

or on the zone **88** of a keyboard **89** of a computer **80**. This configuration shown in FIG. **13** enables a partly blind person to use his computer to read text type files. A software module transforms a text type file in ASCII characters into a Braille type file. Said file is then displayed in sequence letter by letter or word by word or line by line depending on the surface **1** of the touch plate **10** on said surface **1**. Tactile words as defined above can also be displayed on the same surface **1**, with other tactile information to enable better interaction between the user and his operating system or during an Internet type application. Note that in the case of a computer mouse, all functions mentioned above can be transposed to the case of the touch plate on a keyboard position.

[0141] FIGS. **14** and **15** represent another device **90** on which at least one tactile display is located, comprising a touch plate **10** and its control server. In this case it is the steering wheel **90** of a vehicle.

[0142] In the example shown in FIG. **14**, there are two touch plates **10**. It could also be considered that there it is a single touch plate in two parts, because it is sufficient to have a single software module to control the two plates. The software module is not necessarily installed in the steering wheel. In particular, it could be located in a memory area of a vehicle onboard computer.

[0143] Increasing demands are being made on the visual sense of a driver in an automobile environment. For example, by including touch plates **10** on a steering wheel of a vehicle, information can be transmitted to the driver without the driver having to look away from the road and without even stopping listening to the onboard radio.

[0144] The two touch plates **10** fitted on a steering wheel thus enable the driver to receive tactile information, for example on the thumbs of his two hands. For example in this case, one example use could be for a vehicle equipped with a navigation system, to assist the driver by means of tactile messages such as "turn to right" or "turn to left". The software implementation of such of device is the same as that described with reference to the organiser **60**. In this case, the position information originates from the navigation system specific to the vehicle.

[0145] In the case shown in FIG. **15**, the touch plate **10** matches the shape of a steering wheel contour. Thus, for example a plurality of tactile pads are distributed around the contour of the steering wheel or on only part of it, for example a lower part on which the driver normally rests his hands. The driver can thus perceive tactile information when gripping the steering wheel. Sensor systems already exist integrated into the vehicle capable of detecting proximity of an obstacle at the back, front and even on the sides of a vehicle. The information generated by these sensors is transmitted particularly to the software command module of the touch plate **10** so as to notify the driver for example in the case in which there is an obstacle present and the position of the obstacle with respect to the vehicle due to the tactile pads present on the steering wheel. Thus when used with a sensor defining if the continuous white line to the right of the vehicle is crossed, the driver can be notified when this happens by a tactile message, for example by triggering sending the STRESS tactile message on the tactile pads **11** of the touch plate **10** located on the right part of the steering wheel. All these examples could be considered as navigation assistance examples without the driver needing to look at them.

1. Method of transmitting tactile information to a touch plate (**10**) of a tactile display containing tactile pads (**11**), said touch plate (**10**) being controlled by a server (**54**, **64**, **74**), and in this method,

(a) tactile information transmitted in the form of a digital word is defined as being a sequence of a predefined number of images together forming a pattern, each image having a rank in the pattern, each pattern being defined by:

a design of successive images, the designs corresponding to a first and to a second image being identical to each other if the tactile pads in the first design and the tactile pads in the second design in the same geographic position in each of the first and the second images are in the same state, and being distinct from each other if they are not in the same state,

a duration for each image as a function of its rank in the sequence of images,

a duration between successive consecutive images,

a duration between consecutive patterns;

(b) said word is transmitted to a tactile display server (**54**, **64**, **74**), preceded by a beacon indicating that data following the beacon must be directed to the touch plate control server;

(c) a series of instructions is activated when the tactile display server receives the word, this series having a start address that depends on said word, said series of instructions being used to display the successive images together forming the pattern corresponding to the word to be displayed, said series of instructions being repeated to display the same pattern a predefined number of times or for a predetermined duration.

2. Method of transmitting tactile information according to claim **1** in which the pattern is a unique image in which pads (**11**) are active, the image being repeated a predefined number of times with a predefined duration between images during which no pad (**11**) is active.

3. Method of transmitting tactile information according to claim **1** in which the pattern is a single image in which all pads (**11**) are active, the image being repeated a predefined number of times with a predefined duration between images during which the pads (**11**) are no longer active, and in which if said pattern is repeated, a duration TIM between patterns is different from the duration between images.

4. Method of transmitting tactile information according to claim **1** in which the pattern is composed of a sequence of forward images, a first forward image in which the active pads (**11**) form the summits of a first polygon, said first polygon being composed of a closed dummy line joining pairs of active pads (**11**), a second forward image in which the active pads form the summits of a second polygon, said second polygon being composed of a closed dummy line joining pairs of active pads (**11**), said second polygon being similar to the first polygon and entirely containing it, and so on as far as a last forward image in which the active pads (**11**) form the summits of a largest polygon, said largest polygon being composed of a closed dummy line joining pairs of active pads (**11**), said largest polygon being similar to the first and second polygons and entirely containing a last but one polygon similar to the first and second polygons formed in the same way as the last polygon, said last polygon being the largest that can be formed on the touch plate on which the successive tactile images are applied.