

address line 310 and a V<sup>+</sup> address line 320. The V<sup>-</sup> address line 310 and the V<sup>+</sup> address line 320 are located within the charge circuit 350. When the V<sup>-</sup> address line 310 is excited, the electrode 104 exhibits a negative charge. As discussed, in response to the negative charge, the area of electrostatic film 102 directly above the electrode 104 in cell 112 repels from the negatively excited electrode 104 and creates a protrusion 116. When the V<sup>+</sup> address line 320 is excited, the electrode 104 exhibits a positive charge. In response, the area of the electrostatic film 102 directly above the electrode 104 in cell 112 attracts to the positively excited electrode 104 and creates an indentation 114.

[0030] The individual electrodes 104 in the interface 10 are interconnected by a series of electrically conductive row and column couplers. The row and column couplers are in turn coupled to a power source (see FIG. 3A), thereby enabling the electrodes to be collectively or individually excited. More specifically, any individual electrode 104 may be selectively excited by addressing that electrode using the corresponding row and column couplers.

[0031] FIG. 2B is an elevated view illustrating excitation of individual electrodes according to the dynamic tactile interface of FIG. 1A. The row couplers 201a, 201b, 201c, 201d, 201e are each electrically coupled to a plurality of electrodes 104 that are in the same row (in this example across all five columns of the matrix). The column couplers 202a, 202b, 202c, 202d, 202e are each electrically coupled to a plurality of electrodes 104 that are in the same column (in this example, across all five rows). For example, to cause a protrusion 116 and effectuate a “bump” state in the electrode having a cell matrix site of (3,1), a positive charge is applied to both the row coupler 201c (i.e., row 3) and the column coupler 202a (i.e., column 1). In some embodiments, for a single electrode 104 to be excited, it receives an excitation from both its corresponding row and column couplers. Thus, the cells 112 (and the electrodes 104 therein) can be individually addressed, allowing the creation of any regular periodic pattern, a periodic pattern, random pattern, or tactile image on the device 10. In the example illustrated in FIG. 2B, the electrodes 104 having matrix sites of (3,1); (3,2); (4,1); (4,2); (5,1); and (5,2) have been excited with positive charges to create a protrusion 116 over the respective cells 112. Similarly, the electrodes 104 having matrix sites of (1,2) and (1,3) have been excited with negative charges to create an indent 114 over the respective cells 112.

[0032] FIG. 3B is a block diagram illustrating an addressing scheme according to the dynamic tactile interface 10 of FIG. 1A. Each individual electrode 104 is associated with a charge circuit 350 that controls the respective V<sup>-</sup> address line 310 and the V<sup>+</sup> address line 320 for that electrode 104. Each charge circuit 350 is coupled to a row decoder 340 and a column decoder 330. The row decoder 340 and column decoder 330 are controlled by a controller 360. In light of the present disclosure it is understood that the controller 360 is any microcontroller or electronic circuit generally known in the art capable of sending excitation signals to the row decoder 340 and column decoder 330, causing portions of the electrostatic device 10 to exhibit an indent 114 or protrusion 116 (see FIGS. 1B and 1C). In response to receiving user feedback, the controller 360 is capable of updating and adjusting the device in areas that require tactile feedback. The controller 360 excites the areas that require tactile feedback by sending excitation signals to the row decoder 340 and column decoder 330. Based on a desired tactile pattern on the

device 10, the controller 360 determines when a particular row coupler 202 and column coupler 201 combination should be excited, and sends a corresponding excitation signal to the row decoder 340 and column decoder 330. Such an excitation signal causes the row decoder 340 to excite specific row coupler(s) 202 and the column decoder to excite specific column coupler(s) 201.

[0033] In some embodiments, the charge circuits 350 include AND logic gate to detect a decoder signal from the row decoder 340 and the column decoder 330. In this case, the charge circuit 350 will not excite the electrode 104 unless a decoder signal is received from both the row decoder 340 and column decoder 330. The charge circuit 350 also includes the Address Line Selector 370 circuit to evaluate the decoder signal(s) from row decoder 340 and column decoder 330. The Address Line Selector 370 evaluates these signals to determine whether to excite the V<sup>-</sup> address line 310 or the V<sup>+</sup> address line 320 to effect a positive or negative charge on the electrode, and thus an indentation 114 or protrusion 116. The charge circuit 350 is configured to excite the electrode 104 via V<sup>-</sup> address line 310 or the V<sup>+</sup> address line 320 if the appropriate decoder signal(s) arrive from both the row decoder 340 and the column decoder 330. The controller 360 is configured to send excitation signals to the row decoder 340 and column decoder 330, which in turn, sends the decoder signals to charge circuit 350. The charge circuit 350 determines whether to excite the V<sup>-</sup> address line 310 or the V<sup>+</sup> address line 320. As discussed, exciting the V<sup>-</sup> address line 310 creates an indentation 114 and exciting the V<sup>+</sup> address line 320 creates a protrusion 116.

[0034] FIG. 5 is a flow diagram illustrating a method of exciting electrodes according to the dynamic tactile interface 10 of FIG. 1A. As described above, areas of an image capable of tactile feedback are identified. As previously described, electrodes in the dynamic tactile interface 10 corresponding to the areas are identified. A voltage is applied to the electrodes to create the desired state for the electrodes in the dynamic tactile interface 10. The dynamic tactile interface 10 can be implemented as part of a viewable display type of device, or as a device without any viewable display.

[0035] FIG. 6 is a block diagram illustrating a computer architecture or system 1000 that is arranged in accordance with the present disclosure. Example embodiments of dynamic tactile interfaces 10 include a controller 360, which may be realized and/or implemented as illustrated by FIG. 6. A system bus 1002 transports data amongst the Central Processing Unit (CPU) 1004, RAM 1006, the Basic Input Output System (BIOS) 1008 and other components. The CPU 1004 may include a cache memory component 1024. The RAM 1006 may include a dynamic tactile interface process 1200. The dynamic tactile interface process 1200 may determine the control information or excitation signal requirements for the row decoders 340 and the column decoders 330 to produce the desired tactile pattern described above with reference, for example, to the controller 360 and FIG. 3B. The computer system 1000 may include one or more external storage ports 1017 for accessing a hard disk drive, optical storage drive (e.g., CD-ROM, DVD-ROM, DVD-RW), flash memory, tape device, or other storage device (not shown). The relevant storage device(s) are coupled through the external storage port 1017 which is coupled to the system bus 1002 via a disk controller 1022. A keyboard and pointing device (e.g. mouse, touch pad) (not shown) can be coupled to the keyboard/mouse port(s) 1012, and other I/O devices could be