[0034] When the operable element **26** is operated by, for example, pressing the surface **60**, the switch body **50** may rotate about pivot **48** bringing the surface **58** of the light transmitter **30** closer to the region T of display surface **28** while the surface **52** simultaneously moves away from display **12**. This action causes a change of state (which may be from an "off" state to an "on" state, for example). When the surface **58** is proximate to and substantially parallel with display **12**, image elements **24** in region T are transmitted by the light transmitter **30** to the surface **60** where the image elements **24** may be visible to a user viewing the front of the switch body **50**.

[0035] The change of state of a switch (not shown) operatively coupled to switch body **50** may be detected by the processor-based system **10** which in turn may cause the legend associated with the operable element **26** to move from the display region B to the display region T under program control so as to remain visible to the user. The content or design of the legend may also be changed under program control to indicate the change in the switch state.

[0036] Referring to **FIG. 8**, the system **10** may include a processor **60** coupled to an interface **62**. In one embodiment, the interface **62** may be coupled to the display **12**, system memory **64**, and a bus **68**.

[0037] The bus **68** may, in turn, be coupled to an interface **70**. The interface **70** may be coupled to a bus **66** and a hard disk drive **72** or other storage medium. The drive **72** may store software **74**.

[0038] The bus **66** may couple a serial input/output (SIO) device **76**. The SIO device **76** may be connected to the operable element **26**, for example, the switch **36** or mechanism **38**. Thus, a corresponding region of the display **12** may respond to or detect an actuation of the element **26** or the user may respond to information on the display **12**. This may be done under control of a software **74** in one embodiment of the present invention.

[0039] While the present invention has been described with respect to a limited number of embodiments, those skilled in the art will appreciate numerous modifications and variations therefrom. It is intended that the appended claims cover all such modifications and variations as fall within the true spirit and scope of this present invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A processor-based system comprising:

a display;

a user operable element positioned over the display to enable viewing of the display through the element, said operable element having a non-monotonic response to user actuation; and

a switch operatively coupled to the operable element.

2. A processor-based system as recited in claim 1 wherein the display is a cathode ray tube.

3. A processor-based system as recited in claim 1 wherein the display is a liquid crystal display.

4. A processor-based system as recited in claim 1 wherein the user-operable element is a push button.

5. A processor-based system as recited in claim 1 wherein the user-operable element is a rocker.

6. A processor-based system as recited in claim 1 further comprising a lens positioned over the display to enable viewing of the display through the lens.

7. A processor-based system as recited in claim 1 further comprising a light pipe positioned over the display to enable viewing of the display through the light pipe.

8. A processor-based system as recited in claim 10 wherein the light pipe comprises a fiber optic bundle.

9. An apparatus comprising:

a processor;

a display operatively coupled to said processor;

a user operable element positioned over the display to enable viewing of the display through the element, said operable element having a non-monotonic response to user actuation; and,

a switch mechanically connected to the operable element and electrically coupled to the processor.

10. An apparatus as recited in claim 9 wherein the user-operable element is a push button.

11. A processor-based system comprising:

a touch screen display;

a user operable element positioned over the display to enable viewing of the display through the element, said operable element having a non-monotonic response to user actuation; and,

a contactor operatively coupled to the operable element such that actuation of said element causes contact with the touch screen display.

12. A processor-based system as recited in claim 13 wherein the user-operable element is a push button.

13. A processor-based system comprising:

a display;

a user-operable element positioned over the display to enable viewing of the display through the element;

a switch operatively coupled to said operable element; and

a resilient element connected to said operable element such that operation of said operable element is resisted with a non-monotonic force.

14. A processor-based system as recited in claim 13 wherein the resilient element is a rubber dome.

15. A processor-based system as recited in claim 13 wherein the resilient element is a coil spring which breaks out of column in response to compressive force.

16. A processor-based system comprising:

a display;

a user-operable element having a lens positioned over said display to enable viewing of the display through the lens; and,

a switch operatively coupled to said operable element.

17. A processor-based system as recited in claim 16 wherein the display is a cathode ray tube.

18. A processor-based system as recited in claim 16 wherein the display is a liquid crystal display.

19. A processor-based system as recited in claim 16 wherein the user-operable element is a push button.