

**FIG. 10A** is the vertical listing of items, here also known as a focus area **86**; and the horizontal list of available actions, here also known as a focus area **88**.

[0052] **FIG. 10A**, however, illustrates in display **80** a situation where the improvements proposed by the presently described embodiments of this invention are not present (either not disposed to be operative therewith, or alternatively not activated as described below). In other words, related focused upon or highlighted items and focused upon or highlighted actions are similarly shown simultaneously, with dotted backgrounds here, without any further highlighting or definition or visual delineation as described herebelow. Note, the highlighted item in **FIG. 10A** is "Item 2" element number **82** and the highlighted action is the "Cancel" action **85**.

[0053] **FIG. 10B**; on the other hand, provides a display **80a** which has the same general situation as **FIG. 10A** but with some additional visual improvements as provided by this invention. Items in the list **86**, see particularly items **81a**, **82a**, and **83a**, are de-emphasized or dimmed in **FIG. 10B**, as indicated here by the distinctive less bold font, so that the user knows they are not part of the possible or intended "Cancel" action suggested here by the action focus/indication on the "Cancel" action element **85a**. If the user presses the left action key (see softkeys **8**, **FIG. 1A**), here corresponding to the "Select" action **84a**, the items become available, becoming un-dimmed (such as those un-dimmed items **81**, **82** and **83** shown in **FIG. 10A**), and the action indication becomes focused on "Select," by changing the focus indication from the "Cancel" to the "Select" action (this indication is not shown). Such lack of de-emphasis or dimming shows the direct relationship of the action, here "Select", to the items upon which such action may be run. If the user presses either the up or down key, the items in the item focus area **86** become available (not subject to "Cancel"), the action becomes focused on the "Select" action alternative **84** or **84a** and the focused item becomes either one of "Item 1" or "Item 2" or "Item 3," with an appropriate indication (dotted background or the like, shown only for "Item 2" here) thereof depending on which key the user pressed.

[0054] **FIG. 10C**, in display **80b**, shows the same general situation again, but with an alternative visual implementation of the present invention. Here only the currently focused item is de-emphasized or dimmed when the action indication is focused on "Cancel." See "Item 2" element number **82b**. This de-emphasis shows the direct relationship of the action "Cancel" to the highlighted item **82b**, specifically, that the action is not applicable to the item. The alternative if the action "Select" were highlighted (not shown) and the item **82b** selected would result in a lack of de-emphasis or no dimming, thus showing the direct relationship of the availability of the action to be performed on the item. Such a visual clue is perhaps not equally as strong as in **FIG. 10B** where all of the selectable items were dimmed, but in providing such a limited indication, it may provide a better signal for the user that he or she can use the up and/or down keys to directly alter the focus onto the item list and an alternative item thereof, which would also result in a change of focus in the action field, away from the "Cancel" action **85b** and to the "Select" action alternative **85a**.

[0055] **FIG. 11** shows a more general situation that is possible to implement using the concept of **FIG. 10**. Though

generally, one or more actions may be available, here the list control is shown having more than two available actions performable relative to one or more of the items in the list of items (even though in many cases the number of possible actions may be only two where the first one is the actual action and the other one is a way to exit the situation). Here, each action may thus have its own set of items it can affect. Choosing a different focus in the action field dims different items in the list.

[0056] See for example, the display **90** of **FIG. 11A** which shows three items **91**, **92** and **93**, where however, the third such item **93**, "item 3," is shown dimmed (indicated by the distinctive, less-bold font). This is dimmed when the first action in this example, here "Act 1," element **94**, is highlighted (see the dotted background thereof), thereby indicating that item **93** is unavailable for or otherwise incompatible with operation by "Act 1" **94**. The other two shown items **91** and **92** are not dimmed and thus available for and/or compatible with selection for operation with "Act1" **94**; indeed, the "Item 2" element number **92** is highlighted and thus ready to be acted upon if and when the Act1 action is commenced.

[0057] **FIG. 11B** shows in a display **90a** an alternative situation when for example the "Act2" element **95a** has been selected and then corresponding unavailable items **91a** and **92a** ("items 1 and 2) are dimmed. This may then signal to the operator to select another item from the item list which is available, see e.g., "item 3," element **93a**, thus moving the highlight from "item 2" **92a** (as shown) to the "Item 3" (not shown). Similarly, **FIG. 11C** shows in display **90b** what may occur if the "Exit" action element **96b** is selected. Here all of the items in the list are then dimmed; see items **91b**, **92b** and **93b**.

[0058] What is thus described for the embodiments of **FIGS. 10 and 11** are user interfaces having, a form of a multi-focus list control. In a general form of multi-focus list control, the focus may be set in two dimensions at the same time, where one dimension is used for selecting a focus on a particular action and another dimension is used for selecting focus on the target, i.e. item, of the action. The actual triggering of an action on an item can be done after selecting the focus in both dimensions. In one view, the dimension used for selecting focus on the action can replace the functionality that would normally be provided by soft keys (see keys **8** in **FIG. 1A**) in a similar system.

[0059] Nevertheless, in such general forms of multi-focus list control, the mere presentation of multiple focuses may provide some undesirable consequences which may negatively affect the behaviour and/or usability of the UI control. Rather, it might not be totally clear to the user what happens with each alternative the control offers to the user. Also accidental changes of the focused action may easily happen without the user noticing it. Hence the risk of accidental user actions rises and the usability of the device suffers. For example: when there are multiple actions available in a multi-focus list control and one of the actions is to exit, it is likely that the exit action is not targeted to any of the items in the list. However, if the user is still able to select focus on the list of items when exit action is focused, it may become unclear to the user what happens if he/she exits with a different item focused-upon. On the other hand, if the user