can be a series of bumps that are spatially arranged within the area of the window in a predefined pattern; when the cursor moves over a designated bump area, a bump force is output on the touchpad. A pulse or bump force can be output when the cursor is moved over a selectable object, such as a link in a displayed web page or an icon. A vibration can also be output to signify a graphical object which the cursor is currently positioned over. Furthermore, features of a document displaying in a window can also be associated with force sensations. For example, a pulse can be output on the touchpad when a page break in a document is scrolled past a particular area of the window. Page breaks or line breaks in a document can similarly be associated with force sensations such as bumps or vibrations.

[0057] Furthermore, a menu items in a displayed menu can be selected by the user after a menu heading or graphical button is selected. The individual menu items in the menu can be associated with forces. For example, vertical (z-axis) bumps or pulses can be output when the cursor is moved over the border between menu items. The sensations for certain menu choices can be stronger than others to indicate importance or frequency of use, i.e., the most used menu choices can be associated with higher-magnitude (stronger) pulses than the less used menu choices. Also, currently-disabled menu choices can have a weaker pulse, or no pulse, to indicate that the menu choice is not enabled at that time. Furthermore, when providing tiled menus in which a sub-menu is displayed after a particular menu element is selected, as in Microsoft Windows™, pulse sensations can be sent when a sub-menu is displayed. This can be very useful because users may not expect a sub-menu to be displayed when moving a cursor on a menu element. Icons can be associated with textures, pulses, and vibrations similarly to the windows described above. Drawing or CAD programs also have many features which can be associated with similar haptic sensations, such as displayed (or invisible) grid lines or dots, control points of a drawn object, etc.

[0058] In other related interactions, when a rate control or scrolling function is performed with the touchpad (through use of the cursor), a vibration can be displayed on the device to indicate that scrolling is in process. When reaching the end of a numerical range that is being adjusted (such as volume), a pulse can be output to indicate that the end of the range has been reached. Pulse sensations can be used to indicate the location of the "ticks" for discrete values or settings in the adjusted range. A pulse can also be output to inform the user when the center of the range is reached. Different strength pulses can also be used, larger strength indicating the more important ticks. In other instances, strength and/or frequency of a vibration can be correlated with the adjustment of a control to indicate current magnitude of the volume or other adjusted value. In other interactions, a vibration sensation can be used to indicate that a control function is active. Furthermore, in some cases a user performs a function, like selection or cutting or pasting a document, and there is a delay between the button press that commands the function and the execution of the function, due to processing delays or other delays. A pulse sensation can be used to indicate that the function (the cut or paste) has been executed.

[0059] Furthermore, the magnitude of output forces on the touchpad can depend on the event or interaction in the graphical environment. For example, the force pulse can be a different magnitude of force depending on the type of graphical object encountered by the cursor. For example, a pulses of higher magnitude can be output when the cursor moves over windows, while pulses of lower magnitude can be output when the cursor moves over icons. The magnitude of the pulses can also depend on other characteristics of graphical objects, such as an active window as distinguished a background window, file folder icons of different priorities designated by the user, icons for games as distinguished from icons for business applications, different menu items in a drop-down menu, etc. The user or developer can also preferably associate particular graphical objects with customized haptic sensations.

[0060] User-independent events can also be relayed to the user using haptic sensations on the touchpad. An event occurring within the graphical environment, such as an appointment reminder, receipt of email, explosion in a game, etc., can be signified using a vibration, pulse, or other time-based force. The force sensation can be varied to signify different events of the same type. For example, vibrations of different frequency can each be used to differentiate different events or different characteristics of events, such as particular users sending email, the priority of an event, or the initiation or conclusion of particular tasks (e.g. the downloading of a document or data over a network). When the host system is "thinking," requiring the user to wait while a function is being performed or accessed (usually when a timer is displayed by the host) it is often a surprise when the function is complete. If the user takes his or her eyes off the screen, he or she may not be aware that the function is complete. A pulse sensation can be sent to indicate that the "thinking" is over.

[0061] A software designer may want to allow a user to be able to select options or a software function by positioning a cursor over an area on the screen using the touchpad, but not require pressing a physical button or tapping the touchpad to actually select the option. Currently, it is problematic to allow such selection because a user has physical confirmation of execution when pressing a physical button. A pulse sent to the touchpad of the present invention can act as that physical confirmation without the user having to press a button or other control for selection. For example, a user can position a cursor over a web page element, and once the cursor is within the desired region for a given period of time, an associated function can be executed. This is indicated to the user through a tactile pulse sent to the pad **16**.

[0062] The above-described force sensations can also be used in games or simulations. For example, a vibration can be output when a user-controlled racing car is driving on a dirt shoulder of a displayed road, a pulse can be output when the car collides with another object, and a varying-frequency vibration can be output when a vehicle engine starts and rumbles. The magnitude of pulses can be based on the severity of a collision or explosion, the size of the controlled graphical object or entity (and/or the size of a different graphical object/entity that is interacted with), etc. Force sensations can also be output based on user-independent events in the game or simulation, such as pulses when bullets are fired at the user's character.

[0063] The above haptic sensations can be similar to those described in copending patent application Ser. No. 09/253,132, and application Ser. No. 09/_____, entitled, "Tactile