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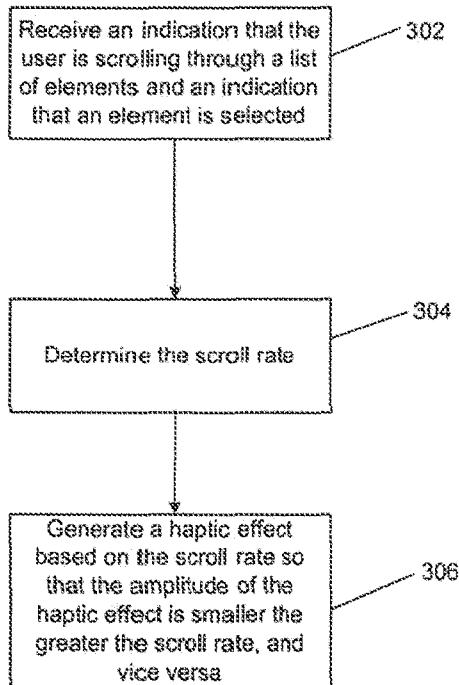
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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: HAPTICALLY ENABLED USER INTERFACE



(57) Abstract: A device has a user interface that generates a haptic effect in response to user inputs or gestures. In one embodiment, the device receives an indication that the user is scrolling through a list of elements and an indication that an element is selected. The device determines the scroll rate and generates a haptic effect that has a magnitude that is based on the scroll rate.



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- as to the applicant's entitlement to claim the priority of the earlier application (Rule 4.17(iii))

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HAPTICALLY ENABLED USER INTERFACE

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] One embodiment of the present invention is directed to haptic effects. More particularly, one embodiment of the present invention is directed to a user interface having haptic effects.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

[0002] Electronic device manufacturers strive to produce a rich interface for users. Conventional devices use visual and auditory cues to provide feedback to a user. In some interface devices, kinesthetic feedback (such as active and resistive force feedback) and/or tactile feedback (such as vibration, texture, and heat) is also provided to the user, more generally known collectively as "haptic feedback" or "haptic effects". Haptic feedback can provide cues that enhance and simplify the user interface. Specifically, vibration effects, or vibrotactile haptic effects, may be useful in providing cues to users of electronic devices to alert the user to specific events, or provide realistic feedback to create greater sensory immersion within a simulated or virtual environment.

[0003] Haptic feedback has also been increasingly incorporated in portable electronic devices, such as cellular telephones, personal digital assistants (PDAs), portable gaming devices, and a variety of other portable electronic devices. For example, some portable gaming applications are

capable of vibrating in a manner similar to control devices (e.g., joysticks, etc.) used with larger-scale gaming systems that are configured to provide haptic feedback. Additionally, devices such as cellular telephones and PDAs are capable of providing various alerts to users by way of vibrations. For example, a cellular telephone can alert a user to an incoming telephone call by vibrating. Similarly, a PDA can alert a user to a scheduled calendar item or provide a user with a reminder for a "to do" list item or calendar appointment.

[0004] Increasingly, portable devices are moving away from physical buttons in favor of touchscreen-only interfaces. This shift allows increased flexibility, reduced parts count, and reduced dependence on failure-prone mechanical buttons and is in line with emerging trends in product design. Many of these touchscreen devices include sophisticated user interfaces that convert user gestures, including multi-touch gestures, into input commands.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] One embodiment is a device having a user interface that generates a haptic effect in response to user inputs or gestures. In one embodiment, the device receives an indication that the user is scrolling through a list of elements and an indication that an element is selected. The device determines the scroll rate and generates a haptic effect that has a magnitude that is based on the scroll rate.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0006] Fig. 1 is a block diagram of a cellular telephone in accordance with one embodiment.

[0007] Fig. 2 is a block diagram of a user interface that includes a list of elements that can be scrolled through the interaction of a scroll bar in accordance with one embodiment.

[0008] Fig. 3 is a flow diagram of the functionality performed by the telephone of Fig. 1 in accordance with one embodiment in response to a scrolling of elements through a user interface.

[0009] Fig. 4 is a flow diagram of the functionality performed by the telephone of Fig. 1 in accordance with one embodiment in response to a flicked object.

[0010] Fig. 5 is a user interface for a touchscreen that provides a virtual slider for controlling volume.

[0011] Fig. 6 is a flow diagram of the functionality performed by the telephone of Fig. 1 in accordance with one embodiment in response to the movement of a slider.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0012] One embodiment is a haptically enabled user interface that provides haptic confirmation to a user in response to various user inputs and gestures or device activity.

[0013] Fig. 1 is a block diagram of a cellular telephone 10 in accordance with one embodiment. Telephone 10 includes a touchscreen 11

and may include mechanical keys/buttons 13. Internal to telephone 10 is a haptic feedback system that generates vibrations on telephone 10. In one embodiment, the vibrations are generated on the entire telephone 10. In other embodiments, specific portions of telephone 10 can be haptically enabled by the haptic feedback system, including the entire touchscreen 11 or individual portions of touchscreen 11.

[0014] The haptic feedback system includes a processor 12. Coupled to processor 12 is a memory 20 and an actuator drive circuit 16, which is coupled to a vibration actuator 18. Processor 12 may be any type of general purpose processor, or could be a processor specifically designed to provide haptic effects, such as an application-specific integrated circuit ("ASIC"). Processor 12 may be the same processor that operates the entire telephone 10, or may be a separate processor. Processor 12 can decide what haptic effects are to be played and the order in which the effects are played based on high level parameters. In general, the high level parameters that define a particular haptic effect include magnitude, frequency and duration. Low level parameters such as streaming motor commands could also be used to determine a particular haptic effect. A haptic effect may be considered "dynamic" if it includes some variation of these parameters when the haptic effect is generated or a variation of these parameters based on a user's interaction.

[0015] Processor 12 outputs the control signals to drive circuit 16 which includes electronic components and circuitry used to supply actuator 18 with the required electrical current and voltage to cause the desired haptic effects.

Actuator 18 is a haptic device that generates a vibration on telephone 10. Actuator 18 can include one or more force applying mechanisms which are capable of applying a vibrotactile force to a user of telephone 10 (e.g., via the housing of telephone 10). Actuator 18 may be, for example, an electromagnetic actuator, an Eccentric Rotating Mass ("ERM") in which an eccentric mass is moved by a motor, a Linear Resonant Actuator ("LRA") in which a mass attached to a spring is driven back and forth, or a "smart material" such as piezoelectric, electro-active polymers or shape memory alloys. Memory device 20 can be any type of storage device or computer-readable medium, such as random access memory ("RAM") or read-only memory ("ROM"). Memory 20 stores instructions executed by processor 12. Memory 20 may also be located internal to processor 12, or any combination of internal and external memory.

[0016] Touchscreen 11 recognizes touches, and may also recognize the position and magnitude of touches on a touch sensitive surface. The data corresponding to the touches is sent to processor 12, or another processor within telephone 10, and processor 12 interprets the touches and in response generates haptic effects. Touchscreen 11 may sense touches using any sensing technology, including capacitive sensing, resistive sensing, surface acoustic wave sensing, pressure sensing, optical sensing, etc. Touchscreen 11 may sense multi-touch contacts and may be capable of distinguishing multiple touches that occur at the same time. Touchscreen 11 may further display images for the user to interact with, such as keys, dials, etc., or may be a touchpad with minimal or no images.

[0017] Although the embodiment of Fig. 1 is a cellular telephone 10, other embodiments may be any type of device that provides a user interface and is capable of generating haptic effects. The device may be handheld and may include a touchscreen that generates the user interface. In other embodiments, rather than generating haptic effects on a handheld device for touchscreen interactions, the device may be a computer system that includes a display and a cursor control device such as a mouse, touchpad, mini-joystick, etc. The display displays the user interface and the mouse or other device includes vibration actuator 18 so that the haptic effect is generated on the device as it is held by the user.

[0018] Fig. 2 is a block diagram of a user interface ("UI") 200 that includes a list of elements 202 that can be scrolled through the interaction of a scroll bar 204 in accordance with one embodiment. A user can slide scroll bar 204 through interaction with a touchscreen, or by pressing a button or using a mouse or other interface device. Further, arrows 206 can be selected in a known manner to scroll the list of elements 202.

[0019] When elements 202 are being scrolled, one of the elements is highlighted to indicate which element is "selected". In one embodiment, a haptic effect is generated when each element of elements 202 is selected. The haptic effect may be in the form of a "bump" "pop", "click", "tick", etc. through a predetermined combination of magnitude, frequency and duration. However, as the scroll rate is increased, a constant magnitude haptic effect can feel like a constant "buzz" to the user and fail to provide meaningful information. Therefore, in one embodiment, the haptic effect

volume/magnitude is decreased as the scroll rate increases, and vice versa. This keeps the overall "haptic energy" of the UI interaction at a low and unobtrusive level.

[0020] Fig. 3 is a flow diagram of the functionality performed by telephone 10 of Fig. 1 in accordance with one embodiment in response to a scrolling of elements 202 through a user interface. In one embodiment, the functionality of Fig. 3, and Figs. 4 and 6 below, is implemented by software stored in memory and executed by a processor. In other embodiments, the functionality can be performed by hardware, or any combination of hardware and software.

[0021] At 302, an indication that the user is scrolling through the list of elements 202 and one of the elements has been highlighted or selected is received. In one embodiment, the list of elements 202 can be a literal list such as a menu list or list of contacts as in Fig. 2, or it could be an abstract list such as a 3D cylinder clock with a list of scrolling digital numbers that can be changed by scroll/flick tumbling of numbers. The scrolling may be accomplished by interacting with the screen through a touchscreen, by button press/hold events in up/down, left/right, diagonal or circular motion, or by any other method.

[0022] At 304, the current scroll rate of elements 202 is determined and may be compared to a previous scroll rate. It is determined if the current scroll rate is increasing or decreasing.

[0023] At 306, a haptic effect that corresponds to the selection of one of the elements is generated based on the current scroll rate and whether it is

increasing or decreasing or based on the magnitude of the scroll rate. In one embodiment, the haptic effect has a short duration and repeats whenever a new element is selected. The magnitude of the haptic effect is decreased relative to a previous haptic effect if the scroll rate is increasing. Similarly, the magnitude of the haptic effect is increased relative to a previous haptic effect if the scroll rate is decreasing. In another embodiment, the magnitude of the haptic effect is determined from a lookup table that bases the magnitude inversely on the current scroll rate. The greater the scroll rate, the smaller the magnitude, and vice versa.

[0024] In one embodiment, when a user is scrolling the list of elements 202, eventually the user will reach the end of the list. At the point, the scrolling may stop or the list may wrap around to the beginning of the list. In one embodiment, a haptic effect will be generated when the last item in the list is selected or when the list wraps around so that a user receives a non-visual indication. This haptic effect is different than the haptic effect that is generated when one of the items is selected that is not at the end of the list, as disclosed above. In one embodiment, the end-of-list haptic effect differs via a change in any combination of duration, amplitude, frequency, etc.

[0025] In another embodiment, a list of items or other objects, such as photos, a ball, puck, etc. can be "flicked" using a gesture so that the list visually moves. The speed of the movement can be dependent on the speed of the flick. Upon hitting a virtual stop, like an end-of-list, wall or other "hard object," the flicked object reacts visually with a bounce. In one embodiment, the bounce causes a corresponding haptic effect and optionally an audible

output. In one embodiment, the haptic effect would have characteristic parameters of being initially very strong (i.e., high magnitude) with a rapidly decreasing magnitude as the bounced object comes to rest. Further, another haptic effect may be generated, such as a subtle haptic click, pop, or tick effect to confirm that the flicked object has stopped moving and come to rest.

[0026] Fig. 4 is a flow diagram of the functionality performed by telephone 10 of Fig. 1 in accordance with one embodiment in response to a flicked object. At 402, processor 12 receives an indication that a flicked object has reached an end point, such as a wall, end-of-list, etc. At 404, in response to the end point indication, a haptic effect is generated. In one embodiment, the haptic effect is dynamic in that it initially has a high magnitude, and then has a rapidly decreasing magnitude as the flicked object comes to rest.

[0027] In another embodiment, a user interface simulates a slider. There are a number of physical control sliders found in professional audio and industrial control equipment. These sliders are generally controlled by dragging the slider with a fingertip. Many of the slider control functionality can be built into touchscreen UIs. Fig. 5 is a UI 500 for a touchscreen that provides a virtual slider 502 for controlling volume. UI 500 provides information about the position or state of virtual slider 502 and the parameter it is controlling. Slider 502 may be manipulated by a finger or a cursor. Other UIs may provide a slider that is laid out in a up/down orientation or might be rotational such as a knob or wheel.

[0028] UI 500 has a minimum and maximum setting, and in one embodiment a dynamic haptic effect is generated that has an increasing

magnitude as the volume is increased and a decreasing magnitude as the volume is decreased. This type of haptic effect helps communicate the relative volume of the parameter being increased/decreased, whether it is an audible volume from a stereo system or a physical volume such as for an industrial flow control system managing liquid volumes. In addition, positional haptic effects may be generated that simulate bumps or dents that might be used as slider end-stops, a centering location, or other important positional locations in the slider that might be specific to the end-user application being controlled (e.g., positions 504 and 506).

[0029] Fig. 6 is a flow diagram of the functionality performed by telephone 10 of Fig. 1 in accordance with one embodiment in response to the movement of a slider. At 602, processor 12 receives an indication the slider has moved and an indication as to whether the parameter (e.g., volume) is decreasing or increasing. At 604, in response to the parameter increasing or decreasing, a dynamic haptic effect is generated that has an increasing or decreasing magnitude or other parameter.

[0030] In another embodiment, slider 502 is a toggle type slider that has only two resting positions or a limited number of positions, such as an on/off switch. In this embodiment, the haptic effect is generated to confirm the action of the toggled control. Further, two or more distinctly different haptic effects can communicate to the user into which state the slider has been placed, such as on/off, slow/medium/fast, etc. The differences in the haptic effect may be a varied magnitude, frequency, duration or any combination of these three parameters.

[0031] In another embodiment, telephone 10 generates haptic effects during screen transitions. The haptic effects in one embodiment are synchronized with any visual transitions occurring on screen. Examples of screen transitions that may generate haptic effects include changes in screen orientation where the on-screen content rotates, content being replaced with new content through screen fades, wipes, dissolves or other video transition techniques, changes in viewing size such as zooming in or out, panning of content such as web pages, pictures or documents, etc. In one embodiment, the haptic effect will be generated during the screen transition, and a different haptic effect can be generated when the screen transition is completed

[0032] In another embodiment, haptic effects are generated when a user drags selected text or other items across a touchscreen. A haptic bump, pop or tick may be generated during the drag. This haptic effect could be played over each letter selected and a different, possibly stronger, effect could be played as whole words are selected in order to confirm both individual letter and whole word selections. Further, a haptic effect may be generated as each individual object becomes selected during the dragging. Further, while dragging an object or otherwise moving a finger across a touchscreen, a haptic effect can be generated to simulate the "surface" of the screen. For example, if the screen is displaying a bumpy road, the haptic effects can be generated so that it feels as if the finger is dragging across a bumpy road.

[0033] In another embodiment, a haptic effect such as a bump, pop or tick could be generated as a user click-draggs his finger or cursor across multiple objects like words, files, directories, pictures, icons, etc. In one

embodiment, the haptic effect would be generated as each individual object became selected or deselected from the grouping while dragging. This selection method could be accomplished with both single and multi-touch touchscreens.

[0034] In another embodiment, a haptic effect such as a bump, pop or tick could be added as a user double-taps his finger or double-clicks a cursor to select words. This confirmation method could be used when triple-tapping or triple-clicking to select whole sentences or paragraphs.

[0035] In some embodiments, a user is forced to wait while a device such as telephone 10 initializes, downloads content, etc. During this time the UI generally cannot be interacted with and any time spent attempting to interact is wasted. In one embodiment, a haptic effect is generated to inform the user that the device has entered or has exited a loading/standby state that causes the user to wait.

[0036] In one embodiment, the haptic effect while the UI is unresponsive is a subtle, constant effect having a non-changing magnitude or frequency that simply ends when the UI becomes available again for interactions. In another embodiment, the haptic effect is a dynamic effect that increases in magnitude and/or frequency as the system progresses towards completion of its task. Further, in one embodiment a separate confirming completion haptic effect can be generated, such as a bump, pop or tick when the UI becomes available again.

[0037] In another embodiment, a gesture from a user on touchscreen 11 can be used to unlock content that has previously been locked by device

10. Device 10 can be unlocked when a predetermined gesture is input by the user. For example, the gesture can function as a password or pass code to unlock the menu system of device 10. Examples of a predetermined gesture includes a swirl, swipe, press/tap pattern, or any combination of these gestures.

[0038] In one embodiment, a haptic effect is generated that corresponds to or is a representation of the gesture so the user may confirm the gesture or learn the gesture. The haptic effect can be dynamic and may be applied to individual portions of touchscreen 11 at a time in order to simulate directional motion such as a circular motion. This especially has value when the gesture is a substitute for a pass code and the user needs to memorize the gesture in order to access device 10. Without the haptic effect, gestures such as a swipe, swirl or tap pattern may be reviewed/confirmed by replaying the gesture with visual and/or audio representations of the gesture. However, the haptic effect can aid the user in remembering the gesture pass code better than with only visual and/or audible cues, especially with a gesture that may include finger pressure data patterns generated by touchscreen 11. The haptic effect can "simulate" the finger pressure data by changing the amplitude values of the haptic effect. The haptic effect may also be generated for a user who may have forgotten their gesture pass code – the playing of the haptic effect will serve as a reminder.

[0039] In another embodiment, the user gesture is used as a "hot key" or macro to bypass a number of steps to arrive at a desired menu or function. For example, swirling a user's finger clockwise on touchscreen 11 twice might

indicate that the user wants to call home, or type a SMS mobile message. Device 10 would then bypass the standard menu selections that would otherwise be needed to be navigated and simply initiate the task immediately. As above, a haptic effect is generated to confirm the gesture to the user or allow the user to review the gesture.

[0040] As disclosed, a device having a user interface generates various haptic effects in order to provide feedback to a user input or provide information regarding a state of the device. The haptic effects enhance the usability of the device.

[0041] Several embodiments are specifically illustrated and/or described herein. However, it will be appreciated that modifications and variations are covered by the above teachings and within the purview of the appended claims without departing from the spirit and intended scope of the invention.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of operating a user interface comprising:
receiving a first indication that the user is scrolling through a list of elements;
determining a scroll rate; and
generating a first haptic effect having a magnitude, wherein the magnitude is based on the scroll rate.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the magnitude is increased as the scroll rate is decreased.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the magnitude is decreased as the scroll rate is increased.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
receiving a second indication that an end of the list is selected; and
generating a second haptic effect in response to the second indication, wherein the second haptic effect is different from the first haptic effect.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the second haptic effect has a different value compared to the first haptic effect for a least one of the parameters from the group comprising magnitude, frequency or duration.

6. A method of operating a user interface comprising:
receiving an indication that an object has been flicked by a user
gesture and that the object has reached an end point that causes the object to
bounce; and
generating a haptic effect when the object has reached the end point.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the haptic effect is dynamic and has
a decreasing magnitude as the bounced object comes to rest.

8. A method of operating a user interface comprising:
providing a slider on the user interface, wherein the slider varies
between a low and high magnitude;
receiving an input that moves the slider towards the high magnitude;
and
generating a first dynamic haptic effect that has an increasing
magnitude as the slider moves toward the high magnitude.

9. The method of claim 8, further comprising:
receiving an input that moves the slider towards the low magnitude;
and
generating a second dynamic haptic effect that has a decreasing
magnitude as the slider moves toward the low magnitude.

10. The method of claim 9, further comprising generating a third haptic effect that corresponds to a state of the slider.

11. A method of operating a user interface comprising:
generating a screen transition between two states on the user interface; and
generating a haptic effect based on the screen transition.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the haptic effect is generated during the screen transition.

13. The method of claim 11, wherein the haptic effect is generated at a completion of the screen transition.

14. A method of operating a user interface comprising:
receiving a selection of at least one item of the user interface;
receiving an indication that the item is being dragged; and
generating a first haptic effect while the item is being dragged.

15. The method of claim 14, further comprising generating a second haptic effect when the selection is received.

16. The method of claim 14, wherein the user interface comprises a surface, and the first haptic effect simulates the surface.

17. A method of operating a user interface comprising:
receiving an indication that the user interface has entered a standby
state; and
generating a first haptic effect that corresponds to the standby state.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the haptic effect is dynamic and
comprises a parameter that increases as the user interface progresses to an
end to the standby state.

19. The method of claim 18, further comprising generating a second
haptic effect when the end is reached.

20. A method of operating a device having a touchscreen comprising:
storing a gesture on the device; wherein the gesture comprises a user
interaction with the touchscreen; and
generating a haptic effect on the device that simulates the gesture.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein the haptic effect is applied to an
individual portion of the touchscreen to simulate a motion portion of the
gesture.

22. The method of claim 20, wherein the haptic effect has a dynamically changing amplitude to simulate a varied pressure portion of the gesture.
23. The method of claim 20, wherein the gesture unlocks the device.
24. The method of claim 20, wherein the gesture initiates a task on the device.

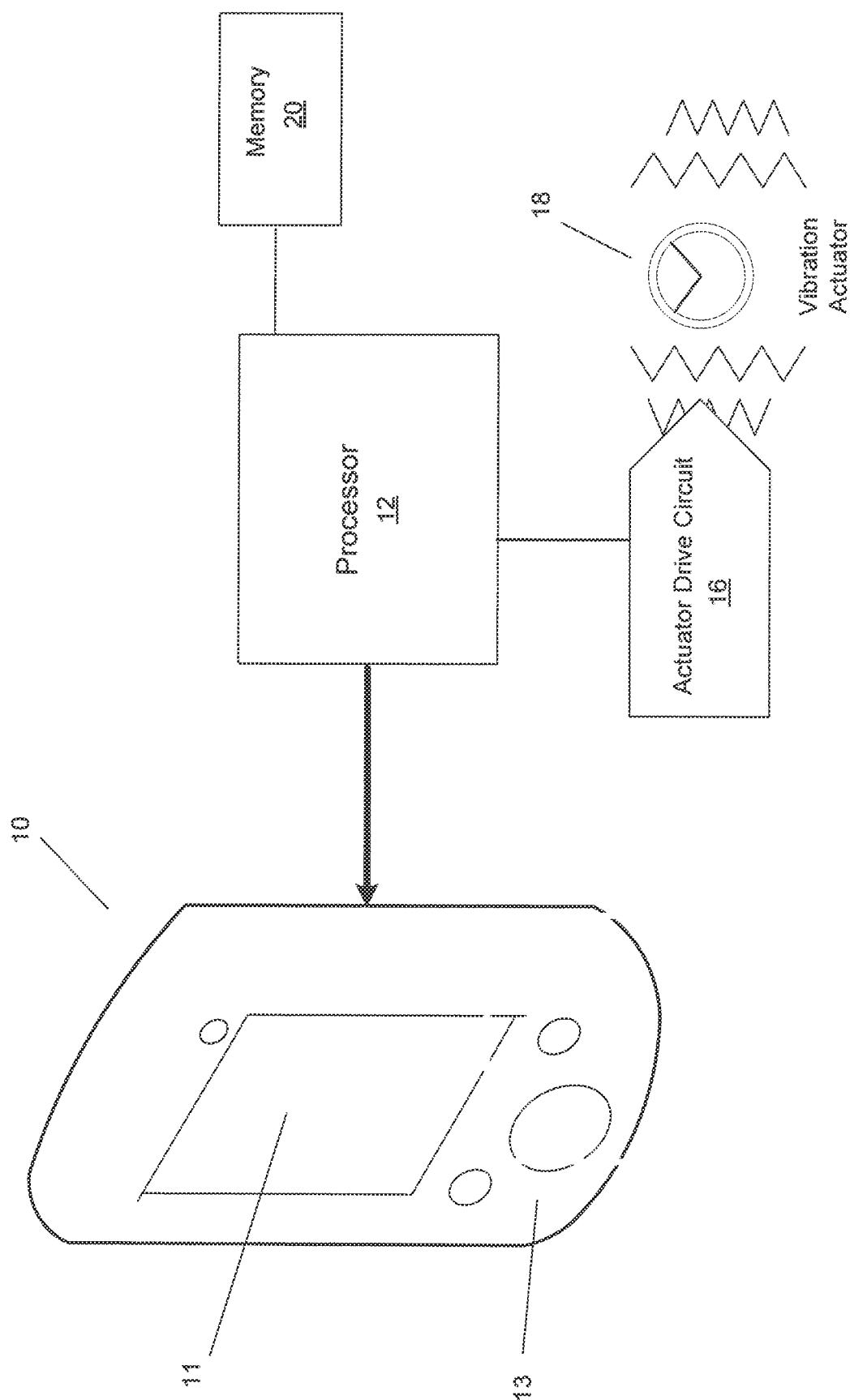


Fig. 1

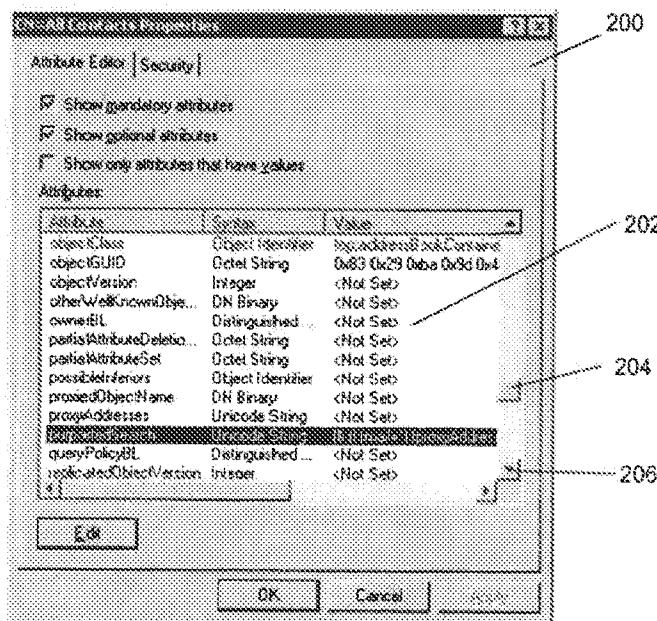


Fig. 2

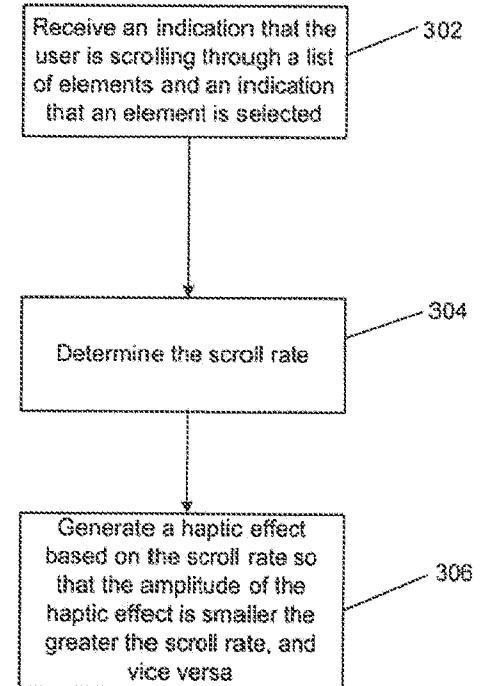


Fig. 3

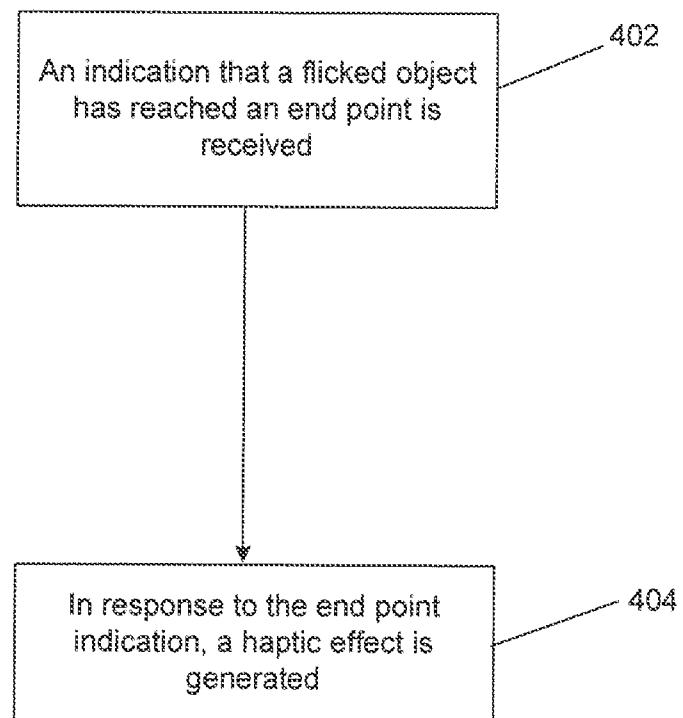


Fig. 4

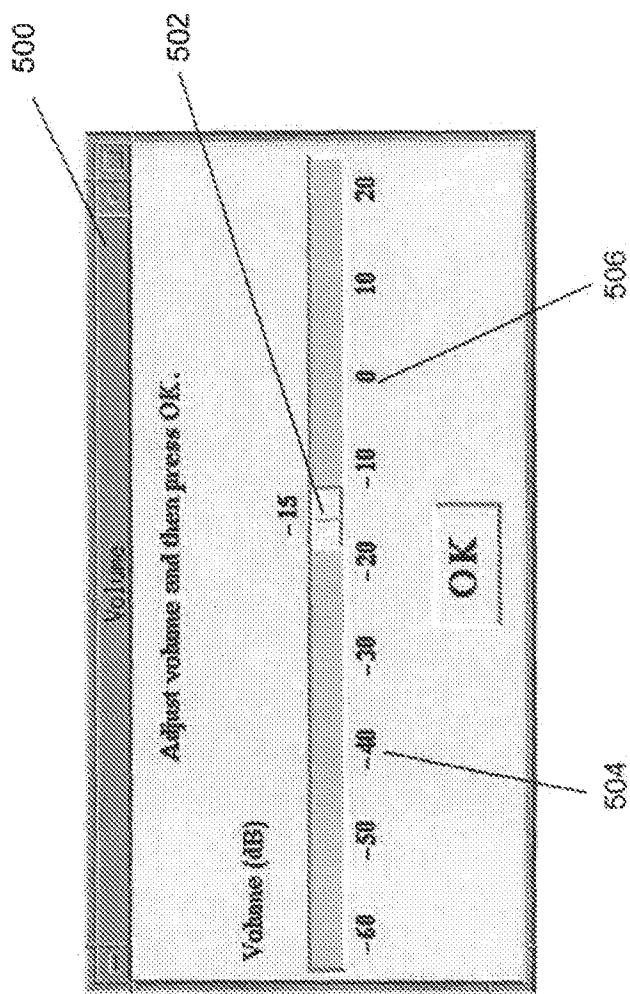
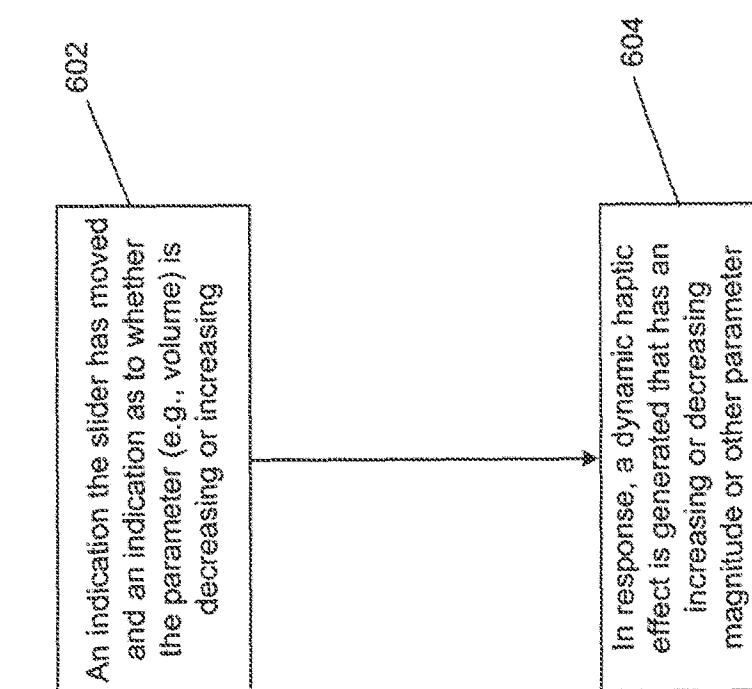


Fig. 5

Fig. 6

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No
PCT/US2009/034231

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
INV. G06F3/01
ADD. G06F3/048

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
G06F

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

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

EPO-Internal

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	WO 2006/042309 A (IMMERSION CORP [US]; GRANT DANNY [CA]; GREGORIO PEDRO [CA]; HEUBEL ROB) 20 April 2006 (2006-04-20) paragraphs [0016] - [0074]; figures 1-19	1-24
X	US 2005/017947 A1 (SHAHOIAN ERIK J [US] ET AL) 27 January 2005 (2005-01-27) paragraphs [0184] - [0189]	14-24
A	EP 0 805 389 A (SUN MICROSYSTEMS INC [US]) 5 November 1997 (1997-11-05) column 1, lines 24-40	6,7

Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

See patent family annex.

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Date of the actual completion of the international search

7 April 2009

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