

[0035] Preferably, the method also comprises the step of allocating the first and/or second display element to a selected display layer or layers based upon the at least one determined visual property or upon an associated pre-set display layer preference.

[0036] Preferably, the step of allocating is based upon stored preferences associated either with a user of the multi-layer display system or with particular software application programs run on a computer system to which the multi-layer display system is connected.

[0037] Preferably, when a particular display layer includes a plurality of display elements, the display elements are arranged within that display layer to thereby control the way in which overlapping portions of display elements in a single display layer are displayed.

[0038] Preferably, when a plurality of display elements are dispersed across at least two display layers, the display elements are arranged over the at least two display layers thereby controlling the way in which overlapping portions of display elements on different display layers are displayed.

[0039] Preferably, the colours of at least the overlapping portion of the first and second display elements are adjusted on a pixel-by-pixel basis.

[0040] In a second aspect, the invention consists in a display controller for a multi-layer display system including at least two overlapping display layers, the display controller comprising:

[0041] i) means for detecting that the position of a first display element to be displayed on a first display layer overlaps or will potentially overlap with the position of a second display element on a different display layer,

[0042] ii) means for adjusting either the position of the first and/or second display element and/or at least one visual property of at least the overlapping or potentially overlapping portion of the first and/or second display element, and

[0043] iii) means for displaying the first and second display elements on their respective display layers in their adjusted position or positions or with their adjusted visual property or properties in order to improve the ability of a user of the multi-layer display system to view the overlapping or potentially overlapping portion of the first and/or second display element.

[0044] Preferably, the means for adjusting are operated manually by a user.

[0045] Alternatively, the means for adjusting operate automatically.

[0046] Preferably, the means for automatically adjusting the position of a first and/or second display element comprises:

[0047] means for determining a level of interference as experienced by a user between the first and second display elements, and

[0048] means for moving the first and/or second display element within their respective display layers, to a new position or positions which reduces the determined level, and/or

[0049] means for changing at least one visual characteristic of the first and/or second display element.

[0050] Preferably, the means for adjusting the position of a first and/or second display element moves the first and/or second display element within their respective display layers, so that there will be no overlap or reduced overlap between the first and second display elements.

[0051] Preferably, the display controller also comprises means for determining whether the first or second display element is currently active and providing this information to the means for adjusting.

[0052] Preferably, the first display layer is nearer to the front of the multi-layer display system than the second display layer and

[0053] if the first display element is active and the second display element is not active, then at least one visual property of at least the overlapping or potentially overlapping portion of the second display element is adjusted, or

[0054] if the second display element is active and the first display element is not active, then at least one visual property of at least the overlapping or potentially overlapping portion of the first display element is adjusted.

[0055] Preferably, the means for adjusting adjusts at least one of colour, saturation, brightness or transparency of at least the overlapping or potentially overlapping portion of the first and/or second display element or the contrast between overlapping or potentially overlapping portions of the first and second display elements.

[0056] Preferably, the means for adjusting combines at least one visual property of the overlapping or potentially overlapping portions of the first and second display elements and the resultant combined visual property is applied to the overlapping portion of the active display element while at least one visual property of the other display element is adjusted to minimise its effect on the image provided by the active display element.

[0057] Alternatively, the means for adjusting adjusts at least one visual property of at least the overlapping portion of both the first and second display elements.

[0058] Preferably, the display controller also allocates the first and/or second display element to a selected display layer or layers based upon the at least one determined visual property or upon an associated pre-set display layer preference.

[0059] Preferably, the allocation to display layers is based upon stored preferences associated either with a user of the multi-layer display system or with particular software application programs run on a computer system to which the multi-layer display system is connected.

[0060] Preferably, when a particular display layer includes a plurality of display elements, the display elements are arranged within that display layer to thereby control the way in which overlapping portions of display elements in a single display layer are displayed.

[0061] Preferably, when a plurality of display elements are dispersed across at least two display layers, the display