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(54) Title: BIOS REAL-TIME CLOCK UPDATE

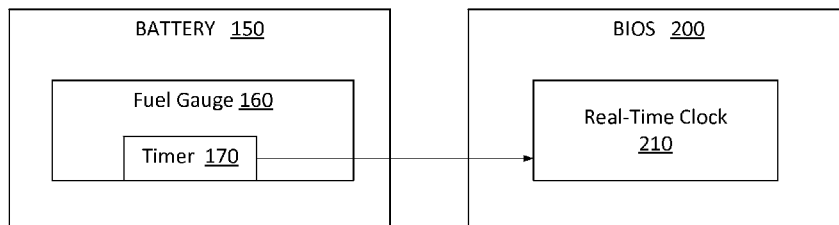


Figure 2

(57) Abstract: An example system includes a basic input/output system (BIOS) and a battery having a fuel gauge timer. The BIOS is associated with a real-time clock, and the BIOS uses timer information from the fuel gauge timer to update the real-time clock.

BIOS REAL-TIME CLOCK UPDATE

BACKGROUND

[0001] Real-time clock information is maintained for devices such as computers, including information such as time and date. Real-time clock is typically maintained within and/or used by a computer's basic input/output system (BIOS). Various applications installed on the computer may use the real-time clock.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0002] For a more complete understanding of various examples, reference is now made to the following descriptions taken in connection with the accompanying drawings in which:

[0003] Figure 1 schematically illustrates an example system having a real-time clock;

[0004] Figure 2 schematically illustrates an example arrangement for updating a real-time clock; and

[0005] Figure 3 illustrates an example method for updating a real-time clock.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0006] Various examples described below provide for updating of a real-time clock for a device, such as a computer. The real-time clock uses information from a fuel gauge of a battery to update the timer information. The fuel gauge of a battery is provided with circuitry for a timer. A controller, such as the central processing unit (CPU) of the device, can obtain the timer information from the fuel gauge of the battery upon boot up of the device. The basic input/output system (BIOS) of the device can obtain the timer information from the fuel gauge and update the real-time clock of the device. Thus, in accordance with various examples, the real-time clock of the device does not need to be powered when the device is shut down, eliminating the need for a coin battery, for example. In some examples, the timer information from the fuel gauge of the battery may be used to supplement, synchronize or otherwise provide timer information to the real-time clock.

[0007] Referring now to Figure 1, an example system having a real-time clock is schematically illustrated. The system may be implemented in a device 100, such as a desktop,

laptop, workstation, tablet, smartphone, gaming device, point of sale device, or server. Of course, those skilled in the art will appreciate that the system may be implemented in any of a variety of other electronic devices. The example device 100 of Figure 1 includes a central processing unit (CPU) 110. In various examples, the CPU 110 may control various operations within the device 100. For example, the CPU 110 may execute instructions from an application stored and/or installed on the device 100.

[0008] The example device 100 of Figure 1 is further provided with a volatile memory 120. In various examples, the volatile memory 120 may be a random access memory (RAM) accessed by the CPU 110 for loading and executing the various applications. The volatile memory 120 may be a static RAM or a dynamic RAM and may be implemented on any of a variety of types of non-transitory storage devices.

[0009] A non-volatile memory 130 is provided on the example device 100 of Figure 1. The non-volatile memory 130 may be used to store various types of information, including stored data and programs, for example. The non-volatile memory 130 may be any of a variety of types of non-transitory storage devices, such as flash memory chips, for example.

[0010] The volatile memory 120 and the non-volatile memory 130 are accessed by the CPU 110. As noted above, the CPU 110 may access the volatile memory 120 (e.g., RAM) to load and access applications while executing instructions associated with the applications, for example. The non-volatile memory 130 may be accessed by the CPU 110 to access data that may be used, for example, by the applications. For example, the non-volatile memory 130 may store files for editing by a word processing program.

[0011] Information stored in the volatile memory 120 may be available during operation of the device 100, but may be lost when the device 100 is shut down. For example, a program loaded into the volatile memory 120 for use by the CPU 100 may require re-starting each time the device 100 is re-booted. By contrast, information in the non-volatile memory 130 may remain stored in the non-volatile memory 130 even if the device 100 is shut down. Thus, information such as documents, pictures, software or other such data may be stored in the non-volatile memory 130.

[0012] A part of the non-volatile memory 130 is used to store basic input/output system (BIOS) information. That part is illustrated in Figure 1 as the BIOS memory 140. The BIOS

memory 140 may include data that is needed for the operation of the BIOS of the device 100. Such information may need to be maintained with either no or limited ability to be altered.

[0013] The example device 100 of Figure 1 also includes various power sources. In one example, the device 100 includes the ability to be powered through an external power source (e.g., an alternating current (AC) power adapter). The device 100 may also include a battery 150 for providing power to the device 100 when the external power source is either disconnected or unavailable. When the external power source is connected, the battery may be charged using the external power source.

[0014] In the example of Figure 1, the battery 150 is provided with circuitry for a fuel gauge 160. The fuel gauge 160 in the battery 150 may include circuitry, for example, for measurement of open-circuit voltage. In addition, in some examples, the circuitry may also include measurement of a temperature. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that circuitry for such fuel gauges 160 may take several forms that are contemplated within the scope of the present disclosure.

[0015] In various examples of the present disclosure, certain information from the fuel gauge 160 may be provided to the BIOS of the device 110. In Figure 1, this provision of information is illustrated by the dashed line between the fuel gauge 160 and the BIOS memory 140. In various examples, the information may be provided either directly to the BIOS or indirectly (e.g., through the CPU 110).

[0016] Referring now to Figure 2, an example arrangement for updating a real-time clock is schematically illustrated. In the example of Figure 2, the fuel gauge 160 in the battery 150 is provided with a timer 170. The timer 170 in the fuel gauge 160 may include circuitry that maintains real-time information, such as date and time. In various examples, the timer requires minimal power from the battery and, accordingly, may operate uninterrupted.

[0017] The timer 170 may be similar to a real-time clock and, in some examples, may be driven by a clock signal generated from a crystal oscillator. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that various types of timers are possible and are contemplated within the scope of the present disclosure.

[0018] Referring again to Figure 2, a real-time clock 210 of the device 100 may be provided within the BIOS 200 of the device 100. In other examples, the real-time clock 210 may be accessed by the BIOS 200 but may be provided outside the BIOS 200. The BIOS 200 uses the

real-time clock 210 for various functions associated with the device 100, the operating system of the device 100 or other programs executed on the device 100.

[0019] As with the timer 170 of the battery 150, the real-time clock 210 of the BIOS 200 may take various forms. In one example, the real-time clock 210 includes circuitry driven by a clock signal generated from a crystal oscillator. As referred to herein, a real-time clock 210 is a clock which provides a timing function which supplies timing information to be used as a system time for the device or system in which the real-time clock is implemented. In various examples, the real-time clock provides timing information such as a current time and date. The real-time clock may be used to provide common timing information to multiple sub-systems or applications within the device or system.

[0020] In various example of the present disclosure, the real-time clock 210 uses information from the timer 170 in the battery 150. The real-time clock 210 can use the information from the timer 170 to update or synchronize the date and time information. In some examples, unlike real-time clock in conventional systems, the real-time clock 210 ceases operation when the device 100 is shut down. In this regard, while conventional systems include a coin battery to allow continued operation of the real-time clock, in some examples of the present disclosure, no power is provided to the real-time clock 210 when the device 100 is shut down. Thus, the need for an additional power source, such as a coin battery, is eliminated.

[0021] Referring now to Figure 3, an example method for updating a real-time clock in a device is illustrated. In accordance with the example method 300, the information from the timer 170 of the battery 150 is used to update the real-time clock 210 upon boot up of the device 100 or the BIOS 200.

[0022] Thus, referring again to Figure 3, the example method begins at block 310, with boot up of the BIOS 200. The BIOS 200 is generally booted up during start up or restarting of the device 100. At boot up of the BIOS 200, the real-time clock may indicate the time and date information associated with the time the device was shut down or some default value.

[0023] At block 320, timer information from the timer 170 of the battery 150 (e.g., from the fuel gauge 160 of the battery 150) is obtained. The timer information from the battery 150 may be obtained by, for example, the CPU 110 of the device 100 or directly by the BIOS memory 140 of the device 100. In various examples, the timer information may include the current date and

time. Additional information may be provided and is contemplated within the scope of the present disclosure.

[0024] At block 330, the timer information from the timer 170 of the battery 150 is used to update the real-time clock associated with the BIOS 200. In this regard, the BIOS 200 may re-start or synchronize the real-time clock 210 with the timer information from the timer 170. Thereafter, the real-time clock 210 can operate normally and may be used by the BIOS 200 and various other aspects of the device 100.

[0025] While Figure 3 illustrates an example in which the time information from the battery is used during boot up of the device 100, other examples may use the timer information at regular intervals during operation of the device 100. For example, at regular intervals, the timer information from the timer 170 of the battery 150 may be obtained and used for verification of the real-time clock 210. In this regard, the timer information from the timer 170 of the battery 150 may be used for synchronization or error correction of the real-time clock 210.

[0026] Thus, in various examples, a real-time clock may be provided without the need for a coin battery or any other power source for the real-time clock when the device is shut down. In other examples, a coin battery may be provided for operation of the real-time clock, but timer information from a timer in the device's main battery may be used for synchronization or error correction of the real-time clock.

[0027] The various examples set forth herein are described in terms of example block diagrams, flow charts and other illustrations. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the illustrated examples and their various alternatives can be implemented without confinement to the illustrated examples. For example, block diagrams and their accompanying description should not be construed as mandating a particular architecture or configuration.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS

1. A system, comprising:
a basic input/output system (BIOS), the BIOS being associated with a real-time clock;
and
a battery having a timer,
wherein the BIOS is to utilize timer information from the timer to update the real-time clock.
2. The system of claim 1, wherein the real-time clock is updated using the timer information from timer upon boot up of the BIOS.
3. The system of claim 2, wherein real-time clock is without power before boot up of the BIOS.
4. The system of claim 1, wherein the timer is part of a fuel gauge of the battery.
5. The system of claim 1, wherein the timer information from the timer includes at least the calendar date and the current time.
6. A method, comprising:
booting up a basic input/output system (BIOS);
obtaining timer information from a timer of a battery; and
updating a real-time clock associated with the BIOS using the timer information from the timer of the battery.
7. The method of claim 6, wherein real-time clock is without power before boot up of the BIOS.
8. The method of claim 6, wherein the battery provides power to the BIOS and the real-time clock.

9. The method of claim 6, wherein the timer is part of a fuel gauge of the battery.
10. The method of claim 6, wherein the timer information from the timer includes at least the calendar date and the current time.
11. An apparatus, comprising:
 - a processor; and
 - a memory device including computer program code, the memory device and the computer program code, with the processor, to cause the apparatus to:
 - obtain timer information from a timer of a fuel gauge of a battery; and
 - update a real-time clock associated with a basic input/output system (BIOS) using the timer information from the timer of the fuel gauge of the battery.
12. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the real-time clock is updated using the timer information from the fuel gauge timer upon boot up of the BIOS.
13. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein real-time clock is without power before boot up of the BIOS.
14. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein real-time clock ceases operation upon shut down of the BIOS.
15. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the timer information from the fuel gauge timer includes at least the calendar date and the current time.

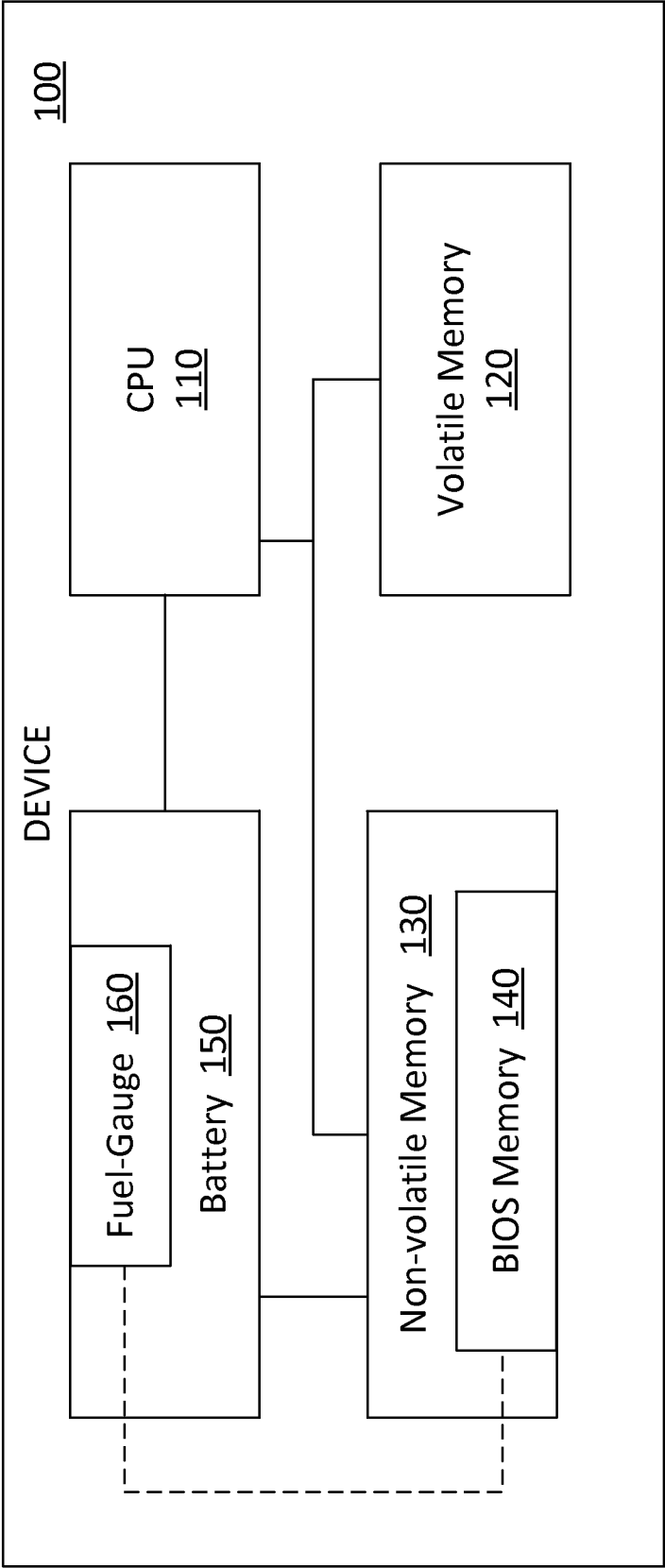


Figure 1

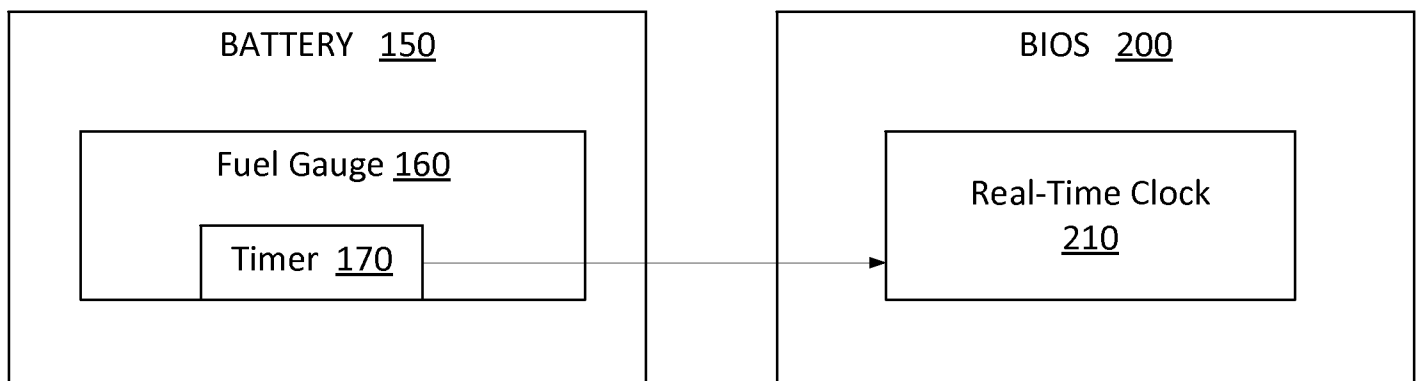


Figure 2

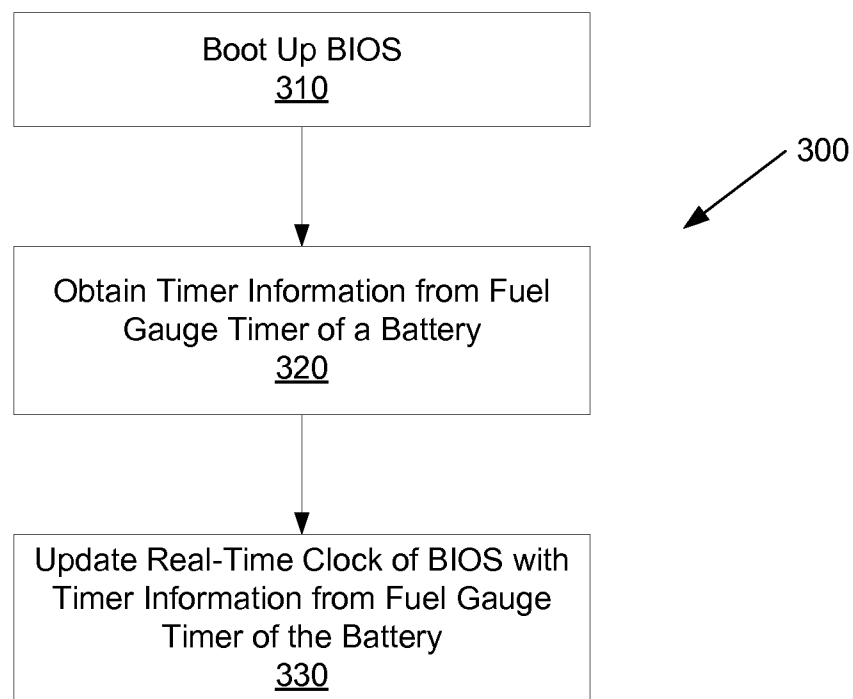


Figure 3

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US2014/048099**A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER****G06F 1/14(2006.01)i**

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

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

G06F 1/14; G06F 19/00; G06F 1/26; G06F 1/12; G01R 31/36; G06F 1/16; G06F 11/00

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

Korean utility models and applications for utility models

Japanese utility models and applications for utility models

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

eKOMPASS(KIPO internal) & Keywords: RTC, BIOS, battery, gauge, timer, power

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	US 2011-0314322 A1 (SHAO WEI) 22 December 2011 See paragraphs [0011]-[0012], [0014]; claim 8; and figure 2.	1-15
Y	US 2012-0275101 A1 (TIMOTHY M. JOHNSON et al.) 01 November 2012 See paragraph [0005]; and figure 1.	1-15
Y	US 2013-0232373 A1 (TUNG-YI WANG et al.) 05 September 2013 See paragraph [0015]; and figure 2.	3, 7, 13-14
A		1-2, 4-6, 8-12, 15
A	US 2003-0115001 A1 (SHIGEFUMI ODAOHARA) 19 June 2003 See paragraph [0052]; and figure 5.	1-15
A	EP 0616281 A2 (COMPAQ COMPUTER CORPORATION) 21 September 1994 See page 2; and figure 1.	1-15



Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.



See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

"E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date

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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

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"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

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No.

PCT/US2014/048099

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