23. The method of claim **21**, wherein the positioning step comprises arranging all of the activation areas (**22**, **24**, **26**) along a left or right side of a visual field (**20**) of the touchscreen (**18**).

24. The method of claim **21**, further comprising assigning variable functions and indications to the activation areas (**22**, **24**, **26**) depending on an operation mode of the imaging system.

25. The method of claim **21**, wherein the defining step includes defining at least one of the activation areas as a segmented activation area (**30**) including a plurality of distinct activation areas (**32**) each having the form of at least a portion of a sector and a unique assigned function relating to the imaging system with an indication of the function being displayed on the activation area (**32**).

26. The method of claim **21**, wherein the function assigned to one of the activation areas (**24**) is display of a submenu (**30**) of a plurality of additional activation areas (**32**), further comprising centering display of the submenu (**30**) at a location on the activation area (**24**) touched by the user such that each of the additional activation areas (**32**) is equidistant from the point of touch.

27. The method of claim **21**, wherein the function assigned to at least one of the activation areas (**22**, **26**, **50**) is to provide adjustment of a parameter or profile of a parameter in multiple directions, further comprising detecting a sliding touch over the at least one activation area (**22**, **26**, **50**) and adjusting the parameter based on the sliding touch.

28. The method of claim **21**, wherein real-time three-dimensional ultrasound images are displayed, the activation areas (**22**) being assigned functions relating to processing of three-dimensional images.

29. The method of claim **21**, wherein the function assigned to at least one of the activation areas (**26**) is to provide adjustment of a parameter, further comprising displaying a numerical readout (**28**) of the parameter while the at least one activation area (**26**) is being touched and removing the numerical readout (**28**) from the touchscreen (**18**) once touching of the at least one activation area (**26**) has ceased.

30. The method of claim **21**, further comprising selectively switching a visual field (**20**) of the touchscreen (**18**) from a first mode in which the entire field of view is occupied by the ultrasound images to a second mode in which the activation areas (**22**, **24**, **26**, **32**) are displayed in the field of view.

31. The method of claim **21**, further comprising the step of displaying the activation areas (**22**, **24**, **26**, **32**) in a semi-transparent manner over the displayed ultrasound images.

32. The method of claim **21**, further comprising defining an activation area for text entry and converting text handwritten in the activation area into data for storage in association with the ultrasound images.

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