

presenting a view of a home application (i.e., a start or base view that the user may return to whenever he likes), is shown in more detail in FIG. 7. In FIG. 6, the hardware keys 5a-d are shown at their actual location to the left of the display screen 3 on the front surface 2_f of the apparatus housing 2, whereas, for clarity reasons, the hardware keys 4a-c are illustrated as being located above the display screen 3 on the front surface 2_f, even while they actually are located at aforesaid first short side 2_u (FIG. 2).

[0077] With reference to FIG. 7, the layout of the display screen 3 is divided into four main areas: a task navigator 60, a title area 70, a status indicator area 74 and an application area 80.

[0078] The application area 80 is used by a currently active application to present whatever information is relevant and also to provide user interface controls such as click buttons, scrollable list, check boxes, radio buttons, hyper links, etc, which allow the user to interact with the currently active application by way of the stylus 9c. One example of how a currently active application, in the form of a notes application, uses the application area 80 in this manner is shown in FIG. 8. A name or other brief description of the currently active application (e.g. the notes application) and a current file or data item (e.g. the currently open text file) is given at 72 in the title area 70 (e.g. "Notes—Report 1"). In addition, by tapping in the title area 70, the user may access a menu structure of the currently active application.

[0079] The status indicator area 74 contains a plurality of icons 76 that provide information about system events and status, typically not associated with any particular active application. As seen in FIG. 7, the icons 76 may include a battery charge indicator, a display brightness control, a volume control as well as icons that pertain to the network interface(s) 55 and the ways in which the pocket computer connects to the network(s) 32, 26.

[0080] The task navigator 60, title area 70 and status indicator area 74 always remain on screen at their respective locations, unless full screen mode is commanded by depressing the hardware key 4c. In such a case, the currently active application will use all of the display 3 and the areas 60, 70 and 80 will thus be hidden.

[0081] The task navigator 60 has an upper portion 62 and a lower portion 66. The upper portion 62 contains icons 63-65 which when selected will open a task-oriented, context-specific menu to the right of the selected icon. The context-specific menu will contain a plurality of task-oriented menu items, and the user may navigate among these menu items and select a desired one either by the navigation key 5a or by pointing at the display screen 3. As seen in FIG. 7, the lower portion 66 represents an application switcher panel with respective icons 67 for each of a plurality of launched applications.

[0082] Referring now to FIGS. 8 and 11-12, the virtual keyboard module 56 with its word completion functionality will be described in more detail. As such, the word completion functionality may be implemented by any existing or future software package capable of deriving a set of full word candidates in response to a current partial word input 106 entered by the user by tapping on different keys of the virtual keyboard 110. To this end, the word completion

functionality may use a dictionary stored in a database in memory 54, possibly together with statistics that reflect the frequency or likelihood of each word, or group of interrelated words, in the dictionary. The dictionary could be language-specific. The particulars of the word completion functionality as such are not a key aspect of the present invention, and no detailed description is given herein to avoid obscuring the invention in unnecessary detail. It is well within reach for the skilled practitioner to implement appropriate word completion functionality, either by designing one of his own or using a commercially available one.

[0083] In FIG. 8, a text handling application in the form of a notes application is active, as indicated at 72 in the title area 70, and has control of the application area 80 of the display screen layout 100. The application area is divided into a text input field 102 and a virtual keyboard 110. Currently, there is no text input shown in the text input field 102.

[0084] The virtual keyboard 110 is divided into four main groups of logical keys or buttons 120, 140, 150 and 160. Each such key has an activation area which is indicated as a grey box having an icon or symbol representing the meaning of the key in question. In a well known manner, by pointing with the stylus 9c within the activation area, the user 9 may select the key. Alternatively or in addition, text input may be performed by other input means, such as handwriting recognition (HWR) functionality. An embodiment that employs HWR instead of a virtual keyboard will be described in more detail later with reference to FIG. 13 and FIG. 14.

[0085] If the selected key is an alphanumeric key included in a character key group 150 or numeric key group 140, such as a "y" key 152, the corresponding alphanumeric character will be directly displayed in the text input field 102, as is well known per se. If, on the other hand, the selected key belongs to a control key group 120 or 160, a corresponding function will instead be performed, such as backspace, carriage return, tabulation, switch of character set, caps lock, etc.

[0086] In FIG. 11, the user has made a text input 104 which includes four complete words ("He", "was", "asked", "to") and one partial word input 106 ("re"). Now, the word completion functionality is called upon to derive a set of full word candidates for the partial word input. In the illustrated example in FIG. 11, the derived set of full word candidates includes the candidates "reply", "record", "receive" and "result". Contrary to the prior art, these candidates are not shown in their entirety on the display screen. Instead, the prefix 132 that corresponds to the partial word input 106 is presented together with the suffixes 133a-133d of the above-mentioned full word candidates in a predetermined area arranged on top of a space bar 130 in the character key group 150. A certain part of the activation area 134 of the space bar 130 is still left available for the user to tap with the stylus for manual selection of a space character. Thus, only a fraction ($L_{\max} - L_{\text{dyn}}$) of the nominal length L_{\max} of the space bar 130 (see FIG. 12) is used for presentation of candidate suffixes 133a-133d.

[0087] The user 9 may now conveniently select the desired full word candidate by pointing at its suffix with the stylus. Thus, if the user selects the suffix 133b ("cord"), the associated full word candidate 112 (made up of prefix "re" and suffix "cord") will automatically replace the partial word