start

Display Menu of Available Food Products

Select Food Product

Display Available Bread Items

Select Bread Item or Receptacle

Display Available Ingredients

Select Ingredients

Compute Selected Food Product

End

Fig. 4
subs
More than 20 fresh 6” or 12” subs to satisfy little and big hungers.

salads
A great alternative to our Sub with any of our great toppings.

drinks
Wash your Sub down with a refreshing cool drink. There’s loads of hot drinks too.

cookies
We say happiness is circular with our classic cookies.
Subway
Laguna Beach

Subs
More than 20 fresh 6" or 12" subs to satisfy little and big hungers.

Salads
A great alternative to a Sub with any of our great toppings.

Kid's menu
A fresh sub, low fat milk and a bag of crunchy apples... yummy!

Breakfast
Start your day in a sizzlin' way with crispy bacon, egg and melty cheese on a fra...

Drinks
Wash your Sub down with a refreshing cool drink. There's loads of hot drink...

Cookies &...
Tasty cookies and a wide range of chips to add to your sub or salad.
soups & mo...  giant subs  platters
Tasty soups, sliced fresh crunchy apples, Yogurts and more.
Whether you're hosting friends for a movie night or throwing a holiday bash,...
Made fresh to your order and piled high with a wide variety of taste-bud-temp...
Italian Collection
Featuring the Chicken Pizzola Melt, Italian B.M.T. and the Meatball Pepperoni Melt.

FREE Cookie
FREE Cookie with every order!

$6 Big Combo Small Price!
Italian Collection

Indulge through an encore of the Italian Collection sandwiches which includes the Chicken Pizzola Melt, Italian B.M.T. and the Meatball Pepperoni Melt.

Offer expires on April 14, 2013
Tuna
Our tasty Tuna Sandwich is simply sumptuous. Flaked tuna, mixed with mayo, and your choice of fresh vegetables...
470 calories

Turkey Bacon Avocado
Get flavor without the flab when you try this American classic with Avocado and Bacon added to it!...tender...
420 calories

Menu

Laguna Beach

6" $4.35
12" $5.75

Make it a Salad

$0.00

Fig. 7A
Our Tuna Sandwich is simply sumptuous. Flaked tuna, mixed with mayo, and your choice of fresh vegetables, this local favorite can be built to suit your craving.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serving Size (g)</th>
<th>Calories</th>
<th>Calories from fat</th>
<th>Total fat (g)</th>
<th>Saturated fat (g)</th>
<th>Cholesterol (mg)</th>
<th>Sodium (mg)</th>
<th>Carbohydrates (mg)</th>
<th>Dietary fiber (g)</th>
<th>Sugars (g)</th>
<th>Protein (g)</th>
<th>Vitamin A (%DV)</th>
<th>Vitamin C (%DV)</th>
<th>Calcium (%DV)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>238</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 7B
### 12" Cold Cut Combo

Can’t decide what kind of meat you want? Get them all. The Cold Cut Combo is stacked with turkey-based meats - ham, salami and bologna. It’s topped with crisp vegetables, served on freshly baked bread. This combo has a little bit of everything.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Calorie Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9-Grain Wheat</td>
<td>420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold Cut Combo Meat</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheese Swiss</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lettuce</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomatoes</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cucumbers</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pickles</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bell Peppers</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olives</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayonnaise</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sauce</td>
<td>Salt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12" Cold Cut Combo on 9-Grain Wheat

Laguna Beach

Order

100%

SUBWAY

Menu

Toasted

Type

Bread: Cheese

Sauce: Veggie

Meal

800cal

$5.00

Fig. 7J
My Order

Fountain Drink Small -... $0.00
Lay's® Salt & Vinegar $0.00

Total: $12.35

Name: 12" Cold Cut Combo for John
Instructions: Toasted lightly

Subtotal: $12.35

Fig. 7V
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place Order</th>
<th>Laguna Beach</th>
<th>$28.45</th>
<th>Laguna Beach</th>
<th>Thu 04/11/2013 at 6:30</th>
<th>Cash</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jane Doe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>152</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>154</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>156</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>158</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 7W
Cold Cut Combo Salad

- Bread
- Cheese
- Veggie Sauce
- Olives
- Bell Peppers

Type: Sandwich

Order: Cold Cut Combo Salad

Price: $5.75

Calories: 180 cal
Cold Cut Combo Salad
Lettuce, Swiss (+), Cold Cut Combo Meat (+), Tomatoes, Bell Peppers, Olives, Onions, Jalapeno Peppers, Avocado

Extras
Swiss (+) 50 cal
Cold Cut Combo Meat 140 cal
Avocado 70 cal

My Order
Miss Vickie's® Jalepeno 210 cal

Fig. 8F
Laguna Beach High School
Next to the Artists Theatre
11:55a

El Morro Elementary
Please indicate which office you would like it dropped-off at.
11:30a

Drop-off time:
Wednesday 4/10/13
For future orders, please select a different date and time.
Distance to drop-off: -- mi
Delivery charge: $0.00

Fig. 10C
Fig. 11A

**Beach delivery**

**School delivery**

Laguna Beach High School
Next to the Artists Theatre

Drop-off time:

Wednesday 4/10/13

For future orders, please select a different date and time.

Distance to drop-off:  -- mi
Delivery charge:  $0.00

Fig. 11B

**Beach delivery**

Downtown Laguna Beach
PCH/Ocean view, on PCH-beach side by red light.

Drop-off time:

Wednesday 4/10/13

For future orders, please select a different date and time.

Distance to drop-off:  -- mi
Delivery charge:  $0.00
Fig. 11C

Fig. 12
You will pick up your order at:

**Laguna Beach**
1350 S Coast Hwy
Laguna Beach, CA 92651
949-376-1995

**Pick-up time:**

*Thursday 4/11/13 at 6:10*

For future orders, please select a different date and time.

Distance to store: 7444.05 mi

---

Fig. 13B
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is Drop Off Supported?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drop Off Locations Take Cash?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply Delivery Charge?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Drop Off Location

* Name

* Description

* Position

Group

Image

Enabled

Automatically retrieve lat/long from the address below

Latitude

Longitude

Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat Sun

Cancel Create

Fig. 14B
SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR DELIVERING PREPARED FOOD PRODUCTS

RELATED APPLICATION DATA

[0001] The present application is a continuation-in-part of co-pending application Ser. No. 13/301,390, filed Nov. 21, 2011, the entire disclosure of which is expressly incorporated by reference herein.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates to systems and methods for ordering prepared food products, e.g., via a network, such as a telecommunications network and/or the Internet, using an electronic device, such as a wireless and/or mobile device, e.g., a cellular telephone, tablet computer, and the like.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Vendors of some prepared food products allow customers to order their products using electronic devices, such as computers, mobile telephones, and the like. Generally, the systems available involve providing a menu to the customer on a display and allowing the customer to select items of interest. The interfaces used in such systems may simply involve displaying word lists of the menu of food items available, and allowing customers to check boxes adjacent the items of interest. Some systems may provide a visual image of menu items, but generally such images are merely examples and do not actually reflect the customer’s order.

[0004] Accordingly, systems and methods for ordering prepared food products that provide an enhanced visual experience would be useful.

SUMMARY

[0005] The present invention is directed to systems and methods for ordering prepared food products, e.g., via a network, such as a telecommunications network and/or the Internet. Such systems and methods may involve use of electronic devices, such as wireless and/or mobile devices, e.g., a cellular telephone, tablet computer, and the like. The systems and methods herein may provide an enhanced experience for customers ordering prepared food products, e.g., providing a visually accurate representation of a customer’s order and/or providing animations that simulate preparation of the customer’s order, which may provide an experience similar to ordering food items in person and watching them be prepared.

[0006] In accordance with one embodiment, a method is provided for ordering prepared food products, e.g., a sandwich, burger, pizza, taco, and the like, via a network, by a customer using an electronic device. A menu of available prepared food products may be presented on a display of the electronic device to the customer, and one of the prepared food products may be selected using an interface of the electronic device. The electronic device may present a menu of bread items available for making the selected prepared food product on the display, the menu including visual representations of each of the available bread items. One of the bread items may be selected using the interface, whereupon the electronic device may present a visual representation of the selected bread item on the display, e.g., in an open orientation for receiving ingredients. One or more ingredients for the selected food product may be selected using the interface, whereupon the electronic device may present visual representations of the one or more ingredients superimposed on the visual representation of the selected bread item.

[0007] The customer may then input into the interface that the selected food product is complete, whereupon the electronic display may present a visual representation of the selected food product in a packaged configuration. An order including the selected food product may then be transmitted via a network to a vendor server for fulfillment. Optionally, one or more additional food items may be added to the order before transmitting the order to the vendor server.

[0008] In one embodiment, the visual representations of the one or more ingredients may be superimposed on one another, e.g., in a predetermined layering scheme, that enhances identification of the selected ingredients when superimposed onto one another and/or over the visual representation of the selected bread item. Such a layering scheme may also facilitate modification of the order, e.g., showing deselected ingredients being removed while the remaining selected ingredients remain in the visual representation being displayed, without having to replace the entire displayed image.

[0009] In addition or alternatively, the visual representations of the available bread items and ingredients may be stored in separate files in memory of the electronic device. For example, one or more databases may be stored in memory of the electronic device, which may include a list of available food products and ingredients, one or more image files associated with respective food products and ingredients, animation files associated with respective food products and ingredients, prices associated with respective food products and ingredients, and/or nutritional information associated with respective food products and ingredients. The one or more databases may be substantially static or may be updated periodically, e.g., when an order is placed, and/or may be customized based on a selected vendor’s available food products.

[0010] In accordance with another embodiment, a method is provided for ordering prepared food products, e.g., a salad, via a network, by a customer using an electronic device. A menu of available prepared food products may be presented on a display of the electronic device. One of the prepared food products may be selected using an interface of the electronic device, whereupon the electronic device may present a receptacle in an open configuration for receiving ingredients of the selected prepared food product on the display. One or more ingredients for the selected food product may be selected using the interface, whereupon the electronic device may present visual representations of the one or more ingredients superimposed on the visual representation of the receptacle.

[0011] The customer may then input into the interface that the selected food product is complete, whereupon the electronic display may present a visual representation of the selected food product with the receptacle in a closed configuration. An order including the selected food product may then be transmitted via a network to a vendor server for fulfillment.

[0012] In accordance with still another embodiment, an electronic device is provided for ordering prepared food products via a network. Generally, the electronic device includes an interface; a display; one or more processors coupled to the interface and display, and a transmitter for transmitting an order including a selected food product via a network to a vendor server for fulfillment. For example, the electronic device may be configured to present a menu of available prepared food products on the display; allow selection of one of the prepared food products using the interface, whereupon
the electronic device may present a menu of bread items available for making the selected prepared food product on the display, the menu including visual representations of each of the available bread items; allow selection of one of the bread items using the interface, whereupon the electronic device may present a visual representation of the selected bread item on the display in an open orientation for receiving ingredients; allow selection of one or more ingredients for the selected food product using the interface, whereupon the electronic device may present visual representations of the one or more ingredients superimposed on the visual representation of the selected bread item; and/or allow input into the interface that the selected food product is complete, whereupon the electronic display may present a visual representation of the selected food product in a packaged configuration.

[0013] In accordance with another embodiment, a method is provided for ordering prepared food products via a network by a customer using a wireless electronic device that includes presenting, on a display of the electronic device, a menu of available prepared food products. Using an interface of the electronic device, the customer may select one or more prepared food products to be included in an order, and may indicate that the order is complete. The customer may also select, using the interface, a desired vendor location to fulfill the order. A drop-off menu may be presented on the display including a plurality of physical locations and drop-off times available for the desired vendor location. The customer may select a desired physical location and a desired drop-off time from the drop-off menu. An order including the one or more selected food products may be transmitted via a network to a vendor server for the desired vendor location to arrange delivery of the order to the desired physical location at the desired drop-off time.

[0014] In accordance with yet another embodiment, a method is provided for ordering prepared food products via a network that includes receiving a drop-off schedule for a vendor location, the drop-off schedule including a plurality of physical locations available for drop-off orders from the vendor location, and a schedule of drop-off times for the physical locations; and adding the drop-off schedule to a vendor database. The drop-off schedule may be sent to a customer electronic device, and an order may be received from the customer electronic device, the order including one or more prepared food products and identifying a desired physical location and a desired drop-off time from the drop-off schedule. The order may be transmitted to the vendor location for the vendor location to arrange delivery of the order to the desired physical location at the desired drop-off time.

[0015] In accordance with another embodiment, a method is provided for ordering prepared food products via a network using a wireless electronic device that includes accessing a default database stored in memory of the electronic device to generate a menu of available prepared food products, and presenting, on a display of the electronic device, the menu. A customer may select, using an interface of the electronic device, one or more prepared food products from the menu, and a desired vendor location from the local database. The customer may indicate, using the interface, that the order is complete. The electronic device may communicate with a remote server to reconcile the order with a vendor database including the menu for the desired vendor location. The reconciled order may be presented on the display, and an order including the one or more selected food products may be transmitted via a network to a vendor server for the vendor location to arrange for delivery of the order.

[0016] In accordance with still another embodiment, an electronic device is provided for ordering prepared food products via a network. Generally, the device includes a user interface; a display; and one or more processors coupled to the interface and display for presenting on the display a menu of available prepared food products; receiving via the user interface one or more prepared food products to be included in an order; receiving via the user interface a desired vendor location to fulfill the order; presenting on the display a drop-off menu including a plurality of physical locations and drop-off times available for the desired vendor location; and receiving via the user interface a desired physical location and a desired drop-off time from the drop-off menu. In addition, the device may include a communications interface coupled to the processor for transmitting an order including the one or more selected food products via a network to a vendor server for the desired vendor location to arrange delivery of the order to the desired physical location at the desired drop-off time.

[0017] In accordance with yet another embodiment, computer program products are provided that may be configured for performing the various methods described herein and/or may be used by any of the devices or systems described herein.

[0018] Other aspects and features of the present invention will become apparent from consideration of the following description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0019] The drawings illustrate exemplary embodiments of the invention, in which:

[0020] FIG. 1 is a schematic drawing showing a network architecture providing an exemplary embodiment of a system for ordering prepared food products.

[0021] FIG. 2 is a schematic of an exemplary wireless device that may be used to order prepared food products via a network.

[0022] FIG. 3 is a flow chart showing an exemplary method for using a wireless device for ordering prepared food products.

[0023] FIG. 4 is a flowchart showing an exemplary method for selecting and/or building a prepared food product to be included in an order.

[0024] FIGS. 5A and 5B are exemplary screen shots (landscape orientation) showing initial images that may be displayed when an electronic device initially launches an application performing a method, such as that shown in FIG. 3.

[0025] FIG. 6A shows an exemplary screen shot that may be displayed of an initial menu for ordering various food products, presented in a vertical (portrait) scrolling orientation.

[0026] FIGS. 6B(1)-6B(3) show left, center, and right portions of an exemplary screen shot that may be displayed of an initial menu for ordering various food products, presented in a horizontal (landscape) scrolling orientation.

[0027] FIGS. 6C and 6D are exemplary screen shots that may be displayed, e.g., when a customer selects “My Favorites” from the exemplary initial menus shown in FIGS. 6A and 6B.

[0028] FIG. 6E is an exemplary screen shot that may be displayed, e.g., when a customer selects “Past Orders” from the exemplary initial menus shown in FIGS. 6A and 6B.
FIGS. 6F and 6G are exemplary screen shots (landscape orientation) that may be displayed when “Specials” is selected from the exemplary initial menus shown in FIGS. 6A and 6B.

FIG. 6H is an exemplary screen shot that may be displayed when “Settings” is selected from the initial menus of FIGS. 6A and 6B.

FIGS. 6I-6L are exemplary screen shots that may be displayed when the user selects one of the Settings fields for editing.

FIGS. 7A-7Q are exemplary screen shots (landscape orientation) that may be displayed when an electronic device performs a method for selecting a prepared food product, i.e., a sub sandwich, for purchase, e.g., using the method shown in FIG. 4.

FIGS. 7R and 7S are exemplary screen shots (landscape orientation) that may be displayed when selection of the sandwich of FIGS. 7A-7Q is complete, e.g., to display vertically scrolling submenus of additional food products that may be purchased with the selected sandwich.

FIGS. 7T-7W are exemplary screen shots (landscape orientation) that may be displayed when an order is completed, including options to save an order to a favorites list and/or to provide special instructions.

FIGS. 8A and 8B are exemplary screen shots (landscape orientation) that may be displayed when an electronic device performs a method for selecting a prepared food product, i.e., a salad, for purchase, e.g., using the method shown in FIG. 4.

FIGS. 8C and 8D are exemplary screen shots (landscape orientation) that may be displayed when selection of the salad of FIGS. 8A and 8B is complete, e.g., to display vertically scrolling submenus of additional food products that may be purchased with the selected salad.

FIGS. 8E and 8F are exemplary screen shots (landscape orientation) that may be displayed when the order of FIGS. 8A-8D is completed, showing a price breakdown and a calorie breakdown, respectively.

FIGS. 9(1) and 9(2) are upper and lower portions of an exemplary screen shot, showing multiple prepared food products included in an order.

FIGS. 10A-10D are exemplary screen shots that may be displayed, showing available “Delivery/Drop-Off/Pick-Up” options that may be selected by a user.

FIGS. 11A-11C are exemplary screen shots that may be displayed, showing an alternative embodiment of “Drop-Off” options that may be selected by a user.

FIG. 12 is an exemplary screen shot showing information related to a selected vendor location.

FIGS. 13A and 13B are exemplary screen shots (landscape orientation) that may be displayed, showing final “Checkout” including confirmation of payment and scheduling for the completed order.

FIGS. 14A and 14B are exemplary screen shots that may be displayed on a manager device for editing information regarding Drop-Off locations.

Detailed Description of the Exemplary Embodiments

Turning to the drawings, FIG. 1 shows an exemplary embodiment of a system 8 that includes one or more vendor servers 12, vendor physical locations 14, (one exemplary server 12 and physical location 14 shown merely for simplicity), and various electronic devices, such as customer electronic devices 20, 30, . . . , one or more manager devices 18 (one shown for simplicity), and the like, connected to and/or communicating via a network 10. In addition or alternatively, the system 8 may also include one or more additional devices, such as a settlement house 16 for processing payments on behalf of vendors and/or customers, and the like.

In exemplary embodiments, the network 10 may be a telecommunications network, including a wide area network (“WAN”), a local area network (“LAN”), an intranet, a wireless network, and/or a telephony network. For example, the network 10 may incorporate several different types of networks including a WAN, a LAN, and/or a wireless network; one such network including multiple different types of networks is the Internet.

Each of the customer electronic devices 20-n (and each manager device 18) may be an electronic and/or computing device, such as a mobile, smart, and/or cellular telephone, a tablet computer, a personal digital assistant, a wi-fi device, a desktop computer, a laptop computer, an interactive television, a kiosk, and the like, capable of communicating via the network 10. Generally, the customer devices 20-n (and each manager device 18) may include one or more processors 22, memory and/or other storage devices 24, communication interfaces 26, and/or user interfaces 28, as shown in FIG. 2 and described further below. Users or “customers” using the customer devices 20-n may interact with the vendor server(s) 12 and/or settlement house 16, e.g., submitting and/or modifying orders, updating menu and/or other information, and the like, as described elsewhere herein.

The vendor server 12 may include one or more computer systems including one or more processors, memory and/or storage devices, and communication interfaces for communicating via the network 10, e.g., with the customer devices 20-n, manager device(s) 18, vendor location 14, and/or settlement house 16. In addition or alternatively, the vendor server 12 may communicate directly with the vendor location 14, and/or may be operated directly by or communicate directly with the vendor location 14, in addition to or instead of via the network 40, e.g., if the vendor server 12 is at the same physical location as the vendor location 14, as represented by dashed line 15. The vendor server 12 may include one or more hardware-based components and/or software-based modules for performing the various functions related to the system 8, as described elsewhere herein. Although only one vendor server 12 and vendor location 14 are shown, it will be appreciated that a single vendor server 12 may communicate with multiple vendor locations 14 (not shown), and/or that multiple vendor servers (also not shown) may be provided for the same or different vendors.

Turning to FIG. 2, an exemplary embodiment of a customer electronic device 20 is shown that includes one or more hardware and/or software components for performing the methods described herein. As shown, the electronic device 20 may be a wireless device, e.g., a mobile, smart, and/or cellular telephone, a tablet computer, a personal digital assistant, a Wi-Fi device, a laptop computer, and the like, capable of communicating via the network 10 (not shown, see FIG. 1). The electronic device 20 includes one or more processors, such as exemplary processor 22, for completing the various tasks described herein, e.g., to place orders for prepared food products, download, upload, and/or save information, and the like, as described further below. Additional processors may be provided, such as an auxiliary processor to manage input/output or perform floating point mathematical operations.
operations, a special-purpose microprocessor having an architecture rapid execution of signal processing algorithms, a slave processor subordinate to the main processing system ("back-end processor"), and/or a coprocessor (not shown). Such auxiliary processors may be discrete processors or may be integrated with the processor 22.

[0049] The processor 22 is generally connected to a communication bus 23. The communication bus 23 may include a data channel for facilitating information transfer between storage and/or other components of the electronic device 20. The communication bus 23 may also provide signals required for communication with the processor 12, including a data bus, address bus, and/or control bus (not shown). The communication bus 23 may include any known bus architecture, for example, industry standard architecture (ISA), extended industry standard architecture (EISA), Micro Channel Architecture (MCA), peripheral component interconnect (PCI) local bus, IEEE 488 general-purpose interface bus (GPIB), IEEE 696/8-100, and the like.

[0050] The electronic device 20 also includes memory and/or storage devices, e.g., main memory 24 and secondary memory or storage devices 25. The main memory 24 may provide storage of instructions and/or data for programs executed on the processor 22. In exemplary embodiments, the main memory 24 may be semiconductor-based memory, such as dynamic random access memory (DRAM) and/or static random access memory (SRAM). In addition, other semiconductor-based memory may also be provided, such as synchronous dynamic random access memory (SDRAM), Rambus dynamic random access memory (RDram), ferroelectric random access memory (FRAM), and the like, as well as read only memory (ROM).

[0051] The secondary memory 25 may include a hard disk drive 25a and/or a removable storage drive 25b, for example, a flash drive, a floppy disk drive, a magnetic tape drive, an optical disk drive, a CDROM drive, a DVDROM drive, and the like (not shown). The removable storage drive 25 may read from and/or write to a removable storage unit (not shown) in a well-known manner. In exemplary embodiments, the removable storage unit may include a floppy disk, magnetic tape, optical disk, CDROM disk, DVDROM disk, and the like that may be read from and/or written to by removable storage drive 25a. Additionally, the removable storage unit may include removable storage media transferable between computer software and computer media storage devices.

[0052] Optionally, the secondary memory 25 may include other components allowing computer programs and/or other instructions to be loaded into the electronic device 20. For example, such components may include semiconductor-based memory such as programmable read-only memory (PROM), erasable programmable read-only memory (EPROM), electrically erasable read-only memory (EEEPROM), or flash memory (block oriented memory similar to EEPROM). Also included are any other interfaces and removable storage units that allow software and data to be transferred from the removable storage unit to the electronic device 20.

[0053] The electronic device 20 also generally includes one or more communication interfaces 26, e.g., one or more transceivers, receivers, and/or transmitters. Communication interface(s) 26 may allow software and/or data to be transferred between the electronic device 20 and the vendor server 12 and/or other external devices, networks, or information sources. Examples of communication interface 26 include but are not limited to an infrared or radiofrequency ("RF") interface (such as those that use the Bluetooth standard), a modem, a network interface (for example an Ethernet card), a communications port, a PCMCI slot and card, and the like. The communication interface(s) 26 may implement industry published or specified standards, such as Ethernet IEEE 802 standards, Fibre Channel, digital subscriber line (DSL), asymmetric digital subscriber line (ADSL), frame relay, asynchronous transfer mode (ATM), integrated digital services network (ISDN), personal communications services (PCS), transmission control protocol/Internet protocol (TCP/IP), serial line Internet protocol/point-to-point protocol (SLIP/PPP), and the like. Software and/or data transferred via the communication interface 26 may be transferred using signals 27, such as electronic, electromagnetic, optical signals, and the like. The signals 27 may be implemented using wires, cables, fiber optics, telephone lines, cellular phone links, radio frequency (RF) links, and/or other communications channels.

[0054] Computer programming instructions, e.g., computer programs, software, or firmware, may be stored in the main memory 24 and/or the secondary memory 25. Computer programs may also be received via the communication interface 26. Such computer programs, when executed, may enable the electronic device 20 to perform one or more of the features described elsewhere herein.

[0055] As used herein, "computer program product" may refer to any media used to provide programming instructions to the electronic device 20. Examples of such media include removable storage units in removable storage drives 25b, a hard disk installed in hard disk drive 25a, and signals 27. Thus, a computer program product may include means for providing programming instructions to the electronic device 20.

[0056] Where the methods and/or features described herein are completed using software, the software may be stored in a computer program product and loaded into the electronic device 20, e.g., using the hard disk drive 25a, removable storage drive 25b, and/or communication interface 26. The computer programming instructions, when executed by the processor 22, may cause the processor 22 to perform the methods and/or features described herein. In addition or alternatively, one or more of the methods and/or features may be implemented primarily in hardware using hardware components, such as application specific integrated circuits ("ASICs").

[0057] In addition, the electronic device 20 may include one or more user interfaces 28, e.g., a keyboard 28b, mouse, touch screen, touch pad (not shown), and/or other input device. The user interface 40 may allow a customer using the electronic device 20 to download software, launch one or more programs, place and/or pay for orders, and/or otherwise communicate with the vendor server 12 and/or settlement house 16, as described elsewhere herein.

[0058] Further, the electronic device 20 may include one or more output devices, e.g., a display 28a, speaker (not shown), and the like. The output device(s) 28a may facilitate a customer controlling and/or otherwise communicating with the processor 22 or other components of the electronic device 20. In addition, the output device(s) 28a may allow information to be presented and/or manipulated in a desired manner, e.g., to present a series of menus and/or images, as described elsewhere herein. In one embodiment, the electronic device 20 may include a touch screen (not shown) that may act as a
display \texttt{28a} and as an input device \texttt{28b}, allowing the customer to scroll through menus and/or select icons, e.g., by touching the corresponding images on the touch screen, as described elsewhere herein.

Optionally, the electronic device \texttt{20} may include one or more additional hardware components and/or software modules. For example, the electronic device \texttt{20} may include a GPS \texttt{29} or other device or system for identifying a location of the electronic device \texttt{20}, e.g., to facilitate identifying vendor locations based on proximity to the customer.

Turning to FIG. 3, an exemplary method is shown for using an electronic device, such as the electronic device \texttt{20} of FIG. 2 (also referenced below), to place an order for one or more prepared food products, e.g., using an application downloaded or otherwise stored in the memory \texttt{24} and/or \texttt{25} of the electronic device \texttt{20}. For example, the application may be initially downloaded via the network \texttt{10}, e.g., from the vendor server \texttt{12}, a general application server, or other available server. When the application is downloaded or otherwise stored in memory \texttt{24} and/or \texttt{25}, the application may include a long-term or indefinite database, e.g., stored in memory \texttt{25}, and optionally, a short-term or temporary database, e.g., stored in memory \texttt{24} and/or \texttt{25}. For example, the long-term database may include a menu of standard food products available from the vendor(s) accessible using the application, prices, nutritional and/or other information regarding the food products, images of food products and available ingredients, standard animations, and the like, as described further below. The temporary database may be used to store information during a particular transaction, e.g., when the electronic device \texttt{20} contacts a vendor server \texttt{12}, such as specials, modifications to the menu of standard food products (e.g., new products not included in the long-term database, food products in the long-term database not available at a selected vendor location \texttt{14}), price changes, and the like, also as described further below.

In an exemplary embodiment, the application may be a specialized program dedicated to ordering food products from a single vendor or its affiliates, e.g., a company that operates multiple outlets directly, or franchisees of a franchisor, such as Subway® restaurants. In this embodiment, the application may be downloaded from the vendor server \texttt{12}, e.g., via a website or other location accessible via the network \texttt{10} and maintained and/or operated by the vendor server \texttt{12}. Alternatively, the application may be available from a website providing multiple applications for various vendors, e.g., a website specializing in food service, or from a general applications store, such as the iTunes® store or other vendor. In another embodiment, the application may provide menus and ordering services for multiple vendors, e.g., such that desired vendors may be selected from the application and orders then placed for products from that particular vendor's menu, e.g., as described elsewhere herein.

Returning to FIG. 3, once the application is stored on the electronic device \texttt{20}, at any time, the application may be used to place orders for prepared food products. Initially, at step \texttt{110}, the application may be launched, e.g., by selecting the desired application from a menu of available applications displayed on the display \texttt{28a}. For example, the customer using the electronic device \texttt{20} may use a touch screen, touchpad, keyboard, or other input device \texttt{28b} to navigate through a menu of applications stored in memory \texttt{24} or \texttt{25} on the electronic device \texttt{20}, and select the application by touching an icon representing the application on a touch screen, clicking on a touch pad, pressing “enter” on a keyboard or keypad, or otherwise using the input device \texttt{28b}. (Similar methods may be used to select items from any of the menus or methods described elsewhere herein).

As described further below, the images related to the application may be displayed on the electronic device \texttt{20} in landscape or portrait orientation, as desired. For example, the display \texttt{28a} may have an aspect ratio in which the width is greater than the height (landscape orientation) or in which the width is smaller than the height (portrait orientation). Optionally, the electronic device \texttt{20} may include a display \texttt{28a} that may be operated in either landscape or portrait orientation. For example, the electronic device \texttt{20} may include one or more accelerometers, gyroscopes, and/or other sensors that may determine the orientation of the display \texttt{28a}, and the application may automatically display the images in the appropriate orientation based on the sensor information.

Next, at step \texttt{120}, a vendor location may be selected. For example, the GPS \texttt{29} on the electronic device or other device or system may provide the location of the electronic device \texttt{20}, which may be transmitted via the communication interface \texttt{26} to the vendor server \texttt{12} or other location. The vendor server \texttt{12} may return one or more vendor locations \texttt{14} based on the GPS data, e.g., by proximity to the electronic device \texttt{20}, which may be presented to the customer as a list or other menu on the display \texttt{28a}. Alternatively, a database of vendor locations may be included in the long-term database of the application, e.g., downloaded and stored in the memory \texttt{25}. A list or menu of available vendor locations may be displayed on the display \texttt{28a} when the processor \texttt{22} accesses the GPS data and the database, e.g., based on proximity to the location of the electronic device \texttt{20}. From the list or menu, the customer may select a desired vendor location \texttt{14}, e.g., using the input device \texttt{28b}.

In a further alternative, the electronic device \texttt{20} may have one or more favorite vendor locations stored in the long-term database, e.g., in the memory \texttt{25}, saved by the user. FIGS. 61 and \texttt{62} show exemplary images that may be displayed a saved or favorite vendor location, e.g., by accessing the “Settings” icon \texttt{132a} from the main menu \texttt{132}, as described further below. The favorite vendor location(s) may be displayed on the display \texttt{28a} or automatically selected when the application launches. The customer may simply accept the default vendor location using the input device \texttt{28b} or may override the default and request a list of vendor locations, e.g., based on proximity to the electronic device \texttt{20} (from GPS data) or based on proximity to a location input by the customer using the input device \texttt{28b}, e.g., a Zip or postal code, city, state, and the like.

Once a vendor location \texttt{14} is selected, the electronic device \texttt{20} may communicate with the vendor server \texttt{12} and/or vendor location \texttt{14}, e.g., to receive updates and/or other information, relevant to the selected vendor location \texttt{14}. For example, the processor \texttt{22} may transmit an inquiry to the vendor server \texttt{12} and/or vendor location \texttt{14} requesting any special offers, menu updates, and the like, which may be downloaded via the communication interface \texttt{26} and stored in the memory \texttt{24} and/or \texttt{25}, e.g., in the long-term or temporary database of the application.

In yet another alternative, the application may defer requesting or selecting a vendor location, e.g., until an order is completed, and the customer is ready to check-out and pay for the order. In this alternative, the application may use a default database, e.g., already stored in the memory \texttt{24} and/or
25, or downloaded from the vendor server 12. For example, the vendor server 12 may send the electronic device 20 a default database when the application is initially downloaded (which may be updated periodically, as described elsewhere herein), or the electronic device 20 may automatically contact the vendor server 12 each time the application is launched, and an entire default database or default updates may be transferred to the memory 24 and/or 25. In this alternative, a user may select items for an order using the default database, which may be reconciled with any changes for a particular vendor location when the order is complete, as described elsewhere herein.

[0068] FIG. 5A shows an exemplary initial image that may be displayed on the display 28a of the electronic device 20, where a location of a Subway® restaurant in Laguna Beach, Calif., has been selected. An image, such as that shown in FIG. 5A, may be displayed for a predetermined time, if desired, e.g., to allow time for any menu updates or other information to buffer and/or at least partially download into memory 24 and/or 25. In addition or alternatively, when the application is launched, a greeting may be presented, e.g., emitted by a speaker (not shown) on the electronic device 20 and/or presented on the display 28a. For example, a greeting may be provided similar to that used by staff when a customer enters a physical vendor location, e.g., “Welcome to Subway. What can I make for you?” and the like. Other audio greetings or messages may be presented at other times during use of the application, e.g., to further enhance the experience and/or simulate being served in person and/or personally, as described elsewhere herein.

[0069] If the vendor location 14 (or the default database) has any special offers, e.g., included in the information downloaded from the vendor server 12, the application may automatically direct the processor 22 to present such offers on the display 28a, e.g., sequentially after the initial screen. For example, the image of FIG. 5A includes a notice to the customer that a drink and chips can be added to a sub for $2.50. FIG. 5B shows another exemplary image of a special offer (“12 cookies for $5.00”) that may be displayed alone or as part of a sequence of special offers on or after the initial image, e.g., superimposed on the image of FIG. 5A. The special offer(s) may be displayed for a predetermined time, e.g., to allow additional time, if needed, for menu updates, image files or other graphics, and the like to further download into the memory 24 and/or 25 of the electronic device 20. Optionally, a user may use the input device 28b to select a special offer, e.g., by touching a touch screen over the image of the special offer, or otherwise using the input device 28b, to bypass at least some of the subsequent menus and jump immediately to a special offer of interest. Alternatively, the user may select “Specials” from the main menu 131, as described further below, at any time while the application is running to access the list of available special offers, which may be displayed, e.g., as shown in FIGS. 6F and 6G.

[0070] As described above, in an exemplary system and method, the application may include a long-term database of standard products; product images, animations, or other graphics; prices; nutritional information; and the like. The long-term database may be set-up and/or stored in the memory 24 and/or 25 of the electronic device 20, e.g., when the application is initially downloaded or otherwise stored. During step 130, the processor 22 may check if any of the standard menu items, prices, and/or other information has changed, and, if so, the new menu items, prices, and/or other updated information may be downloaded and added to the long-term database in memory 24 and/or 25, e.g., indefinitely replacing previous prices or other information. Alternatively, the new prices may be saved temporarily, e.g., into the temporary database, such that the long-term database remains unchanged, while allowing the temporary prices charged by the vendor location 14 to be saved, displayed, and used during an order. For example, the processor 22 may download any such special prices or other deals via the communications interface 26, which may be offered by the vendor location 14, e.g., for a limited time, and/or added to the long-term and/or temporary databases.

[0071] In addition or alternatively, the processor 22 may download any new products offered by the vendor location 14 that are not already included in the long-term database, e.g., for indefinite addition to the long-term database, or temporarily saved solely for the current transaction, e.g., in the temporary database. Alternatively, the processor 22 may determine from the data received from the vendor server 12 that certain products in the long-term database are not offered by the selected vendor location 14, whereupon the processor 22 may leave such products off of the menus subsequently displayed and offered to the customer by the application on the electronic device 20.

[0072] Returning to FIG. 3, at step 140, one or more food products may be selected for purchase, e.g., added to an order being placed by the customer. For example, as shown in FIG. 6A, after presenting an initial image (e.g., FIG. 5A) and/or any special offer images (e.g., FIG. 5B), an initial menu 131 may be displayed on the display 28a, e.g., to present menu options to the customer. As shown in FIG. 6A, the menu 131 may be displayed in a portrait or vertical stacked orientation, e.g., which may be scrolled vertically to present a plurality of menu categories, such as “subs” 131a, “salads” 131b, “drinks” 131c, and “cookies” 131d. Alternatively, as shown in FIGS. 6B(1)-6B(3), the initial menu 131’ may be displayed in a landscape or side-by-side orientation, e.g., which may be scrolled vertically (or alternatively horizontally, not shown) to present menu categories, such as “subs” 131a, “salads” 131b, “kid’s menu” 131c, “breakfast” 131d, “cookies” 131e, “cookies” 131f, “soups & more” 131g, “giant subs” 131h, and “platters” 131i on the display 28a to the customer.

[0073] Optionally, as shown in FIGS. 6A and 6B, a shortcut or main menu 132 (and/or other menus, not shown) may be included in the image presenting the initial menu 131, e.g., along the bottom of the image, as shown, or alternatively, along the top or one of the sides of the image (not shown). The shortcut menu 132 may provide additional options to the customer in addition to selecting individual food products from the initial menu 131.

[0074] For example, the customer may select “new order” 132a from the shortcut menu 132b to begin placing a new order and canceling any unused order information to date (e.g., after confirmation from the customer). Alternatively, the customer may simply select one of the displayed categories on the initial menu 131 to initiate a new order and select one or more prepared food products for purchase. For example, the customer may select a sandwich for purchase, e.g., by touching the image over or adjacent the region labeled “subs” 131a, 131f (or over the image of the exemplary sandwich or elsewhere in the field shown adjacent the corresponding text), or otherwise inputting a selection using the input device 28b, whereupon the electronic device 20 may perform a method to select the prepared food product of choice, such as that shown
in FIGS. 4, 7A-7Q, and described further below. When such a selection is made, the application may again present a message simulating being served in person, e.g., an audio message stating “What would you like on your sandwich?” and the like.

Alternatively, the customer may select “past order” 132b from the shortcut menu 132 to repeat a previous order that the customer has placed using the electronic device 20, e.g., saved in memory 25. For example, if the customer selects past order 132b using the input device 28b, the processor 22 may access the memory 25, and present a submenu of previous orders on the display 28a, such as that shown in FIG. 6E. The customer may then select one of the previous orders, or cancel and exit the submenu and return to the initial menu 131. Optionally, the customer may select to edit the previous order, e.g., by selecting an “edit” button or highlighted text link included in the displayed image (not shown), whereupon the order may be edited using methods similar to those used to place a new order, as described further elsewhere herein.

In yet another option, the customer may select “favorites” 132c from the shortcut menu 132, whereupon the processor 22 may cause a list or submenu of favorite food products previously saved in memory 24 and/or 25 of the electronic device 20. For example, FIG. 6C shows an exemplary image including a submenu of favorite food products previously saved in memory 25 of the electronic device 20. Any of the favorites may be selected, may be edited, and/or may be deleted, e.g., by selecting appropriate icons adjacent the respective favorite food products.

For example, turning to FIGS. 6D(1) and 6D(2), an image of an exemplary favorite prepared food product, e.g., a sandwich, is shown, and described, e.g., by selecting an expand icon 133 to the left of the favorite food product (e.g., changing from a “−” in FIG. 6C to a “+” in FIGS. 6D(1) and 6D(2)). If the customer wants to order the favorite food product identified as previously ordered, the customer may add the product to their order, e.g., by selecting (e.g., touching or clicking) the “+” icon 134b shown in FIG. 6D(1). Alternatively, if the customer wants to modify the favorite food product, the customer may select a “pencil” icon (not shown) and modify the food product, using methods similar to those described elsewhere herein. In a further alternative, the customer may delete the favorite food product, e.g., by selecting the “−” icon 134c, and then confirming by selecting the “Delete” icon 134d (e.g., to reduce the risk of accidental selection), as shown in FIG. 6D(2).

In still another option, the customer may select “specials” 132f from the shortcut menu 132, whereupon the processor 22 may access the memory 24 and/or 25 and/or communicate with the vendor server 14 for special offers. The processor 22 may then present a list or submenu of special deals, such as the exemplary images shown in FIGS. 6F and 6G, offered by the vendor location 14 on the display 28a. The customer may select one of the specials included in the display image, if desired, and may then modify the special order, e.g., to add and/or change ingredients, and the like, similar to other methods herein.

Finally, the customer may select “Settings” 132e from the shortcut menu 132, e.g., to set or change other settings related to operation of the application and/or electronic device 20. For example, when Settings 132e is selected, the customer may be able to save preferred vendor locations, update payment information, e.g., credit or debit card, or online payment service information, such as PayPal® information, and the like. For example, FIG. 6H shows an exemplary image that may be initially displayed when “Settings” 132e is selected from the main menu 132, showing saved user information, e.g., saved favorite vendor location(s) 150, account information 152, customer information 154, saved (or default) delivery/drop-off/pick-up option(s) 156, and saved (or default) payment information 158. The user may select any of these fields or the corresponding “…” icons to review additional details and/or make any desired changes. After the user has made any desired changes, the user may return to the main Settings page of FIG. 6I by selecting the “Settings” icon 148, e.g., as shown in FIGS. 6I-6L.

For example, if the “Account” or “User” icons or fields 152, 154 are selected from the Settings menu shown in FIG. 6I, an image including information regarding the account or user, e.g., including their contact information, such as e-mail address, phone number, address, and the like, may be displayed, similar to the image shown in FIG. 6K.

If the user selects the “Store” icon or associated field 150 shown in FIG. 6I, an image including information related to any saved favorite vendor location(s) may be displayed, such as the image shown in FIG. 6J. For example, as shown in FIG. 6J, a map of the area of the saved vendor location(s) may be displayed including one or more pins, corresponding to the saved store location(s). Alternatively, as shown in FIG. 6J, the saved store location(s) may be displayed as a list. The user may be able switch between the map and list views, e.g., by selecting the “Map” or “List” icon 150c in FIGS. 6I and 6J. Optionally, the user may conduct searches for vendor locations, e.g., by selecting the “Search by postal code, city, street add…” icon 150b shown in FIGS. 6I and 6J, whereupon additional search screens (not shown) may be displayed.

If the “Payment Type” icon or field 158 is selected, an image including saved payment information may be displayed, such as the image shown in FIG. 6L. The user may then modify, add, and/or delete information, as desired from the displayed fields.

If the “Delivery/Drop-Off/Pick-Up” icon or field 156 is selected, an image including delivery options for the customer to receive their order may be displayed, similar to the images or pages shown in FIGS. 10A-10D. A similar image may be presented upon completing an order that is ready to be transmitted to the vendor server 12, e.g., as described elsewhere herein.

As shown, a delivery submenu 160 may be presented on the page including available options for receiving the order from a particular vendor location, such as the store displayed in the Store field on the main Settings page shown in FIG. 6I. As shown, the submenu 160 includes three options: delivery 160a, drop-off 160b, and pick-up 160c. If the user selects the delivery icon 160a, an image similar to that shown in FIG. 6K may be presented, allowing the user to select a saved address previously entered or enter a new address. When an order is placed, i.e., transmitted and/or confirmed, the delivery information may be provided to the selected vendor location, e.g., along with the other order information such that the stuff of the vendor location may arrange for delivery of the order to the identified address.

When the user selects the “Settings” icon 148 to return to the Settings page, the “Delivery/Drop-Off/Pick-Up” field 156 may be updated to indicate that the order is to be delivered to the listed address. Similar pages and/or menus may be presented before an order is actually placed, as
described elsewhere herein, in which case the “Settings” icon 148 shown in FIGS. 6I-6L may be replaced with a “Back” icon 148 to return to the order summary pages, also as described elsewhere herein.

[0086] For example, if the user selects the pick-up icon 160c, the “Delivery/Drop-Off/Pick-Up” field 156 may be updated to indicate that the order is to be picked-up at the selected store identified in the Store field 154. Under this option, the customer (or their representative) may go in person to the vendor location to receive the food items for the order.

[0087] If the user selects the Drop-Off icon 160b, additional menus may be presented, such as those shown in FIGS. 10A-10D and 11A-11D, including available options for having the order dropped off by the selected vendor location. Under this option, the selected vendor location may have a number of physical locations within a desired distance from the vendor location to which staff of the vendor location may deliver orders. For example, delivery personnel from the vendor location may travel using available methods, e.g., automobile, bicycle, and the like, through a prearranged course or path, stopping at one or more locations at predetermined times.

[0088] In an exemplary embodiment, the drop-off locations may be described points of public areas, such as beaches, parks, and the like. Alternately, the drop-off locations may be specific addresses, buildings, room, and the like of schools, businesses, and the like. For example, a delivery person may pick up all orders for a set of scheduled drop-offs and locations and travel along a predetermined course such that the delivery person arrives and remains at the identified drop-off locations at the identified times. Customers may then arrange to meet the delivery personnel at a drop-off location and time selected when they place their orders. The delivery course may require that the customer pay for their orders when placed or may accommodate payment at the time of drop-off, as described elsewhere herein.

[0089] In the embodiment shown in FIG. 10A, a location menu 162 may be presented when the Drop-Off icon 160b is selected, which may include available drop-off locations to which the selected vendor location may deliver orders. Similar to other menus herein, the location menu 162 may be a scrolling menu allowing a customer to scroll through the available drop-off locations before selecting desired drop-off location. Optionally, the user may select the Map icon 150a, whereupon an image similar to that shown in FIG. 10B may be presented, replacing the Drop-Off information (e.g., on the right half of the image, as shown) with a map that includes pins or other icons 163 showing the drop-off locations available. The Map icon 150a may be replaced with a “Time” icon or a button 150c, which may be selected to return to the previous image of FIG. 10A, again showing the selected Drop-Off information.

[0090] As shown in FIGS. 10A and 10B, within a field identifying each drop-off location (examples 162a, 162b shown), a submenu of drop-off times 164 may be presented that includes time icons 165 that may be selected by the user. For example, in the example shown in FIG. 10A, a user may select the “1:30 pm” icon 164a in the drop-off submenu 164. When the user selects a desired time, e.g., the 1:30 pm icon 164a, Drop-Off information may be populated or updated in the fields on the right side of the image, e.g., displaying the selected date and time in the Drop-off Time field 167.

[0091] If certain drop-off times have passed for the day, the now-unavailable times may no longer be highlighted, e.g., grayed or otherwise deactivated (not shown), so the user cannot select one of them. When the user selects the Settings or Back icon 148 to return to the Settings menu (shown in FIG. 6I), the delivery information, i.e., drop-off location and time, may be presented in the delivery field 156.

[0092] FIGS. 10A and 10B include non-addressed drop-off locations, e.g., described by their relationship to landmarks at public places. For example, for a beach that may be several miles long, multiple drop-off locations may be available that are spaced apart from one another along the beach, and distinguished from one another by local landmarks (e.g., next to the gate keycode structure” or “next to the gate entrance” as shown). Optionally, a photo icon 166 may be associated with each drop-off location, which may be selected to see one or more photographs of the drop-off location, which may also facilitate a customer identifying the drop-off locations and/or meeting the delivery personnel at the selected drop-off location.

[0093] Similarly, FIGS. 10C and 10D show a drop-off sub-menu 162 including a plurality of school locations 162c-162d that are available for delivery. In the submenu 162 shown, each school location only includes a single drop-off time 164c-164d, e.g., corresponding to a lunch time or other prearranged time at which the location allows orders to be dropped-off. Customers at the selected locations may arrive at the prearranged times to pick-up the orders that have been dropped off.

[0094] In addition or alternatively, as shown in FIGS. 11A and 11B, when Drop-Off icon 160b is selected from the delivery menu 160, a Group Menu 168 of available groups of drop-off locations may be presented on the display 28a. For example, as shown, two available groups or “classes” of drop-off locations are listed, namely Beach Delivery locations, icon 168a, and School Delivery locations, icon 168b. It will be appreciated that other groups or classes may be listed in addition to or instead of those shown, e.g., based on seasonal or other schedules. For example, the group Beach locations 168a may only be available and included on the Group Menu 168 from spring to fall (e.g., since such locations may not be available during the winter season), while School locations may only be available and included from fall to spring (and not available during the summer). Thus, similar types or classes of drop-off locations may be placed within individual groups, which may facilitate organization and/or selection of the drop-off locations. Optionally, the Group Menu 168 may also include one or more individual drop-off locations, such as the Bluebird Beach icon 168c shown in FIGS. 10A and 103, which may not be included in one of the listed groups.

[0095] When a user selects one of the groups, e.g., the Beach locations icon 168a as shown in FIG. 11B, the Group Menu 168 may be expanded to present a submenu 169 of individual drop-off locations 169a within the identified group. Also, as shown, the icon 168a may be changed from a “•” to a “✓” to indicate the selected group. The user may then be able to scroll through the submenu 169 to select a desired drop-off location and available drop-off time (not shown). When a drop-location and time are selected, information regarding the selection may be presented in the Drop-off Time field 167, as shown in FIGS. 11A and 11B. The information may include the delivery location, the selected drop-off time, e.g., including the date, any delivery charges associated with the selection, and the like. If the user wants to close the
selected group submenu 169, the user may select the “V” icon 168a, which may return the “+” icon 168c and collapse the group submenu 169, and return the user to the Group Menu 168. Similar to the images in FIGS. 10A and 10B, the user may select the Map icon 150a to replace the Drop-Off information with a map showing the selected drop-off location, if desired.

[0096] In addition, as shown in FIG. 11B, each available drop-off location 169a may include a photo icon 169b, which may be selected, whereupon a photograph of the corresponding drop-off location 169a may be presented on the display 28a, e.g., as shown in FIG. 11C. Optionally, multiple photographs may be available, e.g., taken from different perspectives to facilitate identifying the drop-off location. When the user has finished reviewing the photograph(s), the user may select the “Done” icon 169c and return the Drop-Off menus shown in FIGS. 11A and 11B.

[0097] Returning to FIG. 3, once an order is complete (e.g., using any of the methods described elsewhere herein), at step 150, the electronic device 20 may transmit the order to the vendor server 12 for processing. For example, the electronic device 20 may transmit a data file including the order via the communication interface 26 and the network 10 to the vendor server 12. The customer may pay for the order with the vendor server 12 directly, or via the settlement house 16 using conventional methods. For example, the electronic device 20 may include payment information in the memory 25, such as that shown in FIG. 6L, which may be transmitted with the order or may be subsequently transmitted when prompted during communications with the vendor server 12. Alternatively, the customer may opt to pay for the order, e.g., when they arrive at the vendor location 14 or selected drop-off location, to pick up their order, or when the order is delivered, e.g., if authorized by the vendor location.

[0098] If items for the order were selected without first selecting a vendor location, the information regarding the order, e.g., price, etc., may be displayed based on information taken from the default database. Before the final order is transmitted, the application may compare the information from the default database with that for the actual vendor location selected. For example, if the user completes selecting items for an order, and then selects a desired vendor location, the electronic device 20 may communicate with the vendor server 12 to reconcile any differences or conflicts between information from the default database with that for the selected vendor location. For example, the vendor location may have prices and/or menu offerings that differ from the default database. If so, the application may update the information and present it to the customer on the display 28a, e.g., presenting an update price for individual items and/or the complete order. If a menu change requires the customer to modify one or more items for the order, the application may warn the customer and return them to the order menus described elsewhere herein to change the item(s) based on the available choices.

[0099] Optionally, the differences between the current default database and the selected vendor location may be reconciled in the permanent database of the electronic device 20. For example, prices and/or menu changes for the selected vendor location may replace conflicting entries in the default database, thereby creating a new, updated default database that may be used by the application the next time the user places an order. In this manner, bandwidth and/or energy use may be conserved since an order may be selected locally (without having to go back and forth with the vendor server 12) and then reconciled once the order is complete and ready to be transmitted.

[0100] Once the order has been successfully transmitted and acknowledged by the vendor server 12 and optionally paid for, the vendor server 12 may communicate the order to the selected vendor location 14, for example, via the network 10 or directly via link 15, e.g., if the vendor server 12 is located physically at the vendor location 14. The order may be presented to the vendor location 14 in any desired format, e.g., a text file, image file, and the like, that may be integrated into the existing systems and/or procedures at the vendor location 14. Optionally, the vendor location 14 may send an acknowledgment to the electronic device 20, e.g., a text, e-mail, or other communication, acknowledging receipt of the order. Optionally, the vendor location 14 may send a communication to the electronic device 20, e.g., when the order has been prepared and is ready for pick up, when an drop-off order is en route, and/or any other desired communication, for example, via the vendor server 12, the network 10, and the like.

[0101] Turning to FIGS. 4 and 7A-7Q, an exemplary method will now be described for selecting and building a desired prepared food product, e.g., a sandwich from a Subway® restaurant, for inclusion in a customer’s order. Although the illustrated method shows an individual sandwich being ordered, it will be appreciated that the process may be repeated as many times as desired to add additional food products to an individual customer order. In addition, FIGS. 7A-7Q show images that may be displayed on a display in a landscape orientation (although alternatively, similar images may be displayed in a portrait orientation, not shown).

[0102] As described above, an initial menu 131 of available product categories may be presented by the processor 22 on the display 28a, e.g., such as those shown in FIGS. 6A and 6B. The customer may select a desired product category to add to an order, e.g., from the initial menu 131. For example, the customer may select “subs” 131a from the initial menu 131 to select a sandwich. Again, when a selection is made, the application may present a message simulating being served in person, e.g., emitting an audio message from a speaker of the electronic device 20, e.g., asking “What kind of sandwich would you like?” “What would you like on your sandwich?”, and the like.

[0103] In response to the selection, at step 210 in FIG. 4, the processor 22 may access the memory 24 and/or 25 to identify available sandwiches, and may present a menu 212 of available sandwiches on the display 28a. The menu 212 may be obtained and presented for a selected vendor location or for a default database, as described elsewhere herein. As shown in FIG. 7A, the menu 212 may be presented in a vertical orientation that may scroll vertically to allow the customer to peruse the available products. Alternatively, the menu 212 may be provided in a side-by-side orientation (not shown), which may be scrolled horizontally (both alternatives may be used for any of the menus and/or images shown and described herein, as will be appreciated by those of ordinary skill in the art).

[0104] Although only a “tuna” sub and a “melt meatball” sub are shown in FIG. 7A, many different sandwiches may be presented and selected from the menu 212, e.g., by scrolling through the menu 212. It will also be appreciated that many different food products may be provided in addition to or instead of “subs” or sandwiches and that such products may
be selected and ordered using similar methods to those described herein. For example, other food products that include a bread item, e.g., burgers, pizzas, tacos, and the like, may be selected and "built to order" in a similar manner to those described herein. In addition or alternatively, other food products may be selected and built to order, e.g., that are provided in a receptacle. For example, as shown in FIGS. 8A and 8B, a salad may be selected and built to order, e.g., after selecting "salad" 131b from the initial menu 131 in FIG. 6A, as described further below.

Along with images of the available sub-sets (or other food products), additional information may be presented to the customer on the display 28a. For example, as shown in FIG. 7A, the menu 212 may include prices, e.g., of different sizes and/or configurations, of the food products available. As shown, a first "->" icon 213a is shown that identifies a 6" sub for $4.99, a second "->" icon 213b is shown that identifies a 12" sub for $6.99, and a third "->" icon 213c is shown that identifies a salad configuration for $6.99. Optionally, an additional information icon "i" 214 may be associated with each food product on the menu 212, which may be selected by the customer to obtain additional information. For example, if the customer selects icon 213 in FIG. 7A, the processor 22 may access the long-term and/or temporary database in the memory 24 and/or 25, and present another image on the display 28a, including nutritional and/or other information regarding the selected food product, such as that shown in FIG. 7B.

Turning to step 220 in FIG. 4, one of the sub-sets (or other prepared food products) may be selected, e.g., from the menu 212 shown in FIG. 7A, using the input device 28b. In response, at step 220 in FIG. 4, the processor 22 may access the database(s) in memory 24 and/or 25 and present a list or submenu 222 of bread items, ingredients, and/or other components available for the sub-set on the display 28a, e.g., for making the selected prepared food product. FIG. 7C shows exemplary images of a first submenu 223 including visual representations of each of the available bread items. The customer may scroll through the available bread items, as desired, similar to the other menus.

Turning to step 240 in FIG. 4, one of the bread items may be selected using the input device 28b, whereupon the processor 22 may access the database(s) and present a visual representation of the selected bread item 224 on the display 28a, e.g., as shown in FIG. 7D. Optionally, the processor 22 may access and present an animation of the selected bread item, e.g., being directed to an open orientation for receiving ingredients. For example, as represented by the images in FIGS. 7D-7F, the animation may show an enlarged image 224 of the selected bread item, e.g., adjacent the menu 222 of available bread items, in an initial closed configuration (FIG. 7D), show the selected bread item being cut with a knife in the closed configuration (FIG. 7E), and then opened to an open configuration (FIG. 7F) to receive other ingredients. Optionally, the animation may include placing the meat or other main ingredient(s) for the selected sandwich on the open bread. Thus, the animation may simulate preparation of the selected bread item, e.g., as if the customer were in a Subway® restaurant and ordering the sandwich in person.

One or more ingredients may then be selected for the selected food product using the input device 28b and the menu 222. For example, in step 250 of FIG. 4, the processor 22 may access the database(s) and present one or more sections 242-246 of the submenu 222 showing available ingredients on the display 28a, as shown in FIGS. 7G-7Q and 10E-10L, e.g., adjacent the enlarged image 224 of the selected bread item in the open configuration (which will become the image of the prepared food product being built). Similar to other menus described herein, the submenus 242-246 may be scrolled or otherwise navigated, e.g., to search and select desired ingredients.

The available ingredients and/or components may be provided in a single scrolling submenu 222, e.g., with similar ingredients collected together in groups or sections 242-246, etc. If desired, the user may jump to different sections of the submenu 222 to review different groups of ingredients by selecting one of the options 232a-232e from the shortcut menu 232, as described further below. Alternatively, a series of separate submenus may be presented sequentially on the display 28a for each of the groups of ingredients, e.g., by selecting one of the options 232a-232e using the shortcut menu 232, as shown in step 260 of FIG. 4. For example, if the user selects “cheese” 232 from the shortcut menu 232, the application may jump to the section 242 of the menu 222 where the first cheese option is shown. Alternatively, if separate submenus are used, a second submenu 242 labeled "cheese" may be presented that includes cheese, meat, and/or other initial options, as shown in FIGS. 7G, 7J, and 10E-10L. Thereafter, a third section 244 of the menu 222 labeled “veggies” of vegetables and/or other toppings may be presented, as shown in FIGS. 7I-7P and 10I-10K, and/or a fourth section 246 labeled “sauce” of available sauces, condiments, and the like may be presented, as shown in FIGS. 7Q and 10L. Thus, with a single continuous loop scrolling menu, the user may scroll through the entire menu 222 and/or use the shortcut menu 232 to jump to desired sections of the menu 222, as desired.

For example, after selecting a desired bread item, the processor 22 may present the second section 242 of the menu 222 (or a separate cheese/meat submenu, not shown) adjacent the enlarged image 224 of the selected bread item, as shown in FIG. 7G. The second section 242 may present available cheese items, as well as other options, such as extra meat, e.g., adding bacon, pepperoni, and the like, and/or special preparation options, such as toasting the sandwich. As shown in FIG. 7G, the meat of the selected sandwich may be shown in the section 242, along with a toggle icon 243, which may show how much meat has been selected. For example, initially only one button on the toggle icon 243 may be highlighted, representing a standard portion of meat, and a first layer of meat may be added to the enlarged image of the selected bread item (not shown). If the customer selects or clicks on the meat image or the icon 243, “extra meat” may be selected to add another portion of meat, e.g., which may result in highlighting the second button of the icon 243 (not shown). Optionally, a second layer of meat may be added to the enlarged image 224, e.g., at least partially over the first layer, to provide a visual representation that an extra portion of meat has been added to the sandwich, in addition to or instead of the icon 243.

Turning to FIG. 7I, an exemplary image is shown that may be presented on the display 28a, e.g., when cheese has been selected from the second section 242 of the menu 222. As shown, the selected cheese may be added to the enlarged image 224 of the selected bread item, e.g., over the meat. Optionally, a toggle icon (not shown) may be associated with each cheese item displayed, e.g., if the customer wants to select extra cheese, similar to other toggle icons described
elsewhere herein. In addition, FIG. 7J shows a toasting rack 248 under the selected bread item in the enlarged image 224, e.g., to provide a visual representation that a toasted sandwich has been selected from the submenu 242. FIG. 7I shows a “check” icon 249 adjacent the toasting rack, which may be activated when the customer selects toasting to provide a visual confirmation in addition to or instead of the toasting rack added to the enlarged image 224.

[0112] Optionally, the processor 22 may access an animation file in the database(s), which may be presented on the display 28a when toasting (or other ingredient or procedure) is selected by the customer. For example, the animation may show the toasting rack 248 being slid under the selected bread item in the enlarged image 224, e.g., without moving the selected bread item and selected ingredients, or by lifting them, sliding the toasting rack 248 under them, and lowering them onto the toasting rack 248. The toasting rack 248 may then be shown glowing and/or images of steam may be temporarily imposed on the enlarged image 224, e.g., to simulate heating the toasting rack 248 and sub. Optionally, the original cheese image superimposed on the enlarged image 224 may be replaced with a melted cheese image. If the user changes their mind and unselects the toasting option 249, the toasting rack may be removed and the melted cheese image replaced with the original cheese image.

[0113] Turning to FIG. 7J, an exemplary image is shown that may be presented on the display 28a, including the enlarged image 224 showing cheese and meat superimposed on the selected bread item. In one embodiment, the database(s) and/or memory 24 and/or 25 may include separate image files of each available ingredient, in addition to separate enlarged image files for the available bread items. For example, as ingredients are added to the sandwich being selected, the processor 22 may access the database(s) and load the appropriate image files such that the corresponding image(s) are superimposed onto the enlarged image 224 of the selected bread item. In this manner, the image of the sandwich being selected may be customized to reflect the customer’s choices by superimposing the images from the image files on top of one another.

[0114] In an exemplary embodiment, the processor 22 may superimpose the images in a predetermined layering scheme, e.g., that may enhance identification of the selected ingredients when superimposed onto one another over the image of the selected bread item. For example, the image of selected cheese may be superimposed over the selected meat item, which may, in turn, be superimposed over the selected bread item, e.g., as shown in FIG. 7J. As shown in FIGS. 7K-7Q, subsequent ingredients may be superimposed over these images, e.g., in a manner that allows the different layers and/or ingredients to be identified by the customer. One of the advantages of providing separate image files that may be superimposed on one another is that the number and size of image files included in the database(s) of the application may be reduced, e.g., compared to having image files for ever possible combination of sandwiches and ingredients available for purchase.

[0115] Turning to FIGS. 7J-7P, the third section 244 of the menu 222 (or a separate third submenu) labeled “veggies” is shown, e.g., including vegetables and other ingredients that may be added to the sandwich. As vegetable ingredients are added, a corresponding image of the selected vegetable may be superimposed on the enlarged image 224 adjacent the menu 222. For example, FIGS. 7J and 7K show lettuce being added, FIGS. 7L and 7M show tomatoes being added, FIG. 7N shows cucumbers being added, and FIGS. 7O and 7P show olives being added.

[0116] Similar to the toggle icon described above for extra meat, each of the vegetable or other ingredients may include a toggle icon 252-255 (or other button or input) adjacent an image of the vegetable in the menu 222. For example, when a desired vegetable is selected, the default may be to provide an average portion of that vegetable, which may be represented by an image of the selected vegetable on the enlarged image 224 of the sandwich adjacent the menu 222. Optionally, the customer may select the vegetable again (or its toggle icon), to change the amount of the vegetable added to the sandwich. For example, FIG. 7K shows an average portion of tomato added to the sandwich, as represented by two buttons being highlighted in toggle icon 254, while FIG. 7M shows extra tomato selected, as represented by three buttons being highlighted in the icon 254. Also as shown, a second image file of tomatoes has been superimposed or otherwise added to the enlarged image 224 in FIG. 7M (or a new image file of tomatoes may replace the previous standard image of tomatoes), providing a visual representation that extra tomatoes have been selected.

[0117] If the vegetable is selected again, the vegetable may be removed (which may be represented by none of the buttons being highlighted in the associated toggle icon). If selected again, a less than average portion of the vegetable may be selected. For example, FIG. 7O shows average olives, as represented by two buttons being highlighted in toggle icon 255, and FIG. 7P shows “easy” on the olives, as represented by one button being highlighted in the icon 255, and fewer olives being included in the enlarged image 224.

[0118] After selecting desired vegetables, the processor 22 may present the fourth section 246 of the scrolling menu 222 (or a fourth submenu) on the display, e.g., as shown in FIG. 7Q, which may allow the customer to select sauces, condiments, and the like to add. For example, the section submenu 246 may include options, such as salt and pepper, mustard and mayonnaise, oil and vinegar, and the like. Optionally, similar to the other sections of the menu 222, toggle icons 257 may be presented to allow the customer to select extra, easy, or none of any of the ingredients, as shown adjacent to Mayonnaise in FIG. 7Q.

[0119] In an alternative embodiment, to move from one section of the menu 222 to the next (or sequentially between separate submenus), the customer may select the “Order” icon or button 256, as shown in FIGS. 7C-7Q. For example, when the Order icon 256 is selected using the input device 28b, the processor 22 may jump to or replace the previous section or submenu with the next sequential section submenu. Alternatively, the Order icon 256 may be selected to indicate that the selected food product is complete and ready to be added to an order, as described further below.

[0120] Optionally, as shown in FIGS. 7C-7Q, the processor 22 may include a shortcut menu 232, e.g., along the bottom of the display 28a while the menu 222 is displayed, which may facilitate a customer moving between the various sections or submenus. If desired, the shortcut menu 232 (or other menus added to images on the display) may fade or otherwise be removed (not shown), e.g., during inactive periods. For example, it may be desirable to remove the shortcut menu 232 when the user is inactive, e.g., to maximize the space on the display 28a available for the enlarged image 224 and/or scrolling menu 222. If the user does not provide any input for
a predetermined amount of time, e.g., one to three (1-3) seconds, the shortcut menu 232 may be removed. Once the user selects an item or otherwise inputs any information, the shortcut menu 232 may be displayed again.

[0121] For example, to use the shortcut menu 232, a first button 232a may return the customer to the beginning of the bread section 223 of the menu 222, as shown in FIG. 7C, e.g., if the customer wants to change the selected bread item except with any ingredients appearing in the enlarged image 224 remaining (rather than showing the selected bread item empty). If the customer selects a different bread item from the menu 222, any ingredients selected and included in the enlarged image 224 may remain while the selected bread item is replaced. For example, in one embodiment, the processor 22 may access and present an animation showing the images of the selected ingredients being lifted off the selected bread item, moving the image of the previously selected bread item out from under the ingredients, moving an image of the newly selected bread item under the selected ingredients (already in the open configuration, or alternatively in the closed configuration and then cut and opened), and lowering the images of the selected ingredients back onto the newly selected bread item. Thereafter, the application may return to the normal sequence of menus, or the customer may select one of the shortcut menu options to select ingredients, as desired.

[0122] Similarly, a second button 232b on the shortcut menu 232 may return the customer to the beginning of the cheese section 242 of the menu 222, shown in FIGS. 7G and 7H, a third button 232c may return the customer to the beginning of the veggies section 244 of the menu 222, and a fourth button 232d may return the customer to the beginning of the sauce section 246 of the menu 222. In this option, the Order icon 256 may be used to indicate the selected food product is complete or that the current menu selections are complete, as desired by the vendor(s) distributing the application.

[0123] In addition, the shortcut menu 232 (or other icons presented on the display 28a) during the building process may include one or more displays of information related to the selected prepared food product being built. For example, as shown in FIGS. 7A-7H, button or icon 215 may include the total calories of the sandwich being selected and button or icon 216 may include a current total price for the sandwich. In an exemplary embodiment, as ingredients are added to or removed from the sandwich, the processor 22 may access the database(s) and add or subtract any calorie or price changes based on the selected items. For example, some vegetables and sauces may increase the calorie total but not change the price, while some ingredients (e.g., extra meat or cheese, adding bacon, avocado, and the like, not shown) may increase the calorie total and price total. Thus, the icons 215 and 216 may provide a running total to the customer of the calories and price.

[0124] Optionally, if the customer selects the icons 215 or 216, they may be presented with a breakdown of the numbers and/or other information related to the selected ingredients, e.g., subtotals of calories and/or prices. For example, FIG. 7I shows an exemplary image of nutritional information for a six inch “cold cut trio” sub, itemizing ingredients added to the sandwich, and the calories associated with each of the base food product and added ingredients.

[0125] Turning to step 270 in FIG. 4, once the selected prepared food product is complete, the customer may provide an indication via the input device 28b. For example, the customer may select the Order icon 256 included in the images presented on the display 28a, e.g., as shown in FIGS. 7C-7Q. The processor 22 may then add the completed food product to the customer’s order.

[0126] In addition or alternatively, the processor 22 may present a visual representation of the completed food product. In one embodiment, the processor 22 may access the database(s) and present an animation showing the completed food product being packaged. For example, the animation may show the selected bread item being closed around the selected ingredients and/or a wrapper or other package may be applied around the food product, e.g., similar to the enlarged image 224 in FIG. 7R.

[0127] Optionally, the processor 22 may present other options to the customer on the display 28a. For example, the customer may be asked whether they want to save the selected food product to their favorites, as described above. In addition or alternatively, the customer may be asked whether they want to select another prepared food product. If the customer selects that they want to select another food product, the method of FIG. 4 and similar images and menus may be presented to the customer, as described above.

[0128] In addition or alternatively, the processor 22 may prompt the customer to inquire whether the customer would like to order a combo and/or other food items to include in their order. For example, as shown in FIG. 7R, the enlarged image 224 of the packaged food product may be presented along with one or more submenus 282, 284, e.g., of food items that may be added to create a “combo” or “meal.” In addition or alternatively, the application may prompt the user with an audio inquiry, e.g., emitting from a speaker, such as “Would you like to make it a meal?” and the like. As shown, submenu 282 may include a variety of beverages that may be available, while submenu 284 may include a variety of sides, e.g., cookies, chips, soups, and the like that may be added to the order.

[0129] As shown in FIG. 7S, a small Coke beverage has been selected from the beverage submenu 282 and a bag of Lay’s chips has been selected from the sides submenu 284, as indicated by the checks 283, 285 shown adjacent the submenus 282, 284. In addition, when the customer selects a desired beverage and side, the processor 22 may access the database(s) and add images of the items to the enlarged image 224 adjacent the submenus 224, thereby providing a visual representation to the customer of the selected order. It will be noted that the processor 22 may update the information in the calorie and price icons 215, 216 to reflect the addition of the beverage and side, as shown in FIGS. 7S, FIGS. 8C and 8D show similar images and submenus 282, 284, except that the selected food product is a salad rather than a sandwich.

[0130] If satisfied with the items selected, the customer may select the Order icon 256, whereupon the selected items will be added to the current order. Alternatively, if the customer does not want a beverage or side, the customer may select a “No Thanks!” (or other) icon or button 286, e.g., displayed on the shortcut menu or bar 281 along the bottom of the display 28a.

[0131] Turning to FIG. 7T, when the Order icon 256 is selected, the processor 22 may present an image including a summary of the items included in the order, e.g., a text summary 292, which may be expandable to present ingredient and/or price breakdowns, and an image 294 providing a visual representation of the food items. On this page the Order icon 256 has been replaced with a “Checkout” icon 256a.
If the customer changes their mind, they may select the “Pencil/Edit” icon 291 adjacent to “My Order” to return to the previous menus and make changes to the entire order. Optionally, the customer may select the “Star” icon 295a to add individual items in the order to their favorites, the “Pencil” icon 295b to edit the associated individual items (e.g., returning to the order menus described above), or the “+” icon to delete the item. Thus, the Pencil/Edit icon 291 may be selected to return the entire order into edit mode to allow changes to any and/or all of the items, while the Pencil icon 295b may be selected to edit a single item, leaving any other items in the order unchanged.

For example, if the icon is selected to add the sandwich to the customer’s favorites, the processor 22 may present an image, such as that shown in FIG. 7U, which includes an active field 296 into which the customer may enter a name for the order. The customer may then select the Checkout icon 256a, whereupon the processor 22 may save the sandwich and/or order in the database(s) for future reference. At any time, the customer may select the Checkout icon 256a in FIGS. 7T-7V to proceed to the final steps in order to place the order, e.g., similar to the image or page shown in FIG. 7W. In another option, similar to FIGS. 8E and 8F, the summary of the order may be toggled between a price breakdown and a calorie breakdown, if desired.

Optionally, as shown in FIG. 7T, the order pages or images may include a “shared cart” or “bump” feature, such as that represented by the icon 298, which may be used to compile an order including items from multiple electronic devices. For example, after a user has selected items to be included in an order, the user may select the “shared cart” icon 298, whereupon the electronic device 20 may search for other nearby electronic devices 20 including other items, e.g., selected using a similar application on the other electronic device(s) 20. In an exemplary embodiment, the electronic devices 20 may communicate with one another wirelessly, e.g., using radiofrequency signals, such as those generated using Bluetooth or other protocols. The devices may then communicate with one another to send one or more additional items to the receiving device, which may add the item(s) to the order.

Turning to FIG. 7V, before the order is transmitted, e.g., to the vendor server 12, as described above, the processor 22 may present a screen, such as that shown, which may include one or more active fields, such that the customer may include comments or special instructions in the order. For example, as shown, a first active field 297a may be used to provide a name for a selected prepared food product, and a second active field 297b may be used to provide special instructions to the vendor.

Finally, when the customer selects the Checkout icon 256a, e.g., as shown in FIGS. 7T-7V, an image or page such as that shown in FIG. 7W may be displayed with a final summary of the order, i.e., including the customer, store, and payment information fields 152-158, e.g., similar to the Settings page shown in FIG. 6H, except with information specific to the order about to be placed. On this page, the Checkout icon 256a is replaced with a “Place Order” icon 256b. When the customer selects the Place Order icon 256b, the order is transmitted, as described elsewhere herein.

Turning to FIGS. 8A and 8B, exemplary screen shots are shown that may be presented by the processor 22 on the display 28a when the customer has selected a salad configuration, e.g., from one of the menus 131 or 212. Generally, the submenus and shortcut menus, e.g., menus 252 and 232 may function similarly to those described above. Unlike the procedure for selecting a sandwich, an enlarged image 224 of the salad receptacle or container may be presented adjacent the submenu(s) 252, e.g., with the receptacle in an open configuration, as shown in FIG. 8A. Ingredients may be selected to add to the salad, whereupon the processor 22 may superimpose images of the selected ingredients onto the receptacle in the enlarged image 224 as shown. When the selection is complete, an animation (or still image) may be presented, e.g., showing a lid of the receptacle being closed over the salad, as shown in FIG. 8B.

FIG. 9 shows an exemplary screen shot (FIG. 9(1) being an upper portion and FIG. 9(2) being a lower portion of the single scrollable including several salads, as well as sandwiches and beverages, similar to the single item order shown in FIG. 7T. As described above, the items may be selected using a single electronic device 20 or by combining items from several electronic devices 20.

Once completed, the user may select a desired vendor location to make the order, if not already selected, select a delivery option, pay for the order, and the like, as described elsewhere herein. For example, FIGS. 13A and 13B show exemplary images that may be displayed before an order has been finally placed. For example, FIG. 13A includes a summary of payment information for the order, while FIG. 13B includes delivery information, e.g., including a vendor location, time and date when the order may be picked up at the selected vendor location.

In addition or alternatively, as described above with reference to FIGS. 10A-10D, before an order is transmitted, the user may select the delivery menu 160 shown in FIG. 13B, allowing the customer to select one of the available delivery options before the order is finally transmitted to the vendor server 12, similar to the other embodiments herein. At any time, the user may select the “Back” icon 148 to return to the order summary and select the Checkout icon 256a to complete and place the order, e.g., similar to the image or page shown in FIG. 7W.

Turning to FIGS. 14A and 14B, exemplary images are shown that may be used to enter and/or modify available delivery options for a particular vendor location. For example, a manager or other authorized personnel for the vendor location may use an electronic device, such as the manager device 18, a device at the vendor location 14, and the like, which may communicate with the vendor server 12. For example, a manager may add drop-off groups, drop-off locations, and/or drop-off times for the vendor location, which may be added to the database maintained by the vendor server 12. Thus, thereafter, when a customer selects the vendor location and selects a “Drop-Off” delivery option, as described elsewhere herein, the added and/or updated drop-off groups, drop-off locations, and/or drop-off times may be provided to the customers for selection. The manager may also include information related to the drop-off locations, e.g., whether a delivery charge will be applied to orders delivered to the drop-off location, whether the delivery personnel will accept payment at the drop-off location (cash, credit, and the like), and the like. FIG. 12 shows exemplary information that may be presented to a customer requesting information about a particular vendor location. The manager device may be used to modify any of these fields and/or information regarding vendor locations.
In another embodiment, the systems and methods herein may be used in a simulated environment, e.g., to test the application, database, and/or other features, to train personnel at vendor locations, and the like. For example, a fully operationally simulation database may be maintained by the vendor server 12, e.g., which may be accessed by authorized personnel. For example, general customers may not be able to find the simulation database, but managers or other vendor personnel may be able to select the simulation database using an application similar to that described herein for use by general customers.

For example, if the vendor is considering adding new menu items (e.g., at predetermined intervals, e.g., every six weeks, or as desired), changing prices, and the like, any such changes may be made only to the simulation database. Thus, the main database used by the vendor server 12 to receive, fulfill, and/or otherwise arrange orders for general customers may remain unaffected by changes made to the simulation database. Once the final changes have been approved and/or updates have been tested, the vendor server may replace the main database with the simulation database. This may be accomplished by replacing the entire main database or by replacing only items that have been changed, e.g., added, deleted, and the like. Alternatively, once the simulation database is authorized for use by customers, the vendor server may simply point subsequent requests to the simulation database (which may be renamed or otherwise identified as the new main database). Thus, when customers initially download the application and receive a database or when customer electronic devices request updates, the simulation database becomes the database that is used, rather than the outdated previous main database.

While the invention is susceptible to various modifications, and alternative forms, specific examples thereof have been shown in the drawings and are herein described in detail. It should be understood, however, that the invention is not to be limited to the particular forms or methods disclosed, but to the contrary, the invention is to cover all modifications, equivalents and alternatives falling within the scope of the appended claims.

We claim:

1. A method for ordering prepared food products via a network using a wireless electronic device, comprising:
   - presenting, on a display of the electronic device, a menu of available prepared food products;
   - selecting, using an interface of the electronic device, one or more prepared food products to be included in an order;
   - indicating, using the interface, that the order is complete;
   - selecting, using the interface, a desired vendor location to fulfill the order;
   - presenting, on the display, a drop-off menu including a plurality of physical locations and drop-off times available for the desired vendor location;
   - selecting, using the interface, a desired physical location and a desired drop-off time from the drop-off menu; and
   - transmitting an order including one or more selected food products via a network to a vendor server for the desired vendor location to arrange delivery of the order to the desired physical location at the desired drop-off time.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising adding one or more additional food items to the order before transmitting the order to the vendor server.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein adding one or more additional food to the order comprises:
   - selecting, using the interface, a shared cart icon to activate a wireless communication interface of the electronic device;
   - receiving, via the wireless communication interface, a communication from another electronic device, the communication including the one or more additional food items.

4. The method of claim 2, wherein adding one or more additional food items comprises selecting, using the interface, one or more additional food items from the menu.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising presenting, on the display, a map including the vendor location and a plurality of icons of drop-off physical locations available from the drop-off menu.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein presenting, on the display, a drop-off menu comprises:
   - presenting, on the display, a group menu identifying groups of drop-off locations; and
   - selecting, using the interface, one of the groups of drop-off locations, wherein a list of drop-off locations are presented on the display, wherein the desired physical location and desired drop-off time are selected from the list.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein at least some of the physical locations are identified based on landmarks associated with public places.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein at least some of the physical locations are identified based on non-address-based descriptions of the physical locations.

The method of claim 1, wherein the drop-off menu includes photo icons associated with a desired vendor location; and

9. The method of claim 1, wherein presenting, on the display, a photograph of the desired vendor location.

10. A method for ordering prepared food products via a network, comprising:
    - receiving a drop-off schedule for a vendor location, the drop-off schedule including a plurality of physical locations available for drop-off orders from the vendor location, and a schedule of drop-off times for the physical locations;
    - adding the drop-off schedule to a vendor database;
    - sending the drop-off schedule to a customer electronic device;
    - receiving an order from the customer electronic device, the order including one or more prepared food products and identifying a desired physical location and a desired drop-off time from the drop-off schedule; and
    - transmitting the order to the vendor location for the vendor location to arrange delivery of the order to the desired physical location at the desired drop-off time.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the drop-off schedule includes photographs of available physical locations, and wherein the photographs are sent to the customer electronic device to allow a customer to review a photograph of a desired physical location.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein the drop-off schedule includes a plurality of groups of drop-off locations and plurality of physical locations associated with each of the groups.
13. An electronic device for ordering prepared food products via a network, comprising:
   a user interface;
   a display;
   one or more processors coupled to the interface and display for:
   presenting on the display a menu of available prepared food products;
   receiving via the user interface one or more prepared food products to be included in an order;
   receiving via the user interface a desired vendor location to fulfill the order;
   presenting on the display a drop-off menu including a plurality of physical locations and drop-off times available for the desired vendor location;
   receiving via the user interface a desired physical location and a desired drop-off time from the drop-off menu; and
   a communications interface coupled to the processor for transmitting an order including the one or more selected food products via a network to a vendor server for the desired vendor location to arrange delivery of the order to the desired physical location at the desired drop-off time.

14. The device of claim 13, wherein the interface comprises a touch screen on the display.

15. The device of claim 13, wherein the communications interface comprises a wireless transceiver.

16. The device of claim 13, further comprising memory storing a database including a plurality of groups of drop-off locations, a plurality of physical locations associated with each of the groups, and one or more drop-off times associated with each of the physical locations,

   wherein the processor accesses the database to present the groups of drop-off locations on the display, and when one of the groups of drop-off locations is selected via the interface, presents on the display a list of drop-off locations associated with the selected group, and wherein the desired physical location and desired drop-off time are selected from the list.

17. A method for ordering prepared food products via a network using a wireless electronic device, comprising:
   accessing a default database stored in memory of the electronic device to generate a menu of available prepared food products;
   presenting, on a display of the electronic device, the menu;
   selecting, using an interface of the electronic device, one or more prepared food products from the menu;
   selecting, using the interface, a desired vendor location from the local database;
   indicating, using the interface, that the order is complete;
   communicating with a remote server to reconcile the order with a vendor database including the menu for the desired vendor location;
   presenting the reconciled order on the display; and
   transmitting an order including the one or more selected food products via a network to a vendor server for the vendor location to arrange delivery of the order.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the default database is accessed before the desired vendor location is selected.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein communicating with the remote server comprises:
   receiving one or more price changes for the one or more prepared food products wherein a price in the vendor database supersedes a price in the default database; and
   presenting an updated order on the display reflecting the one or more price changes.

20. The method of claim 17, wherein communicating with the remote server comprises:
   receiving one or more menu changes for the one or more prepared food products wherein at least one prepared food product in the order is not available in the vendor database;
   presenting a notice on the display that at least one prepared food product is not available;
   presenting an updated menu on a display of the electronic device; and
   selecting one or more prepared food products to replace the at least one prepared food product that is not available.