

the IC 402 and stored in the memory 412 or 414 of the IC 402. As such, the PC may be in a deep sleep mode. Internal clock and timer logic 422 may be used to keep track of the date and time when the system is off. When the scheduled time for a reminder is reached, the IC 402 can generate an audible tone or beep through the audio subsystem 320 or the IC 402 can wake up the system and deploy the scheduling software in PC mode. As such, an IC 402 consistent with the invention can provide an efficient way to use a scheduling software application. This is especially true for users who travel with a laptop.

[0051] 4. Address Book Applications

[0052] Most PDAs provide contact information or address book software applications enabling a user to store people's contact information such as name, address, phone number, email, etc. A PC having a PDA mode consistent with the invention provides an easy interface for this type of application. When a user wishes to access or find any of the contact information, the user may turn on the PC in PDA mode, e.g., by activating the PDA power on button 104. Function keys 306 may then be used to ask for the contact information database. Then, the system can load the contact information database into the PC's system memory 206 and let the user search through the database. The system power can be shut down when the search is complete. Since the IC 302 does not need to store any contact information directly, it reduces the die size and cost of the chip. Accordingly, a PC consistent with the invention provides a cost effective solution enabling fast searching of contact information.

[0053] 5. Storage Hub for Digital Devices

[0054] A variety of digital devices such as digital cameras, digital camcorders, portable music players, digital recorders, or the like may store digital data on a variety of storage devices such as flash media cards. Some types of flash media cards include SmartMedia™, CompactFlash™, and Memory Stick® cards. When the flash media card is full, the user typically either removes the full flash media card and inserts a new empty flash media card, or may download the data to an electronic device, e.g., PC, to provide extra room for additional data. Using a PC consistent with this invention, a user may boot up the PC in PDA mode by either using the PDA power up button 104 or the PDA mode may automatically be boot up by coupling the digital device to the PC for downloading.

[0055] The user may then utilize a storage software application to select an import function to import the digital data from the digital device to a mass storage device. The mass storage device may be the hard disk drive 240 of the PC or a variety of other storage devices coupled to the PC via a local area network (LAN) or storage area network (SAN). The status of the import function may be displayed on the LCD module 314. After the data is imported from the digital device, the user may erase the associated storage device or flash media card for the next usage. As such, the storage software application provides a simple and easy interface for end users to import digital data without waiting for a long boot up time in PC mode. It also enables the end user to have access to large PC mass storage devices so that the user can avoid paying for additional digital device storage devices or flash media cards. For example, if the digital device is a digital camera, a user can quickly download digital images stored on the digital camera's flash-media card to the PC in

the PDA mode. The PDA mode may be automatically triggered when the user couples the digital camera to the PC. The user can change, edit, or process the digital images later in the PC mode.

[0056] 6. Voice Recording Applications

[0057] Voice recording software applications can be quickly provided in PDA mode without the long boot up time of PC mode. For such voice recording applications, an audio input device, e.g., a microphone, can be utilized by an end user to input voice data, which may then be sent to the audio subsystem 320. The voice data will pass to the IC 302 and it may be stored in system memory 206. The CPU 203 may then retrieve the voice data from system memory 206 and utilize a variety of voice coding techniques known to those skilled in the art to perform voice data compression. The final output may then be sent to a mass storage device, e.g., hard disk drive 240, of the PC or it may be sent to a flash media card of an associated voice recorder and player. The status of voice recording such as a recording time may be displayed on the LCD module 314. Again, such a voice recording application can be quickly provided in PDA mode without the long boot up time of PC mode.

[0058] 7. Remote Access

[0059] Remote access software applications may be programmed so that a PC in PDA mode can send important information such as urgent emails, alert messages, stock market information, etc., to a mobile terminal, e.g., a mobile phone. The information may be sent through a phone line or network cable which is connected to the PC system. This allows the user to access any important messages or information from the user's mobile phone regardless of the location of the PC. A similar concept can also be utilized to allow a mobile terminal to control the PC to access information that the user desires.

[0060] The embodiments that have been described herein, however, are but some of the several which utilize this invention and are set forth here by way of illustration but not of limitation. It is obvious that many other embodiments, which will be readily apparent to those skilled in the art, may be made without departing materially from the spirit and scope of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A personal computer (PC) adapted to function as a personal digital assistant (PDA) comprising:

a central processing unit (CPU) responsive to a control signal to load a first operating system or a second operating system, wherein said first operating system is run by said PC in a first PC mode and said second operating system is run by said PC in a second PDA mode.

2. The PC of claim 1, wherein said first operating system has a first kernel and said second operating system has a second kernel, wherein said second kernel takes up less space in a memory device of said PC than said first kernel.

3. The PC of claim 1, wherein a first boot up sequence for said first operating system has a first boot time and a second boot up sequence for said second operating system has a second boot time, wherein said first boot time is longer than said second boot time.

4. The PC of claim 3, wherein said first boot time is at least five times greater than said second boot time.