

36. A computer system as claimed in claim 35, wherein said audio controller is further adapted to cause said drive to read said compressed audio data based, at least in part, on said stored play list.

37. A computer system adapted to play audio files, said computer system comprising:

a system CPU;

memory;

at least one drive comprising compressed audio data, said compressed audio data residing in one or more audio files;

a play list software program for selecting a play list comprising one or more of said audio files; and

an audio controller coupled to said system CPU, memory and drive;

said audio controller being adapted to cause said drive to read at least one said audio file of said play list, to cause said system CPU to decompress the compressed audio data of said file and thereby provide decompressed audio data, and to cause said decompressed audio data to be stored in said memory.

38. A method of playing audio files on a computer system, said method comprising:

reading compressed audio data from the drive of a computer system having at least a drive, a CPU, and a memory;

providing said compressed audio data to said CPU for decompressing said compressed audio data, thereby providing decompressed audio data; and

storing said decompressed audio data in said memory.

39. A method of playing audio files on a computer system as claimed in claim 38, further comprising placing said system CPU in a standby state when said system CPU is not decompressing said compressed audio data.

40. A method of playing audio files on a computer system as claimed in claim 38, further comprising retrieving said decompressed audio data from said memory for playing.

41. A method of playing audio files on a computer system as claimed in claim 38, wherein said drive is a hard disk, removable disk, floppy disk, magnetic storage medium, optical storage medium, flash media, or IDE device.

42. A method of playing audio files on a computer system as claimed in claim 38, wherein said compressed audio data is in MP3, WMA, AAC, or other secured compressed audio format.

43. A method of playing audio files on a computer system as claimed in claim 38, further comprising generating signals to an LCD display for displaying song name, file/directory name and/or timing data.

44. A method of playing audio files on a computer system as claimed in claim 38, wherein said computer system further comprises a plurality of function keys, and wherein said method further comprises receiving user commands generated by at least one of said plurality of function keys and utilizing said user commands to control said playing.

45. A method of playing audio files on a computer system as claimed in claim 38, further comprising receiving interrupts generated by at least one of said plurality of function keys and passing said interrupts to said system CPU.

46. A method of playing audio files on a computer system as claimed in claim 38, wherein said computer system further comprises standard audio player software, and wherein said method further comprise utilizing said interrupts to control said standard audio player software.

47. A method of playing audio files on a computer system as claimed in claim 38, wherein said steps of reading compressed audio data from the drive of said computer system, providing said compressed audio data to said CPU, and storing said decompressed audio data in said memory, are not performed unless said computer system is off, in hibernate mode, in suspend to HDD mode, or in one of power states S4 or S5.

48. A method of playing audio files on a computer system as claimed in claim 20, wherein said steps of reading compressed audio data from the drive of said computer system, providing said compressed audio data to said CPU for decompressing said compressed audio data into said decompressed audio data, and storing said decompressed audio data in said memory, are not performed when said computer system is on, in sleep mode, in suspend to RAM mode, or in one of power states S0 or S3.

49. A method of playing audio files on a computer system as claimed in claim 45, wherein said steps of receiving interrupts generated by at least one of said plurality of function keys and passing said interrupts to said system CPU are not performed unless said computer system is on, in sleep mode, in suspend to RAM mode, or in one of power states S0 or S3.

50. A method of playing audio files on a computer system as claimed in claim 20, wherein said compressed audio data is stored in one or more audio files on said drive, wherein said method further comprises creating and storing a play list comprising one or more said audio files.

51. A method of playing audio files on a computer system as claimed in claim 50, wherein said step of creating and storing a play list is only performed when said computer is on or in power state S0.

52. A method of playing audio files on a computer system as claimed in claim 51, further comprising reading said compressed audio data from said drive based, at least in part, on said play list.

53. A method of playing audio files on a computer system, said method comprising:

creating and storing a play list comprising a list of compressed audio files residing on one or more drives of a computer system having at least a drive, a CPU, and a memory;

reading said play list;

reading said compressed audio files from said drive based on said play list;

providing said compressed audio data to said CPU for decompressing the data of said compressed audio file into decompressed audio data;

storing said decompressed audio data in said memory; and
retrieving said decompressed audio data from said memory for playing.

54. A method of playing audio files on a computer system, said method comprising:

when said computer system is on, in sleep mode, in suspend to RAM mode, or in one of power states S0 or