personal computing device for operation and use of the predictive text entry system **34.1** directly on the remote personal computing device. Preferably, the external computer-readable medium is adapted to be connected to a second physical instance of the enhanced keyboard-type device **200** for use and operation of that second physical instance in connection with one or more remote personal computing devices. In this arrangement, the data associated with the predictive text entry system **34.1** can also be stored on the external computer-readable medium. Moreover, as one or more of the operating system-specific configurations of the predictive text entry system **34.1** located on the external computer-readable medium are used, the associated data (such as the dictionary) is preferably updated whenever the predictive text entry system **34.1** is instructed to update its dictionary. In this way, a very portable input system is available to the user, containing personal data associated with one or more of the operating system-specific configurations of the predictive text entry system **34.1** so that the user-specific configuration of the one or more of the operating system-specific configurations of the predictive text entry system **34.1** can be used on any type of personal computing device compatible with the external computer-readable medium.

[0148] In another variation of the embodiment shown in **FIGS. 21, 22, 24** and **25**, as illustrated in **FIG. 23**, the display device of the enhanced keyboard-type device **200** comprises a touch-screen display, and the plurality of user input signal generators comprises a plurality of virtual keys which comprise a plurality of respective portions of a touch-sensitive surface of the touch-screen display. In the arrangement shown in **FIG. 23**, the keyboard **206**A is a virtual keyboard displayed on touch-sensitive screen **210**A.

[0149] In yet another variation of the embodiment shown in **FIGS. 21, 22, 24** and **25**, the enhanced keyboard-type device **200** is configured to receive display information from the remote personal computing device and to display such display information on a touch-sensitive portion of the display device of the enhanced keyboard-type device **200**. This can be advantageous when a mouse cursor needs to be positioned on a screen.

[0150] Although this invention has been described with reference to illustrative and preferred embodiments of carrying out the invention, this description is not to be construed in a limiting sense. Various modifications of form, arrangement of parts, steps, details and order of operations of the embodiments illustrated, as well as other embodiments of the invention, will be apparent to persons skilled in the art upon reference to this description. It is therefore contemplated that the appended claims will cover such modifications and embodiments as fall within the true scope of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A computer-implemented method of processing input key events associated with user input received from a keyboard-type device, the keyboard-type device selected from at least one of a keyboard and a keypad, the method comprising:

(a) receiving input key events associated with a first process active within an operating system;

(b) monitoring the input key events for a first predefined input key event associated with user selection of a first key of the keyboard-type device for at least a predetermined time period;

(c) in response to identifying the first predefined input key event, redirecting the input key events from the first process to a second process;

(d) monitoring the input key events for a second predefined input key event associated with further redirection of the input key events; and

(e) in response to identifying the second predefined input key event, redirecting the input key events to another process.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the another process is the first process.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the second predefined input key event is identified in association with user deselection of the first key.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the second predefined input key event is identified in association with user selection of a second key.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the first predefined input key event is identified by detecting a selection signal for at least the predetermined time period, the selection signal indicating user selection of the first key.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the first predefined input key event is identified by receiving an indication that the first key was selected for at least the predetermined time period.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the first predefined keyboard event is identified by detecting generation of one or more auto-repeated characters by auto-repeat functionality associated with the first key.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein detecting generation of one or more auto-repeated characters comprises detecting receipt of at least one message associated with the first key and having a repetition indication.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the first key represents an alpha-numeric character.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein the keyboard is displayed as a virtual keyboard represented in a graphical user interface (GUI).

11. The method of claim 1, wherein identification of the first predefined keyboard event further comprises providing a copy of the input key events to the second process for monitoring by the second process.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein redirecting the input key events to the second process comprises providing representations of further keyboard events to the second process, but not to the first process, for processing.

13. The method of claim 1, further comprising processing the input key events in the second process while it is redirected to the second process.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein redirecting the input key events to the second process is contingent upon the first predefined keyboard event meeting a process switching criterion, wherein different process switching criteria may be associated with different processes being executed as the first process.

15. A computer-readable medium having stored instructions for use in execution of the method of claim 1.

16. A system for processing input key events associated with user input received from a keyboard-type device, the