

Exhibit 5

Part 2 of 2

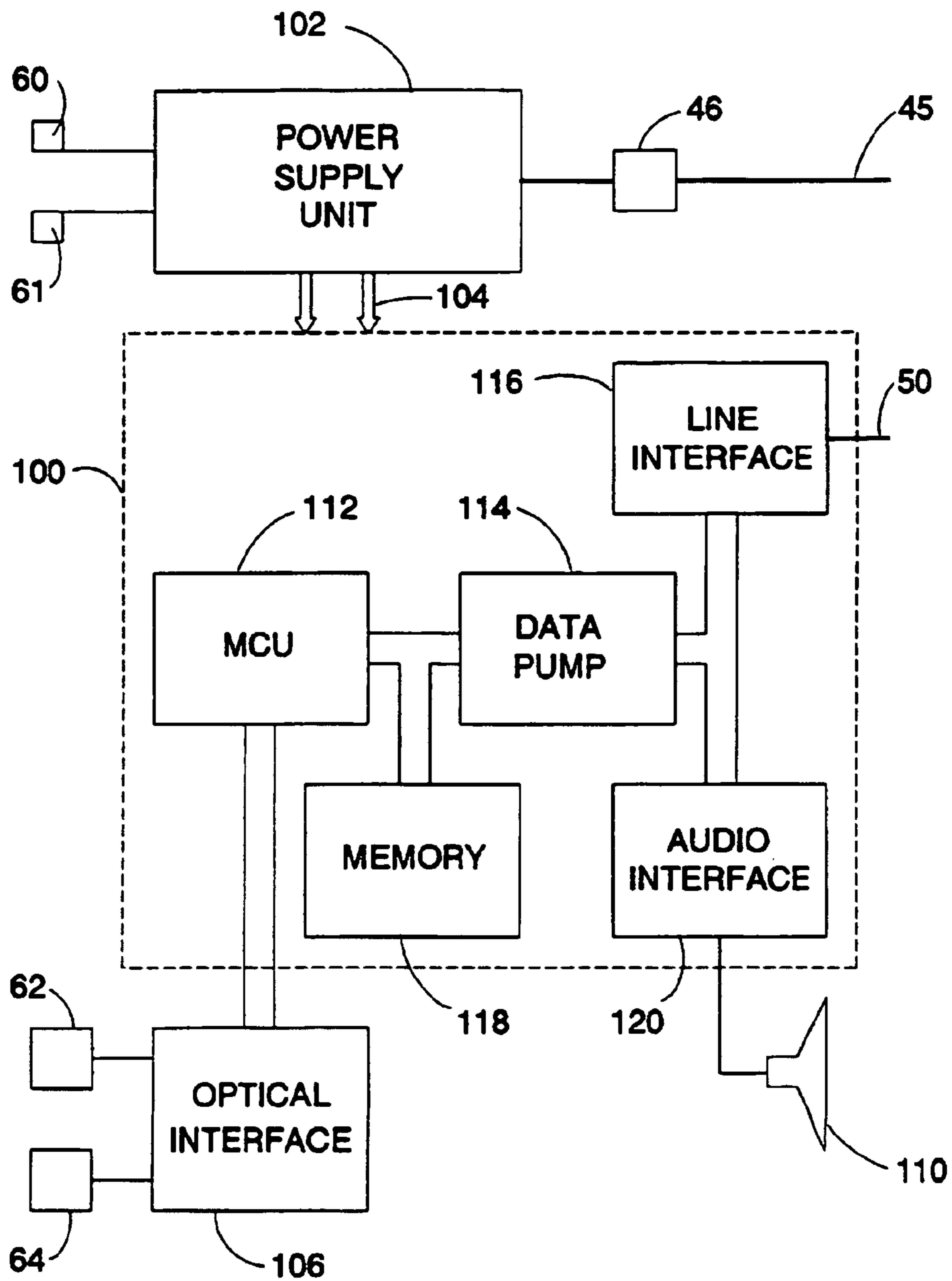


FIG. 4

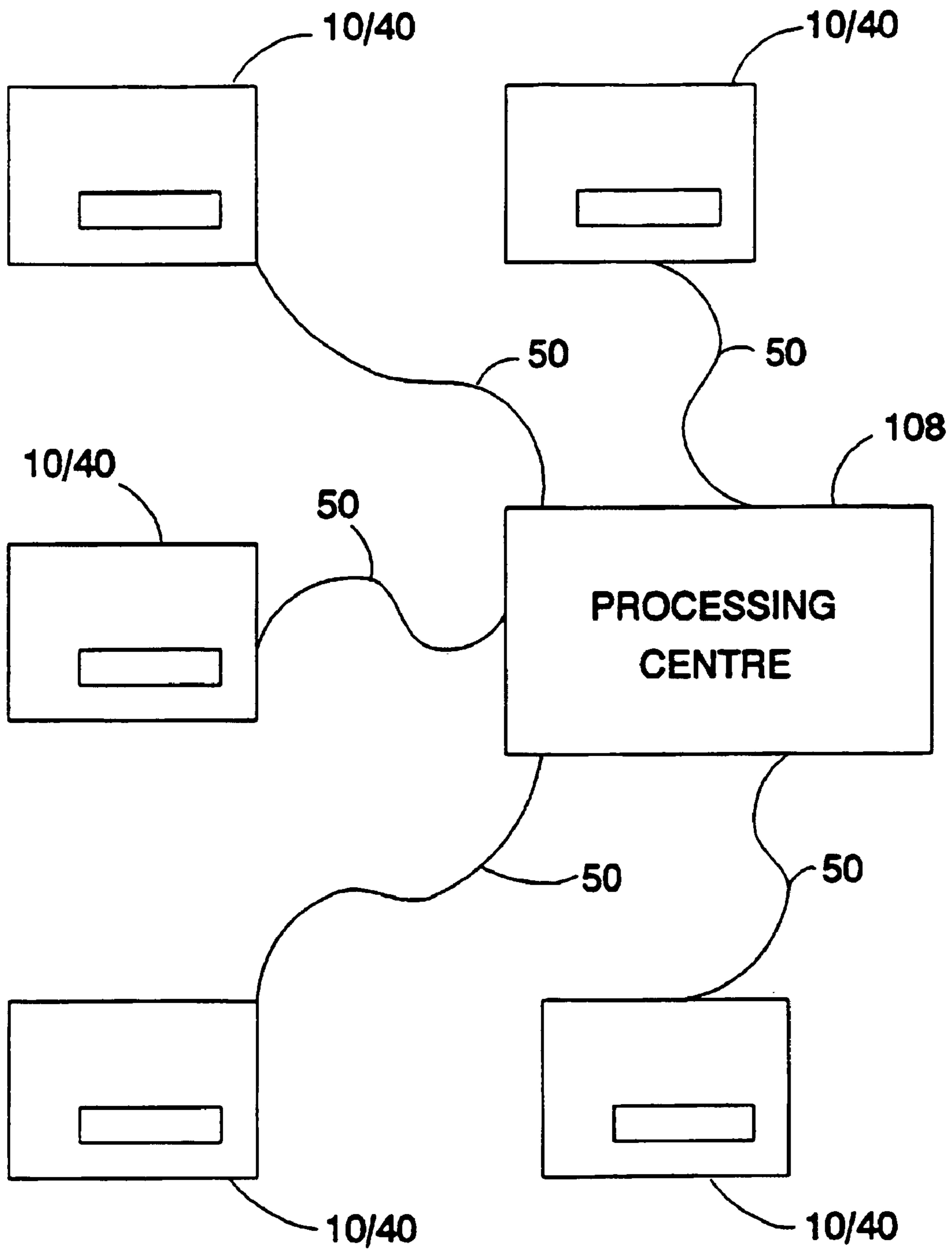


FIG. 5

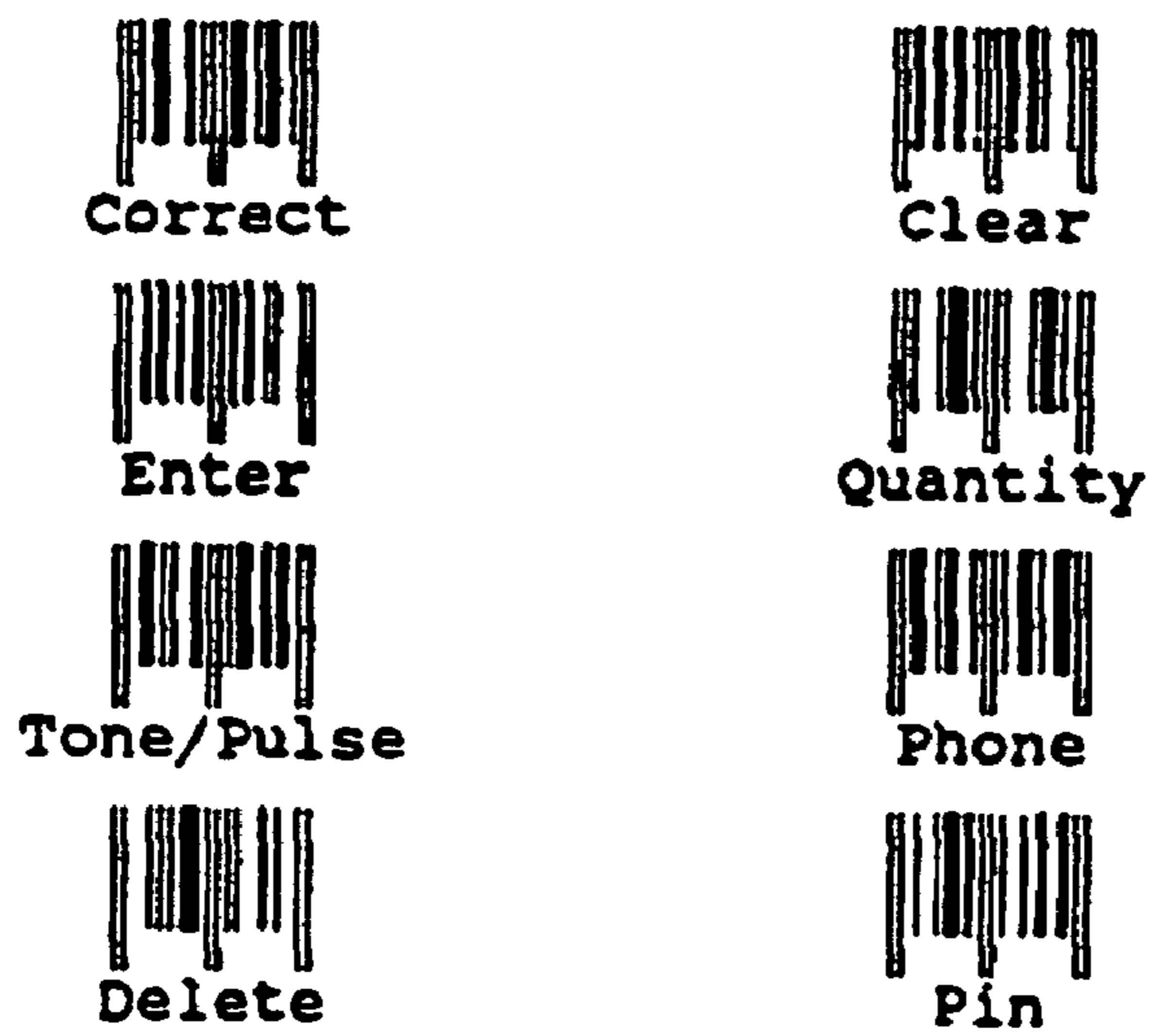
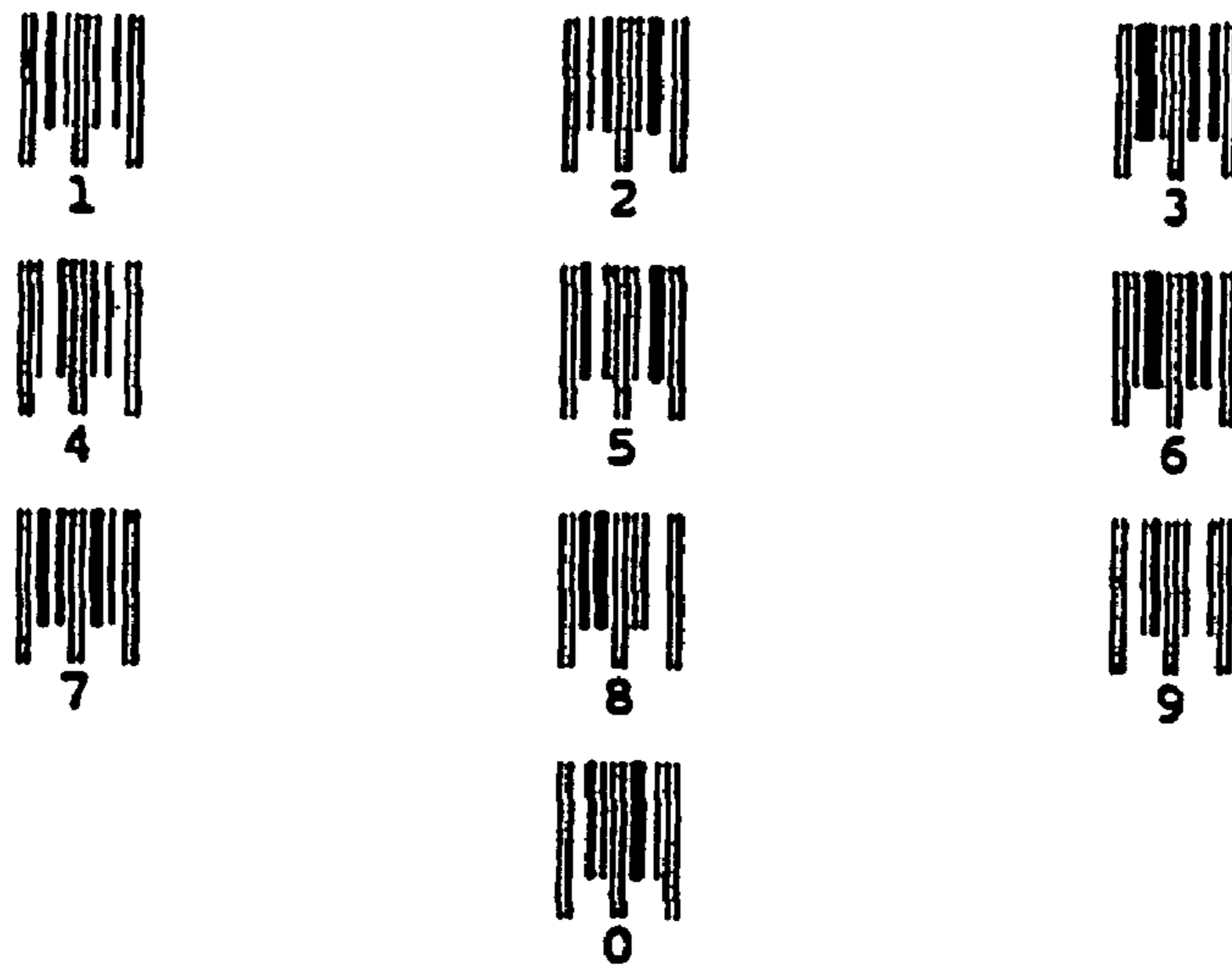


FIG. 6

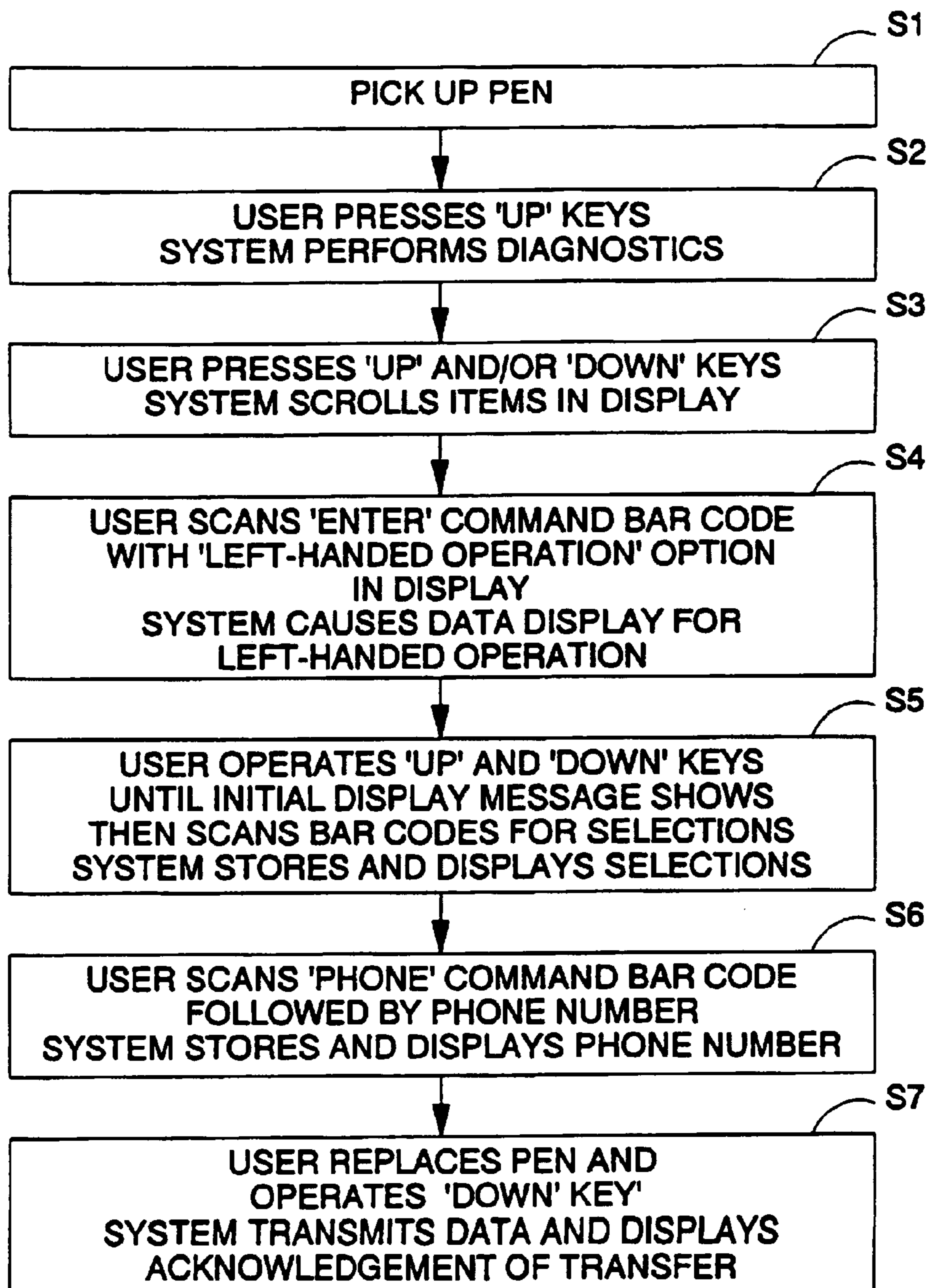


FIG. 7

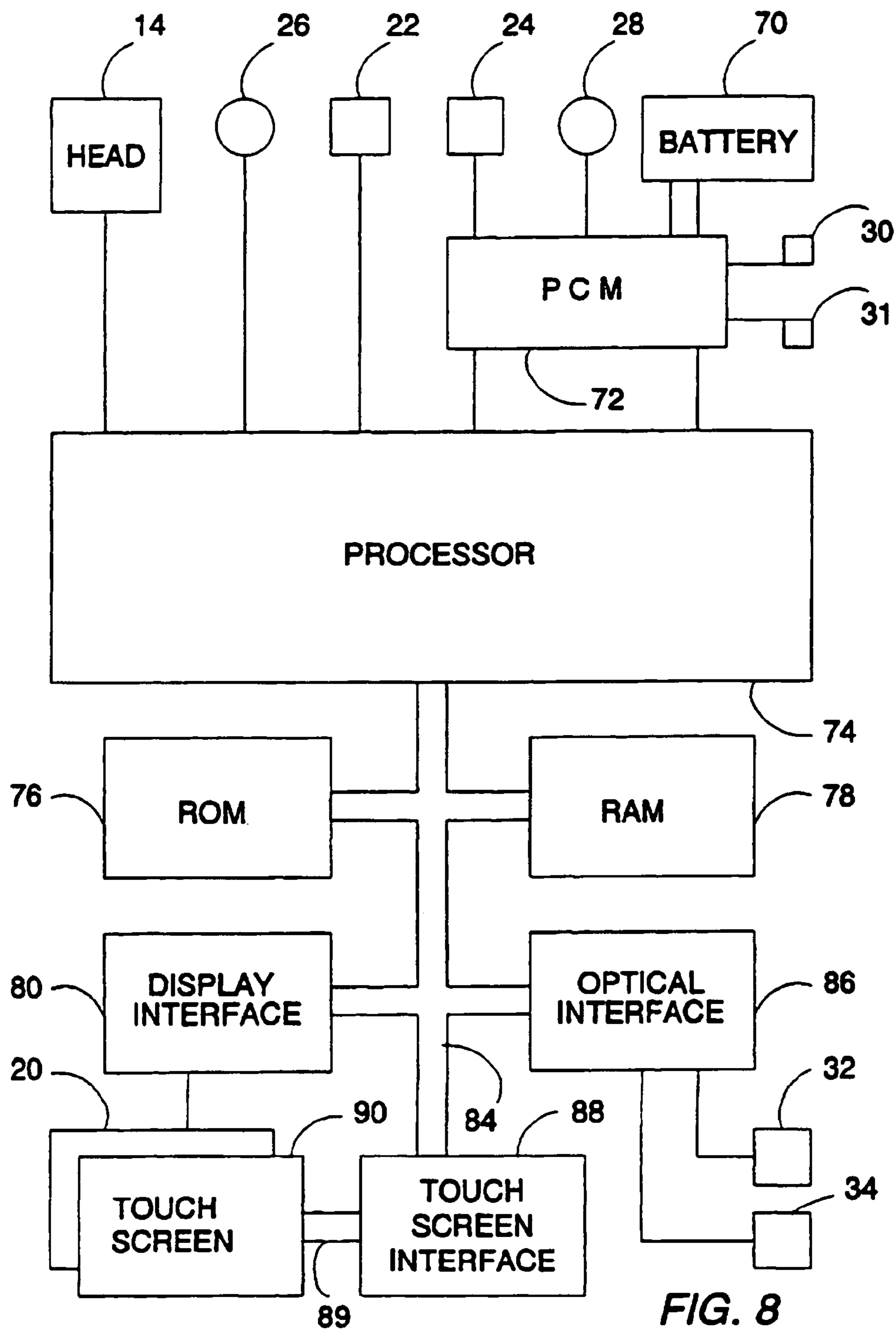


FIG. 8

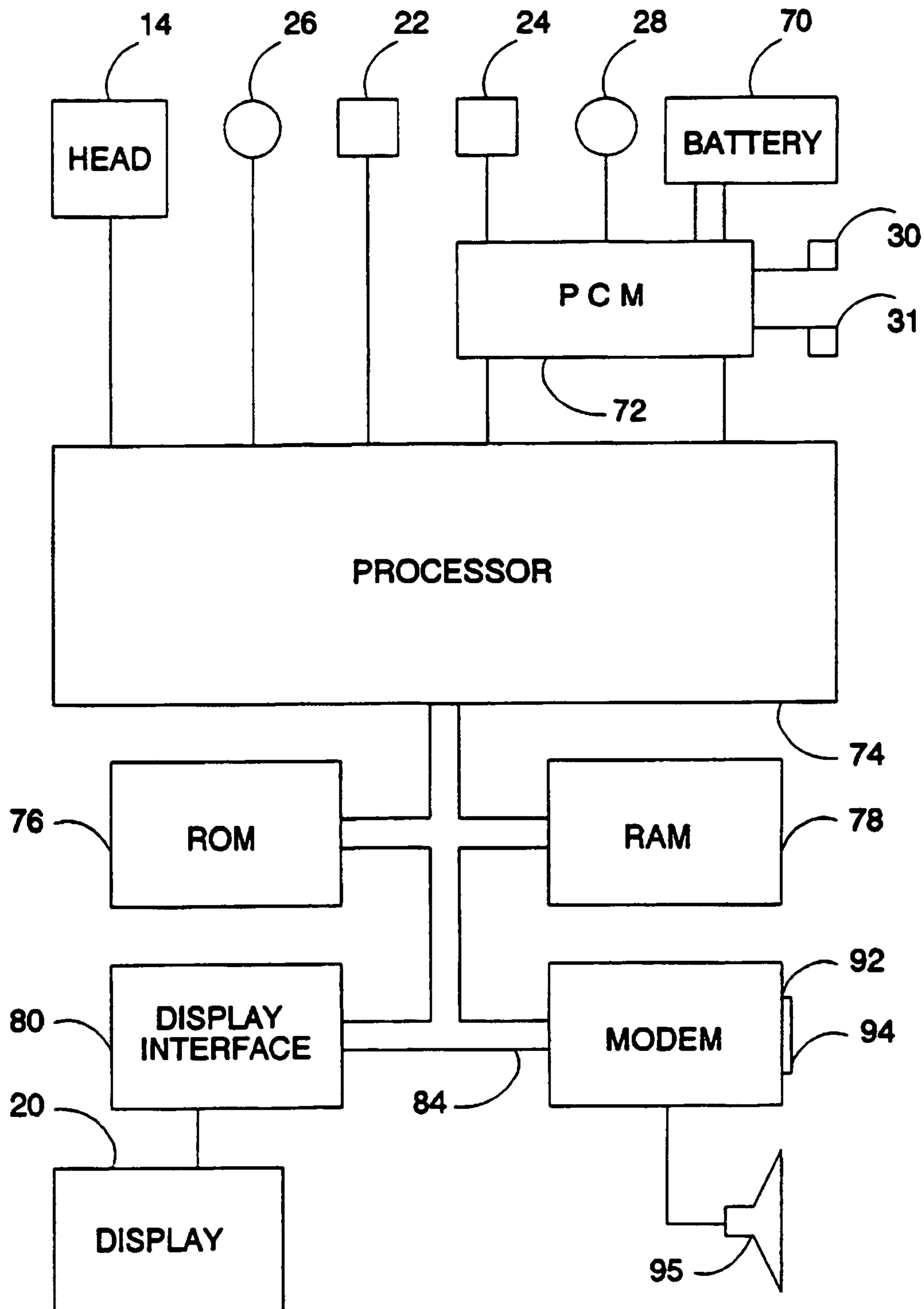


FIG. 9

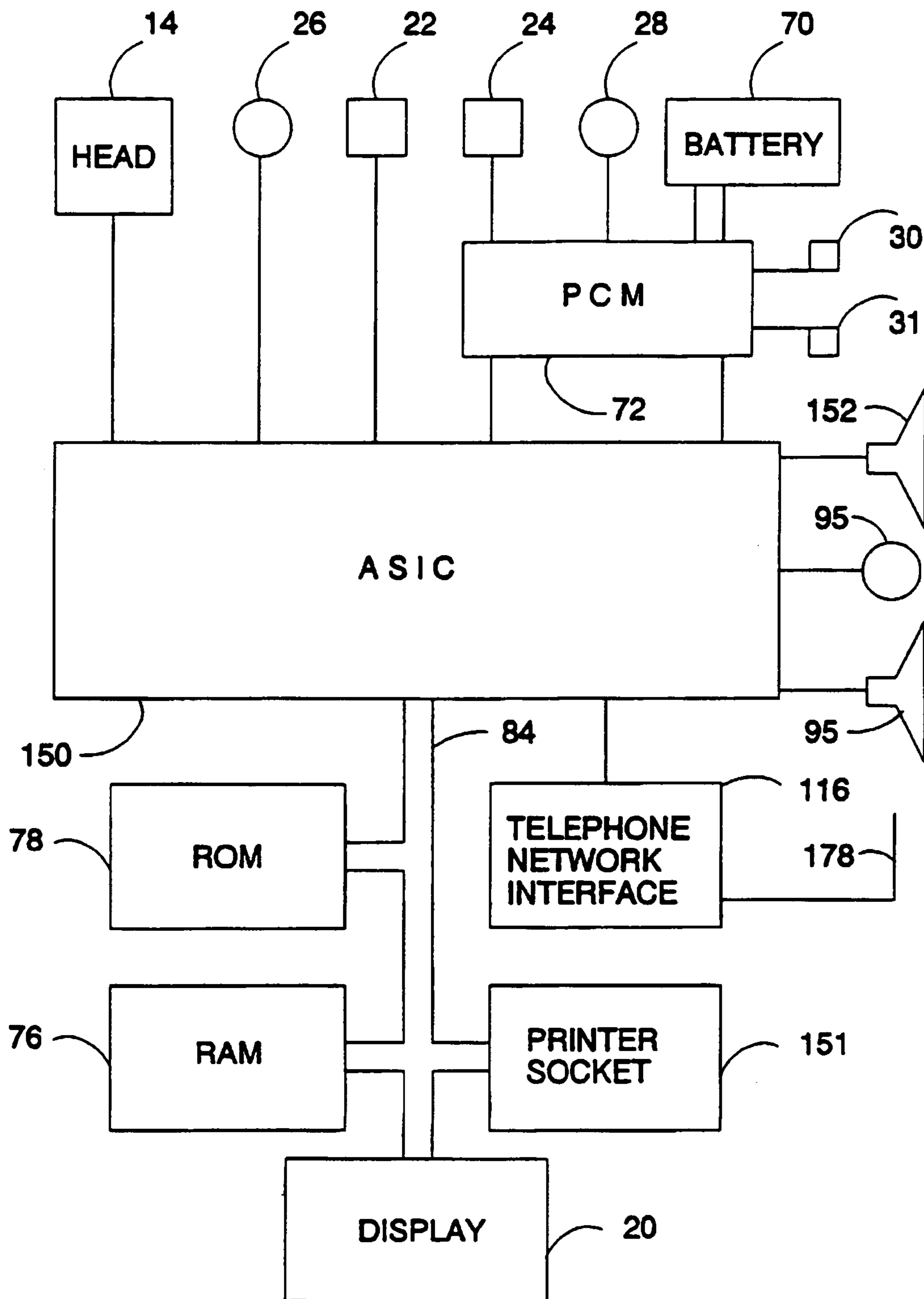


FIG. 10

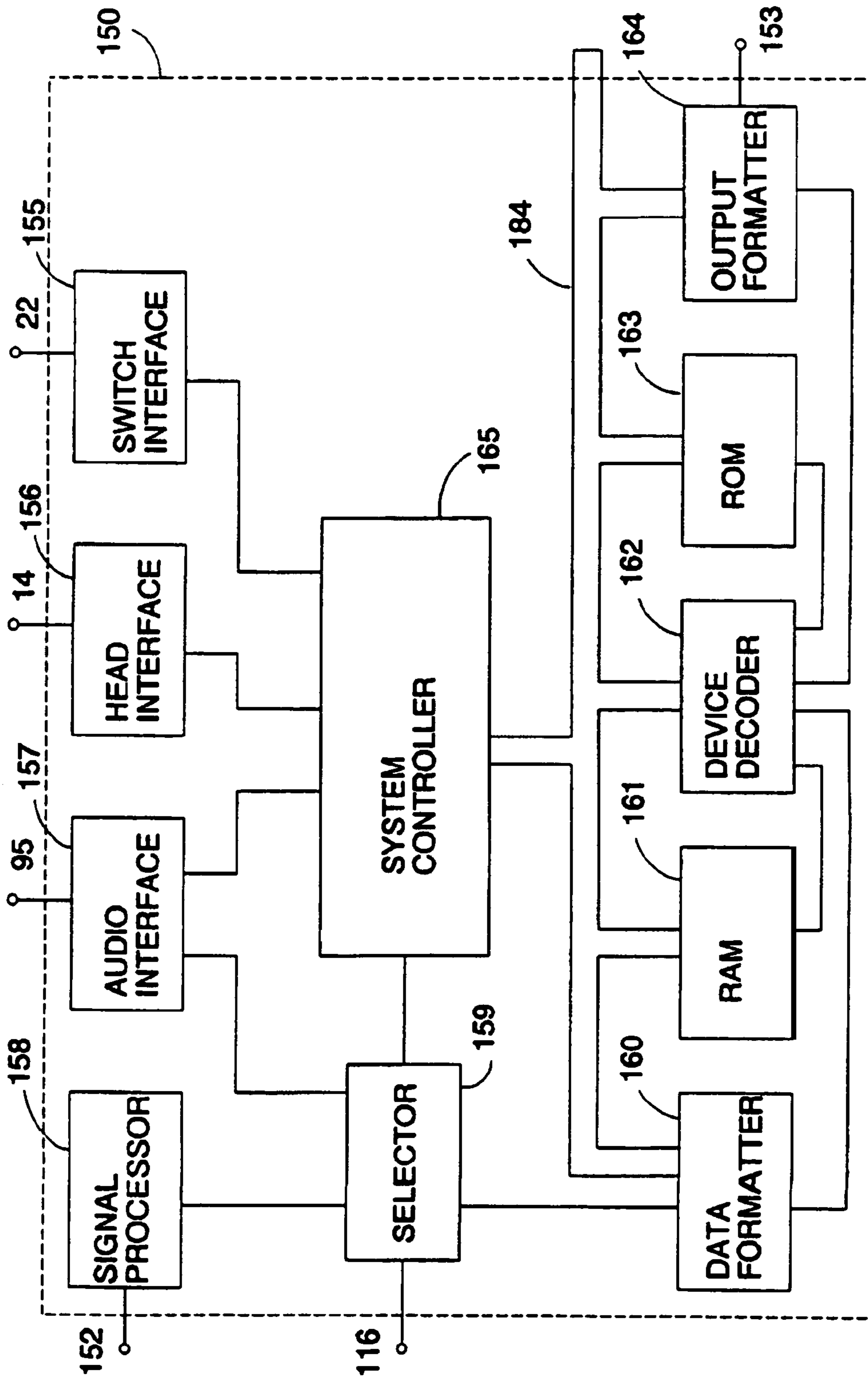


FIG. 11

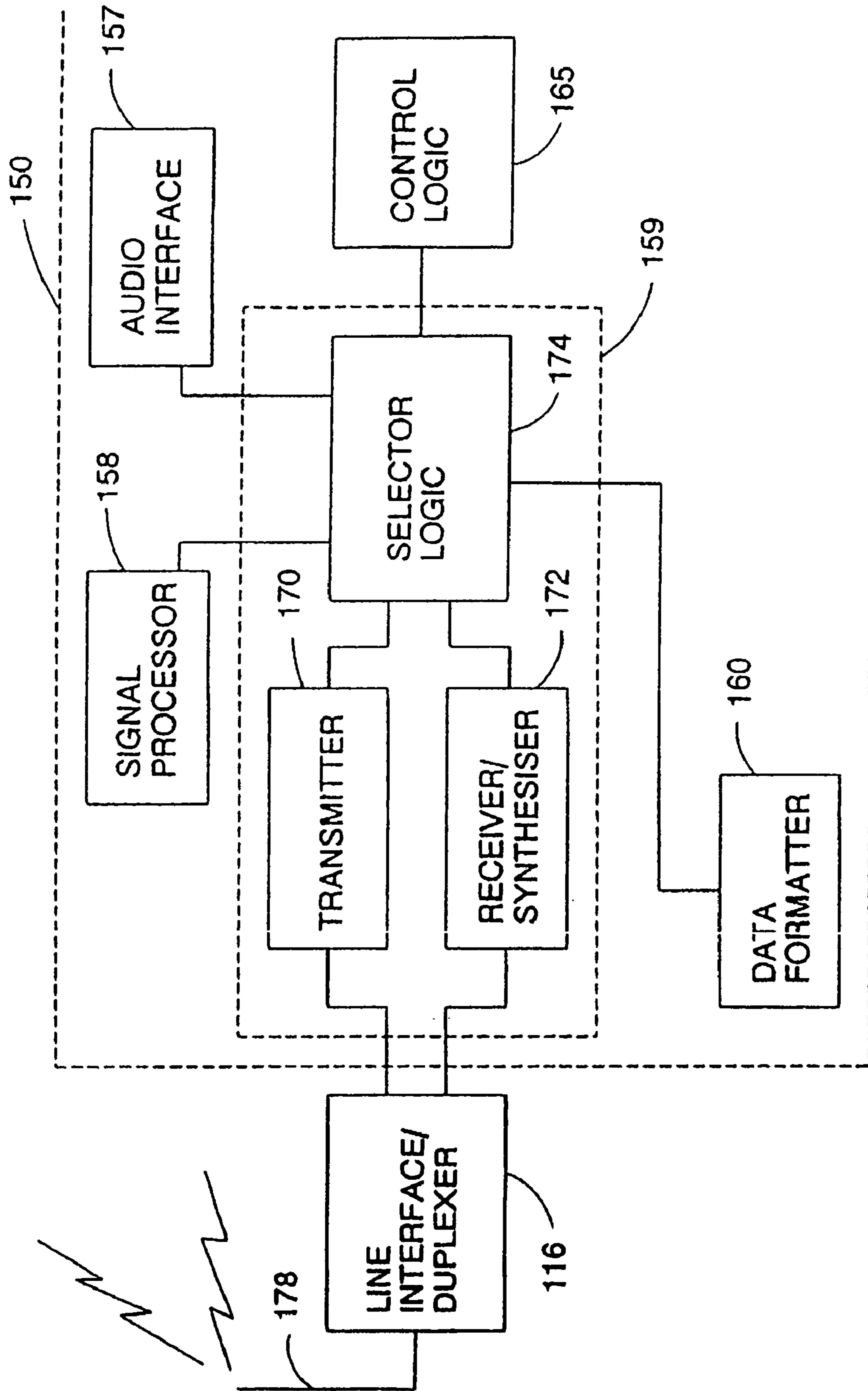


FIG. 12

DATA ENTRY SYSTEMS

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/348,051, filed on Jan. 2, 2009 (now U.S. Pat. No. 7,920,898), which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Serial No. 11/515,152, filed on Aug. 31, 2006 (now U.S. Pat. No. 7,505,785), which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/869,215, filed on Jun. 15, 2004 (now U.S. Pat. No. 7,139,591), which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/548,565, filed on Apr. 13, 2000 (now abandoned), which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 08/619,682, filed on May 23, 1996 (now U.S. Pat. No. 6,058,304), filed as a 371 national stage application of international application No. PCT/GB94/02101, on Sep. 27, 1994, which claims priority to GB 9321133.2, filed on Oct. 13, 1993, the content of each of which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety.

This invention relates to data entry systems, to applications of such data entry systems and to equipment for use therewith.

UK patent GB-B-2,202,664 describes an example of an application for a data entry system for the automated ordering of merchandisable items. Merchandisable items are represented in a printed catalogue or other form of list and are associated with bar codes. A merchandise ordering unit comprises a bar code reader with a telephone transmission capability for use in selecting one or more items from the catalogue and transmitting electronically an order for the merchandise to a processing centre over the public telephone network. The orders for the merchandisable items received in this way are processed in the processing centre. As described, the hand held data entry terminal comprises a calculator-like processing unit with a pen-like bar code reader wand electrically connected to the processing unit via a flexible cable. The processing unit includes a display for displaying information and a telephone transmission capability for transmitting captured data via the telephone network. Although this system works well, it is rather bulky and can be somewhat inconvenient in use as it requires two handed operation, one hand for the processing unit and one hand for the wand. Alternatively, if the processing unit is not carried all the time, it needs to be located in a position where the display on the processing unit can be seen and the keys on the processing unit can be operated. It will be appreciated that particularly where the processing unit is being carried in the hand, operation of the keys on it while holding the wand requires considerable dexterity.

European patent application EP-A-0,094,571 describes a self-contained portable data entry terminal positioned within a portable wand-type enclosure. The wand contains a bar code optical reader, signal conditioning electronics, a microprocessor, a memory and a rechargeable battery. The optical reader is operable as a transmitter/receiver so that readout of data stored in the memory is possible. An example of the use of the portable data terminal is described in which captured bar code data can be output from the memory via the optical reader to an optical receiver and from there via an audio coupler to a telephone line for transmission to a remote station. Another example is described where the bar code data relates to items on a menu in a restaurant. Captured menu selections can be output from the memory via the optical reader to an optical receiver and from there via a computer to a printer in a kitchen. Also described is the programming of the portable data entry terminal using an optical transmitter to input data via the optical reader. The wand includes a beeper for indicating the correct reading of a bar code and the current

memory loading. The wand described in EP-A-0,094,571 is relatively simple in construction, and although it is readily portable, it does not provide any confirmation of what has been read.

5 A further portable data entry terminal manufactured by Telxon Corporation is described in an article entitled "Telxon Corporation, Portable Data Collection and Entry Systems" published by McGraw-Hill in 1989 and referenced "R51-832-101 SKU/UPC Marking and Reading Equipment". The article describes various models of data entry terminals similar to that described in UK patent GB-8-2,202,664. Data from the terminals can be transmitted to a remote station via various telecommunication options including direct connect modems and acoustic couplers. The data entry terminals have a generally rectangular format, similar to a large scientific calculator with a rectangular display and an array of keys. For most models, a separate bar code reader wand is provided which is connected to the data entry terminal via a flexible cable, requiring a two-handed operation as described above. 10 One model PTC-620 has the same basic format as the other terminals, but is described as being for simple applications and features a snap-on reversible head for one-handed operation with either the left or the right hand. However, this terminal is still relatively bulky and cumbersome and in use it is easy inadvertently to operate one or more keys in the array of keys. 15 20 25

An object of the present invention is to provide a data entry system which mitigates the problems of the prior art.

In accordance with an aspect of the invention, there is provided a data entry system comprising a hand held data entry unit, the hand held unit comprising a reading sensor for sensing commands and/or data and for producing input signals in response to the sensed commands and/or data, rewritable storage for information relating to selectable items, a controller connected to receive and process the input signals from the sensor for responding to the commands to control the hand held unit and/or to the data to select the item and a display screen for displaying a user readable representation of the commands and/or stored information for the selected item, and a telecommunications interface for telephonic transmission of information relating to a selected item or items from the storage to a remote processing centre and for telephonic transmission of information relating to selectable items from the remote processing centre to the storage. 30 35 40 45

The provision of a hand held unit having an integral sensor, control, storage, display means with a telecommunications interface enables the unit to be used in a particularly efficient and self-contained manner for the capture, processing, storage, display and transmission of data. The inclusion of the display in the hand held unit enables the user to verify the data being captured without taking his or her eyes off the areas in which data capture is taking place. 50

Preferably, the telecommunications interface is integral to the hand held unit. The provision of a telecommunications interface in the hand held unit enables captured data to be used for direct telephonic transmission of the captured data via a telephone network to a remote processing centre. It also allows for data and/or commands to be received from the remote data processing centre. 55

Preferably, the hand held unit includes a rechargeable power source. There can be provided a base unit separate from the hand held unit, wherein the base unit includes a charger unit and the base unit and the hand held unit are provided with respective interconnectable electrical connectors for recharging the rechargeable power source. 60 65

In some embodiments of the invention, the data entry system can comprise a base unit separate from the hand held unit,

wherein the base unit and the hand held unit are provided with a wireless data link which is operable for bidirectional data transfer between the hand held unit and the base unit, and wherein the base unit includes a telecommunications interface for telephonic transmission of information relating to a selected item or items from the storage to a remote processing centre and for telephonic transmission of information relating to selectable items from the remote processing centre to the storage. In this embodiment, the wireless data link preferably comprises, in the base unit and the hand held unit, optical transmitters and/or receivers which cooperate when the hand held unit is in the rest position to provide a two way optical data link for transferring data from the hand held unit to the base unit and/or from the base unit to the hand held unit. In other embodiments it could comprise respective radio frequency, rather than optical, transmitters and receivers, or indeed other types of transmitters and receivers.

In preferred embodiments of the invention, the telecommunications interface is an interface for connection to a wireless telephony network. This provides for a particularly advantageous implementation of the invention, which can then be used without the need to plug in the data entry system to, for example, a conventional wired telephone network.

In a preferred embodiment of the invention the telecommunications interface is a cellular telephone network interface. In this embodiment of the invention, particularly where the telecommunications interface is incorporated in the hand held unit, the data entry system can be used with the convenience, for example, of a portable cellular phone. Cellular telephone networks are now common place and give a very wide area of coverage. This facilitates the use of a data entry system in accordance with the invention in, for example, a user's home or workplace.

Alternatively, the telecommunications interface can be a satellite telephone network interface, or some other form of wireless telephone interface, for example a telephone interface for a telephone network based on highly localised transponder stations.

Where the telecommunications interface is intended to interface with an analogue telephone network, the telecommunications interface includes a modem.

By arranging that the reading sensor can be used for the input of commands for controlling the hand held unit, the number of user input means (e.g., keys) can be kept to a minimum, reducing the possibility of inadvertent operation. Preferably, there are provided one or two manually operable switches for scrolling the display in a first and/or second direction for selectively displaying a plurality of data stored in the storage. The scrolling of the display enables a large number of items to be accessed with a relatively compact display. In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the first and/or second switches are the only switches on the hand held unit. Preferably also, operation of the first and/or second switches in predetermined operational states of the hand held unit causes predetermined functions other than scrolling functions to be performed (e.g., powering-up or powering-down of the hand held unit). By the provision of only two keys on the hand held unit, the possibility of accidentally operating an incorrect key can be reduced, and also the hand held unit can be kept particularly compact.

Preferably, the hand held unit comprises a sensor for reading coded data, the controller being arranged to access the stored information for selectable items to determine natural language characters or images corresponding to the coded data for display. The invention finds particular, but not exclusive application to the reading of bar codes and/or binary dot

codes, whereby the sensor is a bar code and/or dot code reader. It will be appreciated that the invention also applies to other forms of codes.

The hand held data entry unit may comprise a reading head including a reading sensor for producing input signals, wherein the reading sensor traces movements of the reading head and wherein the controller is responsive to signals from the sensor representative of the movements for identifying characters traced by the reading head as captured data. In this manner data entry can be made in an advantageous manner by tracing out the characters of the data to be input or characters representing commands for controlling the operation of the data entry system.

Preferably, the controller is user programmable to cause the captured data to be displayed on the display either in a first orientation suitable for reading displayed data when the hand held unit is held in a user's right hand, or in a second orientation suitable for reading displayed data when the hand held unit is held in a user's left hand. In a preferred embodiment the display has a substantially rectangular display screen with a longitudinal axis arranged substantially parallel to a longitudinal axis of the hand held unit. For example, for right handed operation, a string of characters could, for example, be displayed along the display from an end nearest to the sensor to the end furthest therefrom, whereas for left handed operation, the same string of characters would be displayed from the end of the display furthest from the sensor to the end nearest thereto.

A data entry system comprising a hand held unit with or without a base unit as described above, can also include means for displaying a plurality of selectable items with associated data sources for user selection of an item by operation of the hand held unit and a remote processing centre for processing user selections transmitted from the hand held unit. The controller in the hand held unit is preferably arranged to respond to appropriate commands input, for example via the reading sensor, to issue coded instructions via the telecommunications interface to the data processing centre and to receive programming data (e.g., relating to information for selectable items) from the programming centre for storage in the hand held unit.

The data entry system may additionally be arranged to provide the functions of a telephone to permit audio communication. In particular, if a cellular telephone interface is provided in a hand held unit, this unit can advantageously combine the functions of the data entry unit and a cellular telephone.

Accordingly, the invention also provides a data entry system additionally comprising means for displaying a plurality of selectable items with associated data sources for user selection of an item by operation of the hand held unit and a remote processing centre for processing user selections transmitted from the hand held unit. Preferably, the hand held unit is programmable remotely from the processing centre.

In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the hand held unit is configured as an elongate unit such that it may be held by a user in the manner of a pen or quill with the reading sensor being located in a reading head at or adjacent to one end of the hand held unit. The configuration of the hand held unit such that it may be held in the manner of a pen or quill means that the unit can be held in a familiar and comfortable manner. Also, it facilitates the provision of user input means (e.g. switches) on the hand held unit to be located such that inadvertent operation thereof can easily be avoided.

Preferably the reading sensor is located in a reading head which is releasably attached to the hand held unit. This

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enables alternative types of reading head to be connected to the hand held unit and/or for faulty reading heads to be replaced easily.

The invention also provides a merchandising system comprising a data entry system of this type wherein the selectable items are merchandisable items and the remote processing centre initiates processing of user orders of the selectable merchandisable items.

Thus, a data entry system in accordance with the invention, especially a data entry system comprising a hand held unit including a telecommunications interface for use with a wireless telephony system, such as a cellular network telephone system, provides a particularly advantageous device for use, for example, for "home shopping". It enables the user to make shopping selections from a catalogue or from a series of options displayed on a television screen from the comfort of his or her home without the need to connect the device to a conventional telephone network. A hand held unit including a wireless telephone network interface such as a cellular network interface finds particular application where the user of the system is travelling from place to place and may need to perform data entry functions when they are far from a conventional wired telephone network socket.

A data entry system or a merchandising system as described above preferably includes a verification device in the form of a verification card (e.g., a credit, payment or other validation card) or like carrier carrying a verification bar code and/or dot code for verification of a user identity. Operation of the data entry system subsequent to an initial data capture operation can then be made dependent on the identification of authorised coded data.

The invention also provides a carrier for a plurality of data and/or command codes (e.g., bar and/or dot codes) for association with means for displaying a plurality of selectable items in a data entry system or a merchandising system as defined above, wherein the carrier carries a plurality of codes, each for a respective one of a plurality of natural language and/or numeric characters, and a plurality of commands for controlling the operation of the data entry or merchandising system, each code being associated with a visual representation of the corresponding natural language or numeric character or command and/or of a graphical representation thereof. This avoids the need for a complete coded data source to be associated with each selectable item in, for example, a catalogue, rather a composite code can be built up by capturing a desired sequence of individual codes. By including the command characters as well, the need for a lot of keys on the data entry device can be avoided.

As an alternative to the use of bar codes, other data representations could be used. Indeed, if the data entry device is provided with a reading sensor in the form of a camera or other scanning sensor rather than a bar code reader, and the data entry device is provided with character or image recognition logic, graphical or alphanumeric data representations can be captured directly. One application of an embodiment of the pen with a camera head as its sensor could be for fingerprint recognition.

As an example of a possible mode of operation, a command character (e.g., a bar code) can be read using the reading head (e.g., a bar code reading head) and this can be used to load down remote data from a remote station. This is particularly advantageous mode of operation where the data entry system can set up a telephone connection to the remote station automatically, for example where the data entry device has cellular telephone capabilities.

The carrier is preferably in the form of a sheet of material. The various characters and commands could be arranged in

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the manner of a standard typewriter keyboard layout to facilitate entry of individual codes to make up a desired code sequence (e.g., for a specific product code).

Exemplary embodiments of the invention will be described hereinafter, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which like reference numerals are used for like features and in which:

FIGS. 1A and 1B are schematic views of a substantially pen-shaped hand held data entry device.

FIG. 2 is a schematic plan view of a base unit for use with the hand held unit of FIGS. 1A and 1B;

FIG. 3 is a schematic block diagram of the functional elements of a first example of a hand held data entry device as shown in FIGS. 1A and 1B;

FIG. 4 is a schematic block diagram of the functional elements of a base unit as shown in FIG. 2 for use with the hand held data entry device of FIGS. 1A, 1B and 3;

FIG. 5 is an overview of a merchandising system using a data entry terminal such as is illustrated in the preceding Figures;

FIG. 6 represents a control card with bar codes for a number of numeric and control characters;

FIG. 7 is flow diagram illustrating an example of the operation of a data entry system as described with reference to FIGS. 1 to 6;

FIG. 8 is a schematic block diagram of the functional elements of a second example of a hand held data entry device as shown in FIGS. 1A and 1B;

FIG. 9 is a schematic block diagram of the functional elements of a further, self-contained, hand held data entry device which is intended for use without a base unit;

FIG. 10 is a schematic block diagram of the functional elements of a further, self-contained, hand held data entry device for use without a base unit and intended, in particular, for use with a wireless telephone network such as a cellular network;

FIG. 11 is a schematic block diagram illustrating components in an ASIC forming part of the apparatus of FIG. 10; and

FIG. 12 is a schematic block diagram illustrating the inter-relationship of functional elements of FIGS. 10 and 11.

FIGS. 1A and 1B are schematic views from above and below, respectively, of one embodiment of hand held data entry unit 10 which is substantially pen-shaped and which will hereinafter, for reasons of conciseness only, be referred to as the "pen 10". The pen 10 is intended to be held for essentially one handed operation between the thumb and forefinger of either the left or right hand in the manner of a conventional, if rather thicker than usual, pen.

The pen 10 has an elongate body 12 with, in the present example, external dimensions of approximately 120 mm by 40 mm, although the dimensions may be larger or smaller as desired subject to technical limitations. A reading head 14, for example a red or infra-red optical reading head (e.g., a laser diode) suitable for reading bar codes is located at one end of the pen. Other types of reading head may be provided. The reading head is preferably-replaceable for interchanging types of reading head. A removable battery cover 16 covering a battery compartment is located at the other end of the pen. As an alternative to a compartment for removable batteries, a removable and/or fixed rechargeable battery pack could be provided instead. Also, the reading head in the present embodiment is arranged to read with a reading angle of between 0.degree. to 45.degree. to the normal to the bar code to be read.

On the upper surface of the pen shown in FIG. 1A a display screen 20, first and second microswitches 22 and 24, a first indicator light 26 and a second indicator light 28 are located.

The display screen **20** preferably comprises a conventional two-dimensional array of pixels which can be selectively activated in order to provide the display of a wide range of displayable items. However, in a low cost version of the pen **10**, the display may be configured only to display a predetermined range of characters and symbols, this reducing the complexity of the display and the controlling logic and thus reducing the cost as will be well understood by one skilled in the art.

Any suitable display technology can be used which enables the displayed information to be read over a wide enough angular range such that it can be read by the user when the pen is held at an angle suitable for reading a bar code. In this way it is not necessary to change the orientation of the pen in order to read the display. In view of the low power consumption and advantageous readability characteristics, a 2 line by 16 character supertwist LCD display screen is employed in the preferred embodiment giving a viewing area of approximately 60 mm by 16 mm with a character size of approximately 3 mm by 5.5 mm. The display is preferably located towards the end of the pen **10** opposite to the reading head **14** with its longitudinal axis substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis of the pen **10**.

With the pen **10** held between thumb and forefinger with the user's hand below the pen as viewed in FIG. 1A, and with the pen held at an angle of, say, 30° to the normal of a bar code to be read, (assuming that the normal to the bar code is generally in the direction of the line of sight of the user), the display screen can be read without difficulty.

The switches **22** and **24** are used to control basic operations of the data entry system and for control of the sequential display of stored information (scrolling of the display) as will be explained later. The indicator light **26** is used to report successful scanning of a bar code. The indicator light **28** is used when rechargeable batteries (**70**, FIG. 3) are inserted in the battery compartment to indicate that the batteries are charging.

On the lower surface of the pen **10** shown in FIG. 1B, an optical transmitter **32** and an optical receiver **34** are provided in a shallow recess **33**. Also, provided on the lower surface are a locating groove **36** and first and second electrical contacts **30** and **31**. The optical transmitter **32** and the optical receiver **34** are used in combination with an optical receiver **62** and optical transmitter **64**, respectively, on a base unit **40** to be described with reference to FIG. 2, for the transfer of data between the pen **10** and the base unit **40**. The locating groove **36** is used correctly to position the pen **10** with respect to a corresponding ridge in a cradle **56** on the base unit **40** when the pen **10** is placed in that cradle **56**. The cradle **56** defines a rest position for the pen **10** on the base unit **40**. The first and second contacts **30** and **31** are arranged to cooperate with corresponding contacts **60** and **61** in the cradle **56** on the base unit **40** for charging the rechargeable batteries.

Turning now to FIG. 2, this illustrates a plan view of a base unit **40** for use with the pen **10** of FIGS. 1A and 1B.

The base unit includes a generally rectangular housing **42** with a raised portion **44** containing a power supply unit (**102**, FIG. 4) which receives electrical power via a mains supply cable **45** and a mains switch **46**. The mains switch **46** is located on the right hand side of the base unit housing **42**. Cooling slots **47** for the power supply unit (**102**, FIG. 4) are provided in the upper surface of the raised portion **44**. Further slots **48** in the upper surface of the base unit housing **42** are located over a speaker (**110**, FIG. 4) for relaying information to the user of the data entry system. The rear of the housing **42** is also provided with a socket **52** for a standard telephone plug for connecting the base unit **40** to a telephone line **50** and a

standard serial connector **54** (e.g., an RS232 connector) for connecting the base unit to, for example, a personal computer (not shown). A manual switch **53** can be provided for switching between the telephone line and the serial connector. It will be appreciated that a parallel connector could be provided instead of, or in addition to, the serial connector **54**. A separate telephone socket **55** can be provided for the connection of a standard telephone handset to the base unit.

Towards the front of the base unit housing **42**, a recess is formed which is configured as a cradle **56** for receiving the pen **10**.

An optical receiver **62** and an optical transmitter **64** are located in the bottom of the recess for cooperating with the optical transmitter **32** and optical receiver **34**, respectively, when the pen is located in the cradle **56**. The optical receiver **62** and the optical transmitter **64** are surrounded by a wall **63** which also forms a shroud between the optical receiver **62** and the optical transmitter **64**. The wall **63** cooperates with the recess **33** in the pen **10** to prevent external light reaching the optical link, and the shroud between the optical receiver **62** and the optical transmitter **64** prevents light from the two optical paths between the pen and the base unit and between the base unit and the pen from interfering with each other. It will be appreciated that alternative configurations are possible, for example the wall could be provided on the pen and the recess on the base unit, although this could mean that the pen was less comfortable to use.

First and second base contacts **60** and **61** are also located in the recess for cooperating with the contacts **30** and **31** on the pen **10** when it is inserted in the cradle **56**, thus enabling rechargeable batteries (**70**, FIG. 3) in the pen **10** to be recharged. A locating ridge **58** is formed in the recess for cooperating with the locating groove **36** in the bottom of the pen **10** to enable the pen to be positioned correctly in the cradle **56** such that the optical transmitter/receiver pairs **32/62** and **64/34** and the contact pairs **30/60** and **31/61** are aligned correctly.

The pen **10** can also be provided with a socket for directly charging the internal rechargeable batteries using an AC mains supply or a DC supply. In the first case the pen will include a transformer, in the second a transformer/rectifier could be incorporated in, for example, a mains plug.

On a further raised portion **66**, one or two base unit indicator lights are provided. The first base unit indicator light **67** is for indicating the base unit is receiving mains power and is turned on. Optionally, the second base unit indicator light **68** can be used to indicate that rechargeable battery (**70**, FIG. 3) in the pen is being charged.

FIG. 3 is a schematic block diagram of the functional elements of the pen **10**. A processor **74** is preferably formed by a conventional programmable microprocessor (e.g., an Intel 80C31 12 MHz CMOS microprocessor with two internal clocks, an Intel 80486, etc.), although a special purpose or specially configured unit (e.g. an ASIC) could alternatively be used (compare FIG. 10). A read only memory (ROM) **76** is connected via a bus **84** to the processor **74** for the storage of control programs and data. The ROM **76** can be implemented by any appropriate technology, for example by a flash PROM. A random access memory (RAM) **78** (for example a 128K low power static RAM, or higher capacity RAM, e.g. a 256K, 512K . . . 5 Mb, etc., RAM) is connected to the processor via the bus **84**. The RAM **78** is used as working storage and for the storage of data captured using the reading head **14**. A display interface **80**, which connects the display **20** to the bus **84**, responds to display instructions from the processor to drive the display in a conventional manner. An optical interface **86** is connected to the bus to convert data to be transmitted into

signals for driving the optical transmitter 32, and converts signals from the optical receiver 34 into data to be passed to the bus 84.

In the present embodiment, other connections are made directly to the processor rather than via the bus. Thus, in the present embodiment, signals relating to data captured by the reader head 14 are passed directly to the processor 74 to be processed.

The manual switch 22 is also connected directly to the processor. In use this switch serves as a “scroll-down” key. The second manual switch 24, which in use serves as a “scroll-up” key, is, however, connected to the processor via a power control module (PCM) 72. This is because the switch 24 also serves as a “power-up” key for turning the pen on or powering it up after it has been powered down. The power control module 72 responds to operation of the key 24 in a powered down state to connect the battery 70 to the processor 74. The power control module 72 also controls the charging of the battery 70 when the contacts 30 and 31 are connected to the corresponding contacts 60 and 61 in the cradle 56 of the base unit 40. The indicator light 67 (e.g., an LED or NEON) is connected to the processor 74 and indicates when the base unit is connected to the mains. The optional indicator light 68 (e.g., an LED or NEON) is connected to the power control module 72 to indicate when the battery 70 is being charged.

The processor is programmed by means of control programs and data stored in the ROM 76 and, in use, in the RAM 78, to receive signals from the reading head 14, to interpret those signals and to derive data therefrom which are displayed on the display 20 and stored in the RAM 78 for subsequent transmission via the optical interface as will be described in more detail below.

FIG. 4 is a schematic block diagram of the functional elements of the base unit 40 of FIG. 2. A power supply module 102 is connected to a mains supply via the switch 46 and the supply cable 45. The power supply unit 102 is also connected to the contacts 60 and 61 so that, when the pen 10 is located in the cradle 56, the battery 70 can be recharged. The power supply unit 102 also supplies power to the other elements of the base unit via supply lines which are represented schematically (for reasons of drawing simplicity) by the arrows 104.

A modem 100 is connected via an optical link 106 to an optical receiver 62 and an optical transmitter 64. The optical interface 106 converts signals from the optical receiver 62 to data to be passed to the modem 100 and converts data from the modem 100 to signals to be transmitted by the optical transmitter 64. A further interface (e.g. a standard V24/RS232 interface—not shown) for connection to a personal computer (not shown) could also be provided. Also a socket for a connection to a standard telephone handset (not shown) could be provided. The modem 100 can be a conventional modem generally comprising a master control unit 112, a data pump 114 and memory 118. The master control unit 112 is connected to receive data from the optical interface 106 (and/or from a V24/RS232 interface, if a personal computer is connected). Data from the data pump 114 are coupled via a line interface 116 to the telephone line 50. The data pump 116 is also connected via an audio interface 120 to a speaker 110 for monitoring the transmission of data via the telephone line 50.

FIG. 5 is a schematic representation of a data entry network comprising a plurality of pens/base units 10/40 connected via respective telephone connections 50 (telephone lines, wireless telephone channels, etc) to a processing centre 108 where data transmitted from the individual pens/base units 10/40 are processed. In the preferred embodiment of the invention, the pens/base units 10/40 are used for the placing of orders for

merchandise and the processing centre 108 processes those orders and dispatches them to the users.

FIG. 6 is a schematic representation of an example of a control card for use with the pen 10. The card shows bar codes for the numerals 0 to 9 and for a set of commands. The command bar codes are used for controlling the operation of the pen 10. The control card can be thought of as a keyboard extension for the pen 10.

At this point it should be explained that the operation of reading a bar code is performed by the processor 74 in a conventional manner. Thus, where the head 14 comprises a red or infra-red light source and a light sensor, signals representing changing levels of reflected illuminations are supplied to the processor 74. Firmware stored in the ROM 76, or in other embodiments possibly hard-wired in the processor 74, is used then to decode the changing levels of reflected illumination to generate a numerical value. On successful reading of a bar code the good read light 26 is illuminated.

The processor tests the numerical values to determine whether the sensed code relates to data or a command. A look up table containing the numerical values for individual commands (not shown) is configured in the ROM 76 and/or RAM 78. By accessing this table, input commands can be identified. The controlling software is aware of which commands can be executed for the current processing state. On identifying a currently executable command, the processor 74 executes that command and causes the display of a human readable command description for user verification purposes. The processor causes an error message to be displayed on the display screen if a non-executable command (e.g., a command has been input at a wrong time) has been input.

If the code does not relate to a recognised command, it is treated as data. The data are then stored in RAM as the result of reading a bar code and are used to address a description of the item referenced by the bar code value from a further look-up table. If a description of the item corresponding to the bar code value is stored in the ROM 76 and/or the RAM 78 in a suitable data structure so that the bar code value can be used either directly or indirectly to address the appropriate description, then the item description can readily be displayed instead of or as well as the bar code value for user verification purposes. If the bar code is not read correctly, then an error message is displayed on the display screen.

The item description data can relate, for example, to items from a merchandising catalogue. In this case the rewritable storage capacity of the pen (e.g. the RAM 78) is chosen to be sufficient to store all the items from one or more merchandising catalogues. If the data is stored in volatile memory, this data is downloaded from the remote processing centre via the telecommunications link on restoring power to the memory in the pen. Preferably, if volatile memory is used, power is supplied to the memory even when the pen is “switched off”. An integral rechargeable back-up battery can be provided in addition to the battery 70 to maintain power to a volatile memory when the battery 70 is being changed. If non-volatile memory is provided, then this data can be retained during a period when no power is supplied to the memory. However, through the use of rewritable memory and control logic enabling the memory to be updated using data downloaded from the remote processing centre, it is possible to keep the pen’s memory up to date on a full list of merchandisable items, including product description, availability, price, etc. Then on reading a bar code relating to an item stored in memory the display on the pen can indicate a description of the item corresponding to the code read, its availability and price. If the code read is not recognised, for example, the pen can be programmed automatically to call up

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the remote processing centre to check on whether an update of the pen's storage is needed when the pen is replaced in the base unit.

FIG. 7 is a flow diagram illustrating an example of a possible series of operations using an example of data entry system such as that described with reference to FIGS. 1 to 6. It will be appreciated that other sequences and modes of operation may be provided in other embodiments of the invention.

In a first step, S1, the pen 10 is removed from the base unit 40.

In step S2, "Up" key switch 24 is operated. The power control module senses operation of this key switch and powers up the processor 74, which performs a series of diagnostic checks, calibrates itself and then displays an initial message (e.g., "Ready") on the display 20.

In step S3 the "Down" and "Up" scroll keys switches 22 and 24 are operated to scroll through a number of initial options pre-stored within the ROM 76 or the RAM 78 and presented on successive screens of data items on the display 20.

In this example of operation, in step S4, when an option "Left-handed operation" is encountered on the screen, the pen is scanned over the "Enter" command bar code on the command sheet of FIG. 6. Whereas for right-handed operation, where text is displayed in English, the text is displayed in sequence from the end of the display nearest to the reading head 14 towards the opposite end, for left-handed operation the text display is inverted with the text then reading from the end of the display furthest from the reading head to the end nearest thereto. It can be seen, therefore, that the text is displayed in an orientation appropriate for the user. If left-handed operation has already selected and it is desired to use the pen in a right-handed mode, then "Right-handed operation" can be selected by scrolling the display using the "Down" and "Up" key switches 22 and 24 and then scanning the "Enter" command bar code when the appropriate option is displayed.

Other options which could be provided in this manner could, for example, be the selected of one of a number of operating languages.

In step S5, the scroll key switches 22 and 24 are again operated until the option "Ready" is encountered once more. Then a series of merchandise selections can be entered by the user by scanning the bar codes for the desired merchandise selections and the command bar codes "Enter", "Clear", "Quantity", etc., as appropriate. As each bar code is scanned successfully, the good read indicator 26 lights and the data read by the bar code reader is displayed on the screen. Either the alphanumeric value of the bar code read is displayed or, if a description of the item corresponding to the bar code value is stored in the RAM or the ROM, then this can be displayed instead of or as well as the bar code value.

Step S5 can be repeated as often as desired until all the desired items have been entered, or until the RAM 78 has become full or nearly full, in which case a "Memory full" error message is displayed on the display screen 20.

If desired, the items entered and stored in the RAM 78 could be checked by selecting a "Check Entries" option with the scroll key switches 22 and 24. In this case the items entered can then be checked in sequence using the scroll key switches 22 and 24, and if necessary corrected by scanning the correct command bar code while the appropriate item is displayed.

In the example shown in FIG. 6, however, after entering the desired items, a phone number is then entered in step S6 by scanning the command bar code "Phone" followed by the

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number of the processing centre 108 to be called. As an alternative to entering separately the telephone number, this could be pre-stored in memory, or could alternatively be included in the "Phone" bar code.

After this, in step S7 the pen is placed in the cradle on the base unit and the "Down" key switch 22 is pressed to download the data from the pen. This causes the data for the telephone number to be downloaded to the modem 100 via the optical link 106. The downloading of the telephone number causes the base unit automatically to call the desired number and, once the normal modem handshaking is completed, to transfer the data stored in the RAM 78 in the pen 10. Preferably, in addition to the actual data stored, the processor 74 in the pen 10 automatically adds error correcting codes to enable the processing centre 108 to verify that successful transmission has occurred. The processing centre 108 then sends a message to confirm (or otherwise) whether successful transmission occurred after checking the error correcting codes. This message is then displayed on the display 20 of the pen 10.

It will be appreciated that the steps Si to S7 illustrated above merely form one possible method of operation. In an alternative embodiment of the invention, the scrolling function is only used for stepping through items which have already been entered into the pen, whether in the form of selectable items downloaded from the remote processing centre and/or items selected by means of the reading head. All other command functions are input by reading appropriate command codes from a command sheet. For this embodiment therefore, a command sheet should include commands for left and right handed operation, or a command for changing handedness. Then, to change between left and right-handed operation, it is merely necessary to scan an appropriate command bar code.

In a final step (not shown in FIG. 7), the pen is turned off by pressing the "Down" and "Up" scroll key switches simultaneously. It should be noted that the processor, which is provided with a date and time clock, is arranged to power-down the pen to conserve battery power if no bar codes are scanned and no key switches operated during a predetermined interval (e.g. 30 seconds). However, as mentioned above, power will be maintained to the RAM 76 if this is a non-volatile memory.

The software stored in the pen also permits the loading of data from the processing centre or another remote computer. The programming is performed using a series of commands preceded by dot codes. The programming commands are thus known as "dot" commands and cover operations such as RAM PEEK, RAM POKE, ROM PEEK, DISPLAY, SENSE, GET INFO, GET FIRST ITEM, GET NEXT ITEM, GET PREVIOUS ITEM, AMEND ITEM, DELETE ITEM, CLEAR ORDER, CLEAR CATALOGUE, ADD CATALOGUE ITEM, and AMEND CATALOGUE ITEM. In this way, a significant amount of catalogue data and/or program software can be held in the processing centre and be sent to the pens only when required. Where programs are to be downloaded, rewritable program storage will be needed in the pen, for example by implementing the ROM 76 in flash PROM technology.

The processing centre can also send commands to a hand held unit to instruct the user to scan in a personal identification number (PIN) possibly with the scanning of a further verification number from, for example a verification device in the form of a verification card (e.g., a credit, payment or other validation card) or like carrier carrying a verification bar code and/or dot code for verification of a user identity. Alternatively, the verification device can be scanned prior to any connection to a remote processing centre. In this case a con-

nection can then be made to the remote processing centre for verification of the user identity. Operation of the data entry system subsequent to an initial data capture operation can then be made dependent on the identification of authorised coded data and a PIN number.

FIG. 8 illustrates another example of a pen 10 in accordance with the invention. This example is substantially the same as the pen 10 described with reference to FIGS. 1 and 3, apart from the addition of a touch sensitive screen 90 for the display 20. A touch screen interface 88 couples the touch sensitive screen to the bus 84 so that data sensed by the touch sensitive screen can be communicated to the processor 74. Although FIG. 8 shows a touch sensitive screen 90 (e.g., an overlay) separate from a conventional display screen, any applicable touch sensitive screen technology can be used, either through the use of an addition to an existing conventional display screen, or the use of a display screen with integral touch sensitivity. One or more touch sensitive areas can be defined on the touch sensitive screen area, in combination with the data displayed on the display screen, for the entry of commands and/or the selection of displayed items. In particular, the processor 74 can be arranged to display a menu of user selectable items and to be responsive to a location at which the screen is touched for input of a user selection of a menu item. The touch sensitive screen can then thus be used as a dynamic and reconfigurable user interface. Touch screen entry can be used in place of or in addition to the entry of commands by scanning the bar codes on the command bar code card.

FIG. 9 illustrates another example of a pen 10 in accordance with the invention. This example includes much in common with the pen 10 of FIG. 3, except that here a modem 92, a socket 94 for a standard telephone plug and a speaker 95 for monitoring transmissions during operation of the modem are provided in place of the optical interface 86 and optical transmitter and receivers 32 and 34. In this example, therefore, data can be transmitted and received via a telephone line without the use of the base station, providing added portability. Preferably, a simplified base station is provided in the form of a charging unit for rechargeable batteries in the pen 10. It will be appreciated that the pen 10 could also be provided with the touch screen facility of the pen 10 of FIG. 8.

Although in the above embodiments, the pens 10 are intended for manual scanning of bar codes, it will be appreciated that they could also be used for reading other optically readable codes, such as binary dot codes, by the provision of appropriate control software for programming the processor 74. Alternatively, in place of the sensor head 14 which is intended to be manually scanned, a self-scanning head could be provided.

The invention is also applicable to the reading of other coded data sources such as, for example, magnetic strips, graphical representations and/or alphanumeric characters, by the provision of an appropriate reading head and control logic.

Alternative removable heads could be attached to the tip of the pen by a screw, bayonet, friction or other appropriate attachment arrangement.

For example, the data entry pen could be provided with a reading head which is responsive to movement of the pen for tracing out desired codes and or commands. In particular, by the provision of a rolling ball in a holder in the reading head, of rotation sensing means in the manner of a personal computer mouse for tracing movements of the ball and suitable interpretation logic in software or special purpose hardware, for defining a series of vectors as the pen is moved over a surface and for performing pattern recognition on the result-

ing vector patterns to identify control and/or alphanumeric characters traced out by the pen head, it is possible directly to input information into the pen by "writing" down those characters. By limiting the range of characters to be recognised (e.g., corresponding to the numerals and commands shown in FIG. 6) it is possible to use conventional pattern recognition techniques with relatively limited processing power and storage requirements. It will be appreciated that increased processing power and storage can be provided in the pen described above for the embodiments of FIGS. 1, 3, 8 and 9 by the use of a more powerful processor and increased memory capacity.

FIG. 10 illustrates a further embodiment of the invention. This further embodiment of the invention is similar to the embodiment of FIG. 9, but this embodiment is intended for use with a wireless data transmission means, for example radio signals. In particular, the embodiment of FIG. 10 is intended for use with a cellular telephone network, although it could be adapted for use with some other form of wireless telephone system, for example a satellite based telephone network.

The embodiment of FIG. 10 is intended to be used independently of a base unit and to contain all the necessary functionality for independent operation. In one alternative the hand held unit is provided with a rechargeable battery pack 70, which can be removed from the hand held unit for recharging. In another alternative the hand held unit is provided with a fixed rechargeable battery pack 70. In the latter alternative, and optionally in the former alternative, a mains voltage charging socket and transformer/rectifier can be provided in the hand held unit or the battery pack for receiving a mains lead for charging purposes rather than the low voltage connectors 30/31. The low voltage DC charging connectors 30/31 can be configured in a socket for receiving an adapter lead, with a transformer/rectifier being provided, possibly incorporated in a plug, for connection to a mains socket. It will be appreciated that an adapter for connection to, for example, a 12 volt DC supply from a car may also be provided. As a further alternative, contactless recharging (for example by magnetic induction) could be employed.

The embodiment of FIG. 10 is implemented using a ASIC, although a conventional microprocessor and external hardware could be used. Likewise, it will be appreciated that the embodiments described with reference to the previous Figures could also be implemented using a ASIC or other equivalent technology instead of a microprocessor.

In the embodiment of FIG. 10, the ASIC (Application Specific Integrated Circuit) performs the majority of the necessary processing functions of the device including:

- 50 accepting data from the head 14;
- accepting data from the switches 22 and 24;
- driving the indicator 26;
- processing the data received from the head in the manner described with respect to the previous embodiments in order
- 55 to extract the necessary information;
- controlling the flow of data in and out of the RAM 78;
- controlling the flow of data in and out of the ROM 76;
- interfacing with the power control module 72;
- implementing the modem function for use with an analogue telephony system and also providing the necessary processing and control for integration with a digital telephony system and/or a cellular telephone network;
- controlling the loudspeaker 95 permitting the progress of calls to be monitored;
- 65 accepting input from a microphone 152 to enable the pen in combination with the loudspeaker 95 to operate as a hand set for the purposes of audio telephony;

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controlling the flow of data to an optional printer socket (not shown) allowing a user to print out information relative to the code being scanned in a predefined format;

controlling the output of data via an optical link **153** to a peripheral device (e.g., a printer) using for example, infra red light;

controlling an interface to the display **20**, the display interface functions being performed in the ASIC.

The optical link **153** could be implemented using the optical link technology described above for interfacing a hand held unit with a base station. Indeed, the printer or other peripheral device could be implemented as, or connected to a base station for the hand held unit.

FIG. **11** illustrates in more detail the configuration of the ASIC **150**.

The ASIC comprises the system controller **165** that controls the operation of the pen and of its associated components. In this embodiment system controller **165** consists of a microcontroller core incorporated into the ASIC. In other embodiments it could consist of some other control means using, for example, one or more finite state machines.

If the system controller **165** is a microcontroller core, then the data that controls its operation is stored in an internal ROM **163** together with the external ROM **76**. Alternatively, there could be no internal ROM **163** and the system controller **165** will then obtain all the data from the external ROM **76**. Alternatively, again, the internal ROM **163** could be used exclusively without an external ROM **78**. However, this would reduce the flexibility of the device. The use of the internal ROM **163** is advantageous where a pre-defined amount of the operations to be performed are fixed for all pen types, whilst the remainder of the operation is dependent on a particular model, to take account for example of language variations, number of switches used to enter data, etc. The RAM **161** in the ASIC can be used by the system controller **165** as a scratch pad RAM to speed up operations and in order to reserve the maximum amount of RAM **78** for the storage of the main data. This "main data" includes data identifying information relating to selectable items of, for example, a merchandising catalogue, which can be down loaded by telephonic transmissions from a remote station.

The microcontroller receives requests via the bus **84** which is connected to the external bus **84** illustrated in FIG. **10**. However, in an alternative embodiment where the system controller **165** consist of a number of finite state machines, then control would be by means of the fixed interconnection of the logic in the fixed state machines.

RAM **161** could be used as a short term data store leaving the RAM **78** to store the main data, the data in RAM **78** being retained by the battery **70**. An additional battery (not shown) could be provided for data retention to prevent the loss of data from the RAM **78** or the RAM **161** in the event of failure of the battery **70**.

The switch interface **155** responds to the operation of the switch **22** and ensures that the system controller **165** receives signals which are devoid of bounce (resulting for example from multiple operations of the switch due to the spring operation within the switch).

The head interface **156** carries out the necessary signal conditioning as required on receiving signals from the head **14**. The signal conditioning will depend on the exact configuration of the head and preferably comprises simple buffering of the data read. Alternatively, it could be implemented to provide at least some of the bar code conversion operations as will be apparent to one skilled in the art.

Selector **159** is controlled by the system controller **165** and functions in such a manner to allow the microphone **152** and

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the speaker **95** to provide standard audio telephony transmission or to allow the system controller to transfer the data over the telephony network using, in the present embodiment, conventional cellular telephone technology.

Thus the selector **159** enables the data entry device to be used as a conventional cellular telephone for the transmission of audio signals. In conventional telephony mode, the selector **159** takes signals from the microphone **152** that have been processed by the signal processor **158** and directs the output to the line interface **116**. The processing performed by the processor **158** can comprise, as will be apparent to one skilled in the art, conventional operations of buffering the microphone to filter out any frequencies not required and to amplify the signal to a suitable level. Received audio data is directed to the audio interface **157** which performs necessary signal conditioning before passing the signal to the speaker **95**.

In the data transfer mode, the selector takes the output from the data formatter **160**, which has prepared the data to be transmitted over the cellular telephone network, and directs this to the line interface **152**. The speaker **95** is then used to output any tones or audio messages indicating errors, correct operation, etc., again via the audio interface **157**.

Switching between modes can be accomplished using the keys and/or the scanning sensor of the hand held unit in the manner described above for the entry of data and/or commands.

The output formatter **164** prepares the data to be transmitted to a remote printer via an optical link **153** (not shown). This transmission could be in any one of a number of forms, for example, infra red light using technology as described above for interfacing the pen with a base unit. Alternatively, other remote link technology, for example a radio link, could be provided.

FIG. **12** illustrates aspects from FIGS. **10** and **11** to illustrate in more detail the incorporation of an example of a cellular telephone system within the data entry unit. The telecommunications interface **116** comprises a line interface/duplexer which is connected to an aerial **178**. The line interface/duplexer **116** is connected to a transmitter **170** and to a receiver/synthesizer **172** implemented in the selector **159**. Also implemented in the selector **159** is selector logic **174** for connecting the transmitter **170** and the receiver/synthesizer **172** to the signal processor **158**, the audio interface **157**, the data formatter **160** and the control logic **165** within the ASIC **150**.

Although specific embodiments of the invention have been described hereinabove, it will be appreciated that many modifications and/or additions are possible within the scope of the present invention.

Thus, for example, although in the presently preferred embodiments described above the hand held unit is configured with the shape of a pen, it will be appreciated that the hand held unit could be configured in other shapes as desired in other applications, for example in the shape of a pistol.

Although in the examples of the pen and base unit described with reference to FIGS. **1** to **4** and **8** an optical link between the pen and the base unit is provided, in an alternative embodiment other wireless data transmission means, for example radio signals, could be used, in the manner of a portable telephone of the type with a portable handset and a base unit.

The data from the memory of the pen (e.g., the complete list of items which could be ordered from a catalogue) could conveniently be output in alphanumeric form via a modem to a facsimile (fax) machine for printing the content of the memory.

In the preferred embodiments described above, catalogue data is down-loaded into the pen from a remote processing system by telephone, over the telecommunications interface. However, as an alternative to down-loading, for example a complete catalogue, via the telephone line, other data entry means could be provided for the bulk of the data, the telephone line then only being used for updating the stored data. For example the pen and/or the base unit as appropriate could be provided with a socket or connector or reader for a memory device (such as a plug-in ROM, a smart card, etc.).

Although no speaker is illustrated in the examples of the pen described with reference to FIGS. 3 and 8, a speaker or other sound generator could be provided as in the FIGS. 9 and 10 embodiments for giving audio feedback to report on the correct reading, or otherwise, of a code. Thus, for example, when a code is correctly read, one beep can be sounded, and when a code is incorrectly read, two beeps could be sounded. Alternatively, appropriate synthetic or recorded voice messages could be output.

Although in the examples described above the plane of the display is generally parallel to the axis of the pen, the plane of the display 20 could be arranged to slope progressively towards the axis of the pen away from the head end of the pen to reduce the angle between the normal to the plane of the display and the line of sight of the user.

Also, although in the present examples two mechanical key switches are provided, in other embodiments one key switch only could be provided. Operating that key switch a predetermined number of times within a short period could be used to emulate the provision of two key switches for scrolling and other functions. More key switches could also be provided in other embodiments. For example, a numerical keypad could be provided. However, in preferred embodiments of the invention, the number of keys should be kept as low as possible for any particular application. As in the embodiments described above, two key switches are preferred. The control sheet or data carrier effectively forms a keyboard extension for the pen.

Although in the example of a card or other carrier shown in FIG. 6 a set of bar codes for only numeric and command codes are indicated, if desired a set of bar codes for the complete alphabet could be provided. Alternative arrangements of the codes would also be possible, for example a complete set of codes and corresponding characters could be arranged in the format of a standard typewriter keyboard layout. The codes could also be incorporated in the letters and numerals, for example extending as a strip across the letters and numerals. For example, a bar code could replace the cross bar in a capital "A", and similar modifications for the other letters of the alphabet.

Also, as mentioned above, in appropriate embodiments of the invention, codes other than bar codes or dot codes could be used. For example a symbol blob code could be used, this requiring about 1 Kbyte of storage for decoding purposes. Indeed, in other embodiments of the invention full character recognition (OCR) could be employed where the reading sensor is in the form of a camera or other scanning sensor incorporated in the reading head. With a camera and appropriate recognition logic, the pen could be used, for example, for fingerprint recognition, either as an aim in itself, or for user validation purposes.

In a merchandising system, where bar codes or other codes are associated with merchandisable items, this could be achieved simply by means of a printed catalogue, or some other form of list, or as a result of codes applied to examples of the products in question, or as a result of codes displayed, for example, on a TV screen with images relating to those

products. The only requirement is that the display of the codes are readable by the data entry system of the present invention.

Features from the respective embodiments of the invention described above could also be combined as desired to provide a configuration appropriate for a particular application.

Thus, for example, the audio telephony functions described with reference to the embodiment of FIGS. 10 to 12 could be incorporated in the hand held or base unit, as appropriate, of the other embodiments of the invention.

Although in the specific embodiments described above the telecommunications interface for the telephonic transmission of information is only provided in a hand held unit where no base unit with a telecommunications interface is provided, it will be appreciated that a hand held unit with a telecommunications interface could be combined with a base unit also having a telecommunications interface, either of the same or a different type.

The invention claimed is:

1. A hand held data entry unit operable for use in a data entry system, said hand held unit comprising:

(A) a speaker and a microphone permitting said hand held unit to be used as a wireless telephone handset;

(B) a sensor operable to sense commands and/or data, and in response to said sensed commands and/or data operable to produce input signals for said hand held unit;

(C) rewritable storage made of solid state memory, wherein said storage is remotely programmable with: a plurality of user selectable items, via downloading said user selectable items for said rewritable storage for later user access from said storage; and wherein said plurality of user selectable items are downloadable from a remote source which is publicly accessible by other users of other hand held units;

(D) an antenna;

(E) a plurality of mechanical switches operable by a user;

(F) a rechargeable power supply;

(G) a display screen operable to display information for user selectable items, wherein further said display screen is operable to display a selected language of a number of languages to assist a user in operating said hand held unit, wherein said selected language is selectable by a user via operation of said sensor, and said number of languages includes English and at least one language other than English;

(I) a telecommunications interface operable for: transmission of information corresponding to a selected item or items of said plurality of user selectable items from said storage via said antenna and at least a telecommunications network, and reception of information corresponding to one or more of said plurality of user selectable items for said storage via said antenna and at least a telecommunications network; and

(j) wherein said hand held unit additionally is operable for a user to make a shopping selection and to order a merchandisable item available for purchase, wherein:

(i) by utilizing said antenna and at least a telecommunications network said hand held unit is operable: to receive at least a plurality of user selectable items which correspond to merchandisable items available for purchase by a user, wherein said receiving is subsequent to entry of one or more user inputs to said hand held unit,

(ii) wherein subsequent to said hand held unit receiving said plurality of user selectable items which correspond to merchandisable items, said display screen is

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- operable to display one or more of said plurality of user selectable items which correspond to merchandisable items,
- (iii) by utilizing said antenna and at least a telecommunications network said hand held unit is operable to transmit data from said hand held unit corresponding to a selected user selectable item of said plurality of user selectable items which correspond to merchandisable items to enable a user to order a merchandisable item corresponding to said selected item,
- (iv) wherein via operation of said sensor and/or one or more of said mechanical switches said selected item is individually selectable by a user from said plurality of user selectable items which correspond to merchandisable items, and
- (v) in response to a said transmission said hand held unit is operable to receive information about a said order to display on said display screen.
2. A data entry system comprising: a self-contained, hand held data entry unit which is a cellular telephone handset, said hand held unit comprising:
- (A) a sensor for sensing commands and/or data and for producing input signals in response to said sensed commands and/or data;
- (B) an antenna;
- (C) a plurality of mechanical switches operable by a user;
- (D) a speaker and a microphone, wherein said sensor or one or more of said mechanical switches are operable by a user to select or deselect a mode permitting said hand held unit to be used as a telephone handset for voice communication;
- (E) rewritable storage made of solid state memory and programmable with user selectable items, wherein each of a plurality of said user selectable items are receivable to said storage via said antenna and are for retention by said storage for later user access and user selection via operation of a said sensor;
- (F) a display screen for displaying a user readable representation of commands, and for displaying one or more user selectable items retrieved from retention in said storage;
- (G) a wireless interface coupled to said storage, wherein said interface is configured to establish a link to a device separate from said hand held unit to permit transfer of data from said storage to said separate device, wherein said link is a wireless link of short range radio signals; and
- (H) a telecommunications interface for transmission of information retrieved from said storage relating to each of a selected item or items of said plurality of user selectable items via said antenna and a telecommunications network and for reception of description information corresponding to each of one or more of said plurality of user selectable items to said storage via said antenna and a telecommunications network, wherein said received description information is for retention in said storage for later user access;
- (I) wherein said telecommunications interface is a cellular telecommunications interface;
- (J) wherein said display screen, telecommunications interface, and antenna are operable to permit a user to select and place an order for one or more user selectable merchandisable items for a user, wherein
- (i) said hand held unit is operable in response to user input to receive via said antenna a plurality of user selectable merchandisable items,

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- (ii) said display screen is operable to display a plurality, of user selectable merchandisable items, and each of said one or more merchandisable items is individually selectable for ordering from said display screen from said plurality of user selectable merchandisable items via operation of a said sensor, and
- (ii) said one or more selections are transmitted via said antenna, and wherein subsequent to a said transmission said hand held device is operable to receive via said antenna information corresponding to a said order to display on said display screen.
3. A merchandising system comprising: a portable data entry unit operable for use in and away from a user's home; said data entry unit comprising:
- (A) a sensor operable by a user to input commands and/or information for said data entry unit; and
- (B) in addition to said sensor one or more mechanical switches operable by a user to input or select information in said data entry unit;
- (C) a speaker;
- (D) an antenna;
- (E) a rechargeable power supply;
- (F) said sensor coupled to a wireless communications interface operable to transmit command and/or data signals, said wireless communications interface being coupled to said antenna and operable to connect said data entry unit to a telecommunications network via said antenna; and
- (G) a display screen coupled to said sensor to display a plurality of user selectable items in response to input to said data entry unit via said sensor, and wherein said display screen, sensor, antenna, one or more mechanical switches, speaker, antenna, power supply, and wireless communications interface are part of a unitary assembly; and wherein:
- (I) said data entry unit is configured for a user to make a shopping selection and to request a product available for purchase, wherein:
- (i) by utilizing said wireless communications interface, said data entry unit is operable in response to user input: to receive via said antenna and a telecommunications network a plurality of user selectable items which correspond to products available for purchase by a user,
- (ii) wherein subsequent to said data entry unit receiving said plurality of user selectable items which correspond to products, said display screen is operable to display user selectable items which correspond to products,
- (iii) wherein an item is individually selectable from said plurality of user selectable items which correspond to products via said sensor sensing a location selected, wherein said location is: a location of multiple locations selectable from said display screen, and said location corresponds to an individually selectable item which is displayed along with other user selectable items,
- (iv) by utilizing said wireless communications interface, said data entry unit is operable to transmit, via said antenna, data for a selection of an item of said plurality of user selectable items which correspond to products, wherein a said transmission is to request a product corresponding to said selected item, and
- (v) subsequent to a said transmission said data entry unit is operable to receive via said antenna information relating to a said request to display on said display screen; and

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- (J) wherein further said data entry unit is configured to receive input of characters, including alphabetic characters, via user input, wherein
- (i) said display screen is operable to display a plurality of characters in response to user input;
 - (ii) said data entry unit is configured to receive via user input a sequence of characters in order to build up text which includes a plurality of alphabetic characters, wherein said display screen is operable to display said built up text; and
 - (iii) said built up text makes up a code which corresponds to a user selectable item, which code said data entry unit is configured to utilize to retrieve information for said corresponding user selectable item to display on said display screen.
4. A wireless telephone comprising, as an integral and-holdable unit:
- (A) a sensor to sense commands and/or data, and for producing input signals for said hand-holdable unit in response to said sensed commands and/or data;
 - (B) a plurality mechanical switches operable by a user, and wherein said sensor is a touch sensitive screen device;
 - (B) rewritable storage made of solid state memory and programmable to store a database of information relating to user selectable items, said storage being programmable by downloading information to said storage in response to one or more transmitted instructions;
 - (C) an antenna;
 - (D) a display screen operable to display a user understandable representation of commands, and to display information from said storage for one or more selected items;
 - (E) a microphone for conversion of user speech into voice signals for transmission, and as speaker for conversion of received voice signals into audio signals, to permit said hand-holdable unit to be used as a telephone handset; and
 - (F) a wireless telecommunications interface, wherein said interface is configured to permit
 - (i) transmission and reception of voice signals via said antenna and a wireless telecommunications network;
 - (ii) transmission of information retrieved from said storage relating to an item or items selected from said database via said antenna and a wireless telecommunications network, wherein said item or items are individually selected from said display screen from a display of one or more of said user selectable items, and
 - (iii) reception of information relating to selectable items to said database via said antenna and a wireless telecommunications network;
- said hand-holdable unit comprising further limitations, wherein
- (I) said display screen, sensor, wireless telecommunications interface, and antenna are configured to permit said hand-holdable unit additionally to be operable by a user:
 - (i) to receive via said antenna a plurality of user selectable items which correspond to a plurality of products available for purchase by a user of said hand-holdable unit,
 - (ii) to make a shopping selection of a product available for purchase by a user, wherein each shopping selection is made via individual selection of an item from said display screen from a plurality of user selectable items which correspond to a plurality of products available for purchase, via user operation of said sensor, wherein a individually selected item corresponds to a product available for purchase, and

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- (iii) to transmit via said antenna data corresponding to a said shopping selection, wherein in response to a said transmission said hand-holdable unit is operable to receive via said antenna information to display on said display screen.
5. A merchandising system comprising: a cellular telephone; wherein said telephone is an integral hand held unit comprising:
- (A) a sensor to sense commands and/or data and for producing input signals in response to said sensed commands and/or data;
 - (B) an antenna;
 - (C) rewritable storage made of solid state memory, wherein said storage:
 - (i) is programmable with a database of user selectable items, said storage being programmable via receiving user selectable items via said antenna to said storage for later user access from said storage; and
 - (ii) wherein said user selectable items receivable via said antenna include a plurality of items available from one or more remotely located catalogues of merchandisable or other items;
 - (D) a display screen coupled to said rewritable storage, wherein said display screen is operable:
 - (i) to display user understandable representations of commands, and to display information, and
 - (ii) to display a selected language of a number of languages to assist a user in operating said hand held unit, wherein a user is able to select a said language via operation of said sensor, and said number of languages includes English and at least one language other than English;
 - (E) a microphone for conversion of user speech into voice signals for transmission, and a speaker for conversion of received voice signals into audio signals, permitting said hand held unit to be used as a handset; and
 - (F) a cellular telecommunications interface operable to directly and wirelessly connect said hand held unit to a cellular telecommunications network via said antenna, and configured to permit:
 - (i) transmission of information retrieved from said storage corresponding to an item or items selected from said database of user selectable items via said antenna, wherein each of said item or items selected is individually selectable from said database of said user selectable items from said display screen via operation of said sensor, and
 - (ii) reception of information corresponding to one or more of said selectable items to said database via said antenna;
 - (G) wherein further said hand held unit is configured to receive input of characters, including alphabetic characters, via user input, wherein
 - (i) said display screen is operable to display a plurality of characters in response to user input;
 - (ii) said hand held unit is configured to receive via user input a sequence of characters in order to build up text which includes a plurality of alphabetic characters wherein said display screen is operable to display said built up text; and
 - (iii) said built up text makes up a code which corresponds to a user selectable item, which code said data entry unit is configured to utilize to retrieve information for said corresponding user selectable item for display on said display screen.

6. A hand held data entry unit according to claim 1, wherein a said sensor is a touch sensitive screen device, a roller ball device operable to sense user input, or a scanning device.

7. A hand held data entry unit according to claim 2, wherein a said sensor is a touch sensitive screen device, a roller ball device operable to sense user input, or a scanning device.

8. A portable data entry unit according to claim 3, wherein a said sensor is a touch sensitive screen device, a roller ball device operable to sense user input, or a scanning device.

9. An integral hand-held unit according to claim 4, wherein a said sensor is a touch sensitive screen device, a roller ball device operable to sense user input, or a scanning device.

10. An integral hand held unit according to claim 5, wherein a said sensor is a touch sensitive screen device, a roller ball device operable to sense user input, or a scanning device.

11. A hand held data entry unit according to claim 1, wherein said display screen includes reconfigurable areas displayed on the display screen, associated with data displayed on the display screen, wherein one or more of said areas are selectable by a user for inputting commands into said hand held unit and for selecting one or more items displayed on said display screen.

12. A hand held data entry unit according to claim 2, wherein said display screen includes reconfigurable areas displayed on the display screen, associated with data displayed on the display screen, wherein one or more of said areas are selectable by a user for inputting commands into said hand held unit and for selecting one or more items displayed on said display screen.

13. A portable data entry unit according to claim 3, wherein said display screen includes reconfigurable areas displayed on the display screen, associated with data displayed on the display screen, wherein one or more of said areas are selectable by a user via operation of said sensor for inputting commands into said hand held unit and for selecting one or more items displayed on said display screen.

14. An integral hand held unit according to claim 5, wherein said display screen includes reconfigurable areas displayed on the display screen, associated with data displayed on the display screen, wherein one or more of said areas are selectable by a user for inputting commands into said hand held unit and for selecting one or more items displayed on said display screen.

15. An integral hand held unit according to claim 5, further comprising: a wireless connector coupled to said solid state memory, operable to establish a wireless link with a peripheral device via short range radio signals; and a plurality of mechanical switches operable by a user.

16. A hand held data entry unit according to claim 1, additionally comprising: a camera, wherein said camera is operable for use to capture a plurality of data for storage by said solid state memory for later user access, wherein said data is an image or a representation of an image, and whether or not said unit or camera is configured to recognize content of an image.

17. A hand held data entry unit according to claim 2, additionally comprising: a camera, wherein said camera is operable for use to capture a plurality of data for storage by said solid state memory for later user access, wherein said

data is an image or a representation of an image, and whether or not said unit or camera is configured to recognize content of an image.

18. An integral hand-holdable unit according to claim 4, additionally comprising: a camera, wherein said camera is operable for use to capture a plurality of data for storage by said solid state memory for later user access, wherein said data is an image or a representation of an image, and whether or not said unit or camera is configured to recognize content of an image.

19. An integral hand held unit according to claim 5, additionally comprising: a camera, wherein said camera is operable for use to capture a plurality of data for storage by said solid state memory for later user access, wherein said data is an image or a representation of an image, and whether or not said unit or camera is configured to recognize content of an image.

20. A hand held data entry unit according to claim 1, wherein said unit is operable to process code which includes visible user readable text and is associated with a item; wherein after selection of visible text of a said code by use of said sensor a said code is processed, and wherein after processing a said code, said display screen displays content or one or more images relating to said item associated with a said code.

21. A hand held data entry unit according to claim 2, wherein said unit is operable to process code which includes visible user readable text and is associated with a item; wherein after selection of visible text of a said code by use of said sensor a said code is processed, and wherein after processing a said code; said display screen displays content or one or more images relating to said item associated with a said code.

22. An integral hand held unit according to claim 5, wherein said unit is operable to process code which includes visible user readable text and is associated with a item; wherein after selection of visible text of a said code by use of said sensor a said code is processed, and wherein after processing a said code, said display screen displays content or one or more images relating to said item associated with a said code.

23. An integral hand held unit according to claim 5, wherein further:

(H) said sensor, display screen, cellular telecommunications interface, and antenna are operable to permit a user to shop for and order one or more merchandisable items for a user, wherein

(i) said display screen is operable to display a plurality of user selectable items corresponding to merchandisable items available for purchase for a user, and

(ii) each of said one or more selected items which correspond to merchandisable items is individually selectable for ordering by selecting from a location on said display screen associated with a selected item via operation of a said sensor, and

(iii) said one or more selections are transmitted via said antenna, and wherein subsequent to a said transmission said telephone is operable to receive via said antenna information relating to a said order to display on said display screen.