ated that the invention may be modified, altered, or varied without deviating from the scope and fair meaning of the following claims. For example, the directions assigned to a particular character shown in **FIG. 5** could be changed. In addition, the mechanical keypad could be replaced by merely using the capacitive touchpad to select a key. This can be done by further utilization of the pulse signals in the wire grid. Finally, the lookup table may be replaced by an alternative internally or externally stored data source of touchpad data signals and corresponding disambiguating character data.

[**0036**] The foregoing description is not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the invention to the precise form disclosed. Modifications or variations are possible in light of the above teachings. The embodiment(s) was chosen and described to provide the best illustration of the principles of the invention and its practical application, and to enable one of ordinary skill in the art to utilize the invention in various embodiments and with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated. All such modifications and variations are within the scope of the invention as determined by the appended claims, as may be amended during the pendency of this application for patent, and all equivalents thereof, when interpreted in accordance with the breadth to which they are fairly, legally, and equitably entitled.

What is claimed is:

1. A keypad system comprising:

a capacitive touchpad for detecting movement within a region;

a driver device electrically coupled to the capacitive touchpad, wherein the driver device is for generating a touchpad data signal corresponding to the movement detected by the capacitive touchpad; and

a controller electrically coupled to the driver device for receiving the touchpad data signal generated by the driver device and for resolving the touchpad data signal as one of a plurality of character values corresponding to the region.

2. The keypad system of claim 1, wherein:

the capacitive touchpad is further for detecting a direction of the movement within the region; and

the driver device is for generating the touchpad data signal to correspond to the direction of the movement.

3. The keypad system of claim 1, wherein the controller is further for resolving the touchpad data signal in accordance with a lookup table stored in a memory, wherein the lookup table is comprised of touchpad data signal values and corresponding character values.

4. The keypad system of claim 1, wherein the driver device is further for sending a plurality of pulse signals to the capacitive touchpad for mapping the capacitive touchpad into a coordinate plane.

5. The keypad system of claim 4, wherein the capacitive touchpad is further for detecting a direction of the movement in a specific region by outputting a resultant signal induced by interaction between the movement and one or more of the plurality of pulse signals to the driver.

6. The keypad system of claim 5, wherein the driver device comprises a signal processing integrated circuit for processing the resultant signal and for generating the touchpad data signal to correspond to the resultant signal.

7. The keypad system of claim 5, further comprising a mechanical keypad adjacent and mechanically coupled to the capacitive touchpad, wherein the mechanical keypad includes a plurality of mechanical keys.

8. The keypad system of claim 7, wherein the controller is electrically coupled to the mechanical keypad and the controller is further for selecting one of a plurality of lookup tables stored in a memory, wherein the plurality of lookup tables correspond to the plurality of mechanical keys, respectively.

9. The keypad system of claim 1, further comprising:

a memory electrically coupled to the controller, wherein the memory includes a plurality of lookup tables stored therein and the plurality of lookup tables correspond to the plurality of mechanical keys.

10. The keypad system of claim 1, wherein the capacitive touchpad comprises a plurality of horizontal and vertical wires for defining a wire grid.

11. A keypad system comprising:

a keypad device that includes a plurality of keys and respective key switches for outputting a selection indication signal corresponding to a selection of one of the plurality of keys to a controller;

a memory electrically coupled to the controller, the memory including a plurality of lookup tables corresponding to the plurality of keys, respectively;

a capacitive touchpad adjacent and mechanically coupled to the keypad device; and

a driver device electrically coupled to the controller, wherein the driver device is for outputting a plurality of pulse signals to the capacitive touchpad sensor,

wherein:

the capacitive touchpad includes a wire grid for outputting a resultant signal induced by interaction between movement and one of the plurality of pulse signals to the driver device; and

the controller is for resolving the resultant signal to a character value in accordance with the one of the plurality of lookup tables.

12. The keypad system of claim 11, wherein the selection indication signal output by the keypad device is further corresponding to a time duration of the selection.

13. The keypad system of claim 11, wherein the controller is further for:

determining if a time duration of the selection indication is in accordance with a predetermined time period; and

resolving the signal received from the driver device in accordance with one of the plurality of lookup tables only if the time duration is in accordance with the predetermined time period.

14. A method for disambiguating a plurality of characters for a mechanical keypad comprising:

detecting pressure on one of a plurality of keys of the mechanical keypad and generating a key selection signal indicative of the one of the plurality of keys;