

to visually perceive, and it becomes possible to more easily carry out an information selection.

[0129] Also, the number of items of information displayed on any of the selection axis **310** and the non-selection axes **320** and **330** is limited, apart from the specified information **300**. For at least this reason, even though there are a large number of items of information relating to the specified information **300** via each of the relation criteria, a display size of other items of information, other than the specified information **300** on the display device **105**, is prevented from being too small. Also, even though the number of items of information that are displayed aligned on the selection axis **310** and the non-selection axes **320** and **330** is limited, as long as a fixed number of items of information are displayed, the user is not hindered from visually perceiving a relationship between the other items of information and the specified information **300**.

[0130] Meanwhile, each time the specified information **300** and/or the selected relation criterion is changed, its selection condition history is recorded in the history storage areas **401** to **40n** (shown, for example, in FIG. 4A). When the user actuates the X-button of the input device **104**, the selection condition of the specified information and the selected relation criterion stored in a history storage area as a history immediately previous to the present display mode is read. A display mode, in which the previous history has been restored, is displayed on the display device **105**. With such a configuration, even when the present specified information **300** is thought to be farther away from a user's desired item of information, after a previous display mode is reproduced, the specified information **300** and the selected relation criterion can be selected over again. Thus, a selection of a user's desired item of information may be facilitated.

[0131] Also, when the user actuates the square button of the input device **104**, the selection condition of the specified information **300** and selected relation criterion at the time of actuation is recorded. When the user later actuates the triangle button, the selection condition, of the specified information and the selected relation criterion, stored in the bookmark buffer **420** is read, and the display mode when the user actuated the square button is restored on the display device **105**. When the user becomes curious about a selection condition of the specified information **300** and selected relation criterion at a certain point, it is possible to bookmark the point and restore the bookmarked display mode at any later time. With such a configuration, even when the present specified information **300** is thought to be farther away from a user's desired item of information, after the bookmarked display mode is reproduced, the specified information **300** and the selected relation criterion can be selected over again. Thus, a selection of a user's desired item of information may be facilitated.

[0132] Meanwhile, as the display device **105** generally displays an image in a planar configuration, a plurality of items of information can be only two-dimensionally arranged on the display device **105**. With a three-dimensional arrangement of items of information, it is possible to project an information relationship onto a two-dimensional plane by means of a perspective transformation or the like, but a tridirectional input is required. In contrast, in this embodiment, although the input device **104** includes only

up, down, left and right two-dimensional direction keys, by selecting the selected relation criterion by an input from the left and right direction keys and selecting the specified information **300** by an input from the up and down direction keys, the user can use three-dimensional relation criteria to visually perceive a relationship of each item of information and easily select a desired item of information from among a plurality of items of information.

[0133] Furthermore, when the user actuates the circle button of the input device **104**, a process according to an item of information which is made the specified information **300** is carried out. In this way, a process set according to the specified information **300** is carried out by an actuation of the circle button, the user can visually perceive and select a process which he or she wants to carry out.

#### Second Embodiment

[0134] A configuration of an information processing apparatus applied to this embodiment is the same as that of the information processing apparatus shown in the first embodiment. In this embodiment, a configuration of the information selectively displayed on the display device **105** in response to an input from the input device differs from that of the first embodiment. Also, because of this difference in the information configuration, a number of axes on which the information is displayed, which is based on specified information displayed in the center of the display device **105**, varies according to the specified information.

[0135] FIG. 7 is a diagram schematically showing a configuration of information selectively displayed on the display device **105** in this embodiment. At this point, items of information relating to each other via identical relation criteria are grouped together, forming information packages **701** to **707** for each relation criterion. The information packages **701** to **707** are stored in advance in the HDD **103** of the non-limiting exemplary information processing apparatus shown in FIG. 1. In one information package, items of information having close similarity in their contents when considered with regard to the relevant relation criterion are recorded adjacent to each other. Each of the items of information in the information packages **701** to **707** is not necessarily an information content, but may instead be a pointer to an item of information having content.

[0136] Next, a description will be given for a display mode of items of information on the display device **105** in accordance with this embodiment. FIGS. 8A and 8B are diagrams showing examples of display modes for items of information selectively displayed on the display device **105** in this embodiment. In FIGS. 8A and 8B, an item of information that is displayed larger than the other surrounding items and is also displayed in the center is specified information **800**. A relation criterion corresponding to any one of the information packages, including an item of information selected as the specified information **800**, is selected as a selected relation criterion.

[0137] Other items of information related to the specified information **800** by the selected relation criterion are displayed as being aligned on a selection axis **810**. For example, items of information Y, Z, B and C, which are aligned on the selection axis **810** in FIG. 8A, are two previous and two subsequent items of information centered around information A, which is the specified information