



US 20160038253A1

(19) **United States**(12) **Patent Application Publication**
PIRON et al.(10) **Pub. No.: US 2016/0038253 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: Feb. 11, 2016**(54) **METHOD, SYSTEM AND APPARATUS FOR CONTROLLING A SURGICAL NAVIGATION SYSTEM**(86) PCT No.: **PCT/CA2014/000247**

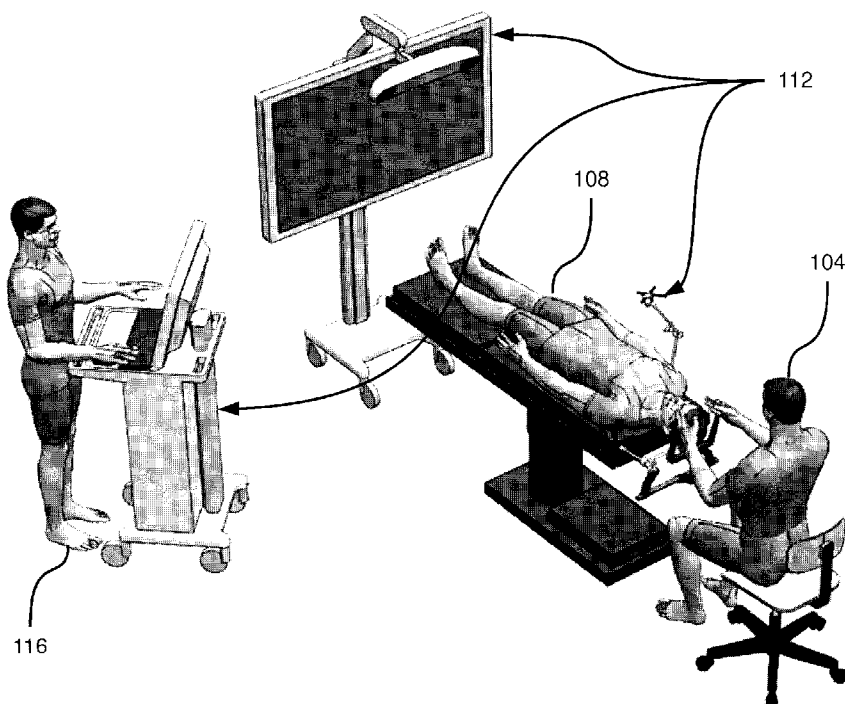
§ 371 (c)(1),

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(60) Provisional application No. 61/801,530, filed on Mar. 15, 2013, provisional application No. 61/800,155, filed on Mar. 15, 2013, provisional application No. 61/818,280, filed on May 1, 2013, provisional application No. 61/924,993, filed on Jan. 8, 2014.

Publication Classification(51) **Int. Cl.**
A61B 19/00 (2006.01)(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC **A61B 19/5244** (2013.01); **A61B 19/56** (2013.01); **A61B 19/2203** (2013.01); **A61B 2017/00207** (2013.01)(57) **ABSTRACT**

A method, system and apparatus for controlling a surgical navigation system are provided. The method 1 comprises receiving image data at a processor from a tracking system; receiving, at a processor, an identifier of a surgical instrument within a field of view of the tracking system; generating, at the processor, output data based on the identifier of the surgical instrument; and transmitting the output data to at least one output device connected to the processor, for controlling the output device.



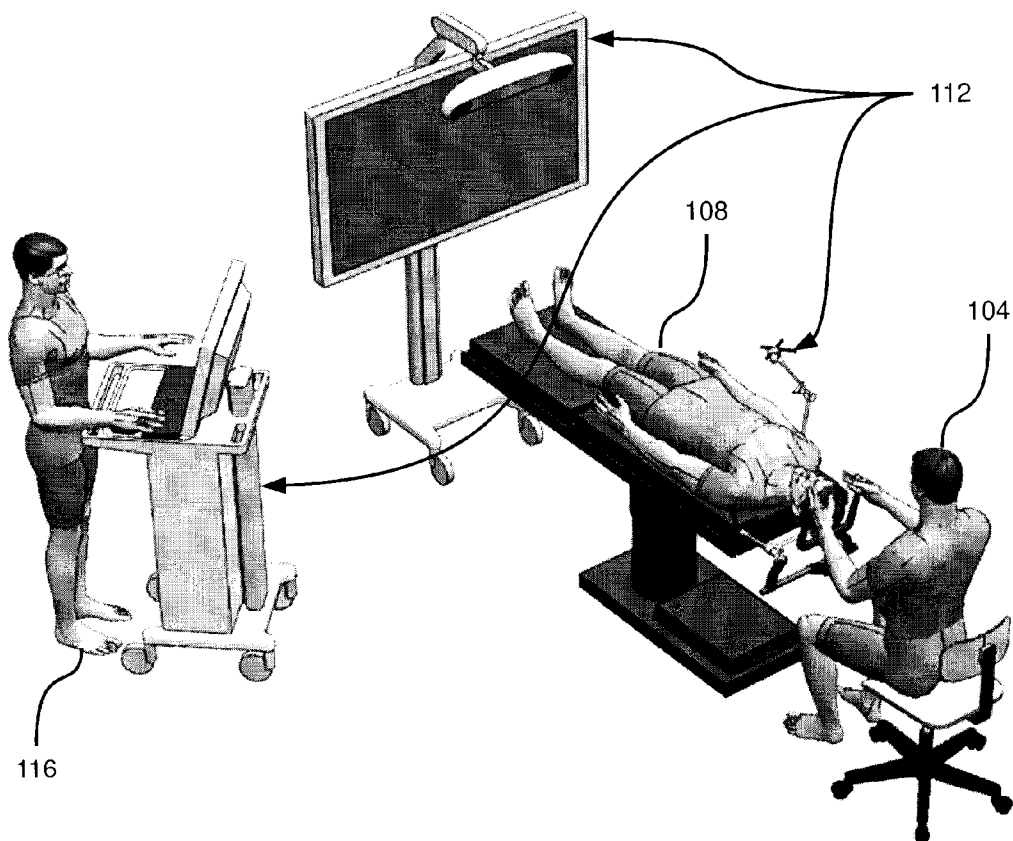


Figure 1

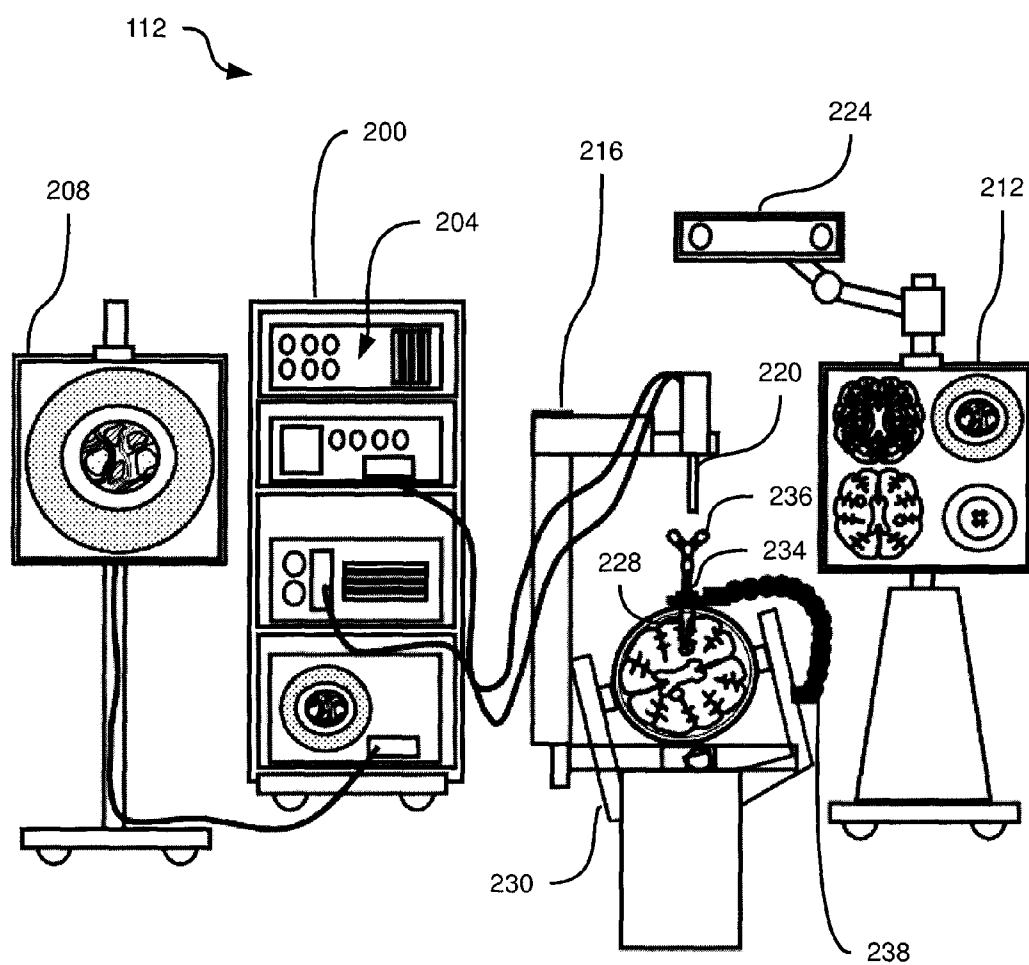


Figure 2

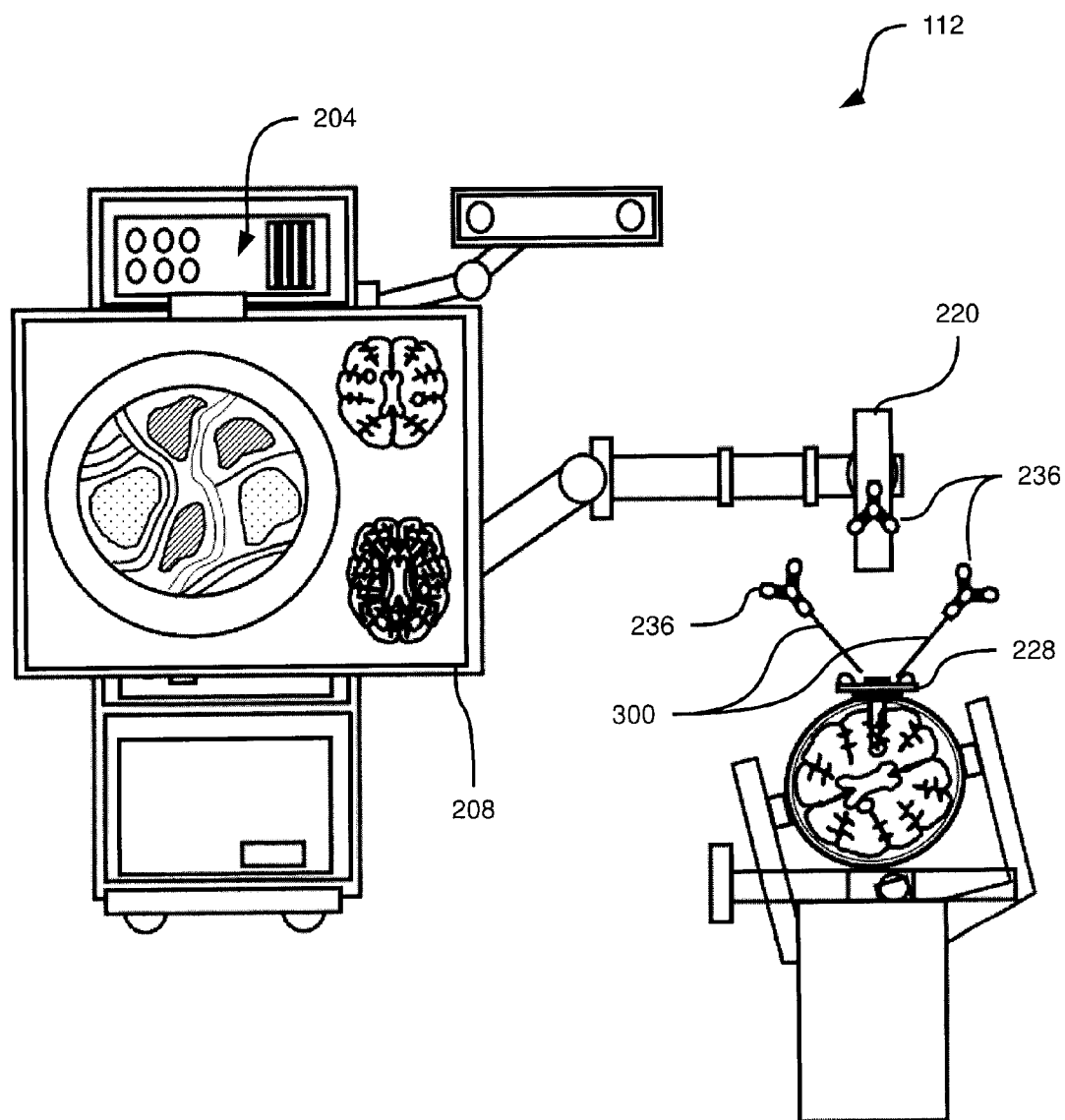


Figure 3

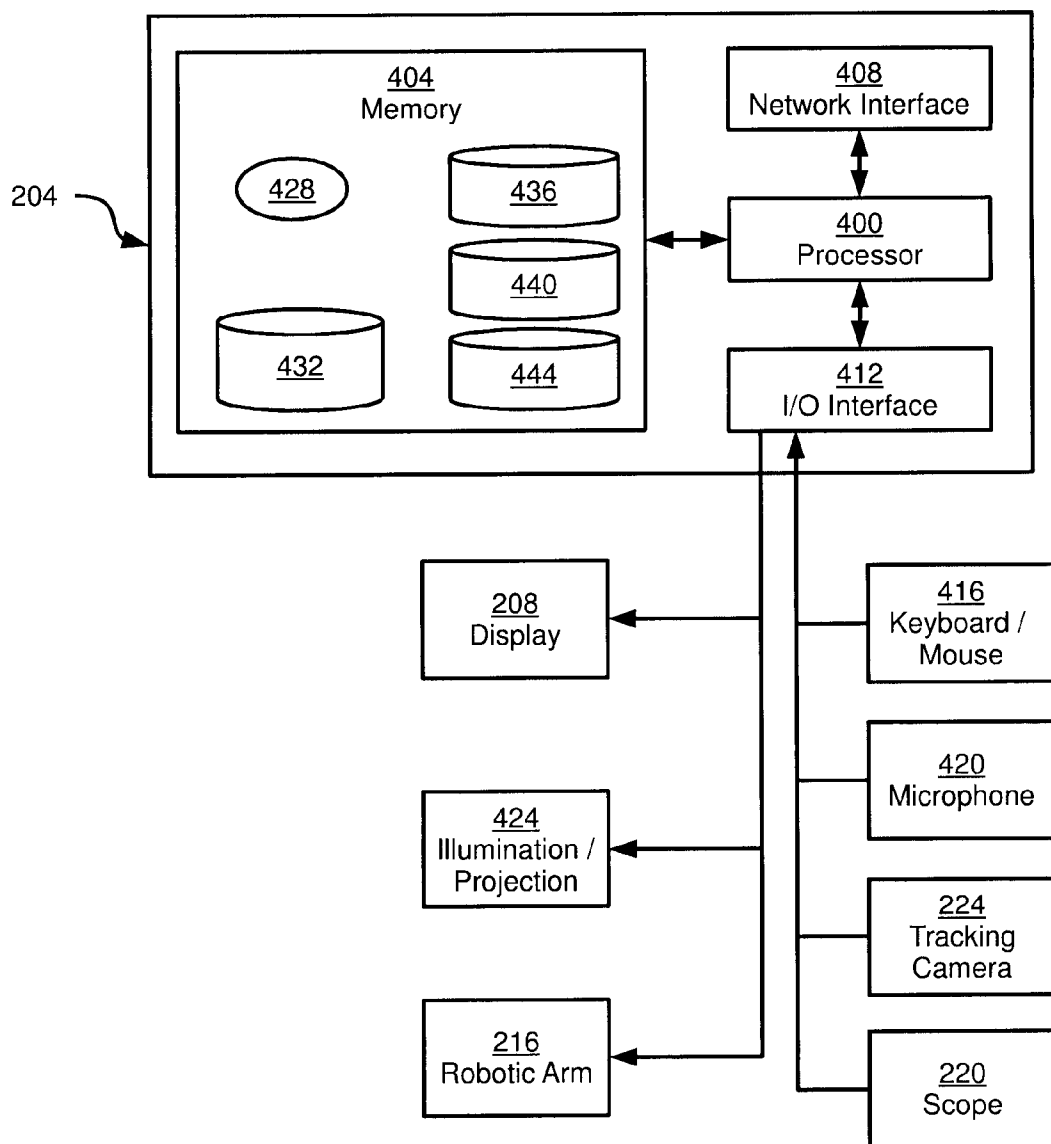


Figure 4

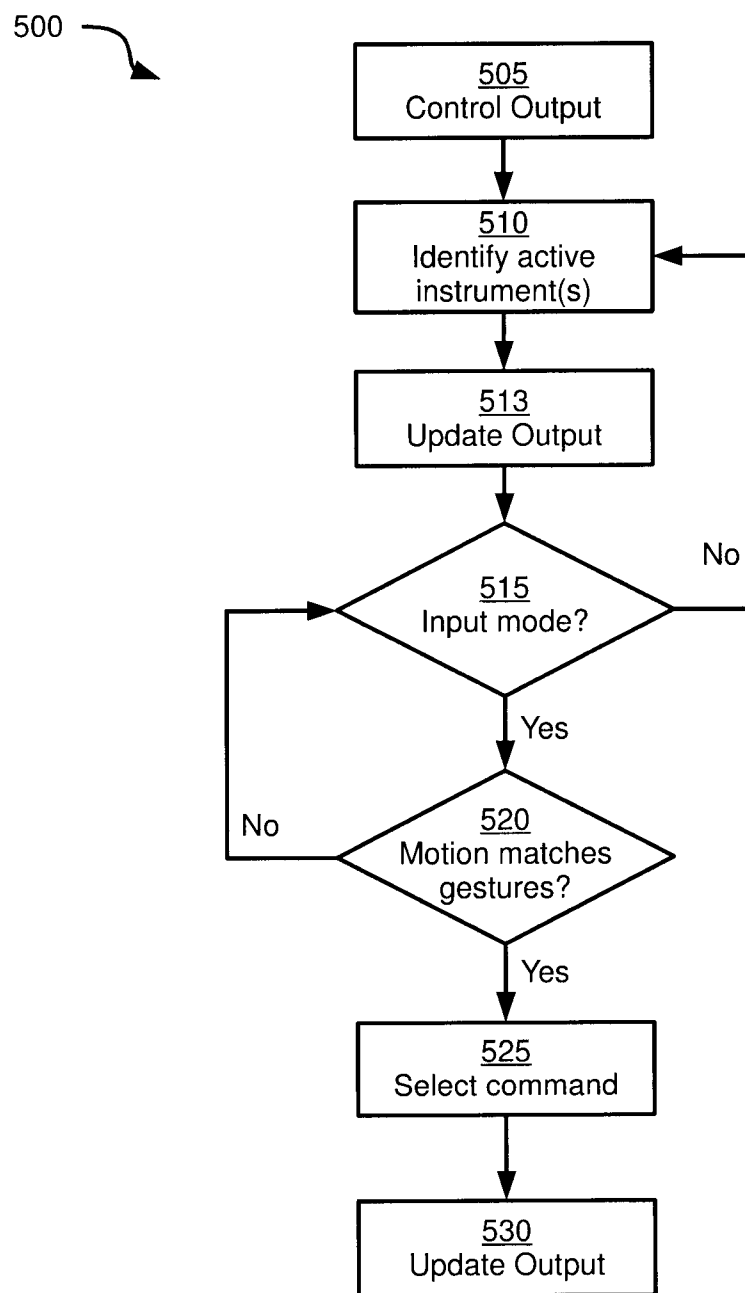


Figure 5

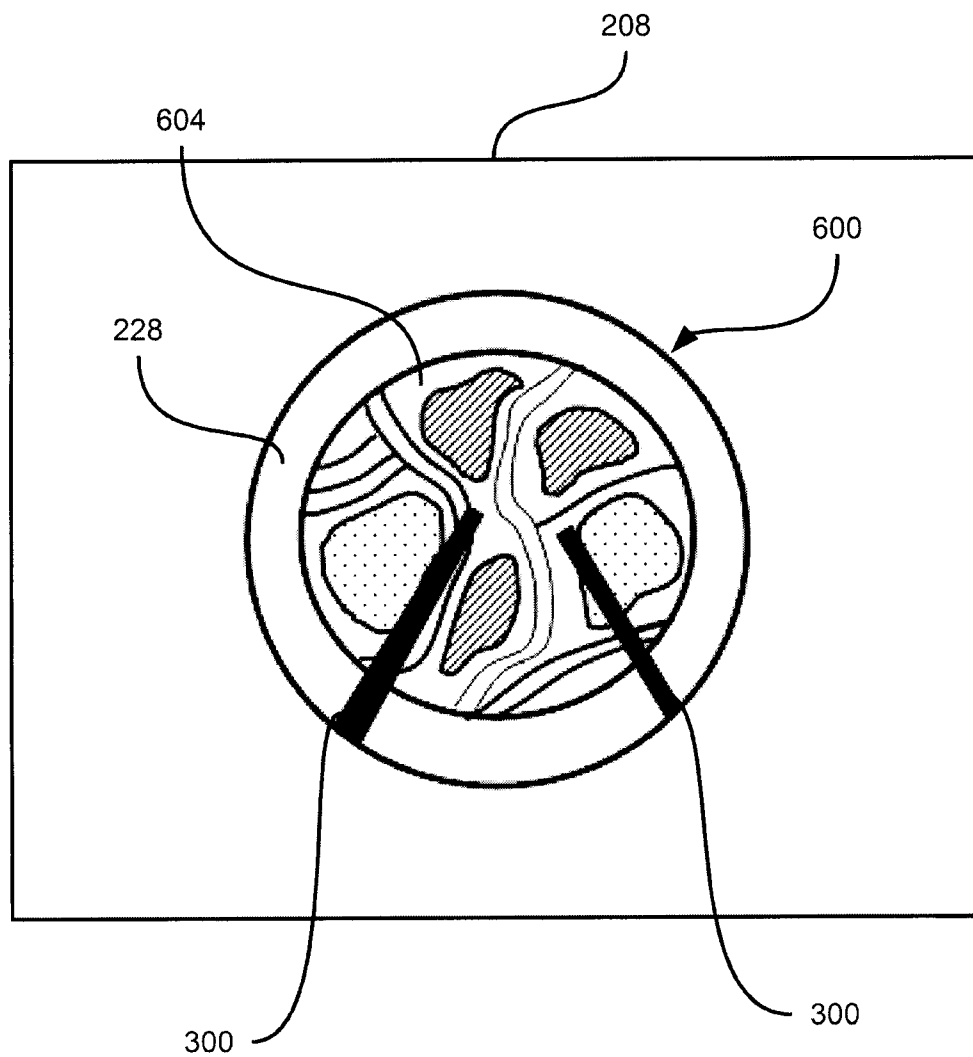


Figure 6

436

700

Instrument Identifier	Marker geometry
Suction	1
Probe	2
...	...

Figure 7

440

800

Gesture	Definition
Shake	3 or more velocity reversals within 1 second
Tap	Position overlap for at least 1 second
135°	135° angle relative to access port for at least 1 second
...	...

Figure 8

444

900

Gesture	Instrument	Command	Condition
Shake	Suction	Follow with scope	N/A
Shake	Probe	Increase brightness	N/A
Tap	Suction, Probe	Show resection menu	N/A
135°	Suction	Select "Record"	Resection menu present
...

Figure 9

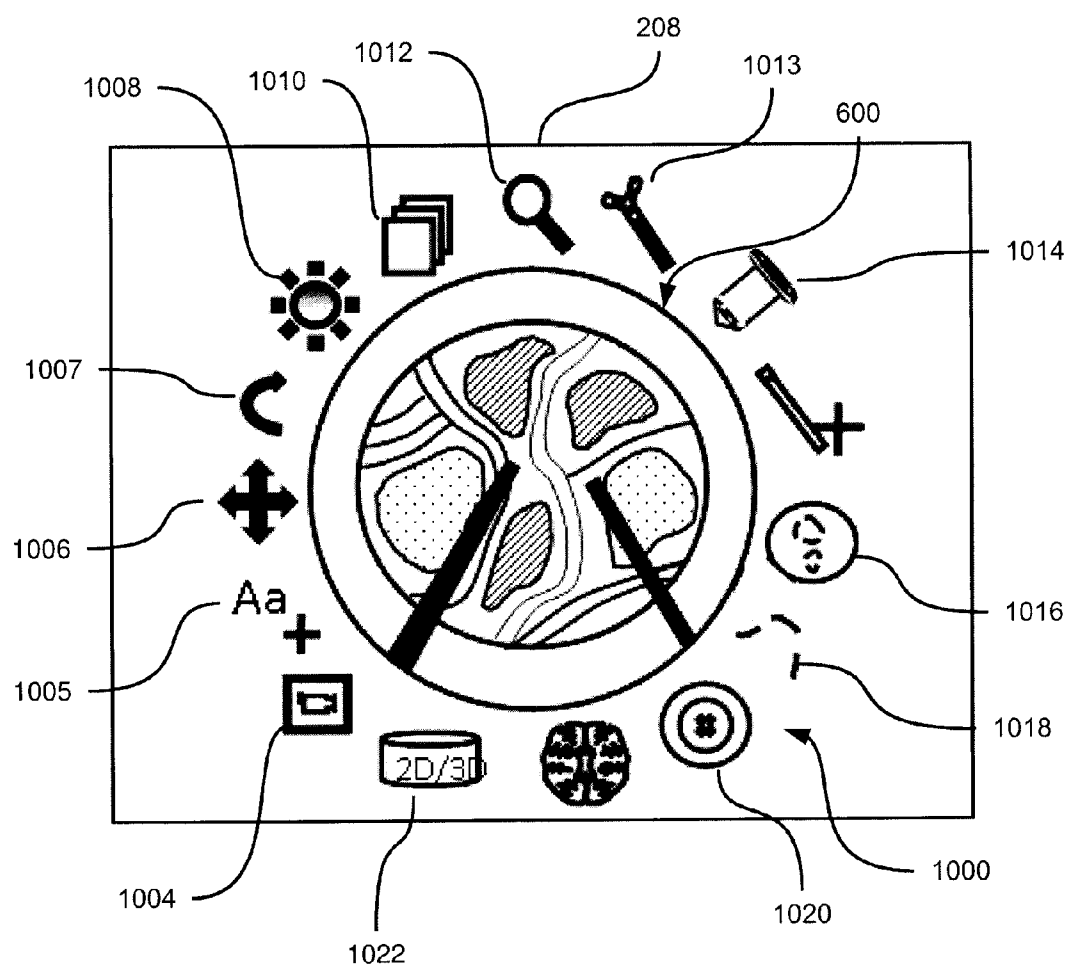


Figure 10

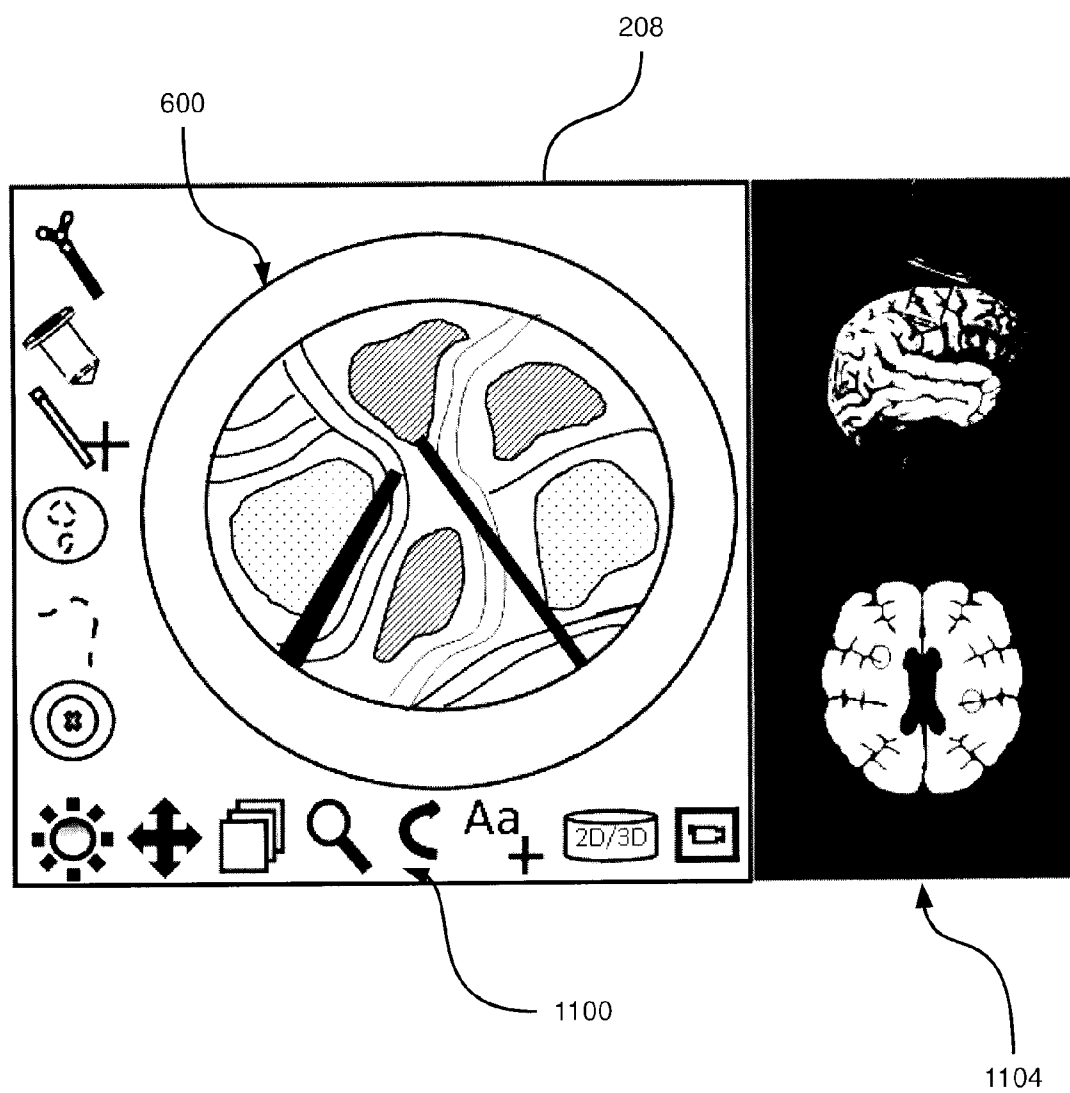


Figure 11

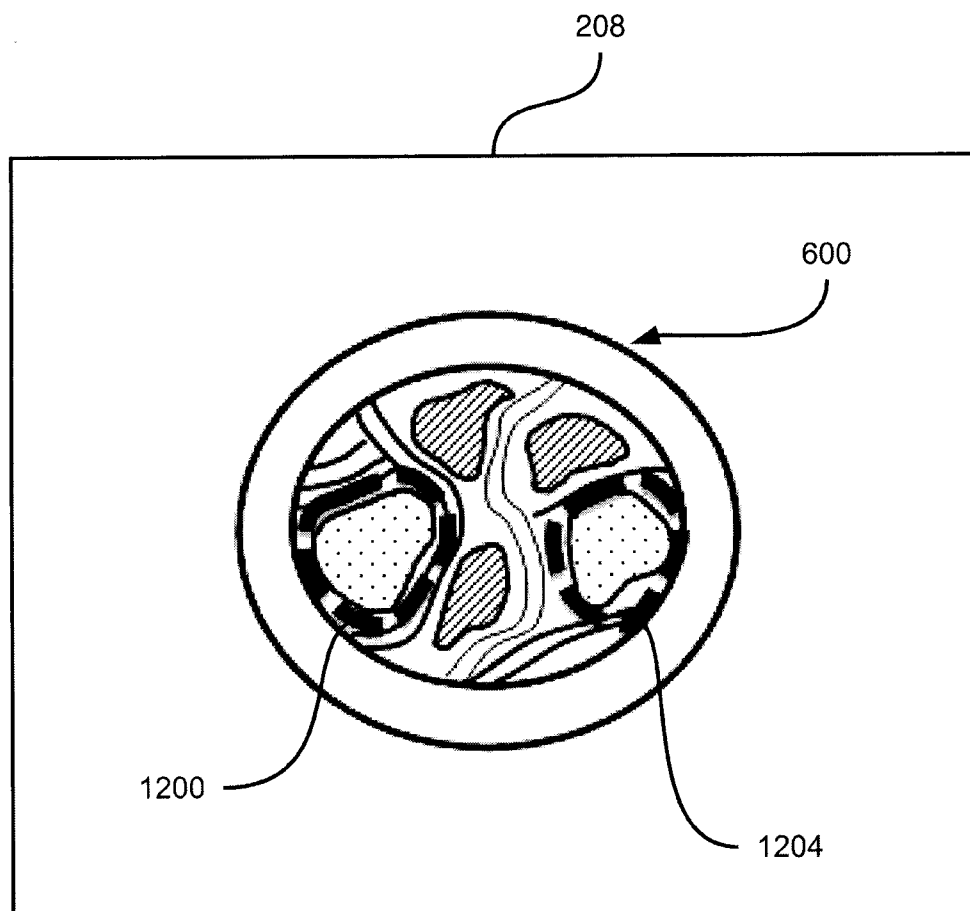


Figure 12

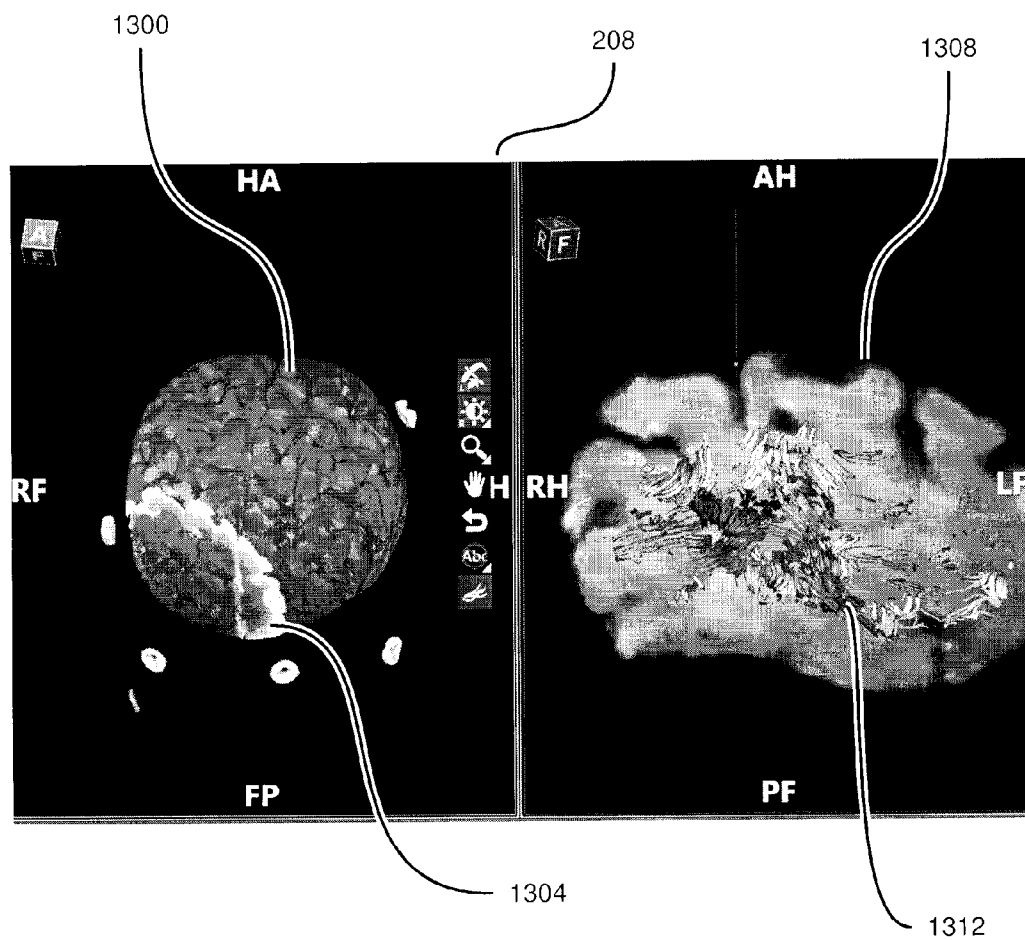


Figure 13

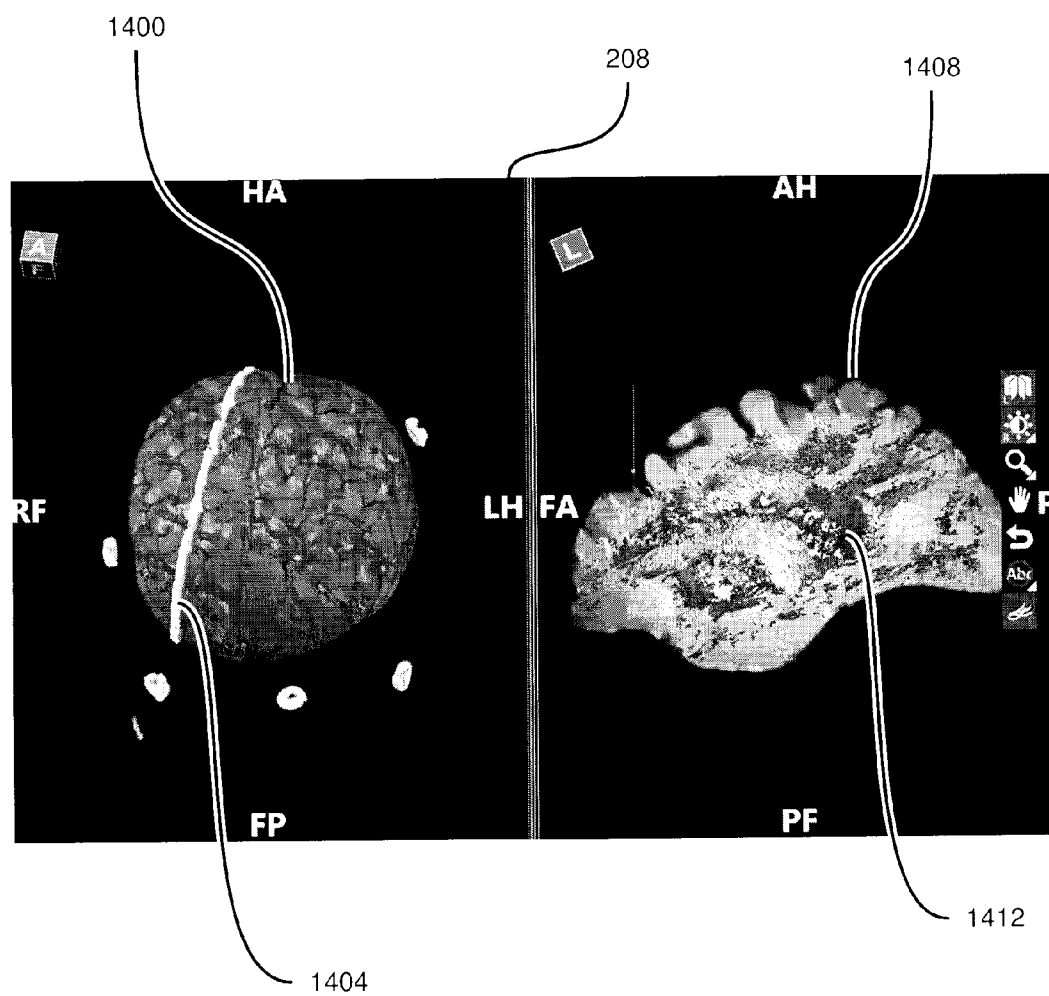


Figure 14

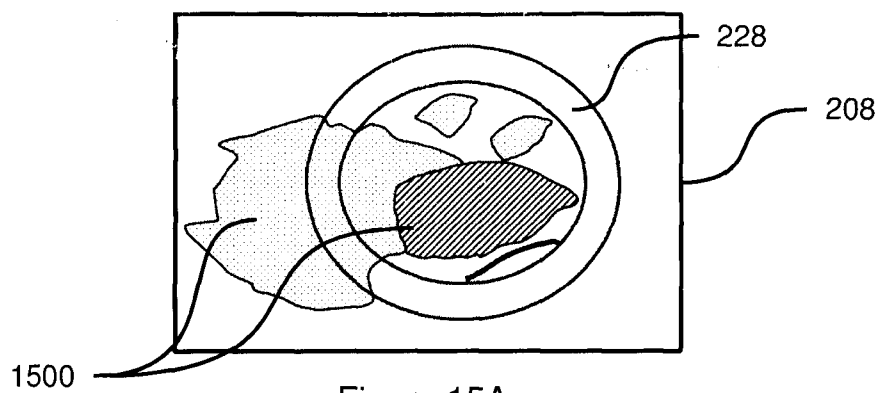


Figure 15A

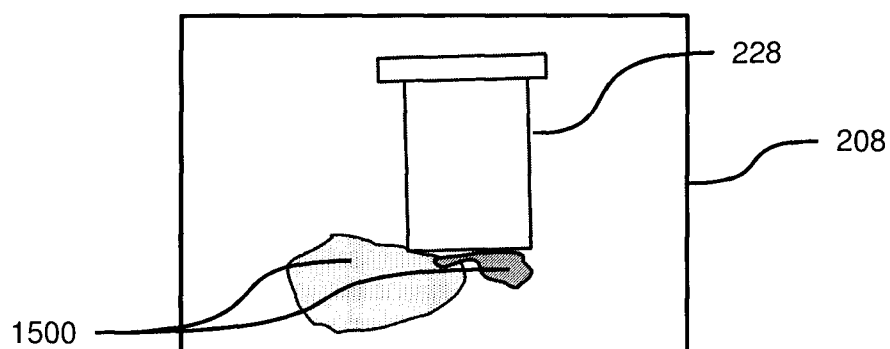


Figure 15B

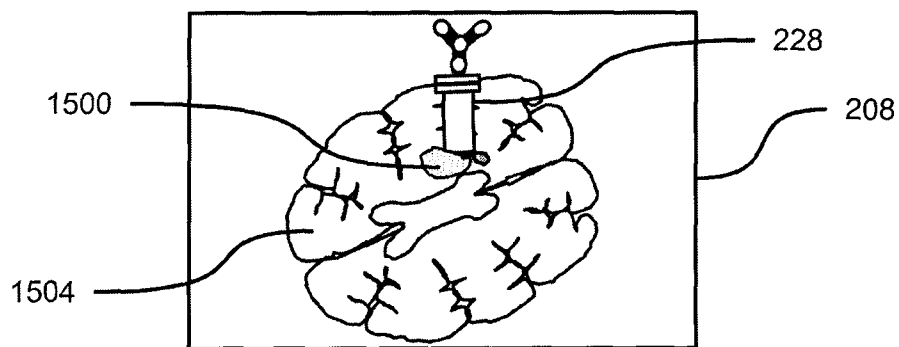


Figure 15C

METHOD, SYSTEM AND APPARATUS FOR CONTROLLING A SURGICAL NAVIGATION SYSTEM

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application claims priority from U.S. Provisional Application Nos. 61/801,530, filed Mar. 15, 2013; 61/800,155, filed Mar. 15, 2013; 61/818,280, filed May 1, 2013; and 61/924,993, filed Jan. 8, 2014. The contents of all the above-mentioned provisional applications are incorporated herein by reference.

FIELD

[0002] The specification relates generally to navigation systems, and specifically to a method, system and apparatus for navigation systems for use in image guided medical procedures.

BACKGROUND

[0003] The performance of surgical procedures often calls for a surgeon to access significant volumes of information. As a result, various surgical assistance systems exist that place some of this information at the surgeon's disposal. However, conventional technologies for navigating such systems to access the desired information may require the surgeon to deposit surgical instruments and manipulate other devices, or to attempt to communicate desired system interactions to an assistant. As a result, although all the required information may be present, access to that information during the procedure may be hampered.

SUMMARY

[0004] An aspect of the specification provides a method of controlling a surgical navigation system, comprising: receiving, at a processor, an identifier of a surgical instrument within a field of view of a tracking system; generating, at the processor, output data based on the identifier of the surgical instrument; and transmitting the output data to an output device connected to the processor, for controlling the output device. Further aspects of the specification include a computing device configured to perform the above method, and a non-transitory computer-readable medium storing a plurality of computer readable instructions executable by a processor for implementing the above method.

BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS OF THE DRAWINGS

[0005] Embodiments are described with reference to the following figures, in which:

[0006] FIG. 1 depicts a navigation system in use in a surgical procedure, according to a non-limiting embodiment;

[0007] FIG. 2 depicts a schematic diagram of the navigation system of FIG. 1, according to a non-limiting embodiment;

[0008] FIG. 3 depicts a schematic diagram of the navigation system of FIG. 1, according to another non-limiting embodiment;

[0009] FIG. 4 depicts a computing device of the system of FIG. 1, according to a non-limiting embodiment;

[0010] FIG. 5 depicts a method of controlling a surgical navigation system, according to a non-limiting embodiment;

[0011] FIG. 6 depicts an example performance of block 505 of the method of FIG. 5, according to a non-limiting embodiment;

[0012] FIG. 7 depicts instrument definitions stored by the computing device of FIG. 4, according to a non-limiting embodiment;

[0013] FIG. 8 depicts gesture definitions stored by the computing device of FIG. 4, according to a non-limiting embodiment;

[0014] FIG. 9 depicts output control rule definitions stored by the computing device of FIG. 4, according to a non-limiting embodiment;

[0015] FIG. 10 depicts an example performance of block 530 of the method of FIG. 5, according to a non-limiting embodiment;

[0016] FIG. 11 depicts another example performance of block 530 of the method of FIG. 5, according to a non-limiting embodiment; and

[0017] FIG. 12 depicts a further example performance of block 530 of the method of FIG. 5, according to a non-limiting embodiment;

[0018] FIG. 13 depicts a further example performance of block 530 of the method of FIG. 5, according to a non-limiting embodiment;

[0019] FIG. 14 depicts a further example performance of block 530 of the method of FIG. 5, according to a non-limiting embodiment; and

[0020] FIGS. 15A, 15B and 15C depict further example performances of block 530 of the method of FIG. 5, according to a non-limiting embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE EMBODIMENTS

[0021] Various embodiments and aspects are described below. The following description, and the accompanying drawings, are illustrative and are not to be construed as limiting in scope.

[0022] FIG. 1 depicts a surgeon 104 conducting a minimally invasive port-based surgical procedure on a patient 108 in an operating room (OR) environment. The surgical procedure is supported by a navigation system 112, including a computing device connected to a variety of input devices (e.g. a tracking sensor such as a camera, a keyboard and mouse and the like) and controlling a variety of output devices (e.g. a display, illumination equipment and the like). System 112 also includes a variety of surgical instruments, whose motions may be tracked by system 112. An assistant or operator 116 can also be present, and both surgeon 104 and assistant 116 can operate system 112. In particular, as will be discussed below, system 112 is configured to control the output devices based on input from a variety of sources, including not only the above mentioned input devices, but also the tracked surgical instruments that are manipulated by surgeon 104 during the procedure.

[0023] Turning now to FIG. 2, a block diagram illustrating certain components of system 112 is depicted. As seen in FIG. 2, system 112 includes an equipment tower 200 supporting a computing device 204, along with other equipment. Equipment tower 200 is mounted on a rack, cart, or the like, and may also support a power supply for the remaining components of system 112.

[0024] Computing device 204 is connected to output devices including a display, such as displays 208 and 212, and a robotic arm 216. Each of displays 208 and 212 can be based

on any suitable display technology. For example, display **208** can be a flat panel display comprising any one of, or any suitable combination of, a Liquid Crystal Display (LCD), a plasma display, an Organic Light Emitting Diode (OLED) display, and the like. Other display technologies on which displays **208** and **212** can be based include projection systems, cathode ray tube (CRT) displays. Computing device **204** is also connected to input devices including an optical scope **220** (also referred to as an exoscope), and a tracking sensor such as a tracking camera **224**, which can be a stereoscopic camera. Examples of such cameras, such as the “Polaris” unit available from Northern Digital Imaging (NDI), will occur to those skilled in the art. Tracking camera **224** may be configured to receive visible light, IR, or both. Although tracking camera **224** is discussed herein as an example tracking sensor, it is to be understood that other tracking sensors may also be used instead of, or in addition to, tracking camera **224**. Thus, any references to tracking camera **224** below may also refer, in other embodiments, to any of a variety of suitable tracking systems known to those skilled in the art.

[0025] Minimally invasive brain surgery using access ports is a recently conceived method of performing surgery on brain tumors previously considered inoperable. Such minimally invasive procedures are performed through a relatively small opening in a patient’s skull. To that end, system **112** also includes an access port **228** for insertion through the skull of patient **108**—which is immobilized by a holder **230**—and into the brain of patient **108**. An introducer **234** with an atraumatic tip (for reducing damage to brain tissue during the insertion of access port **228**) is inserted into access port **228**, and access port **228** and introducer **234** together are inserted into the skull of patient **108**.

[0026] Introducer **234** includes fiduciary markers **236** such as IR-reflecting markers, that are detectable by tracking camera **224**. In the present embodiment, tracking camera **224** can emit infrared light, which is reflected by markers **236** and permits tracking camera **224** (which is sensitive to IR radiation) to capture images from which markers **236** can readily be isolated. As will be discussed below, robotic arm **216** and other instrumentation can also carry fiduciary markers. Camera **224** in conjunction with computing device **204** can determine the spatial positions of markers **236** using conventional motion tracking algorithms. Computing device **204** is therefore configured to track the position of markers **236** (and by extension, the position of introducer **234**) as introducer **234** is moved within the field of view of tracking camera **224**. In addition, it is contemplated that the spatial position of patient **108**’s skull was previously determined and stored by computing device **204**.

[0027] Because introducer **234** is held within access port **228** during insertion of access port **228** into the skull of patient **108**, markers **236** allow computing device **204** to track not only introducer **234**, but also access port **228** itself, even if access port **228** does not carry any markers. The tracked position of introducer **234** relative to the known position of the skull of patient **108** can be presented on one or both of displays **208** and **212**. Various views (e.g. axial, sagittal, coronal, perpendicular to tool tip, in-plane of tool shaft, and the like) of the relative positions of introducer **234**, access port **228** and the skull can be presented on displays **208** and **212**.

[0028] Once introducer **234** and access port **228** have been inserted into the brain of patient **108**, introducer **234** may be removed from access port **228** to allow access to the brain

tissue through a central opening of access port **228**. In some embodiments, access port **228** does not carry any fiduciary markers, and therefore may not be able to be directly tracked after the removal of introducer **234**. However, other surgical instruments carrying markers can be used to indirectly track access port **228**. In other embodiments, including the embodiments discussed in detail below, access port **228** itself can carry fiduciary markers **236**.

[0029] System **112** can also include an articulated arm **238** anchored at one end to holder **230**, and having at an opposite end a clamp for engaging access port **228**. Arm **238** may be employed to fix the position of access port **228** after insertion. Arm **238** may also have locked and unlocked positions, such that in the locked position access port **228** is not permitted to move, while in the unlocked position movement (at least in certain axes) by access portion **228** is permitted.

[0030] Turning to FIG. 3, another depiction of system **112** is illustrated, in which only display **208** is included. Additional surgical instruments **300** are also shown (such as a probing instrument and a suction instrument, for example), each carrying fiduciary markers **236**. Further, as mentioned above, scope **220** also carries markers **236** in FIG. 3.

[0031] In general, therefore, the movements of certain components of system **112**, particularly surgical instruments, can be tracked in space. As will be discussed below in greater detail, computing device **204** can control the output devices of system **112** based on those tracked movements. The control of output devices need not be based only on tracked movements—output control can also be based on other contextual data, including the specific identity of the tracked instruments, as well as surgical planning data. The surgical planning data can include an identifier of the current phase or stage of the surgical procedure, which can be determined at computing device **204** either via receipt of an input from an operator (e.g. surgeon **104**), or by other triggers automatically detected by computing device **204**. Those triggers can include detection of a tip of access port **228** traversing the outer boundary of the skull, indicating that cannulation is occurring. For example, as will be discussed below, displays **208** and **212** can be controlled to present various selectable interface elements (including menus) based on instrument identities and movements. The components and operation of computing device **204** will now be discussed in greater detail.

[0032] Turning to FIG. 4, a schematic diagram of certain components of computing device **204** is shown in relation to other components of system **112**. Computing device **204** includes a central processing unit (also referred to as a microprocessor or simply a processor) **400** interconnected with a non-transitory computer readable storage medium such as a memory **404**. Processor **400** and memory **404** are generally comprised of one or more integrated circuits (ICs), and can have a variety of structures, as will now occur to those skilled in the art (for example, more than one CPU can be provided).

[0033] Memory **404** can be any suitable combination of volatile (e.g. Random Access Memory (“RAM”)) and non-volatile (e.g. read only memory (“ROM”), Electrically Erasable Programmable Read Only Memory (“EEPROM”), flash memory, magnetic computer storage device, or optical disc) memory. In the present example, memory **404** includes both a volatile memory and a non-volatile memory. Other types of non-transitory computer readable storage medium are also contemplated, such as compact discs (CD-ROM, CD-RW) and digital video discs (DVD).

[0034] Computing device 204 also includes a network interface 408 interconnected with processor 400. Network interface 408 allows computing device 204 to communicate with other computing devices via a network (e.g. a local area network (LAN), a wide area network (WAN) or any suitable combination thereof). Network interface 408 thus includes any necessary hardware for communicating over such networks.

[0035] Computing device 204 also includes an input/output interface 412, including the necessary hardware for interconnecting processor 400 with various input and output devices. Interface 412 can include, among other components, a Universal Serial Bus (USB) port, an audio port for sending and receiving audio data, a Video Graphics Array (VGA), Digital Visual Interface (DVI) or other port for sending and receiving display data, and any other suitable components.

[0036] Via interface 412, computing device 204 is connected to input devices including a keyboard and mouse 416, a microphone 420, as well as scope 220 and tracking camera 224, mentioned above. Also via interface 412, computing device 204 is connected to output devices including illumination or projection components (e.g. lights, projectors and the like), as well as display 208 and robotic arm 216 mentioned above. Other input (e.g. touch screens) and output devices (e.g. speakers) will also occur to those skilled in the art.

[0037] Computing device 204 stores, in memory 404, an interface management application 428 (also referred to herein as application 428) comprising a plurality of computer readable instructions executable by processor 400. When processor 404 executes the instructions of application 428 (or, indeed, any other application stored in memory 404), processor 404 performs various functions implemented by those instructions, as will be discussed below. Processor 400, or computing device 204 more generally, is therefore said to be “configured” to perform those functions via the execution of application 428.

[0038] Also stored in memory 404 are various data repositories, including patient data 432, surgical instrument definitions 436, input gesture definitions 440, and output control rules 444. Patient data 432 includes a surgical plan defining the various steps of the minimally invasive surgical procedure, as well as image data relating to patient 108, such as Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) and Computed Tomography (CT) scans, three-dimensional models of the brain of patient 108 and the like. Instrument definitions 436 includes data defining characteristics of at least one of the surgical instruments to be used in the surgical procedure—such characteristics allow computing device 204 to differentiate between instruments in image data received from tracking camera 224. Gesture definitions 440 include data defining various movements of the instruments defined in instrument definitions 436. Finally, rules 444 contain associations between the gestures defined in gesture definitions 440 and output operations to be effected by computing device 204. These repositories will be described in further detail below.

[0039] It is to be understood that although repositories 432, 436, 440 and 444 are shown as databases in FIG. 4, their data structures are not particularly limited—the data contained within each repository can be stored in any suitable structure.

[0040] Turning now to FIG. 5, a method 500 of controlling a navigation system, such as system 112, is shown. Method 500 will be described in conjunction with its performance on system 112, and particularly on computing device 204,

although it is contemplated that method 500, and variants thereof, can also be adapted to other systems.

[0041] At block 505, computing device 204 is configured to control one or more output devices of system 112. To control the output devices of system 112, processor 400 is configured to generate output data and transmit the output data, via I/O interface 412, to the relevant output devices. The nature of the control at block 505—which output devices are controlled and what output data is generated—is not particularly limited. In the present example performance of method 500, at block 505 processor 400 is configured to control display 208 to present a video feed received from scope 220 on display 208. An example of such a feed is shown in FIG. 6, where an image 600 representing a frame of the video feed is presented on display 208. In image 600, a portion of access port 228 is visible, and brain tissue 604 is visible through access port 228. Access port 228 and brain tissue 604 may be visible on display 208 at a configurable magnification greater than 1. Also visible in image 600 are the tips of two surgical instruments 300.

[0042] It is also contemplated that at block 505, an overhead light or projector 424 is controlled by computing device 204 to project white light at a predefined brightness onto access port 228 to illuminate brain tissue 604. As will be discussed below, a wide variety of control mechanisms are contemplated, and they need not include overhead lighting in some embodiments. For example, overhead lights may not be controlled by computing device 204 in some embodiments.

[0043] Proceeding to block 510, computing device 204 is configured to identify surgical instruments that are active (that is, present in the field of view of tracking camera 224). Computing device 204 receives image data from tracking camera 224 via interface 412. The received image data contains artifacts representing reflected light from markers 236, and computing device 204 is configured to compare the image data, including such artifacts, to instrument definitions 436 to determine which surgical instruments, if any, are present within the field of view of tracking camera 224.

[0044] Turning briefly to FIG. 7, an example of instrument definitions 436 is shown. Instrument definitions 436 includes a plurality of records 700, each including an instrument identifier (e.g. “suction”) and one or more instrument characteristics. In the present example, each record 700 includes an indication of the geometry of markers 236 attached to that particular instrument (that is, the positions of markers 236 relative to each other). Thus, at block 510, computing device 204 is configured to compare the geometry of markers in image data received from tracking camera 224 to the geometries specified in definitions 436. When the geometry of one or more markers in the image data matches the geometry specified in a given record 700, the corresponding instrument identifier in that record 700 is selected for further processing.

[0045] A wide variety of instrument characteristics can be included in records 700 instead of, or in addition to, marker geometry. Other examples of instrument characteristics include marker reflectivity, marker size, and the like. In still other embodiments, surgical instruments can be equipped with RFID tags or other near-field communication devices that broadcast instrument identities to computing device 204.

[0046] In some embodiments, tool definitions 436 can be omitted entirely from computing device 204. Instead, tracking camera 224 (or, as mentioned earlier, any other suitable tracking system) can be configured to identify instruments and transmit instrument identifiers and position data to com-

puting device 204, instead of transmitting image data for computing device 204 to process.

[0047] Having identified active instruments at block 510, computing device 204 can be configured to perform block 513. At block 513, computing device 204 is configured to generate updated output data for controlling the output devices of system 112 based on the identities of the active instruments. For example, instrument definitions 436 can include output commands in addition to the instrument identifiers and characteristics. Such output commands can cause computing device 204 to select a particular menu of selectable interface elements for presentation on display 208, among a plurality of selectable interface elements contained in application 428. Such output commands can also configure computing device 204 to control illumination and projection equipment 424 in a predefined manner, or to control display 208 to overlay data from repository 432 on image 600 (for example, a three dimensional model of the patient's brain, a CT scan, or the like).

[0048] The above-mentioned output commands need not be specified in instrument definitions 436. Instead, such output commands can be specified in planning data in repository 432. For example, each stage of the surgical procedure can contain data identifying the instruments expected to be used for that stage, and specifying output commands for controlling the output devices of system 112. The identification of instruments matching those in a certain stage of the planning data (or matching certain relative states, such as instrument positions, e.g. probe tip within the skull boundary) can indicate that the procedure has reached that certain stage, and computing device 204 can be configured to implement the output commands associated with the stage.

[0049] In other embodiments, the performance of block 513 can be omitted. The performance of method 500 therefore proceeds from either of blocks 510 or 513 to block 515.

[0050] At block 515, computing device 204 is configured to determine whether an input mode has been activated. In an input mode, the movements of the instruments identified at block 510 can control the output devices of system 112 connected to computing device 204. The determination at block 515 can take a variety of forms. For example, computing device 204 can be configured simply to detect whether one or more of the instruments identified at block 510 is moving, based on image data continually received from tracking camera 224. If the instruments are stationary (or show movement below a predetermined threshold), the determination at block 515 is negative, and the performance of method 500 returns to block 510.

[0051] If, on the other hand, the instruments do show movement beyond zero, or beyond some other predetermined lower bound, the determination at block 515 is affirmative, and the performance of method 500 proceeds to block 520, to be discussed below. Alternatively, the determination at block 515 can be affirmative (that is, the input mode is active) if an instrument remains stationary and within a certain set distance of another instrument for a set amount of time.

[0052] In other embodiments, the determination by computing device 204 at block 515 can take other forms. For example, at block 515 computing device 204 may be configured to await specific input data, such as audible command (such as a voice command, e.g. "input on") recorded by microphone 420. In another example, computing device 204 may be configured to await a specific input from keyboard or

mouse 416, or from another input device such as a foot pedal (not shown) available to surgeon 104.

[0053] Having determined that an input mode has been activated, at block 520 computing device 204 is configured to determine whether the tracked movements of the instruments identified at block 510 match any of the gesture definitions in repository 440. As will now be apparent to those skilled in the art, processor 400 continually receives image data (or instrument identifiers and positions, as mentioned above) from tracking camera 224 and processes such data according to conventional motion-tracking mechanisms to generate motion data (e.g. speed, direction, coordinates) for the instruments substantially in real-time. Processor 400 is therefore configured to compare the motion data to the definitions in repository 440, and determine whether the motion data matches any of the definitions.

[0054] Turning to FIG. 8, an example of gesture definitions repository 440 is shown. Repository 440 includes a plurality of records 800, each defining a gesture. Each record 800 includes a gesture identifier, and corresponding characteristics of that gesture. For example, a "shake" gesture is defined in the present example as three reversals in movement velocity of an instrument within a time period of one second, and a "tap" gesture is defined as a minimum of one second of overlap between the positions of two instruments, as determined by processor 400. A "135 degree" gesture is defined as an instrument being held at an angle of one hundred and thirty five degrees relative to the center of the access port. A wide variety of other gestures can also be defined, and other characteristics can be used to define such gestures. For example, certain gestures can be defined by the relative position of an instrument in comparison to segments of the field of view of scope 220, such that the presence of an instrument in a certain quadrant of the field of view for a certain time period is interpreted as a gesture by computing device 204. Other gestures can be defined by the speed or timing of a rotation of the instrument, the distance between the tips of two instruments, and the like.

[0055] Each record 800 can also specify tolerances (not shown) for the characteristics. For example, the time periods shown in FIG. 8 may have tolerances of 10%, such that three velocity reversals occurring in 1.1 seconds would still be interpreted as a "shake". Such tolerances, and any other gesture characteristics, can also be defined in association with a specific surgeon or surgical procedure. For example, a first surgeon may require gesture definitions with greater tolerances than a second surgeon.

[0056] Returning to FIG. 5, if the determination at block 520 is negative (that is, the motion data representing the movement of the identified instruments does not match any predefined gestures), the performance of method 500 returns to block 515. In other words, computing device 204 is configured to confirm whether or not an input mode remains active, and to monitor for any further movements that may match defined gestures.

[0057] If, on the other hand, the determination at block 520 is affirmative (that is, the movement of the identified instruments does match a predefined gesture), the performance of method 500 proceeds to block 525.

[0058] At block 525, computing device 204 is configured to select a command corresponding to the gesture detected at block 520, based on output control rules 444. Turning to FIG. 9, an example of rules 444 is shown. Rules 444 include a plurality of records 900 each defining an output control rule.

Each record **900** includes a command definition for controlling one or more output devices of system **112**. Each record **900** can also include, corresponding to the command definition, a gesture identifier and an instrument identifier.

[0059] In the present example, three rules are defined in rules **444**. The first of records **900** defines a command that will cause robotic arm **216** to follow the motion of the suction instrument for a certain time after the suction instrument has registered a “shake” gesture. Such a command can be used to reposition scope **220**. The second of records **900** defines a command that will cause an overhead light **424** to increase in brightness when a probe instrument registers a “shake” gesture. The third of records **900** defines a command that will cause display **208** to be updated to present a menu containing selectable interface elements relevant to tumor resection when the suction and probe instruments register a “tap” gesture. The fourth of records **900** defines a command that will cause a particular selectable element of the resection menu to be selected when the suction device is held at an angle of one hundred thirty five degrees in relation to the center of access port **228**.

[0060] It will be understood that the rules shown in FIG. **9** are merely examples, and that a wide variety of other rules are also contemplated. As mentioned earlier, application **428** can contain a plurality of menus, each including various selectable elements. Rules **444** can contain one or more records defining conditions under which each of the plurality of menus is to be selected for presentation on display **208**.

[0061] In some embodiments, additional parameters corresponding to the command definition can be included in a record **900**, while in other embodiments some parameters can be omitted. Examples of other parameters include a stage of the surgical procedure (as defined in patient data **432**); an identifier of a surgeon; characteristics of the image currently shown on display **208** (for example, image characteristics indicative of tumor tissue, such as brightness, contrast, or colour values); and other output data already provided to the output devices, such as which menu is currently presented on display **208**. In general, rules **444** define associations between the context in which surgical instruments are being used, and commands to control the output devices of system **112**.

[0062] Thus, at block **525** computing device **204** is configured to compare the identities of the instruments identified at block **510**, the context of use of those instruments (e.g. gestures detected at block **520**, stage of the procedure, identity of the surgeon), to rules **444** and select a rule that matches the current context. The command of that particular rule is the command selected at block **525**.

[0063] Having selected a command at block **525**, at block **530** computing device **204** is configured to update the control of the output devices of system **112** based on the selected command. The nature of the control effected at block **530** is defined by the particular command selected at block **525**, and can therefore vary greatly. An example of a performance of block **530** is shown in FIG. **10**.

[0064] FIG. **10** depicts an updated interface presented on display **208**, in which image **600** is shown following a “tap” gesture with the suction and probe instruments. In addition to image **600**, which represents a frame of the video feed from scope **220** as discussed earlier, a menu **1000** is presented on display **208**. Menu **100** is one of the plurality of menus within application **428**, and includes a plurality of selectable elements. Each element is selectable for causing computing device **204** to execute a specific operation implemented by the

instructions of application **428**. For example, a record element **1004** causes computing device **204** to begin (or cease, if recording is already underway) storing the feed shown on display **208** in memory **404** as a video file. An annotation element **1005** allows text input for annotating image **600**. A panning element **1006** allows image **600** to be panned in a plane parallel to the page of FIG. **10**. A reset element **1007** resets the view shown on display **208** to a previous state (for example, before a recent panning operation). A brightness element **1008** causes computing device to present a further one of the plurality of menus within application **428** on display **208** for adjusting the brightness of display **208**. Also included are a stack element **1010** and a magnification element, which **1012** causes computing device to present a still further one of the plurality of menus within application **428** on display **208** for adjusting the magnification of the video feed from scope **220**.

[0065] Other examples of selectable elements include a tool selection element for selecting one of a plurality of tools identified by computing device **204**. Such a selection may be used to restrict output control to the movements of a particular tool, for example. A port visibility element **1014** allows a rendering of access port **208** on display **208** to be toggled on and off (this functionality may also be extended to other tools). A region of interest element **1016** causes computing device **204** to begin tracking the movement of a given surgical instrument to draw a region of interest on image **600**. A tract visibility element **1018** turns the presentation of fluid flow tracts (e.g. nerve fibre tracts, vasculature, and the like) on display **208** on and off. In addition, a skull stripping toggle element **1020** and a 2D/3D mode toggle element **1022** can be provided.

[0066] With menu **1000** presented on display **208**, computing device **204** is configured to return to block **510** and continue monitoring the movements of any active instruments. Assuming that the instruments detected in the previous iteration of method **500** have not been removed from the field of view of tracking camera **224**, the performance of blocks **510**, **513** (optionally) and **515** will not effect any changes, and the performance of block **520** will determine whether any further input gestures have been made. Such input gestures may include a selection of an element of menu **1000** (for example, as specified in the fourth record **900** of FIG. **9**). In response to selection of a menu element, computing device **204** is configured to generate further updated output data to enable the function corresponding to the selected element. As will now be apparent to those skilled in the art, numerous iterations of method **500** can be performed to control system **112**, while reducing or avoiding the need for surgeon **104** to abandon the surgical instruments in favour of more conventional input devices (such as keyboard and mouse **416**).

[0067] FIGS. **11** and **12** provide further examples of output device control during the performance of method **500**. FIG. **11** depicts display **208** presenting a menu **1100** (containing the same selectable elements as menu **1000**, although in a different orientation), and image data **1104** retrieved from repository **432**, in addition to image **600** as discussed above. FIG. **12** depicts image **600** on display **208**. Menus **1000** and **1100** are no longer presented in FIG. **12** (they may be dismissed by certain instrument gestures, or by the selection of certain elements of menus **1000** or **1100**). However, two regions of interest **1200** and **1204** are highlighted within image **600** on display **208**. Regions of interest **1200** and **1204** are the result of further performances of method **500**, in which

a region of interest element such as element **1016** was selected, and further instrument gestures were detected to draw the regions. Computing device **204** can be configured to take various actions in connection with regions of interest **1200** and **1204**. For example computing device **204** can apply a mask to image **600** to hide all of image **600** with the exception of regions **1200** and **1204**.

[0068] Still other examples of output device control achieved through the performance of method **500** will occur to those skilled in the art. For example, images can be projected onto the patient's skull, and optical properties (e.g. magnification, focus and the like) of scope **220** can be altered. Further, individual selectable elements within the menus discussed above can be presented on display **208** in various orders and combinations.

[0069] A further example of output device control, particularly (although not exclusively) at block **513**, involves masking out one or more portions of the surgical instruments identified at block **510**. For example, scope **220** may have a shallow depth of field, and thus portions of the instruments that extend out of access port **228** towards scope **220** may appear out of focus on display **208**. Computing device **204** can be configured, following the identification of the instruments, to generate output data including a mask of the identified instruments that can be combined with the video feed from scope **220** to obscure the unfocused portions of the instruments with in-focus images of the instruments.

[0070] Another example of output device control, referring now to FIG. **13**, includes activating a display mode at block **530** referred to as radial stacking. In this display mode, computing device **204** is configured to present a three dimensional rendering **1300** of the brain in which a slice **1304** of brain tissue may be selected. Computing device **204** is configured to determine the location and plane of slice **1304** based on, for example, instrument movements matched with known gestures at block **520**. Computing device **204** can also be configured to control display **208** to present a two dimensional cross-section **1308** of three dimensional model **1300**, taken in the plane of slice **1304**. A variety of display layers can be presented on cross section **1308**, again based on further motions of surgical instruments detected by computing device **204**. In the present example, fluid flow tracts **1312** are presented on cross section **1308** (for example, in response to a selection of a menu element such as element **1018**).

[0071] Computing device **204** can also be configured to control display **208** to update the position of slice **1304**, and the appearance of cross section **1308**, based on further movement of surgical instruments. Turning to FIG. **14**, an updated rendering **1400** is shown, in which an updated slice **1404** is depicted. Slice **1404** may be a rotated version of slice **1304**, the rotation of which can be controlled by movement of surgical instruments. Similarly, a cross section **1408** is also presented on display **208**, representing an updated version of cross section **1308** resulting from the new position of slice **1404**. Tracts **1412** are also updated in cross section **1408**. It will now be apparent that through manipulation of surgical instruments, it is possible to cause slice **1304** to sweep through a full 360° rotation, or to relocate to any location or angle within the brain. In some embodiments, displayed elements such as tracts **1312** and **1412** may also be restricted to only certain areas of the current slice, such as an area within the current slice and also within a predetermined distance of a tool tip (detected at block **520**). Elements such as tracts **1312** and **1412** in cross sections **1308** and **1408** can also have

configurable depths; that is, tracts **1312** and **1412** can be displayed not only for the exact plane of slices **1304** and **1404**, but also for a configurable number of adjacent planes parallel to those planes.

[0072] In still further embodiments, movements of surgical instruments detected by computing device **204** can be used to present three dimensional renderings of those instruments on display **208**, in addition to or instead of a video feed from scope **220**. For example, a model such as rendering **1300** can be updated to show the position of surgical instruments, including access port **228**, tracking their movements substantially in real time. Additional information can also be presented on such renderings.

[0073] For example, a rendering of a tumor whose location and size are stored in repository **432** can be presented on display **208**. In some examples, a rendering of a tumor or other data from repository **432** can be overlaid on a video feed (that is, a non-virtual feed) from scope **220**. The rendering can be located and scaled on display **208** (for example, on image **600** discussed above) based on the current magnification of scope **220** and the location of access port **228**. Referring to FIGS. **15A**, **15B** and **15C**, examples of output data presented on display **208** in this embodiment are shown. FIG. **15a** shows a modified version of the display shown in FIG. **6**, in which a video feed from scope **220** showing access port **228** is supplemented with a (virtual) rendering of a tumour **1500** in two or three dimensions, indicating that the tumour is larger than the field of view into the patient's brain afforded by access port **228**.

[0074] FIG. **15B** shows a rendering of access port **228** and tumour **1500** in an orientation perpendicular to the axis of access port **228**. The display of FIG. **15B** is generally virtual rather than being supplemented with video from scope **220**.

[0075] FIG. **15C** shows an additional rendering of tumour **1500**, the patient's brain **1504**, and access port **228**, depicting the scale of access port **228** relative to the entire brain **1504** and tumour **1500**. The views of FIGS. **15A-15C** can be controlled through method **500**, and can also be combined on display **208** (for example, in three panes).

[0076] Variations to the above systems and methods are contemplated. For example, in some embodiments equipment tower **200** can be omitted entirely or replaced with two or more towers. Additionally, in some embodiments computing device **204** need not be co-located with the remainder of system **112**. Instead, computing device **204** can be connected to the remainder of system **112** via a network, such as the Internet. In still other variations, computing device **204** can be implemented in a distributed computing framework.

[0077] In still further variations, markers and tracking technologies other than IR can be employed. For example, markers **236** can include RFID tags, electromagnetic sensors, LEDs or the like. In still other variations, markers **236** can be omitted entirely, and computing device **204** can instead be configured to employ known image processing techniques to locate and identify surgical instruments in the field of view of tracking camera **224** or any other suitable tracking system.

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[0079] Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that there are yet more alternative implementations and modifications

possible for implementing the embodiments, and that the above implementations and examples are only illustrations of one or more embodiments. The scope of the claims should not be limited by the embodiments set forth above, but should be given the broadest interpretation consistent with the description as a whole.

We claim:

1. A method of controlling a surgical navigation system, comprising:

receiving, at a processor, an identifier of a surgical instrument within a field of view of a tracking system;
generating, at the processor, output data based on the identifier of the surgical instrument; and
transmitting the output data to an output device connected to the processor, for controlling the output device.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving image data at a processor from a tracking system;
storing a surgical instrument definition; wherein receiving the identifier comprises determining the identifier of the surgical instrument by comparing the image data with the surgical instrument definition.

3. The method of claim 1 or claim 2, further comprising:

storing a plurality of selectable interface elements;
wherein generating the output data comprises retrieving a subset of the selectable interface elements; and
wherein transmitting the output data comprises presenting the subset on a display.

4. The method of claim 3, further comprising:

selecting one of the subset of elements presented on the display based on the identifier; and
generating further output data based on the selected one of the subset.

5. The method of any one of claims 1 to 4, further comprising:

storing gesture definitions;
receiving motion data representing movement of the surgical instrument; and
determining whether the motion data matches one of the gesture definitions.

6. The method of claim 5, comprising:

when the motion data matches one of the gesture definitions, generating the output data based on the identifier of the surgical instrument and on the one of the gesture definitions.

7. The method of any one of claims 1 to 6, further comprising:

storing a plurality of output control rules each including an instrument identifier; wherein generating the output data comprises selecting one of the control rules having an instrument identifier matching the determined identifier.

8. The method of any one of claims 1 to 7, wherein transmitting the output data comprises transmitting respective portions of the output data to at least one of a display, a projector, and a robotic arm.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein receiving the identifier of the surgical instrument at the processor comprises receiving the identifier from the tracking system coupled to the processor.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein the output device comprises a display, and wherein transmitting the output data comprises controlling the display to present a rotatable three dimensional slice in a model of brain tissue.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein transmitting the output data further comprises controlling the display to rotate the slice about an axis based on the identifier of the surgical instrument.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the output device comprises a display; the method further comprising:

storing a tumour definition in the memory;

transmitting the output data by controlling the display to present a model of the tumour in conjunction with one of a video feed of an access port instrument, and a model of the access port instrument.

13. The method of claim 1, **[text missing or illegible when filed]**

14. A computing device, comprising:

a memory;

a processor connected to the memory;

an interface connecting the processor to a tracking system; and

an output device connected to the processor;

the processor configured to:

receive an identifier of a surgical instrument within a field of view of the tracking system;

generate output data based on the identifier of the surgical instrument; and

transmit the output data to the output device for controlling the output device.

15. The computing device of claim 14, wherein the memory stores a surgical instrument definition, and wherein the processor is further configured to:

receive image data at a processor from a tracking system; and

determine the received identifier of the surgical instrument by comparing the image data with the surgical instrument definition.

16. The computing device of claim 14 or claim 15, wherein the memory stores a plurality of selectable interface elements; wherein the output device includes a display, and wherein the processor is further configured to:

generate the output data by retrieving a subset of the selectable interface elements from the memory; and

transmit the output data by presenting the subset on the display.

17. The computing device of claim 16, the processor further configured to:

select one of the subset of elements presented on the display based on the identifier; and

generate further output data based on the selected one of the subset.

18. The computing device of any one of claims 14 to 17, wherein the memory stores gesture definitions, and wherein the processor is further configured to:

receive motion data representing movement of the surgical instrument; and

determine whether the motion data matches one of the gesture definitions.

19. The computing device of claim 18, the processor further configured to:

when the motion data matches one of the gesture definitions, generate the output data based on the identifier of the surgical instrument and on the one of the gesture definitions.

20. The computing device of any one of claims 14 to 19, wherein the memory stores a plurality of output control rules

each including an instrument identifier, and wherein the processor is further configured to:

generate the output data by selecting one of the control rules having an instrument identifier matching the determined identifier.

21. The computing device of any one of claims **14** to **20**, wherein the output device includes one or more of a display, a projector and a robotic arm; the processor further configured to transmit the output data by transmitting respective portions of the output data to at least one of the display, the projector, and the robotic arm.

22. The computing device of claim **14**, the processor further configured to receive the identifier of the surgical instrument by receiving the identifier from the tracking system.

23. The computing device of claim **14**, wherein the output device comprises a display, the processor further configured

to transmit the output data by controlling the display to present a rotatable three dimensional slice in a model of brain tissue.

24. The computing device of claim **23**, the processor further configured to transmit the output data further by controlling the display to rotate the slice about an axis based on the identifier of the surgical instrument.

25. The computing device of claim **14**, wherein the memory stores a tumour definition, and wherein the output device comprises a display; the processor further configured to transmit the output data by controlling the display to present a model of the tumour in conjunction with one of a video feed of an access port instrument, and a model of the access port instrument.

26. A non-transitory computer-readable medium storing a plurality of computer readable instructions executable by a processor for implementing the method of any one of claims **1** to **13**.

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