

SEARCH INTERFACE FOR MOBILE DEVICES

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This is an application claiming benefit under 35 U.S.C. 119(e) of U.S. Provisional Patent application Ser. No. 60/718,187 entitled “ENHANCED PORTABLE DEVICE NAVIGATION TOOLS” and filed Sep. 16, 2005. This application is also related to co-pending U.S. patent application Ser. No. _____, (Atty. Docket No. MS315061.01/MSFTP1354US), entitled, “CONTENT SHARING USER INTERFACE FOR MOBILE DEVICES”, and filed _____; U.S. patent application Ser. No. _____, (Atty. Docket No. MS315060.01/MSFTP1309US), entitled, “EXTENSIBLE, FILTERED LISTS FOR MOBILE DEVICE USER INTERFACE”, and filed _____; and U.S. patent application Ser. No. _____, (Atty. Docket No. MS315063.01/MSFTP1355US), entitled, “TILE SPACE USER INTERFACE FOR MOBILE DEVICES”, and filed _____. The entireties of the above-noted applications are incorporated by reference herein.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Mobile or portable devices have become increasingly popular and prevalent in today’s society. Many users utilize a mobile device, such as a cellphone, as their primary means of communication and carry such devices with them constantly. Mobile devices can include multiple functions such as cellular phone service, voice over Internet protocol (“VoIP”) phone service, software applications, email access, Internet capabilities, calendar functions, music players and the like. Functions, features and capabilities have increased both the utility and complexity of mobile devices. It is likely that functions will continue to be added to mobile devices further increasing both usefulness and intricacy.

[0003] While consumers desire additional functionality, the sheer volume of information and features make it difficult for users to locate and access commonly used data and functions. Difficulty in locating content makes it impossible for users to fully exploit the capabilities of such devices. The problem is exacerbated by the generally limited user interfaces of mobile devices. Such devices are designed to be small, lightweight and easily portable. Consequently, mobile devices typically have limited display screens, keypads, keyboards and/or other input devices. Due to the size of the user input devices and display screens, it may be difficult for users to enter, retrieve and view information using mobile devices.

[0004] Users may have difficulty in accessing the information or function they desire due to the organization of information that may be contained in or accessible by the mobile device, as well as the growing number of functions such devices are capable of supporting. Information is frequently organized based upon the application software that provides or manages the information. Consequently, users can be required to access information by navigating to various software applications and searching within the context of the application. Users can become frustrated when they are unable to locate the desired information or tasks and may be unable to fully exploit the functions and advantages of the mobile device.

SUMMARY

[0005] The following presents a simplified summary in order to provide a basic understanding of some aspects of the

claimed subject matter. This summary is not an extensive overview. It is not intended to identify key/critical elements or to delineate the scope of the claimed subject matter. Its sole purpose is to present some concepts in a simplified form as a prelude to the more detailed description that is presented later.

[0006] Briefly described, the provided subject matter concerns an improved user interface for mobile devices such as smartphones, personal digital assistants (PDAs) and the like. A search system is provided that utilizes user input to search multiple software applications and data sources. Content can be retrieved and presented to a user without requiring the user to navigate to the underlying application or sources supplying content. The applications or content sources can be local to the mobile device or remotely located, such as an Internet site. One or more types of data can be retrieved and presented to a user based upon the user input. Search results can be displayed and dynamically updated as additional user input is obtained.

[0007] Search results can be organized and presented to users in groups, lists or other arrangements based upon the type or class of the data. For example, if user input consists of the character “A” multiple search results with multiple types of data (e.g., people, documents, music or audio files) can be retrieved where each search result begins with the letter “A.” Each type or class of search result can be organized in a separate group or list. The user can navigate through the result groups or lists to view relevant search results. The initial or default list displayed to the user can be dependent upon the context from which the search was generated. For example, if the search commenced while a music file was selected, the class of data displayed in the default list can consist of music files. Similarly, if the search commenced while the user was reviewing an email message, the class of data displayed in the default list can include email messages.

[0008] The search system can also provide a set of keywords that can be mapped to data, services and tasks. Keywords can be a predefined set of words, however the data or task to which a keyword is mapped can be dynamic. For example, a keyword can map to a particular website in one geographic context, and the same keyword can map to a second, distinct website in a second geographic context. In addition, keywords can provide shortcuts to data, services and mobile device tasks, such as audio settings, power management and the like. Keywords can also be used to access links to remote data and services, such as web sites.

[0009] To the accomplishment of the foregoing and related ends, certain illustrative aspects of the claimed subject matter are described herein in connection with the following description and the annexed drawings. These aspects are indicative of various ways in which the subject matter may be practiced, all of which are intended to be within the scope of the claimed subject matter. Other advantages and novel features may become apparent from the following detailed description when considered in conjunction with the drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0010] FIG. 1 is a block diagram of a search system for providing content from one or more software applications in accordance with an aspect of the subject matter disclosed herein.