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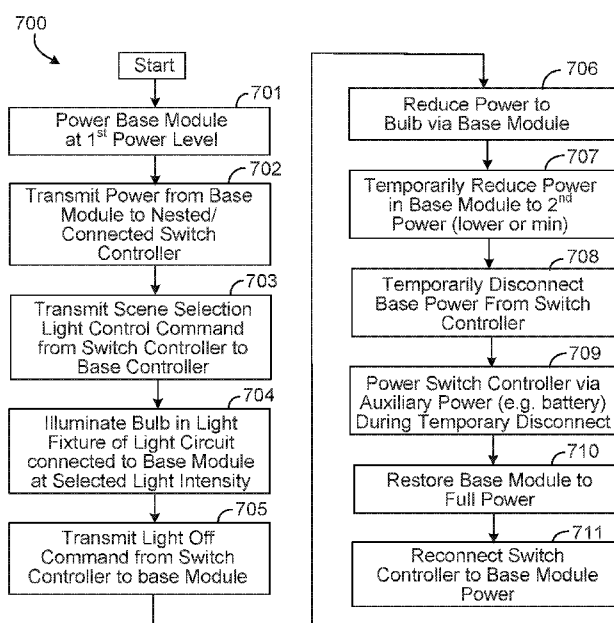


FIG. 7

(57) Abstract: The present disclosure provides an intelligent lighting control system for temporarily opening a circuit in the system. The lighting control system includes a light switch module including a switch control circuit. The switch control circuit includes a processor configured to modulate the flow of electrical energy to the lighting circuit via a dimmer circuit to produce a plurality of lighting scenes by varying the illumination of the light bulb. The processor is, in response to receipt of a control command to discontinue illumination of the light bulb, configured to cause, for a first pre-specified period of time, the amperage of the current flowing from an alternating current power supply to the power circuit to be reduced, and open, for the first pre-specified period of time, the electrical connection between the switch control circuit and an electrical connector.



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INTELLIGENT LIGHTING CONTROL SYSTEM APPARATUSES, SYSTEMS, AND METHODS

RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] The present application claims priority to U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 62/360,113, filed on July 8, 2016, entitled "INTELLIGENT LIGHTING CONTROL SYSTEM APPARATUSES, SYSTEMS, AND METHODS," which application is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] The present application relates generally to the field of lighting control systems.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Customizing and automating home lighting control devices is often epitomized by the installation of unsightly lighting switches that are inundated with light switches confusingly mapped to respective fixtures. Automated home lighting control systems can also include large, complex, expensive central hubs that require expert or skilled technicians for installation and/or operation. Smart light bulbs and/or Wi-Fi enabled lightbulbs introduced into any of these contexts or even in simpler ones can disadvantageously be limited by the light switch that it is associated with and/or the lighting fixture itself. For example, if a light switch associated with a smart light bulb is switched off the smart light bulb becomes inoperable.

SUMMARY

[0004] The inventors have appreciated that some light bulbs behave differently during the ramp up of power compared to ramping down. For example, a certain critical-mass/threshold of energy is used to cause the bulb to initially pop-on; however, in many cases during the ramp down the bulb can stay illuminated well below that same threshold value. Moreover a bulb's pop-on threshold value can be lower once the bulb has already been illuminated and is "warm" or holding residual energy. The inventors have appreciated that in order to restore the highest value for bulb pop-on (and allow control module to sink greater values of power), the lighting control module can fully open the circuit to allow the bulb(s) to fully discharge its residual energy.

Accordingly, various embodiments disclosed herein provide apparatuses, systems, and methods for temporarily opening a light switch circuit in an intelligent lighting control system.

[0005] Various embodiments provide a lighting control system including a base module including a base housing forming a well and including a first electrical connector positioned in the well. The first electrical connector is connected to a power circuit that is configured to receive current from an (alternating current) A.C. power supply and is configured to be electrically coupled to a lighting circuit of a light fixture. The base module is configured to connect the current from the A.C. power supply to the lighting circuit for illumination of a light bulb connected to the light fixture. The lighting control system includes a light switch module configured for nesting, at least in part, in the well of the base module. The light switch module includes a module housing, a graphical user interface coupled to the module housing, a rechargeable battery housed in the module housing, a second electrical connector electrically connected to the rechargeable battery, and a switch control circuit positioned in the housing. The second electrical connector is configured for engagement with and electrical coupling to the first electrical connector of the base module when nested in the well of the base module. The switch control circuit includes a processor configured to modulate the flow of electrical energy to the lighting circuit via a dimmer circuit to produce a plurality of lighting scenes by varying the illumination of the light bulb. The switch control circuit is electrically connected to the graphical user interface, the rechargeable battery, and the second electrical connector. The processor is, in response to receipt of a control command to discontinue illumination of the light bulb, configured to cause, for a first pre-specified period of time, the amperage of the current flowing from the A.C. power supply to the power circuit to be reduced, and open, for the first pre-specified period of time, the electrical connection between the switch control circuit and the second electrical connector.

[0006] In some implementations, the power circuit of the base module includes a relay configured to reduce the current flowing from the A.C. power supply to the power circuit.

[0007] In some implementations, the first electrical connector is configured for press fit engagement with the second electrical connector.

[0008] In some implementations, the lighting control system includes a sensor configured to check the energy level of the rechargeable battery.

[0009] In some implementations, the processor is configured to check the energy level of the rechargeable battery before opening the electrical connection between the switch control circuit and the second electrical connector.

[0010] In some implementations, the processor is configured to prevent opening of the electrical connection between the switch control circuit and the second electrical connector if the energy level of the rechargeable battery is below a pre-determined threshold.

[0011] Various implementations provide a method of operating a lighting control system. The method includes powering, at a first current level and via an AC power source, a base module connected to a lighting circuit of a light fixture in a closed circuit such that a light bulb electrically connected to the light fixture is (substantially) unilluminated. The method includes converting the AC to (direct current) DC. . The method includes transferring the DC from the base module to a light switch module nested, at least in part, in a well of the base module via a first electrical connector of the base module electrically coupled to a second electrical connector of the light switch module. The second electrical connector is electrically coupled to a switch control circuit in the light switch module. The switch control circuit includes a processor configured to modulate the flow of electrical energy to the lighting circuit via a dimmer circuit to produce a plurality of lighting scenes by varying the illumination of the light bulb. The switch control circuit is electrically connected to a rechargeable battery. The rechargeable battery can be charged by the power transferred from the base module to the light switch module. The method includes in response to receiving a first command from the switch control circuit to illuminate the light bulb, increasing the current of electrical energy flowing from the base module to the lighting circuit. The method includes in response to receiving a second command to discontinue illumination of the light bulb at the light switch module: 1) reducing the amperage of current flowing to the lighting circuit to a level configured to discontinue illumination of the light bulb, 2) for a first pre-specified period of time, reducing the amperage of the current flowing in the base module to a second level lower than the first current level from the A.C. power supply, 3) for a second pre-specified period of time, opening the electrical connection between the switch control circuit and the second electrical connector, and 4) using the rechargeable battery to power the switch control circuit during the second pre-specified period of time.

[0012] In some implementations, the method includes reducing the current of electrical energy flowing from the base module to the lighting circuit to a level configured to eliminate illumination of the light bulb in light fixture connected to lighting circuit.

[0013] In some implementations, the method includes reducing the amperage via a relay.

[0014] In some implementations, the method includes closing the electrical connection between the switch control circuit and the second electrical connector to reconnect control circuit and electrical connector after the second pre-specified period of time has passed, whereby DC power generated from the AC power powers control circuit.

[0015] In some implementations, the method includes recharging the battery via the DC power.

[0016] In some implementations, the method includes checking the energy level of rechargeable battery before temporarily opening circuit.

[0017] In some implementations, the method includes preventing opening the electrical connection between the switch control circuit and the second electrical connector in response to the energy level of the rechargeable battery being below a pre-determined threshold.

[0018] In some implementations, the method includes determining the pre-specified period of time by determining a period of time for the bulb to at least one of cool down and reach a fully off state.

[0019] In some implementations, the method includes dimming the bulb after full illumination and before discontinuing illumination.

[0020] In some implementations, receiving the first command from the switch control circuit to illuminate the light bulb, includes receiving a command to illuminate the light bulb at a power less than a full power.

[0021] Various implementations provide a computer program product for operating a lighting control system. The computer program product can include a non-transitory computer-readable storage medium coupled to one or more processors and having instructions stored thereon which, when executed by the one or more processors, cause the one or more processors to perform operations for operating a lighting control system apparatus according to anyone of

the preceding implementations described and/or according to anyone of the apparatuses disclosed herein.

[0022] It should be appreciated that all combinations of the foregoing concepts and additional concepts discussed in greater detail below (provided such concepts are not mutually inconsistent) are contemplated as being part of the inventive subject matter disclosed herein. In particular, all combinations of claimed subject matter appearing at the end of this disclosure are contemplated as being part of the inventive subject matter disclosed herein. It should also be appreciated that terminology explicitly employed herein that also may appear in any disclosure incorporated by reference should be accorded a meaning most consistent with the particular concepts disclosed herein.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0023] The drawings primarily are for illustrative purposes and are not intended to limit the scope of the inventive subject matter described herein. The drawings are not necessarily to scale; in some instances, various aspects of the inventive subject matter disclosed herein may be shown exaggerated or enlarged in the drawings to facilitate an understanding of different features. In the drawings, like reference characters generally refer to like features (e.g., functionally similar and/or structurally similar elements).

[0024] FIG. 1A is a perspective partially exploded view of a lighting control device.

[0025] FIG. 1B is a fully exploded view of the lighting control device of FIG. 1A

[0026] FIG. 2A shows the lighting control device of FIG. 1A mounted on a wall.

[0027] FIGS. 2B and 2C illustrate multi-switch lighting control devices.

[0028] FIGS. 3A -3F illustrate a lighting control device transitioning through various lighting settings and a room having lighting fixtures controlled by the lighting control device.

[0029] FIG. 4 provides a flow diagram of operations of a system for controlling a lighting control device.

[0030] FIG. 5 shows a flow diagram of a system for remotely operating a lighting control device.

[0031] FIG. 6 illustrates a flow diagram of a system for remotely configuring operations of a lighting control device.

[0032] FIG. 7 is a flow diagram of a method of operating a lighting control system to temporarily open a circuit in the system and reduce power of the lighting control system from a full power level to a reduced power level.

[0033] FIG. 8 is a schematic of a lighting control system.

[0034] FIG. 9 is a graph demonstrating variations in the power with respect to time as various operations are engaged by a lighting control system in accordance with the methods of FIG. 7.

[0035] The features and advantages of the inventive subject matter disclosed herein will become more apparent from the detailed description set forth below when taken in conjunction with the drawings.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0036] Following below are more detailed descriptions of various concepts related to, and exemplary embodiments of, inventive systems, methods and components of lighting control devices.

[0037] FIG. 1A is a perspective partially exploded view of a lighting control device 100. The lighting control device 100 includes a switch module 102 including a light switch actuator 106 and a tactile display 104 housed in the light switch actuator 106. The lighting control device 100 also includes a wall plate cover 108 including a switch module opening 110 extending therethrough. The lighting control device 100 also includes a base module 112 configured for coupling to the switch module 102 via multi-pin socket 114. The base module 112 is sized and configured for receipt within a one-gang wall electrical box and has a volume corresponding substantially thereto. The base module 112 is configured to be coupled to a wall electrical box via connection tabs 116 and fastener apertures 118 in the connection tabs 116.

[0038] The light switch actuator 106 includes an outer actuation surface 122, which as discussed further herein may be composed of glass. The actuation surface 122 is movable, for example, by pushing on the curved foot 120 to cause the light switch actuator 106 to pivot, for

example. The pivoting of the light switch actuator 106 and the actuation surface 122 causes a contact component (shown in FIG. 2) of the switch actuator 106 to move from a first position to a second position. Movement of the contact component causes a connection of an electrical flow path, for example by allowing two electrical contacts to connect or by connecting the contact component with an electrical contact. The connecting of the electrical flow path, permits electrical energy supplied by a power source connected to the base module 112 to energize or activate the tactile display 104, as discussed in further detail herein. The tactile display 104 is structured in the switch module to move contemporaneously with at least a portion of the actuation surface 122 and with the actuator 106. When activated or energized, the tactile display 104 allows a user to define or select predefined lighting settings where the lighting settings change the voltage or power supplied to one or more light fixtures. The change in power supplied to the light fixtures may include a plurality of different voltages supplied to each fixture and may be based on various parameters including, but not limited to, location, light intensity, light color, type of bulb, type of light, ambient light levels, time of day, kind of activity, room temperature, noise level, energy costs, user proximity, user identity, or various other parameters which may be specified or detected. Furthermore, the lighting control device 100 may be connected to all of the lights in a room or even in a house and can be configured to operate cooperatively with one or more other lighting control devices 100 located in a unit or room and connected to the same or distinct lighting fixtures.

[0039] FIG. 1B is a fully exploded view of the lighting control device 100 of FIG. 1A. As demonstrated in FIG. 1B, the tactile display 104 is positioned between the outer actuation surface 122 and the light switch actuator 106. The actuation surface 122 may be composed of an impact-resistant glass material permitting light from the tactile display 104 and/or a clear sight of path for sensors 127 or other lights, such as a light from light pipe 126 indicating activation to pass through the actuation surface 122. The tactile display 104 is composed of a polymer-based capacitive touch layer 124 and a light emitting diode panel 125, which are controlled via one or more modules or processors positioned on the printed circuit board 129. The tactile display 104 is housed within a recess 131 of the light switch actuator 106 beneath the actuation surface 122. The light switch actuator 106 may be formed as a thermoplastic housing including a housing cover 133 and a housing base 135. The light switch actuator housing cover 133 is pivotally connected to the housing base 135 via pins 136 and the housing cover 133 is biased with respect

the housing base 135 via torsion spring 137. In particular embodiments, the light switch actuator housing cover 133 may be configured to slide or otherwise translate or rotate. The outer actuation surface 122 is biased with the switch actuator housing cover 133 and moves contemporaneously therewith in concert with the tactile display 104 housed in the cover component 133 of the light switch actuator 106. The light switch actuator 106 includes a switch pin 128 movable between positions to close an open circuit on the primary printed circuit board substrate 150, which board also houses a switch controller or processor. In certain embodiments the light switch actuator 106 may include a circuit board stack, including the primary printed circuit board substrate 150 and a secondary printed circuit board 138. The light switch actuator 106 may include a latch 136 for coupling to the base module 112 (e.g. as the light switch actuator 106 is passed through the opening 110 in the wall plate cover 108), which latch causes the light switch actuator 106 to click into place. The housing base 135 includes a multi-pin connector or plug 134 configured to engage the multi-pin socket 114 of the base module 112.

[0040] The lighting control device 100 includes a mounting chassis 142 configured to be installed to an electrical wall box. The mounting chassis 142 creates an even surface for installation of the other modules (e.g., the base module 112 and the switch module 102). Once the base module is connected to the electrical wall box via the mounting chassis 142, the wall plate cover 108 can be coupled to the mounting chassis 142 and the light switch actuator 106 can be inserted through the switch module opening 110. In particular embodiments, the wall plate cover can be coupled to the mounting chassis 142 and/or the tabs 116 of the base module via magnets. The magnets may be recessed within openings of a portion of the wall plate cover 108. As noted, the base module 112 is configured to be coupled to the mounting chassis 142 via connection tabs 116. The base module 112 is further configured to be electrically coupled to a power source (e.g., an electrical wire coming from an electrical breaker box to the electrical wall box) and to one or more light fixtures wired to the electrical box. Accordingly, the base module 112 provides an interface between a power source, the light switch actuator 106, and one or more light fixtures. The base module includes a processor 140 and a circuit board 141 for managing the power supplied by the power source and routed to the one or more light fixtures in accordance with a light setting selection identified via the light switch actuator 106 or the tactile display 104.

[0041] One or more of the processor on the printed circuit board 15038a or 138b 130 and the base module processor 140 may include wireless links for communication with one or more remote electronic device such as a mobile phone, a tablet, a laptop, another mobile computing devices, one or more other lighting control devices 100 or other electronic devices operating in a location. In certain implementations the wireless links permit communication with one or more devices including, but not limited to smart light bulbs, thermostats, garage door openers, door locks, remote controls, televisions, security systems, security cameras, smoke detectors, video game consoles, robotic systems, or other communication enabled sensing and/or actuation devices or appliances. The wireless links may include BLUETOOTH classes, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth-low-energy, also known as BLE, 802.15.4, Worldwide Interoperability for Microwave Access (WiMAX), an infrared channel or satellite band. The wireless links may also include any cellular network standards used to communicate among mobile devices, including, but not limited to, standards that qualify as 1G, 2G, 3G, or 4G. The network standards may qualify as one or more generation of mobile telecommunication standards by fulfilling a specification or standards such as the specifications maintained by International Telecommunication Union. The 3G standards, for example, may correspond to the International Mobile Telecommunications-2000 (IMT-2000) specification, and the 4G standards may correspond to the International Mobile Telecommunications Advanced (IMT-Advanced) specification. Examples of cellular network standards include AMPS, GSM, GPRS, UMTS, LTE, LTE Advanced, Mobile WiMAX, and WiMAX-Advanced. Cellular network standards may use various channel access methods e.g. FDMA, TDMA, CDMA, or SDMA. In some embodiments, different types of data may be transmitted via different links and standards. In other embodiments, the same types of data may be transmitted via different links and standards.

[0042] FIG. 2A shows the lighting control device 100 of FIG. 1A mounted on a wall 200. As demonstrated in FIG. 2A, the base module 112 is not visible upon installation of the lighting control device 100 in view of the wall plate cover 108. Because the wall plate cover 108 attaches to the base module 112, the wall plate cover 108 appears to be floating on the wall 200. The lighting control device 100 may be activated by a user 103 interacting with the outer actuation surface 122 and the tactile display 104.

[0043] FIGS. 2B and 2C illustrate multi-switch configurations of multiple lighting control device. FIGS. 2B and 2C illustrate a two switch and three switch embodiment respectively

where the lighting control devices 202 and 203 each include a light switch actuator 106 as well as auxiliary switches 204 and 208, as well as 2 and 3 base modules 112, respectively.

[0044] FIGS. 3A - 3F illustrate a lighting control device transitioning through various lighting settings and a room having lighting fixtures controlled by the lighting control device.

[0045] In FIG. 3A, the lighting control device 300 is connected to a base module positioned behind the wall plate 308. The lighting control device 300 includes a dynamic light switch actuator 306, operable in a manner similar to the light switch actuator discussed in connection with FIGS. 1A-2C, and an auxiliary light switch actuator. As demonstrated in FIG. 3A by the unilluminated outer actuation surface 322 of the light switch actuator 306 is inactive and not energized. In response to a user 103 moving the actuation surface 322 of the light switch actuator 306, the light switch actuator 306 begins to become energized, as shown in FIG. 3B. The energization or activation of the light switch actuator 306 is signaled by the power light indicator 305 and by full lighting setting icon 351. As shown in FIG. 3C where the icon 351 is fully lit (rather than partially lit as in FIG. 3B), the light switch actuator 306 is fully energized. In this particular configuration, the primary lights 309 and 310 are illuminated at full power. FIG. 3D shows the transition between lighting settings. As demonstrated in FIG. 3D, this transition is facilitated via user 103 completing swiping gesture 312 across the tactile display 304 and along the actuation surface 322. As the user completes the gesture 312, the icon 351 is swiped from the tactile display 304 as the tactile display toggles to a new light setting shown in FIG. 3E. The new light setting shown in FIG. 3E is represented or identified by the dinner icon 352. The new light setting shown in FIG. 3E has the light fixture 309 powered down and has caused lamp 316 and sconces 318 to become illuminated to change the lighting scene in the room. The change in the light setting causes a change in distribution of power to certain lighting fixture based on the selected lighting setting. The light switch actuator 306 may be pre-programmed with a plurality of lighting settings or may be configured with particular lighting settings as specified by the user 103. A further swiping gesture 315 shown in FIG. 3F or a different gesture are used to transition from the lighting setting of FIG. 3F represented by icon 352 to a further lighting setting.

[0046] FIG. 4 provides a flow diagram of operations of a system for controlling a lighting control device. FIG. 4 illustrates control operations of a control system, such as processor 130

configured to control the lighting control device 100 or 300, in accordance with various embodiments of the present invention. At 401, the tactile display housed in the light switch actuator is activated by moving the light switch actuator, for example by moving the actuation surface of the light switch actuator. At 402, the light fixtures electrically coupled to the light switch actuator via a base module are powered as the movement of the light switch actuator causes a contact component to move into a new position and thereby permit or cause an electrical flow path between a power source and the light fixture(s) to be closed. The tactile display housed in the light switch actuator is moved contemporaneously with the actuation surface. At 403, a lighting setting selection request is received via the tactile display, for example by a particular motion or motions on the tactile display. The lighting setting selection request identifies a lighting setting from among a plurality of lighting settings. A user may swipe multiple times to toggle through the plurality of lighting settings or may conduct a specific motion that corresponds to a particular lighting setting including, but not limited to, a half swipe and tap to achieve a light intensity of all the connected light fixtures at half of their peak output. The lighting settings identify distinct power distribution schemes for one or more light fixtures connected to the light switch module. At 404, a power distribution scheme is identified. At 405, the identified power distribution scheme is transmitted, for example by the base module responding to control signals from the light switch actuator, to adjust one, some, or all of the lights based on the power distribution scheme corresponding to the lighting setting selected. The power distribution schemes or profiles may be stored in a memory device of the lighting control device. In certain embodiments, the power distribution schemes may be adjusted to account for other parameters such as ambient lighting from natural light or an unconnected source. In certain embodiments the power distribution schemes may be adjusted based on one or more other sensor parameters. In particular embodiments, the lighting setting may be adjusted by automation based on time of day, sensed parameters such as light, temperature, noise, or activation of other devices including, but not limited to, any electronic device described herein.

[0047] FIG. 5 shows a flow diagram of system for remotely operating a lighting control device. In particular embodiments, the lighting control device 100 or 300 may be operable from a remote device if the actuator switch is activated or energized. In such instances, the remote device may include one or more computer program applications, such as system 500, operating on the device to communicate with and control the lighting control device. Accordingly, at 501,

the control system 500 initiates a connection module to generate a communication interface between a mobile electronic device and a light switch module. The connection module may cause the remote device to send one or more wireless transmission to the lighting control device via a communication protocol. At 502, the control system 500 causes the remote device to generate a display of icons on a display device of the mobile electronic device to facilitate selection of a lighting setting. At 503, the control system 500 receives a lighting setting selection based on the user selecting a particular icon. At 504, a transmission module causes the lighting setting selected to be transmitted to the lighting control device so that the light switch module and/or the base module can cause the power distribution scheme corresponding to the lighting setting to be transmitted to the lighting fixtures. The tactile display of the lighting control device may be updated in concert with receipt of the lighting setting to display the icon selected on the mobile electronic device and corresponding to the lighting setting selected on the tactile device.

[0048] FIG. 6 illustrates a flow diagram of a system for remotely configuring operations of a lighting control device. The remote device may include devices including, but not limited to a mobile phone, a mobile computing device or a computing device remote from the light control device. At 601, the mobile electronic device generates a communication interface with the light switch module. At 602, a light fixture identification module initiates a sensor based protocol to identify a parameter associated with one or more light fixtures connected to the light switch control module. At 603, a display selection module causes a display of an icon to appear on a display device of the mobile electronic device. At 604, a lighting setting configuration module allows a user to create a power distribution scheme or profile for the light fixtures identified based on the identified parameters and a user specified input related to light intensity. At 604, a storage module is used to store the power distribution scheme and associate a particular lighting setting icon with the power distribution scheme. At 605, a transmission module transmits the power distribution scheme and the associated icon to the light switch control module.

[0049] FIG. 7 is a flow diagram of a method of operating a lighting control system to temporarily open a circuit in the system and reduce power of the lighting control system from a full power level to a reduced power level. At 701, the base module is powered at first operating power. The base module receives power via AC power provided via a power wire connected to the base module. At 702, the base module, which is connected to a lighting circuit including a

light fixture configured to receive a light bulb, transmits power to a switch controller or switch control module nested and electrically connected to the base module. At 703, the switch controller transmits a scene selection selected thereon (e.g. by a user engaging a graphical user interface of the switch) from the switch controller to the base module. At 704, the base module transmits a corresponding amount of electrical current to the light circuit connected thereto to cause the bulb(s) of the light fixture to become illuminated at a particular light intensity based on the selected scene. At 705, a command to turn the light fixture off and discontinue illuminated the bulb(s) is sent from the switch controller to the base module (e.g. after a period of time the user actuates the switch controller via the GUI or remotely via a wireless electronic device). In response, to this command being sent from the switch controller to the base module at the request of a user, the base module reduces the current transmitted to the bulb in order to turn the light fixture off. At 707, in response to receipt of the turn off command, the lighting control system automatically temporarily reduces the power in the base module to a low power mode (e.g. at power level lower than the 1st power level and configured to allow the bulb to cool). At 708, in response to this reduction and substantially simultaneously, the light control system also temporarily disconnects the power transmission between the base module and the switch controller (e.g. by opening a circuit without unnesting the switch controller). At 709, in response to this disconnect and so that the switch controller can continue to be operable, the switch controller is switched to auxiliary power where the components contained therein (as described above and in further detail in connection with FIG. 8) are powered, for example via a rechargeable battery. At 710, after a pre-specified period of time has passed the base module automatically resumes to full power level and at 711, the circuit automatically closes after a pre-specified period of time (which can be the same or substantially the same as the reduced power operating period) to reconnect the switch controller to power from the base module, whereby the switch controller components are powered. The rechargeable battery can be recharged using this power.

[0050] FIG. 8 is a schematics of a lighting control system 800 configured to execute lighting control operations described herein, such as those described in FIG. 7 above and through the application. The lighting control system 800 illustrates lighting control system components that can be implemented with a lighting control system including an air gap system as described herein. The lighting control system 800 is depicted separated into a base lighting control module

812 (which may be configured in a manner similar to base module 112) and a switch module or switch controller 802 (which may be configured in a manner similar to switch module 102). As described herein, the switch module 802 can include a tactile interface, operable via the graphical user interface module 852, and a switch actuator, such as the tactile display 104 and the light switch actuator 106 described herein. The switch module 802 houses a processor 850, which may be configured to send commands to microcontroller 840 and receive inputs from the microcontroller 840 to control the operation of a transformer 818, a power isolator and an AC to DC converter 814 (which may include a flyback converter), and a dimmer, such as a TRIAC dimmer 813, a voltage and current sensor 816. In some embodiments, the base lighting control module 812 may include a MOSFET dimmer. The power isolator 814 separates the analog AC current from the low power or DC digital components in the base lighting control module 812 and the switch module 802. The power isolate 814 may provide power inputs to the switch control module 802 via a power module 853. Power module 853 includes power circuitry configured to regulate the flow of power from the base module 812 to the switch controller module 802 including directing power to one or more of the modules in the switch controller module 802. The switch module 802 also houses a communication module, which can include one or more antennae or other wireless communication modules. The switch module 802 also houses a sensor module, which can include one or more sensors, such as a light sensor, a camera, a microphone, a thermometer, a humidity sensor, and an air quality sensor. The processor 850, is communicably coupled with one or more modules in the switch module 802 to control the operation of and receive inputs from those modules, for example to control modulation of the flow of electrical energy to a lighting circuit of a light fixture 824 connected to the base lighting control module 812.

[0051] The base lighting control module 812 includes a ground terminal 830 for grounding various electrical components container in the module 812. The base light control module 812 includes a neutral terminal 828 for connecting to a neutral wire, a line terminal 826, and a load terminal 822. As shown in FIG. 8, the voltage and current sensor(s) are coupled to the load line to detect changes in the voltage or current along the line carrying power to one or more light fixtures 824 connected to the lighting circuit (750). The base lighting control module 812 also includes a controller 840 communicably coupled to the processor 850. The base lighting control module 812 also includes LED indicator lights 842 and 841 for indicating information regarding

the status of the base lighting control module 812. For example, in some embodiments LED indicator light 841 can indicate if a neutral wire is connected while LED indicator light 842 can indicate if a 3 way connection is connected.

[0052] FIG. 9 is a graph demonstrating variations in the power with respect to time as various operations are engaged by a lighting control system in accordance with the methods of FIG. 7. As noted herein, a certain critical-mass/threshold of energy is used to cause the bulb to initially pop-on (i.e. the minimum level of power provided to the bulb for first perceivable illumination as discussed in further detail in U.S. Provisional Patent application No. 62/321,132 filed April 11, 2016 and entitled, the entirety of which hereby incorporated herein by reference in its entirety); however, in many cases during the ramp down the bulb can stay illuminated well below that same threshold value. Moreover a bulb's pop-on threshold value can be lower once the bulb has already been illuminated and is "warm" or holding residual energy. In a lighting control system in accordance with inventive embodiments disclosed herein, the lighting control system (such as system 800 or 100) operates at a full power shown at a time t_0 , even when the light switch is turned off and a bulb connected thereto is not illuminated (even though the circuit is connected). The full power level can be configured to ensure that the bulb is not illuminated. At least a portion of this power can be used to charge a rechargeable battery of a switch controller connected to the base module portion of the lighting control system. The power level at time t_1 and t_2 represent various values that a user can select via the lighting control system. At t_1 the user has selected a full power, while at time t_2 , the user has selected a scene that reduces the power to a 1st dim level. At time t_3 , the user has selected a command to turn the lights off. This automatically engages a protocol as discussed in reference to FIG. 7, where the power of the base module is reduced to a level lower than the full power (e.g. low power mode) and the switch controller or switch control module is run on auxiliary power. The period of time for the lighting control system to engage the low power mode can be a pre-specified period of time (indicated by a timer of a processor or controller) and can be configured and/or variable based on a bulb type connected to the lighting control system (which can be detected via the lighting control system in accordance with certain embodiments.). A relay can be used to reduce the power. At time t_4 , the full power mode is automatically restored. At time t_5 the user selects a different scene that causes the lighting control system to power a light fixture to a second dim level. At time t_6 the user turns the light off and the system again automatically engages in the

low power mode. As demonstrated at time t7, the user has selected to turn the light back on, but may do so before the lighting control system has resumed from the low power mode (e.g. they may request to turn the lights back on sooner via actuation of the switch controller that is powered on auxiliary power). This causes the switch controller to send a control signal to the base module, which causes the base module to increase power although the pre-specified period of time has not yet passed. At time t9 the lights are turned off again and after the pre-specified period has passed for low power operation the lighting control system returns to full power at time t9, where it powers the switch controller.

[0053] Implementations of the subject matter and the operations described in this specification can be implemented by digital electronic circuitry, or via computer software, firmware, or hardware, including the structures disclosed in this specification and their structural equivalents, or in combinations of one or more of them. Implementations of the subject matter described in this specification can be implemented as one or more computer programs, i.e., one or more modules of computer program instructions, encoded on computer storage medium for execution by, or to control the operation of, data processing apparatus.

[0054] A computer storage medium can be, or be included in, a computer-readable storage device, a computer-readable storage substrate, a random or serial access memory array or device, or a combination of one or more of them. Moreover, while a computer storage medium is not a propagated signal, a computer storage medium can be a source or destination of computer program instructions encoded in an artificially generated propagated signal. The computer storage medium can also be, or be included in, one or more separate physical components or media (e.g., multiple CDs, disks, or other storage devices).

[0055] The operations described in this specification can be implemented as operations performed by a data processing apparatus on data stored on one or more computer-readable storage devices or received from other sources.

[0056] The term “data processing apparatus” encompasses all kinds of apparatus, devices, and machines for processing data, including by way of example a programmable processor, a computer, a system on a chip, or multiple ones, or combinations, of the foregoing. The apparatus can include special purpose logic circuitry, e.g., an FPGA (field programmable gate array) or an ASIC (application specific integrated circuit). The apparatus can also include, in addition to

hardware, code that creates an execution environment for the computer program in question, e.g., code that constitutes processor firmware, a protocol stack, a database management system, an operating system, a cross-platform runtime environment, a virtual machine, or a combination of one or more of them. The apparatus and execution environment can realize various different computing model infrastructures, such as web services, distributed computing and grid computing infrastructures.

[0057] A computer program (also known as a program, software, software application, script, or code) can be written in any form of programming language, including compiled or interpreted languages, declarative or procedural languages, and it can be deployed in any form, including as a stand-alone program or as a module, component, subroutine, object, or other unit suitable for use in a computing environment. A computer program may, but need not, correspond to a file in a file system. A program can be stored in a portion of a file that holds other programs or data (e.g., one or more scripts stored in a markup language document), in a single file dedicated to the program in question, or in multiple coordinated files (e.g., files that store one or more modules, sub programs, or portions of code). A computer program can be deployed to be executed on one computer or on multiple computers that are located at one site or distributed across multiple sites and interconnected by a communication network.

[0058] The processes and logic flows described in this specification can be performed by one or more programmable processors executing one or more computer programs to perform actions by operating on input data and generating output. The processes and logic flows can also be performed by, and apparatus can also be implemented as, special purpose logic circuitry, e.g., a FPGA (field programmable gate array) or an ASIC (application specific integrated circuit).

[0059] Processors suitable for the execution of a computer program include, by way of example, both general and special purpose microprocessors, and any one or more processors of any kind of digital computer. Generally, a processor will receive instructions and data from a read only memory or a random access memory or both. The essential elements of a computer are a processor for performing actions in accordance with instructions and one or more memory devices for storing instructions and data. Generally, a computer will also include, or be operatively coupled to receive data from or transfer data to, or both, one or more mass storage devices for storing data, e.g., magnetic, magneto optical disks, or optical disks. However, a

computer need not have such devices. Moreover, a computer can be embedded in another device, e.g., a mobile telephone, a personal digital assistant (PDA), a mobile audio or video player, a game console, a Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver, or a portable storage device (e.g., a universal serial bus (USB) flash drive), to name just a few. Devices suitable for storing computer program instructions and data include all forms of non-volatile memory, media and memory devices, including by way of example semiconductor memory devices, e.g., EPROM, EEPROM, and flash memory devices; magnetic disks, e.g., internal hard disks or removable disks; magneto optical disks; and CD ROM and DVD-ROM disks. The processor and the memory can be supplemented by, or incorporated in, special purpose logic circuitry.

[0060] To provide for interaction with a user, implementations of the subject matter described in this specification can be implemented on a computer having a display device, e.g., a CRT (cathode ray tube) or LCD (liquid crystal display) monitor, for displaying information to the user and a keyboard and a pointing device, e.g., a mouse or a trackball, by which the user can provide input to the computer. Other kinds of devices can be used to provide for interaction with a user as well; for example, feedback provided to the user can be any form of sensory feedback, e.g., visual feedback, auditory feedback, or tactile feedback; and input from the user can be received in any form, including acoustic, speech, or tactile input. In addition, a computer can interact with a user by sending documents to and receiving documents from a device that is used by the user; for example, by sending web pages to a web browser on a user's user device in response to requests received from the web browser.

[0061] Implementations of the subject matter described in this specification can be implemented in a computing system that includes a back end component, e.g., as a data server, or that includes a middleware component, e.g., an application server, or that includes a front end component, e.g., a user computer having a graphical display or a Web browser through which a user can interact with an implementation of the subject matter described in this specification, or any combination of one or more such back end, middleware, or front end components. The components of the system can be interconnected by any form or medium of digital data communication, e.g., a communication network. Examples of communication networks include a local area network ("LAN") and a wide area network ("WAN"), an inter-network (e.g., the Internet), and peer-to-peer networks (e.g., ad hoc peer-to-peer networks).

[0062] The computing system can include users and servers. A user and server are generally remote from each other and typically interact through a communication network. The relationship of user and server arises by virtue of computer programs running on the respective computers and having a user-server relationship to each other. In some implementations, a server transmits data (e.g., an HTML page) to a user device (e.g., for purposes of displaying data to and receiving user input from a user interacting with the user device). Data generated at the user device (e.g., a result of the user interaction) can be received from the user device at the server.

[0063] While this specification contains many specific implementation details, these should not be construed as limitations on the scope of any inventions or of what may be claimed, but rather as descriptions of features specific to particular implementations of particular inventions. Certain features that are described in this specification in the context of separate implementations can also be implemented in combination in a single implementation. Conversely, various features that are described in the context of a single implementation can also be implemented in multiple implementations separately or in any suitable sub combination. Moreover, although features may be described above as acting in certain combinations and even initially claimed as such, one or more features from a claimed combination can in some cases be excised from the combination, and the claimed combination may be directed to a sub combination or variation of a sub combination.

[0064] For the purpose of this disclosure, the term “coupled” means the joining of two members directly or indirectly to one another. Such joining may be stationary or moveable in nature. Such joining may be achieved with the two members or the two members and any additional intermediate members being integrally formed as a single unitary body with one another or with the two members or the two members and any additional intermediate members being attached to one another. Such joining may be permanent in nature or may be removable or releasable in nature.

[0065] It should be noted that the orientation of various elements may differ according to other exemplary implementations, and that such variations are intended to be encompassed by the present disclosure. It is recognized that features of the disclosed implementations can be incorporated into other disclosed implementations.

[0066] While various inventive implementations have been described and illustrated herein, those of ordinary skill in the art will readily envision a variety of other means and/or structures for performing the function and/or obtaining the results and/or one or more of the advantages described herein, and each of such variations and/or modifications is deemed to be within the scope of the inventive implementations described herein. More generally, those skilled in the art will readily appreciate that all parameters, dimensions, materials, and configurations described herein are meant to be exemplary and that the actual parameters, dimensions, materials, and/or configurations will depend upon the specific application or applications for which the inventive teachings is/are used. Those skilled in the art will recognize, or be able to ascertain using no more than routine experimentation, many equivalents to the specific inventive implementations described herein. It is, therefore, to be understood that the foregoing implementations are presented by way of example only and that, within the scope of the appended claims and equivalents thereto, inventive implementations may be practiced otherwise than as specifically described and claimed. Inventive implementations of the present disclosure are directed to each individual feature, system, article, material, kit, and/or method described herein. In addition, any combination of two or more such features, systems, articles, materials, kits, and/or methods, if such features, systems, articles, materials, kits, and/or methods are not mutually inconsistent, is included within the inventive scope of the present disclosure.

[0067] Also, the technology described herein may be embodied as a method, of which at least one example has been provided. The acts performed as part of the method may be ordered in any suitable way. Accordingly, implementations may be constructed in which acts are performed in an order different than illustrated, which may include performing some acts simultaneously, even though shown as sequential acts in illustrative implementations.

[0068] The claims should not be read as limited to the described order or elements unless stated to that effect. It should be understood that various changes in form and detail may be made by one of ordinary skill in the art without departing from the spirit and scope of the appended claims. All implementations that come within the spirit and scope of the following claims and equivalents thereto are claimed.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A lighting control system comprising:

a base module including a base housing forming a well and including a first electrical connector positioned in the well, the first electrical connector connected to a power circuit that is configured to receive current from an A.C. power supply and is configured to be electrically coupled to a lighting circuit of a light fixture, wherein the base module is configured to connect the current from the A.C. power supply to the lighting circuit for illumination of a light bulb connected to the light fixture; and

a light switch module configured for nesting, at least in part, in the well of the base module, the light switch module comprising:

a module housing,

a graphical user interface coupled to the module housing,

a rechargeable battery housed in the module housing,

a second electrical connector electrically connected to the rechargeable battery, the second electrical connector configured for engagement with and electrical coupling to the first electrical connector of the base module when nested in the well of the base module, and

a switch control circuit positioned in the housing and including a processor configured to modulate the flow of electrical energy to the lighting circuit via a dimmer circuit to produce a plurality of lighting scenes by varying the illumination of the light bulb, the switch control circuit electrically connected to the graphical user interface, the rechargeable battery, and the second electrical connector, wherein the processor is, in response to receipt of a control command to discontinue illumination of the light bulb, configured to:

1) cause, for a first pre-specified period of time, the amperage of the current flowing from the A.C. power supply to the power circuit to be reduced, and

2) open, for the first pre-specified period of time, the electrical connection between the switch control circuit and the second electrical connector.

2. The lighting control system according to claim 1, wherein the power circuit of the base module includes a relay configured to reduce the current flowing from the A.C. power supply to the power circuit.
3. The lighting control system according to claim 1, wherein the first electrical connector is configured for press fit engagement with the second electrical connector.
4. The lighting control system according to claim 1, further comprising a sensor configured to check the energy level of the rechargeable battery.
5. The lighting control according to claim 4, wherein the processor is configured to check the energy level of the rechargeable battery before opening the electrical connection between the switch control circuit and the second electrical connector.
6. The lighting control according to claim 5, wherein the processor is configured to prevent opening of the electrical connection between the switch control circuit and the second electrical connector if the energy level of the rechargeable battery is below a pre-determined threshold.
7. A method of operating a lighting control system comprising:
 - powering, at a first current level and via an AC power source, a base module connected to a lighting circuit of a light fixture in a closed circuit such that a light bulb electrically connected to the light fixture is (substantially) unilluminated;
 - converting the AC to DC;
 - transferring the DC from the base module to a light switch module nested, at least in part, in a well of the base module via a first electrical connector of the base module electrically coupled to a second electrical connector of the light switch module, wherein the second electrical connector is electrically coupled to a switch control circuit in the light switch module, the switch control circuit including a processor configured to modulate the flow of electrical energy to the lighting circuit via a dimmer circuit to produce a plurality of lighting scenes by varying the illumination of the light bulb, wherein the switch control circuit is electrically connected to a rechargeable battery,

in response to receiving a first command from the switch control circuit to illuminate the light bulb, increasing the current of electrical energy flowing from the base module to the lighting circuit;

in response to receiving a second command to discontinue illumination of the light bulb at the light switch module:

1) reducing the amperage of current flowing to the lighting circuit to a level configured to discontinue illumination of the light bulb,

2) for a first pre-specified period of time, reducing the amperage of the current flowing in the base module to a second level lower than the first current level from the A.C. power supply,

3) for a second pre-specified period of time, opening the electrical connection between the switch control circuit and the second electrical connector, and

4) using the rechargeable battery to power the switch control circuit during the second pre-specified period of time.

8. The method according to claim 7, further comprising reducing the current of electrical energy flowing from the base module to the lighting circuit to a level configured to eliminate illumination of the light bulb in light fixture connected to lighting circuit.

9. The method according to claim 7, further comprising reducing the amperage via a relay.

10. The method according to claim 7, further comprising closing the electrical connection between the switch control circuit and the second electrical connector to reconnect control circuit and electrical connector after the second pre-specified period of time has passed, whereby DC power generated from the AC power powers control circuit.

11. The method according to claim 10, further comprising recharging the battery via the DC power.

12. The method according to claim 7, further comprising checking the energy level of rechargeable battery before temporarily opening circuit.

13. The method according to claim 7, further comprising preventing opening the electrical connection between the switch control circuit and the second electrical connector in response to the energy level of the rechargeable battery being below a pre-determined threshold.
14. The method according to claim 7, further comprising determining the pre-specified period of time by determining a period of time for the bulb to at least one of cool down and reach a fully off state.
15. The method according to claim 7, further comprising dimming the bulb after full illumination and before discontinuing illumination.
16. The method according to claim 7, wherein receiving the first command from the switch control circuit to illuminate the light bulb, includes receiving a command to illuminate the light bulb at a power less than a full power.

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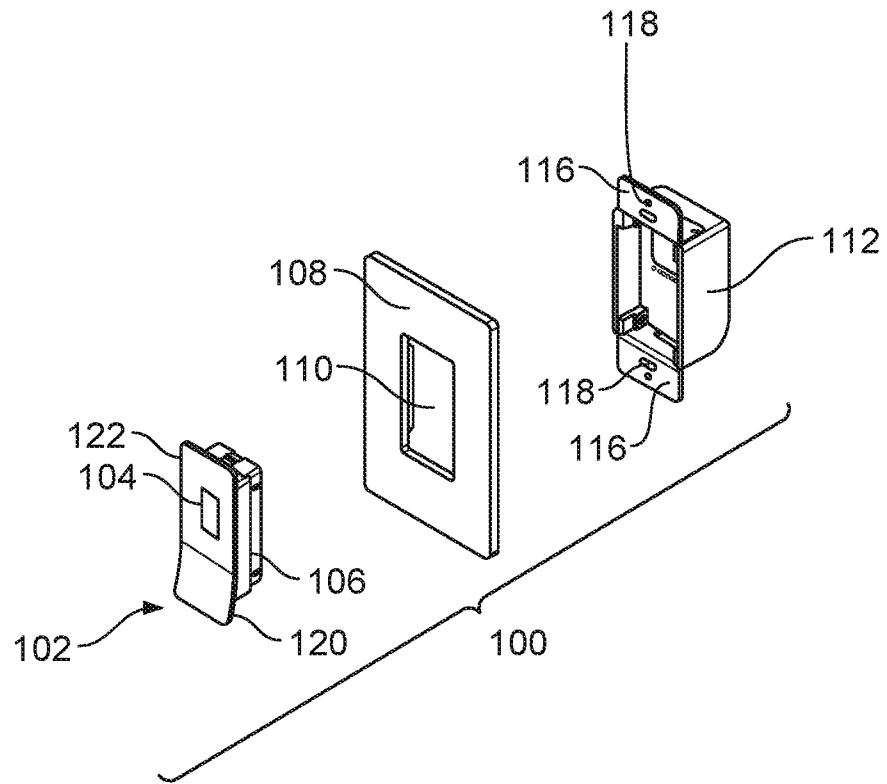
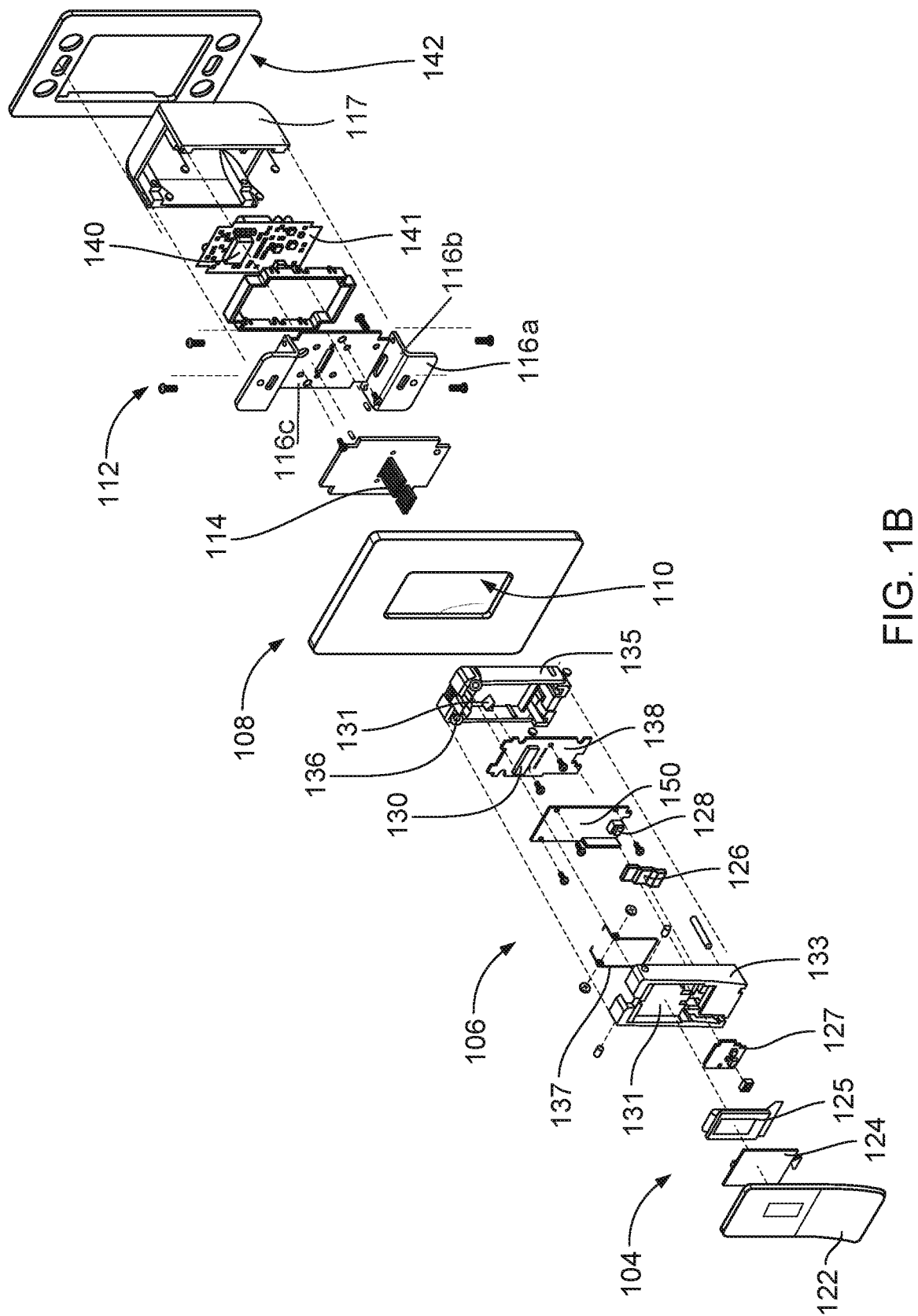


FIG. 1A



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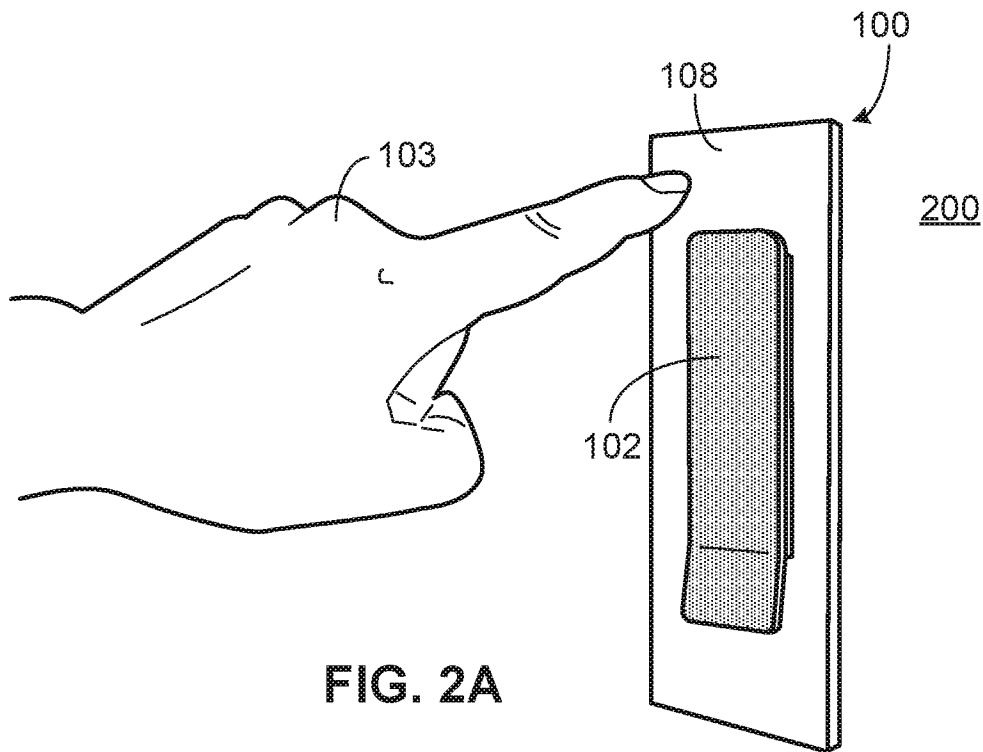


FIG. 2A

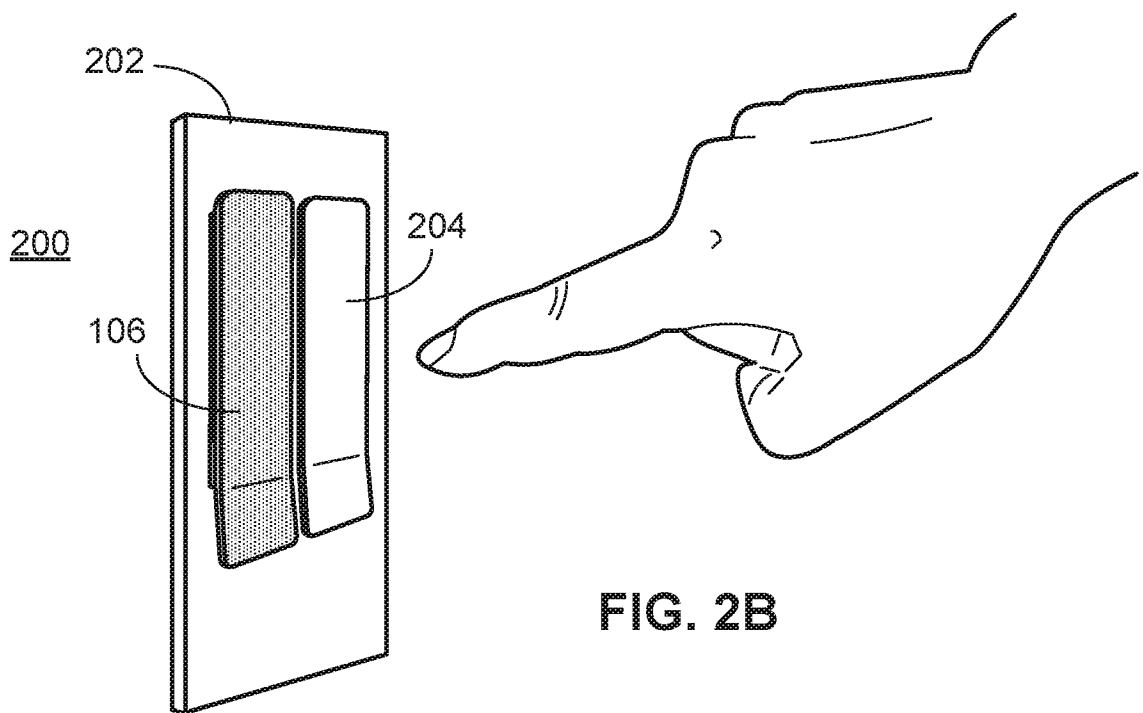


FIG. 2B

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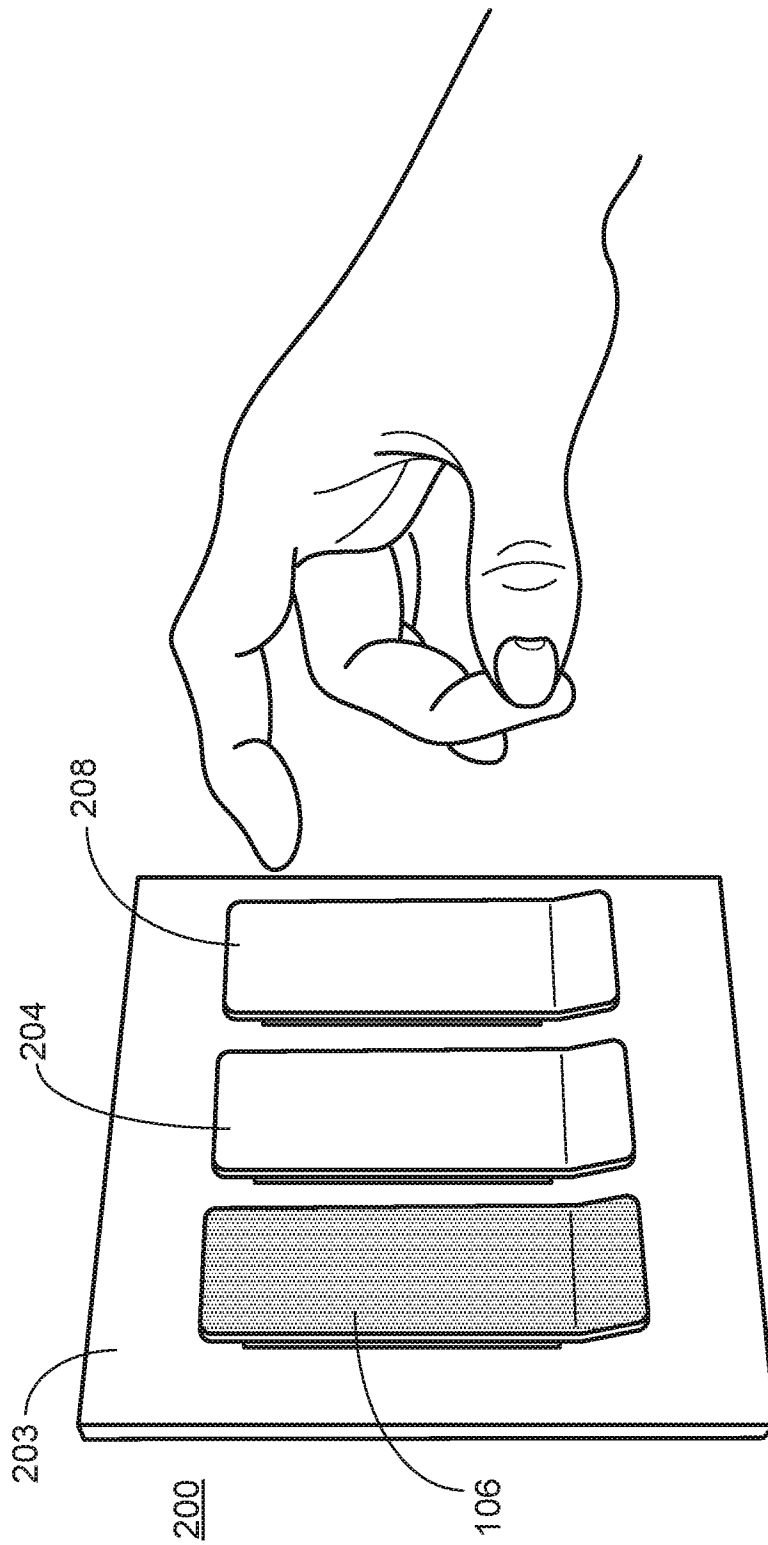


FIG. 2C

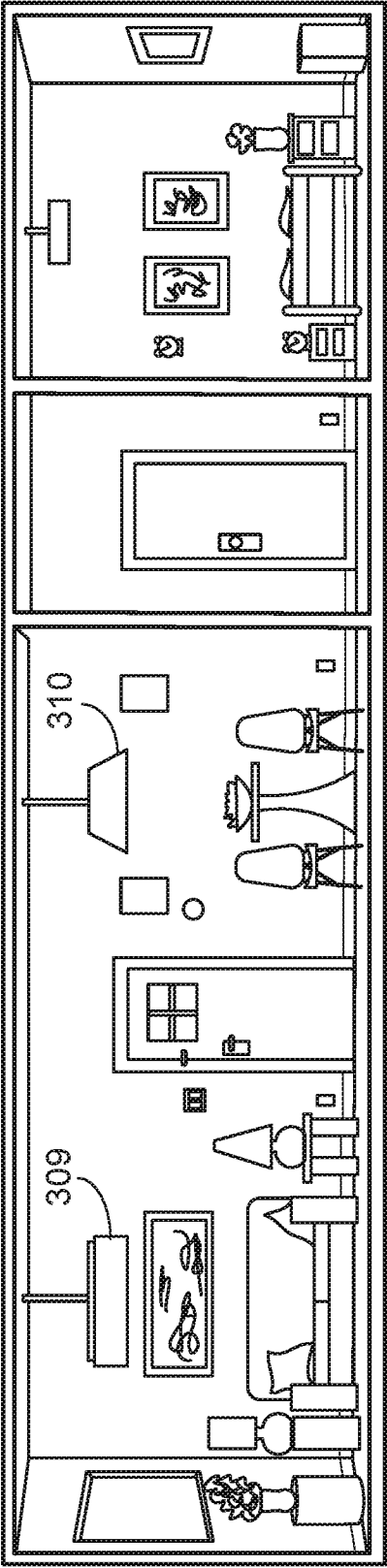
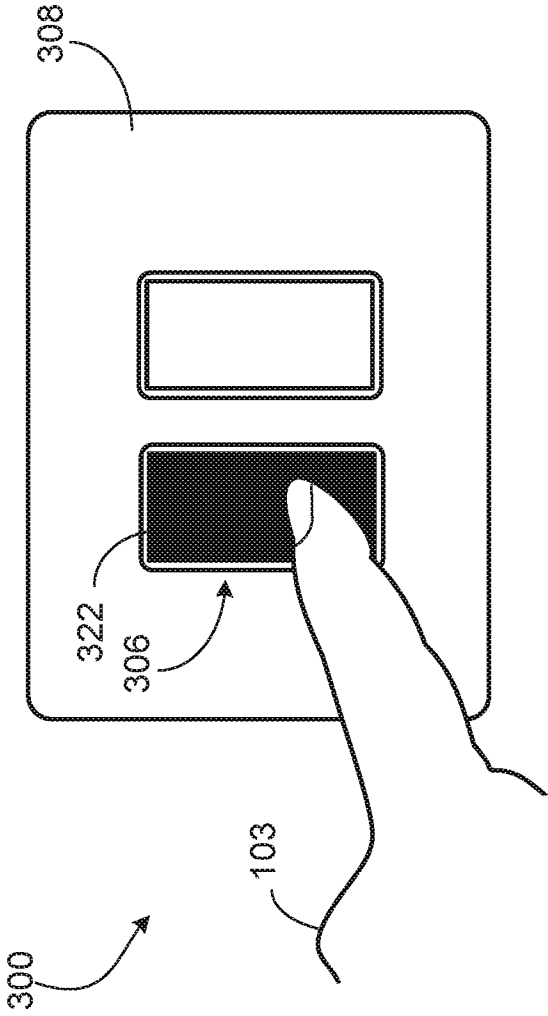


FIG. 3A

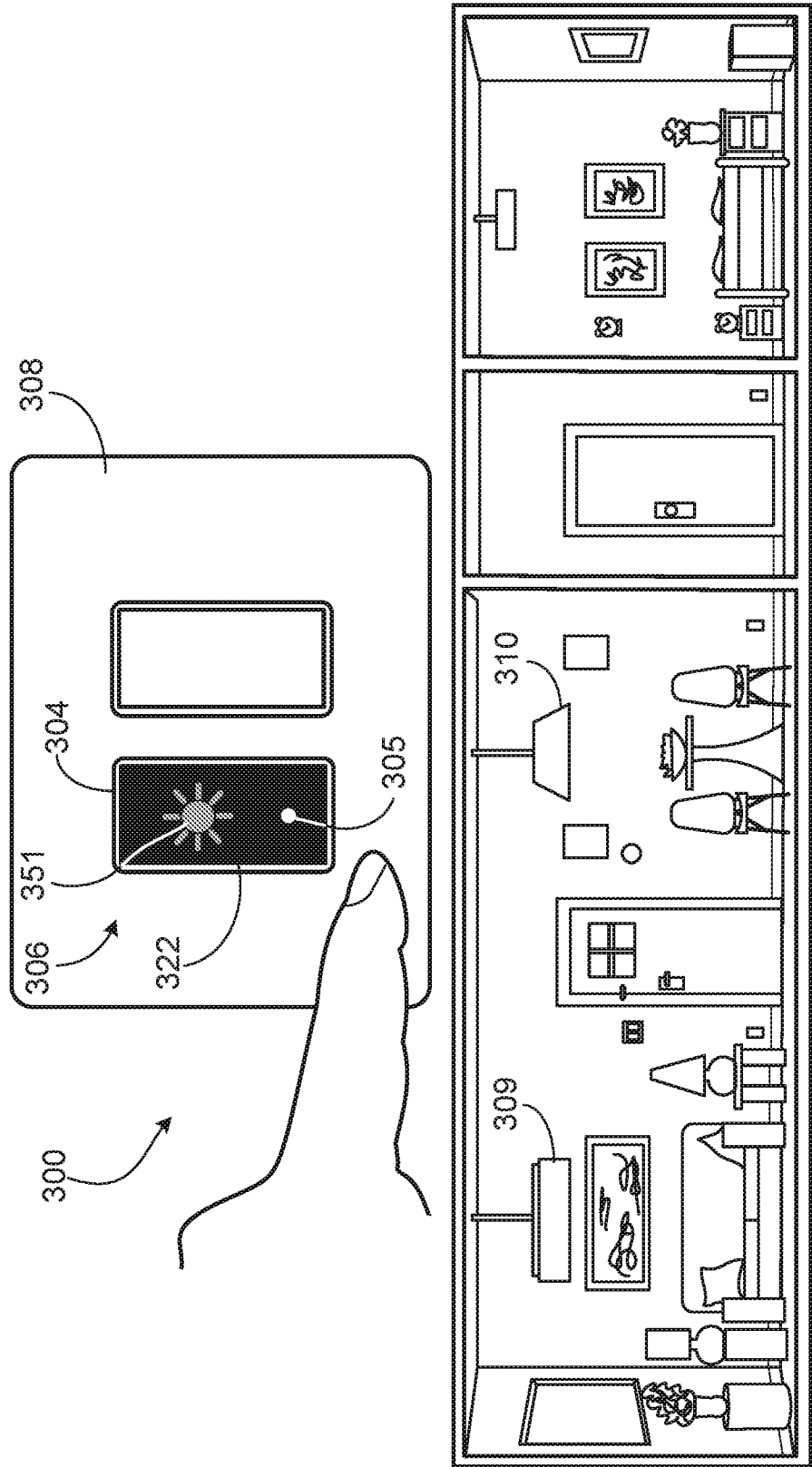


FIG. 3B

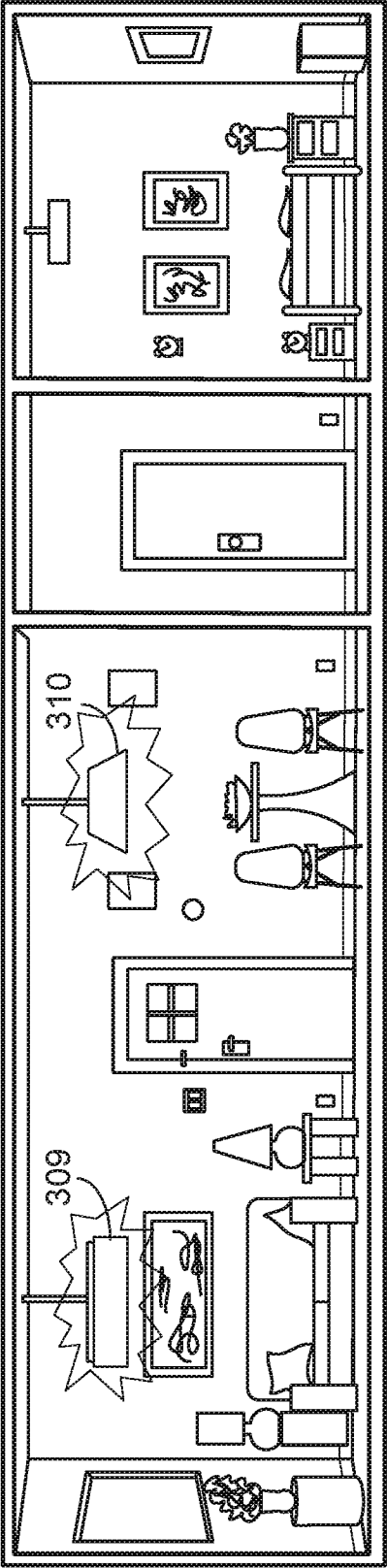
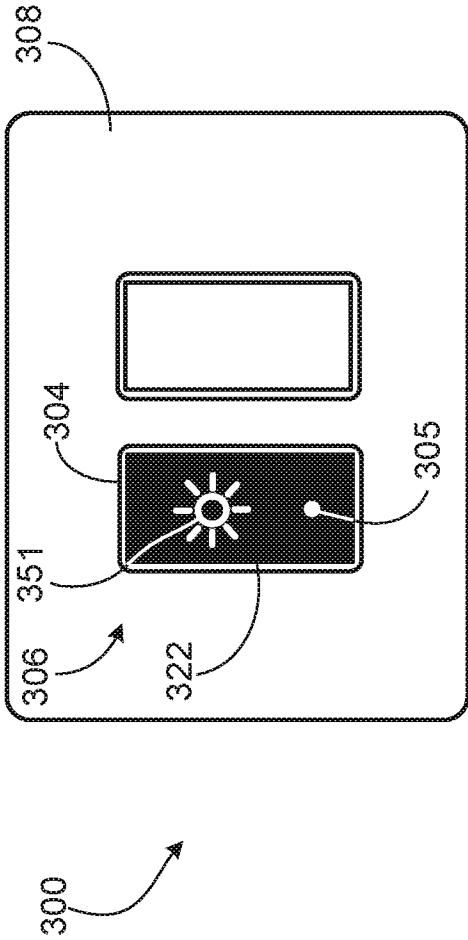


FIG. 30C

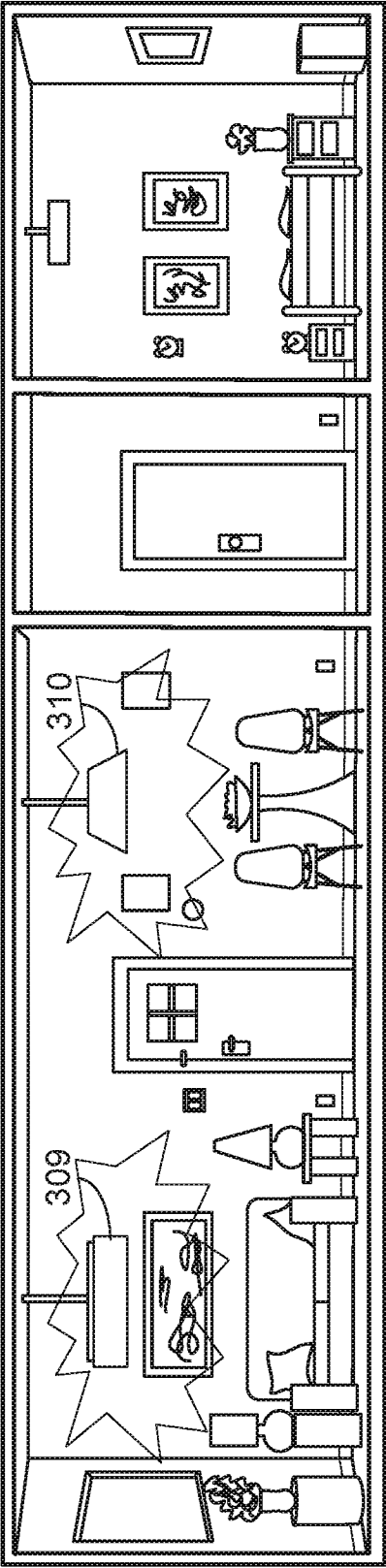
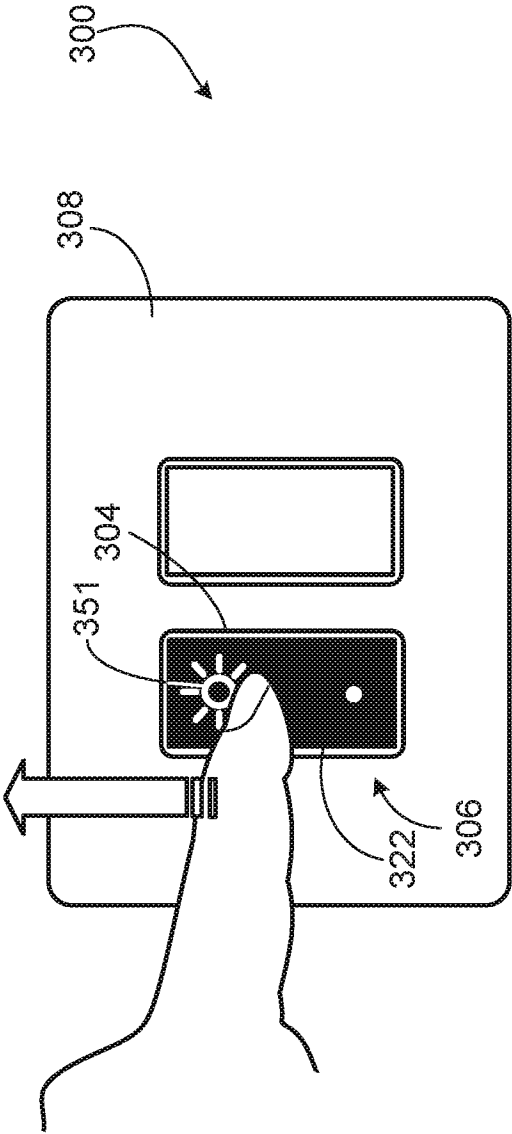


FIG. 3D

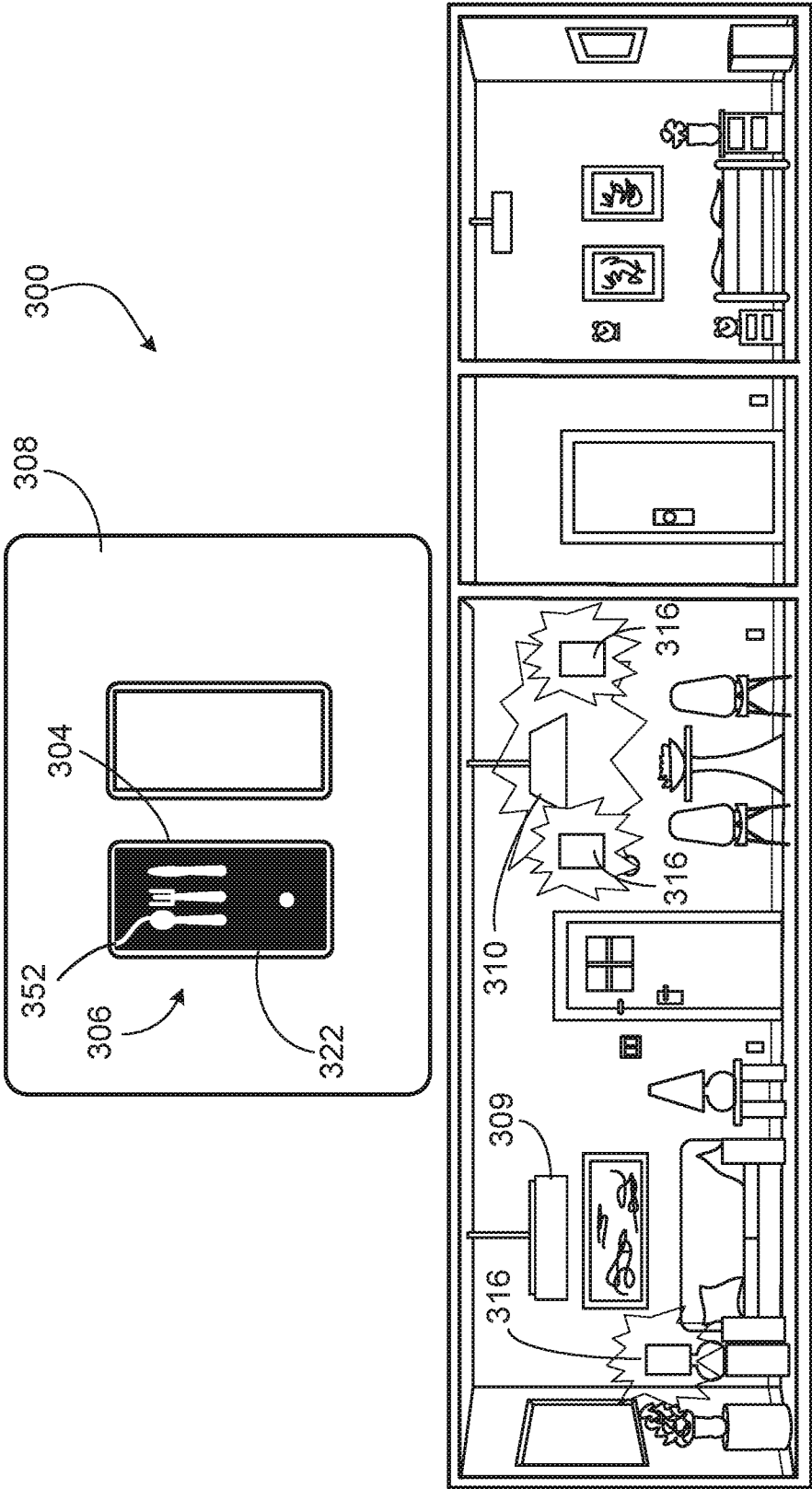


FIG. 3E

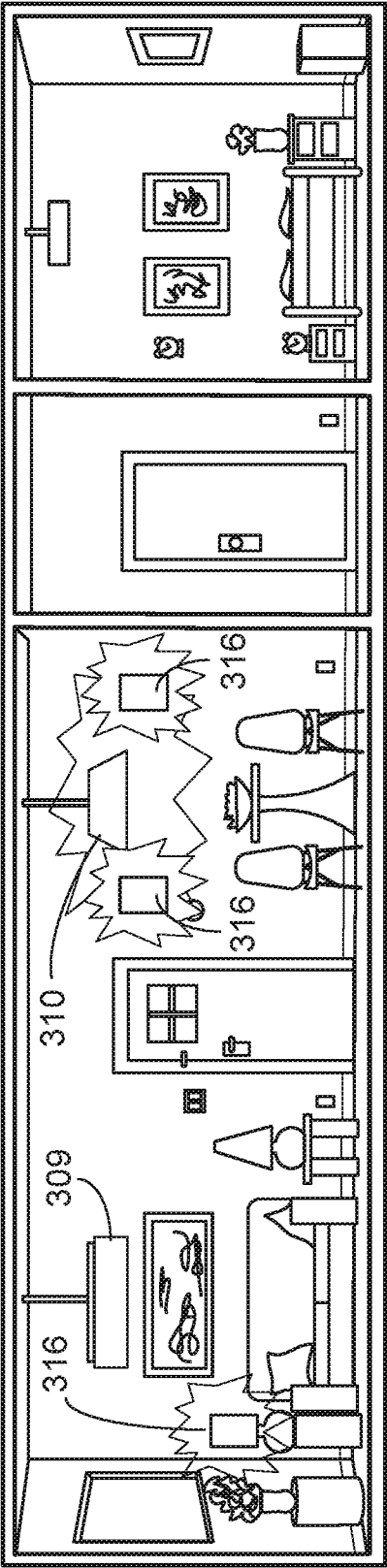
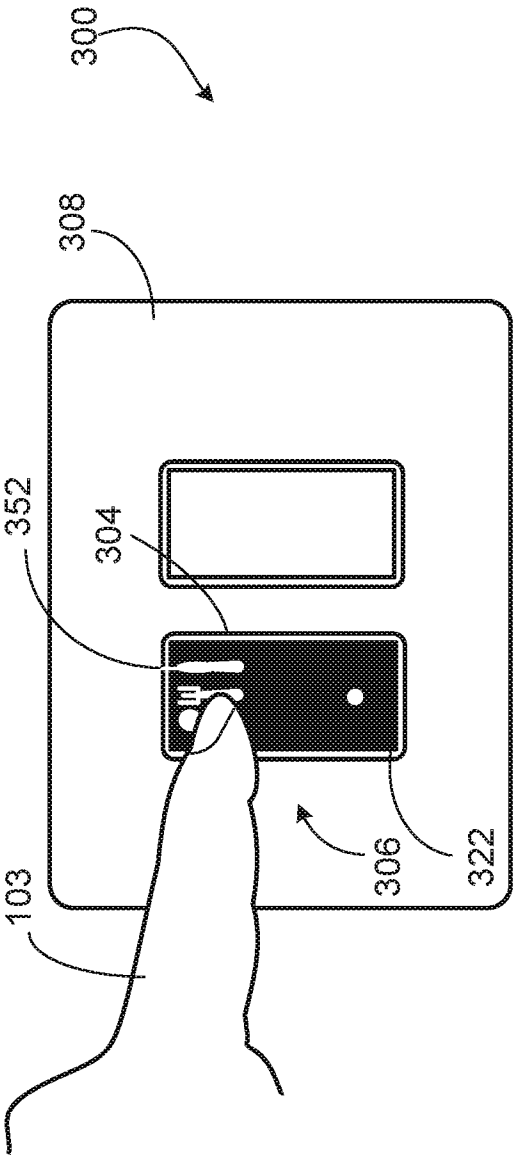
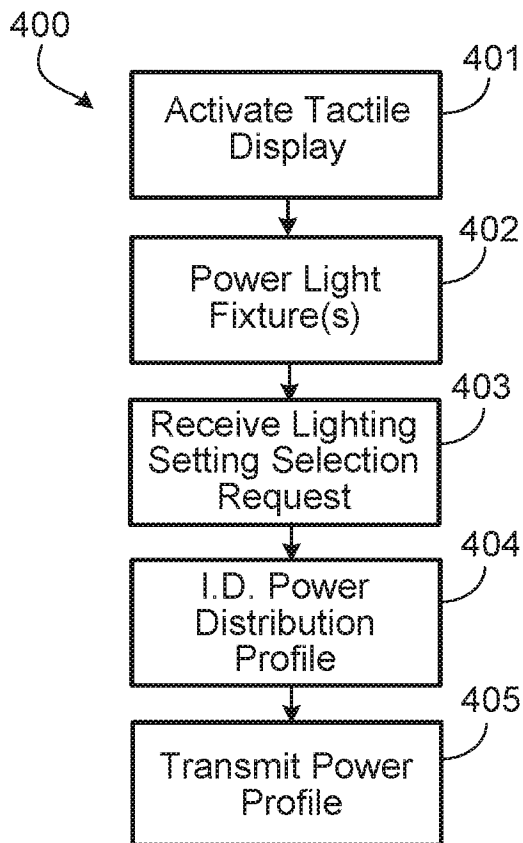
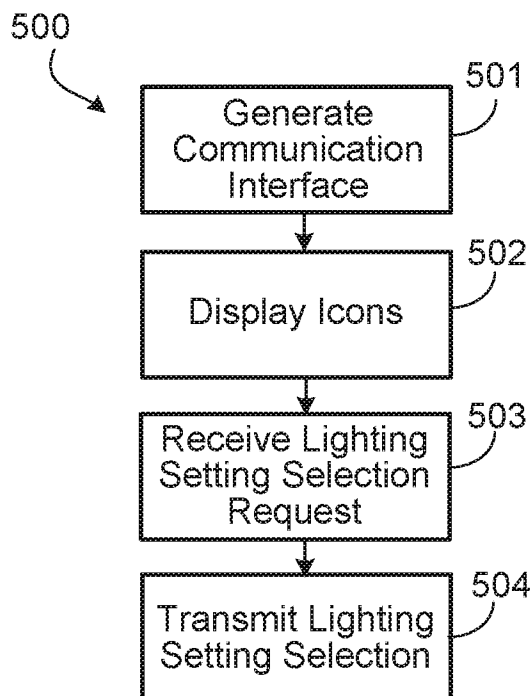
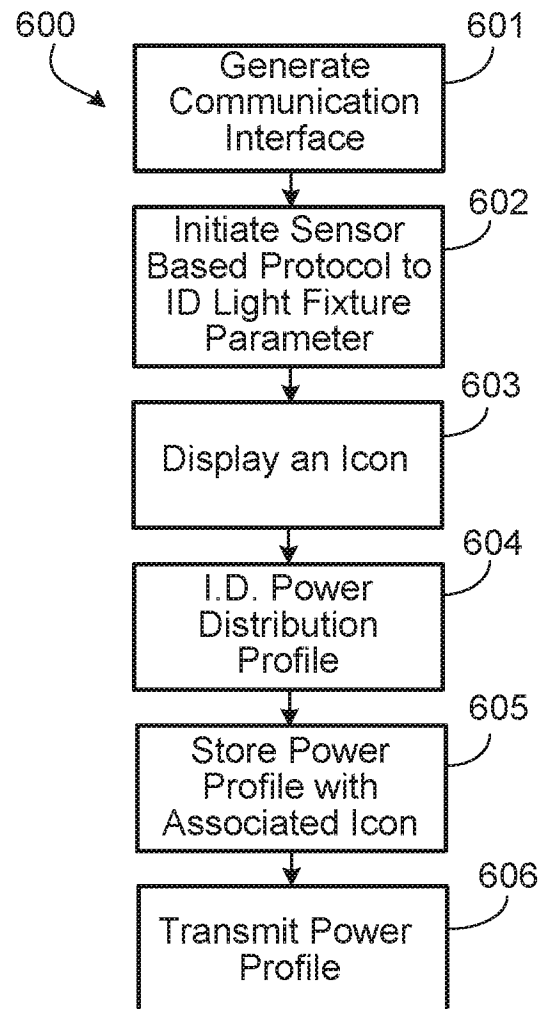


FIG. 3F

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**FIG. 4****FIG. 5****FIG. 6**

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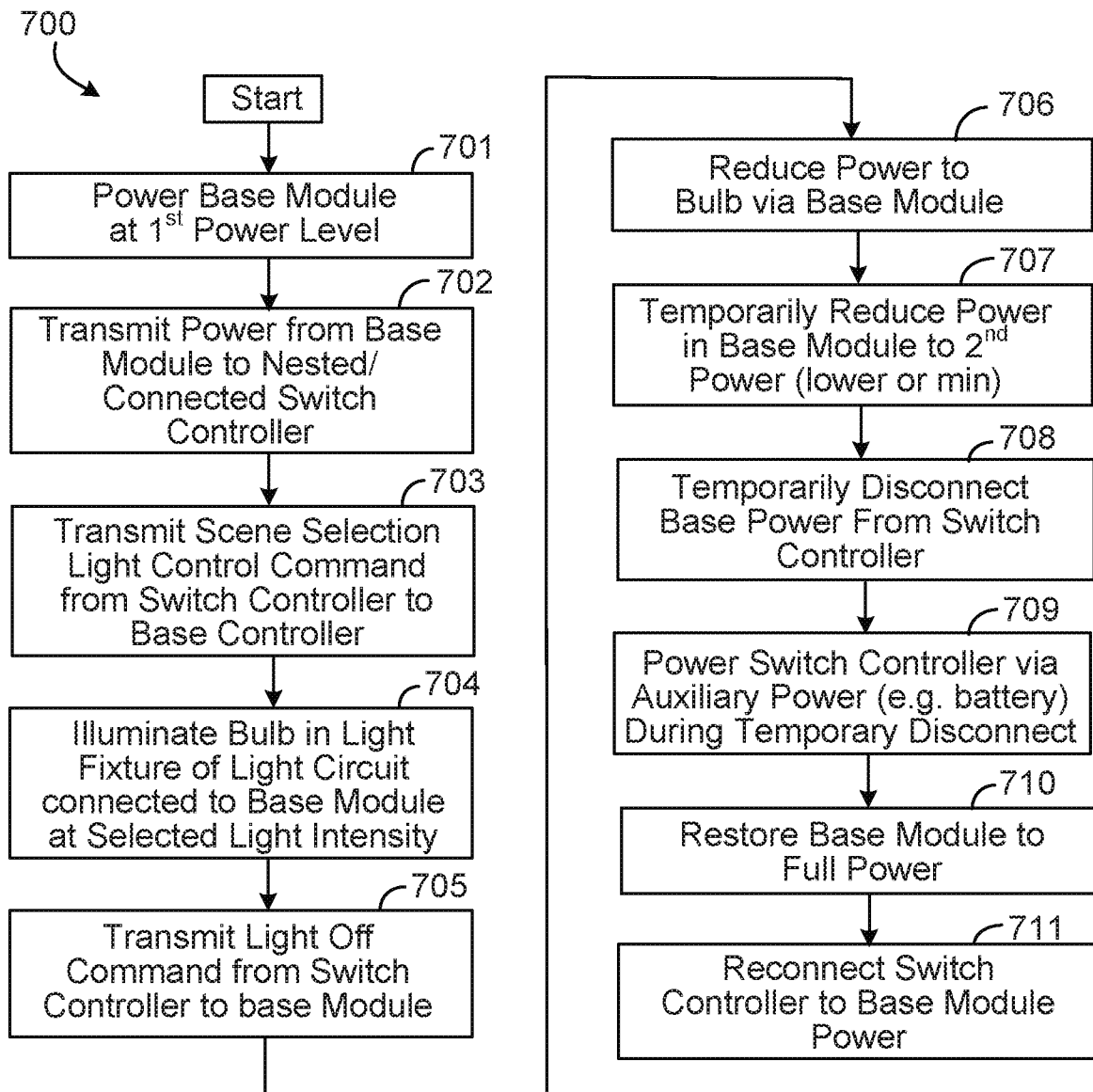


FIG. 7

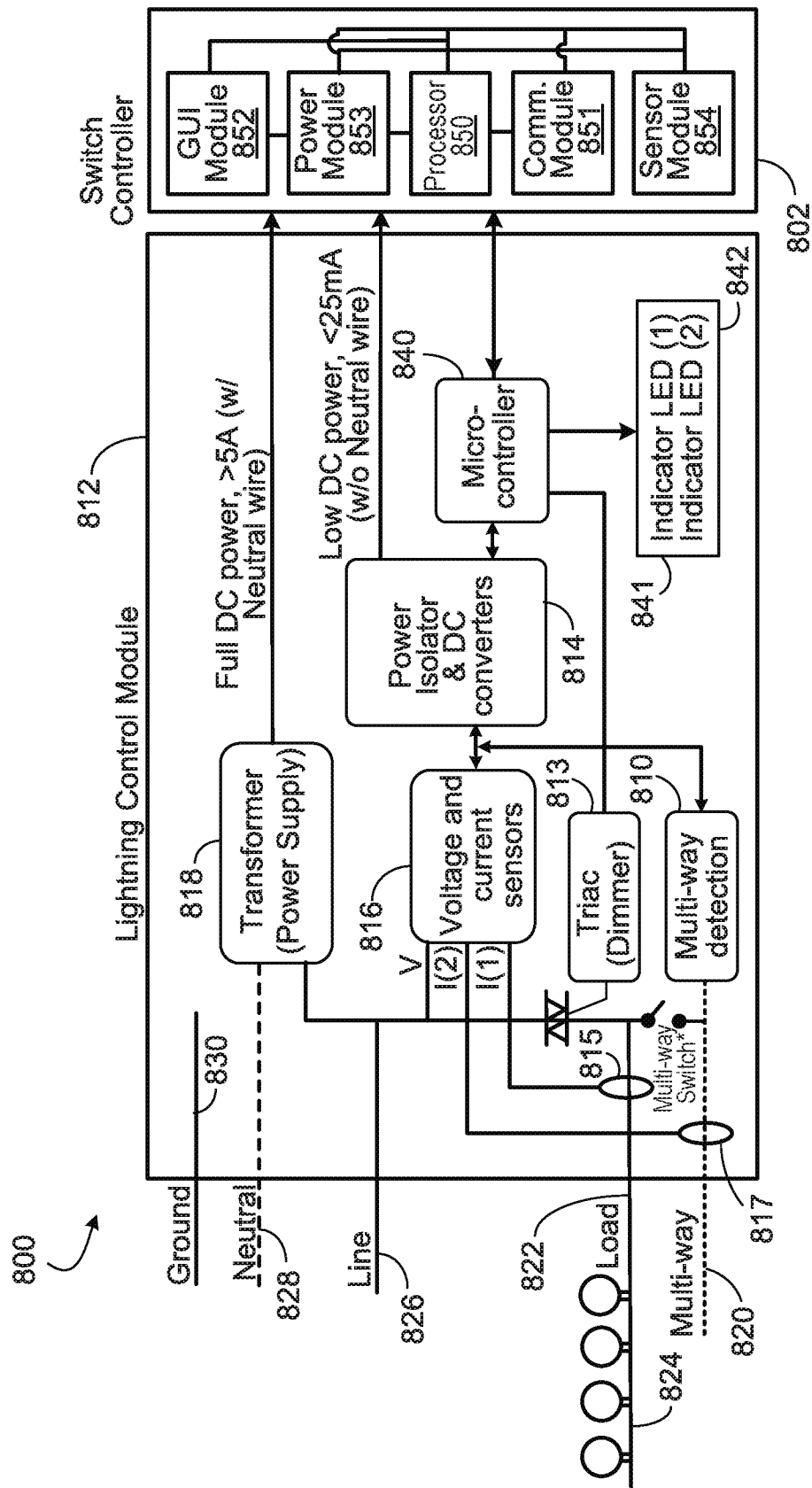
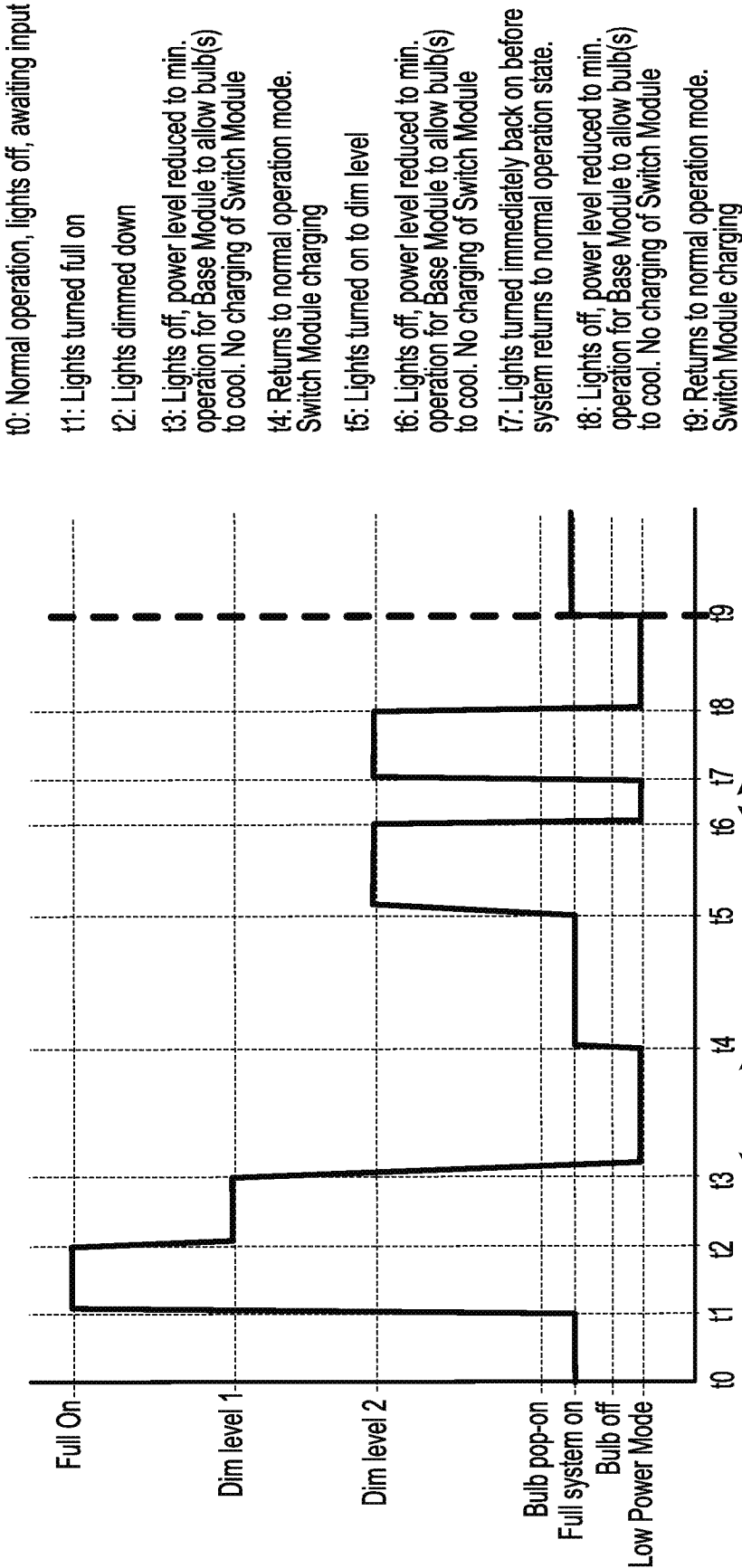


FIG. 8



Note: System will automatically return to "Full System On" mode from "Low Power Mode" if battery level of Switch Control Module drops below a determined value.

FIG. 9

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US17/41175

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC - H05B 39/04, 37/02; H02J 3/10 (2017.01)

CPC - H05B 39/041, 37/02; H02M 5/2576; H02J 3/10

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)

See Search History document

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

See Search History document

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

See Search History document

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	WO 2016/046814 A2 (SWITCHBEE LTD.) March 31, 2016; entire document	1-16
A	US 2015/0277469 A1 (PASS & SEYMOUR, INC.) October 1, 2015; entire document	1-16
A	US 2013/0026953 A1 (WOYTOWITZ, P) January 31, 2013; entire document	1-16
A	US 2010/0283391 A1 (BRAUNSHTEIN, D) November 11, 2010; entire document	1-16

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.☐ See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:

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"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

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

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

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

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

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

31 August 2017 (31.08.2017)

Date of mailing of the international search report

21 SEP 2017

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