

[0172] Similarly but independently, following block 958, the method proceeds to block 964 where it is determined if the second GUI element should be deactivated. If so, the method proceeds to block 966 where the GUI element is deactivated. For example, as shown in FIG. 38E, the second GUI element (control panel 966) is disabled and removed from display when the finger 925 is no longer detected over the border 968. If not, the method maintains block 958.

[0173] It should be noted that the method is not limited to only two GUI elements and that other GUI elements may be activated if other conditions are implemented. For example, a third GUI element may be activated when a third set of condition occurs and so on. By way of example, as shown in FIG. 38F, the user may slide their finger 925 from the border 968 to a menu portion 970 of the active window 960 thereby initiating a change from the control panel 966 to a scroll wheel 972 (e.g., while the second GUI element is being deactivated, the third GUI element is being activated).

[0174] Further, as shown in FIG. 38G, the user may add another finger 925 to the current touch thereby initiating a change from the first control panel 966 to a second control panel 982. The first control panel 966 may include a first set of control options such as play, stop, seek and volume options and the second control panel 982 may include a second set of control options such as song playing order, song information, light effect options.

[0175] Moreover, as shown in FIG. 38H, the user may place one finger 925A over the border 968, another finger 925B over a menu portion 970, and yet another finger 925C over the playlist portion 964 thereby initiating three different GUI elements, particularly, a control panel 966, a first scroll wheel 972 for scrolling through the menu 970, and a second scroll wheel 962 for scrolling through the playlist 964.

[0176] In addition, multiple GUI elements can be activated in the same portion. For example, as shown in FIGS. 38I and 38J, if the user selects a particular box 990 in the playlist 964, a keyboard 992 may be activated so that the user can enter data associated with the song (e.g., title, artist, genre, etc.). If the scroll wheel 962 is active at the same time as the keyboard 992, the scroll wheel 962 may be minimized to accommodate the keyboard 992 as shown. Once the keyboard 992 is deactivated, the scroll wheel 962 reverts back to its original size.

[0177] The various aspects, embodiments, implementations or features of the invention can be used separately or in any combination.

[0178] The invention is preferably implemented by hardware, software or a combination of hardware and software. The software can also be embodied as computer readable code on a computer readable medium. The computer readable medium is any data storage device that can store data which can thereafter be read by a computer system. Examples of the computer readable medium include read-only memory, random-access memory, CD-ROMs, DVDs, magnetic tape, optical data storage devices, and carrier waves. The computer readable medium can also be distributed over network-coupled computer systems so that the computer readable code is stored and executed in a distributed fashion.

[0179] While this invention has been described in terms of several preferred embodiments, there are alterations, per-

mutations, and equivalents, which fall within the scope of this invention. For example, although the invention has been primarily directed at touchscreens, it should be noted that in some cases touch pads may also be used in place of touchscreens. Other types of touch sensing devices may also be utilized. It should also be noted that there are many alternative ways of implementing the methods and apparatuses of the present invention. It is therefore intended that the following appended claims be interpreted as including all such alterations, permutations, and equivalents as fall within the true spirit and scope of the present invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A user interface method, comprising:

detecting a touch;

determining a user interface mode when a touch is detected;

displaying one or more GUI elements based on the user interface mode; and

enabling the functionality of the GUI element.

2. The user interface method as recited in claim 1 wherein the user interface mode is based on one or more applications.

3. The user interface method as recited in claim 2 wherein different applications indicate different user interface modes.

4. The user interface method as recited in claim 1 wherein the user interface mode is based on a current state of an application.

5. The user interface method as recited in claim 5 wherein different states of the application indicate different user interface modes.

6. The user interface method as recited in claim 1 wherein the user interface mode is based on one or more touch characteristics of the detected touch.

7. The user interface method as recited in claim 6 wherein different characteristics of the touch indicate different modes.

8. The user interface method as recited in claim 1 wherein the user interface mode is based on only one condition, the condition being selected from application, a state of an application, a touch characteristic of the detected touch.

9. The user interface method as recited in claim 1 wherein the user interface mode is based on multiple conditions, the conditions being selected from one or more applications, one or more states of an application, one or more touch characteristics of the detected touch.

10. The user interface method as recited in claim 1 wherein only one GUI element is displayed.

11. The user interface method as recited in claim 1 wherein multiple GUI elements are displayed.

12. The user interface method as recited in claim 1 wherein the user interface mode is a scroll mode, and wherein the GUI element is a virtual scroll wheel.

13. The user interface method as recited in claim 1 wherein the user interface mode is a data entry mode, and wherein the GUI element is a virtual keyboard.

14. The user interface method as recited in claim 1 wherein the user interface mode is an edit mode, and wherein the GUI element is a tool bar or virtual keyboard.

15. The user interface method as recited in claim 1 wherein the user interface mode is a control mode, and wherein the GUI element is a control panel.