

tion, those skilled in the art will understand that various changes and modifications may be made, and equivalents may be substituted for elements thereof, without departing from the true scope of the invention.

[0069] In addition, many modifications may be made to adapt a particular element, technique or implementation to the teachings of the present invention without departing from the central scope of the invention. Therefore, this invention should not be limited to the particular embodiments and methods disclosed herein, but should include all embodiments falling within the scope of the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A user interface, comprising:
 - a display;
 - an input device located adjacent an edge of the display, and operatively connected to the display to respond to a physical contact; and
 - a processor for executing user interface software configured to implement a function in response to the physical contact on the input device.
2. The user interface of claim 1 wherein the display is a liquid crystal diode display.
3. The user interface of claim 1 wherein the input device includes a flexible elastomer strip having an upper surface and a lower surface.
4. The user interface of claim 3 wherein the elastomer strip includes a deformable cavity formed therein.
5. The user interface of claim 3 wherein the upper surface of the elastomer strip is smooth.
6. The user interface of claim 3 wherein the upper surface of the elastomer strip includes a protrusion.
7. The user interface of claim 1 wherein the input device includes a plurality of electrical contacts positioned to electrically couple in response to the physical contact.
8. The user interface of claim 1 wherein the input device includes a resistive plate positioned to generate a response to the physical contact.
9. The user interface of claim 7 wherein the plurality of electrical contacts includes a first set of mating electrical

contacts positioned a first distance from one another and a second set of mating electrical contacts positioned a second distance from one another.

10. The user interface of claim 9 wherein at least one of the first set of mating electrical contacts is ring-shaped.

11. The user interface of claim 9 wherein at least one of the second set of mating electrical contacts is disc-shaped.

12. The user interface device of claim 1 wherein the user input device is permanently affixed to a host device.

13. The user interface device of claim 1 wherein the user input device extends along more than one edge of the display.

14. A method for implementing a user interface, comprising the steps of:

- generating an image on a display in response to a first contact on an input device adjacent an edge of the display; and

- implementing a function associated with the image when a second contact is applied to the input device.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein the generating step includes the step of generating textual data on the display.

16. The method of claim 14 wherein the generating step includes the step of generating graphical data on the display.

17. The method of claim 15 further comprising the step of scrolling through the textual data generated on the display in response to a sliding contact.

18. The method of claim 16 further comprising the step of scrolling through the graphical data generated on the display in response to a sliding contact.

19. The method of claim 14 wherein the generating step includes the step of generating an image corresponding to a programmable area of the user input device.

20. The method of claim 14 wherein the generating step includes the step of generating an image that identifies a category of information corresponding to a first predetermined area of the input device and generating an image that identifies a sub-category of information corresponding to a second predetermined area of the input device.

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