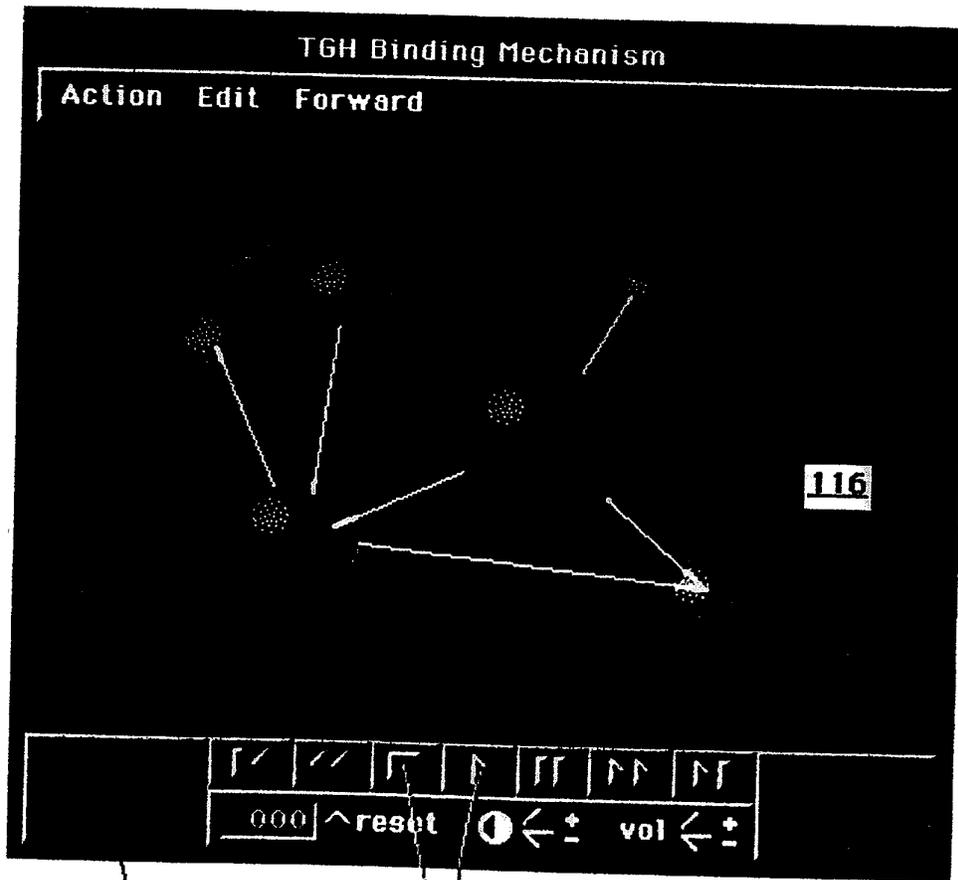


EXHIBIT 1.03



118

120

FIG 10

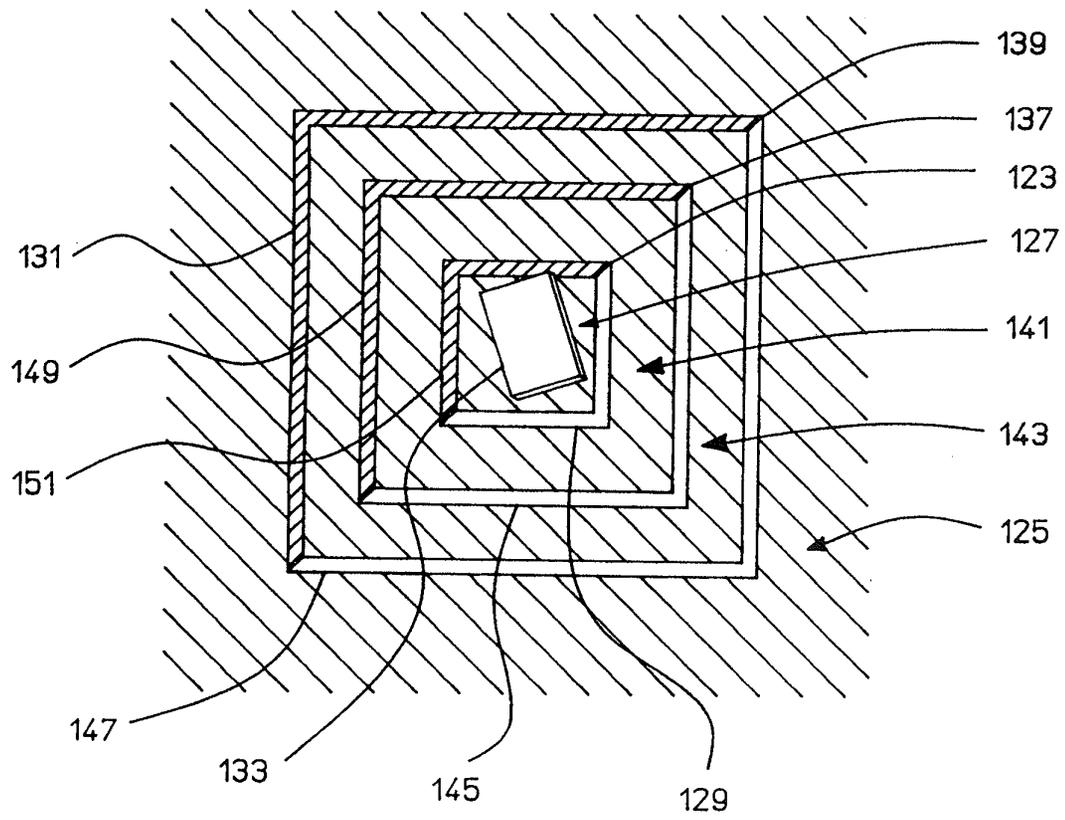


FIG 11

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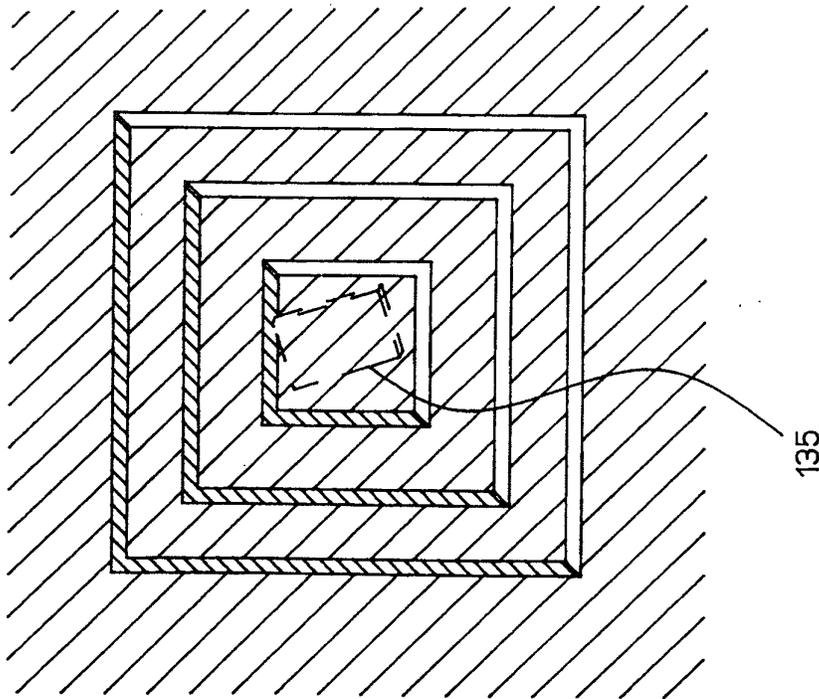


FIG 12

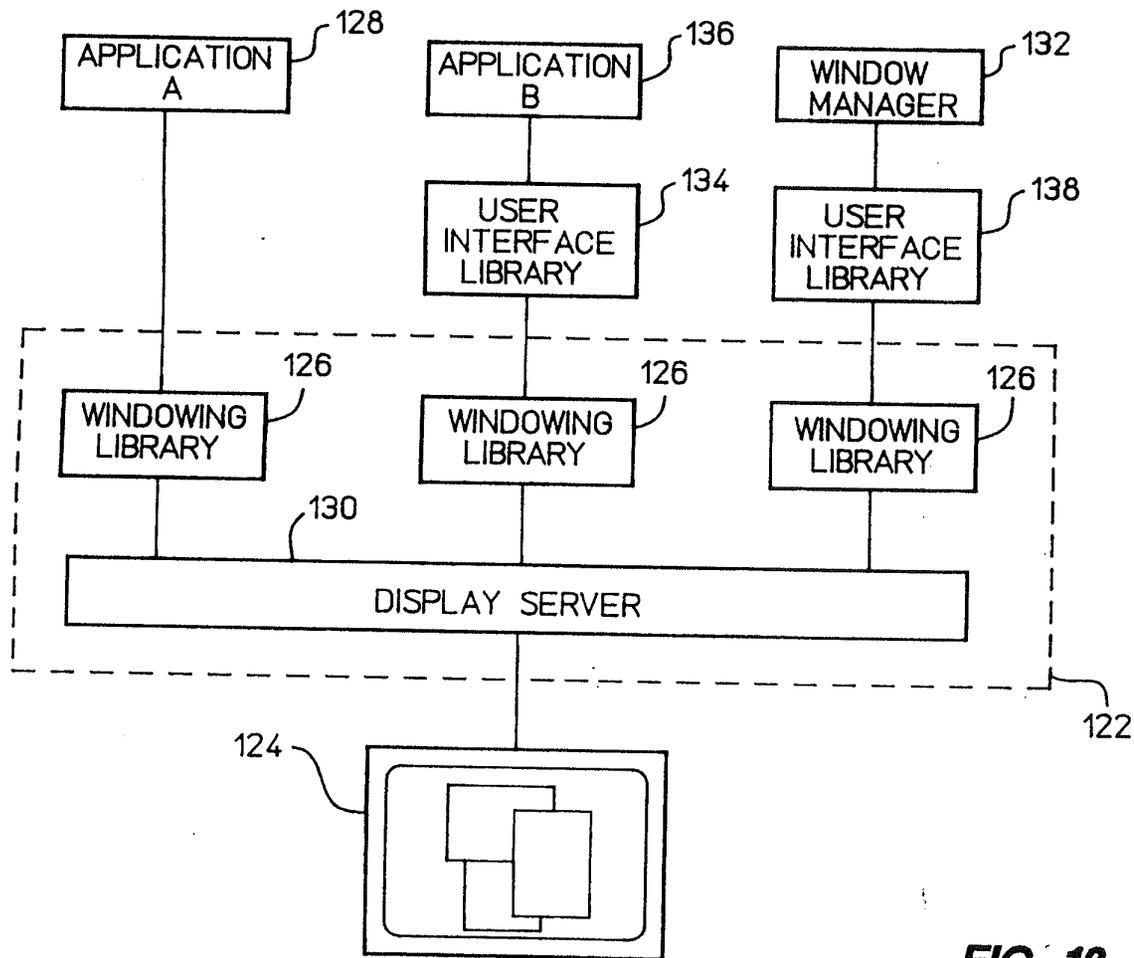


FIG 13

EP 584392 (1)
G06F3/033A1-

PTJ 96-2990

S.T.I.C., Translations Branch



- 1 -

G06F3/033A1



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DOC

⑥ Statusanzeige.

⑦ Die Erfindung betrifft eine Statusanzeige für ein Computerprogramm mit einem länglichen Feld 1, auf dem ein Anzeigefeld 4 oder Zeiger wandert, dessen jeweilige Stellung auf dem länglichen Feld 1 den Status angibt, wobei das längliche Feld 1 aus mehreren aneinander angrenzenden Einzelfeldern 2 zusammengesetzt ist. Diese bilden jeweils ein Bedienfeld oder einen Bedientopf, bei dessen Betätigung

in den dazugehörigen Programmbereich verzweigt oder die dazugehörige Programmfunktion ausgeführt wird und das Anzeigefeld 4 oder der Zeiger sich stets in oder auf demjenigen Einzelfeld 2 befindet, in dessen zugehörigem Programmbereich/Programmfunktion der Benutzer sich jeweils befindet.

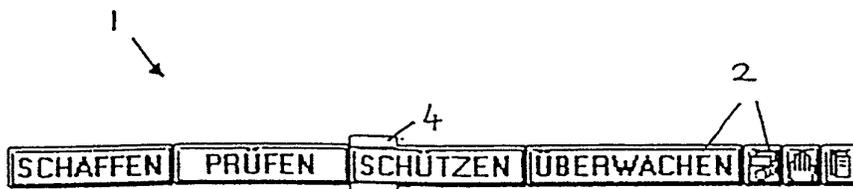


Fig. 1

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Die Erfindung betrifft eine Statusanzeige in einem Computerprogramm mit einem länglichen Feld, auf dem ein Anzeigefeld oder Zeiger wandert, dessen jeweilige Stellung auf dem länglichen Feld den Status angibt.

Statusanzeigen in Form länglicher Felder sind verschiedentlich bekannt. So sind längliche Anzeigegeräte bekannt, bei denen ein Zeiger entlang einer geraden Skala wandert. Ferner ist bekannt, am Rand eines Fensters insbesondere eines Textfensters ein längliches Feld anzuordnen, an dessen beiden Enden ein Knopffeld angeordnet ist, wobei zwischen beiden Knopffeldern ein Anzeigefeld wandert und verschieblich ist, wodurch im Fenster der Inhalt insbesondere der Text entsprechend verschoben wird. Die Stellung des wandernden Knopfes über das längliche Statusfeld zeigt ungefähr an, an welcher Stelle des gesamten Textes sich das Fenster befindet, d.h. es muß geschätzt werden, wie weit der Knopf bewegt werden muß, um eine bestimmte Textstelle zu erreichen.

Aufgabe der Erfindung ist es, eine Statusanzeige zu schaffen, die sehr präzise anzeigt, an welcher Stelle eines Programms oder eines Textes oder eines Informationsbereiches man sich befindet, wobei eine besonders einfache Bedienung gegeben sein soll.

Diese Aufgabe wird erfindungsgemäß dadurch gelöst, daß das längliche Feld aus mehreren aneinander angrenzenden Einzelfeldern zusammengesetzt ist, die jeweils ein Bedienfeld oder einen Bedientaste bilden, bei dessen Betätigung in den dazugehörigen Programmbereich verzweigt oder die dazugehörige Programmfunktion ausgeführt wird, wobei das Anzeigefeld oder der Zeiger sich stets in oder auf demjenigen Einzelfeld befindet, in dem der Benutzer sich jeweils befindet.

Bei einer solchen Statusanzeige wandert das Anzeigefeld bzw. der Zeiger über die Einzelfelder und zeigt damit sehr genau an, an welcher Stelle des Programms bzw. der Informationsmenge man sich befindet, da die Einzelfelder die einzelnen Program-, Text- oder Informationsmengenteile bzw. -abschnitte oder -absätze oder -kapitel oder -bereiche darstellen. Es wird somit sehr präzise die jeweilige Stelle des Programms, des Textes oder der Informationsmenge angezeigt. Darüber hinaus bilden die Einzelfelder selber Bedienfelder bzw. Bedientaste, die bei ihrer Betätigung (Anklicken) zu dem jeweiligen Programmbereich bzw. Text- oder Informationsbereich führen. Die Statusanzeige hat damit die doppelte Funktion einer menueähnlichen Bedienung mit einer exakten Darstellung, wo der Anwender bzw. Benutzer im Programm bzw. in der Informationsmenge steht.

Besonders vorteilhaft ist es, daß das Anzeigefeld oder der Zeiger mehrere Stellungen in oder auf dem Einzelfeld einnimmt, je nach dem in welchem Unterbereich des dazugehörigen Programmbereichs der Benutzer sich befindet. Hierdurch kann eine noch feinere Unterteilung der Einzelfelder erfolgen, d.h. das Anzeigefeld bzw. der Zeiger kann an verschiedenen Stellen des Einzelfeldes sich befinden und damit darstellen, in welchem Bereich des zugehörigen Programmbereichs der Benutzer sich befindet.

Besonders vorteilhaft ist es, wenn das Anzeigefeld oder der Zeiger farbige und/oder durchsichtige ist. Auch ist es von besonderem Vorteil, wenn das Anzeigefeld oder der Zeiger in seiner Größe größer oder kleiner als ein Einzelfeld ist.

Eine sehr präzise Anzeige wird geschaffen, wenn das Anzeigefeld oder der Zeiger in seiner Breite einen Bruchteil der Breite eines Einzelfeldes aufweist, wobei der Bruchteil der Anzahl der Unterbereiche des Programmbereichs entspricht.

Ausführungsbeispiele der Statusanzeige sind in den Fig. 1 bis 3 dargestellt.

Fig. 1 zeigt eine Statusanzeige in Form eines länglichen Feldes 1, das aus mehreren Einzelfeldern 2 zusammengesetzt ist, wobei die in der Höhe gleich großen und in der Länge unterschiedlich langen Einzelfelder lückenlos mit ihren Seiten aneinandergrenzen. Ein solches längliches Feld 1 ist im Ausführungsbeispiel längs beschriftet, so daß es im Monitorbild waagrecht am oberen oder unteren Rand in der Regel angeordnet ist und während des gesamten Programms stets zu sehen ist. Alternativ oder zusätzlich kann das längliche Feld auch senkrecht am linken und/oder rechten Bildrand angeordnet sein. Ferner können zwei oder mehr längliche Felder waagrecht oder senkrecht parallel nebeneinander angeordnet sein. Jedem Einzelfeld ist ein bestimmter Programmbereich oder eine bestimmte Programmfunktion zugeordnet, wobei die Einzelfelder entsprechend dem logischen und/oder zeitlichen Ablauf des Programms hintereinander angeordnet sind. Hierbei können wichtige und/oder große Programm- oder Inhaltsbereiche von einem längeren und/oder größeren Einzelfeld dargestellt sein als kleinere oder weniger wichtige Programmbereiche bzw. Programmfunktionen.

Wird eines der Einzelfelder betätigt, insbesondere durch das Anklicken eines Mauszeigers oder durch Antippen mit dem Finger, so führt dieses Betätigen des Einzelfeldes zu einer Funktion, die dem entsprechenden Programmbereich oder der entsprechenden Programmfunktion entspricht, insbesondere wird zu demjenigen Programmbereich führt. Damit...

einzelnen Menüpunkte bzw. Menüethemen bilden.

Entlang der länglichen Statusanzeige und damit dem Feld 1 bewegt sich ein Anzeigefeld oder Zeiger 4 der anzeigt, an welcher Stelle des Programms bzw. in welcher Programmfunktion der Benutzer des Programms sich befindet (dieser Benutzer kann auch eine Maschine, ein Rechner oder ein Programm sein). Im Ausführungsbeispiel nach Fig. 1 wird ein zweiteiliges Anzeigefeld 4 verwendet, das mit einem oberen Bereich am oberen Rand und mit einem unteren Bereich am unteren Rand des länglichen Feldes 1 entlang wandert. Das Anzeigefeld bzw. der Zeiger 4 können stets die gleiche Länge besitzen wie ein Einzelfeld 2, so daß von einem Einzelfeld zum anderen das Anzeigefeld/Zeiger 4 springt, siehe Ausführungsbeispiel nach Fig. 3 rechts außen.

Alternativ kann aber auch das Anzeigefeld/Zeiger 4 eine geringere Länge als ein Einzelfeld 2 haben, so daß die Stellung des Anzeigefeldes/Zeigers innerhalb eines Bereichs eines Einzelfeldes 2 darstellt, an welcher Stelle des Programmbereichs eines Einzelfeldes man sich befindet. Es wird also damit eine noch genauere Anzeige erzeugt. Hierbei kann das Anzeigefeld in Programmbereichen von großer Länge sehr schmal ausgeführt sein, um viele Stellungen innerhalb eines Einzelfeldes 2 darstellen zu können. In diesem Fall bewegt, insbesondere springt das Anzeigefeld/Zeiger in kleinen Schritten über ein Einzelfeld.

In einer anderen Alternative entspricht die unterschiedliche Länge der Einzelfelder den unterschiedlichen Längen der Programmbereiche, so daß sich nicht das Anzeigefeld, insbesondere Einzelfeld in seiner Länge der Länge bzw. Größe des Programmbereichs oder der Programmfunktion anpaßt.

In dem linken Bereich der Ausführungsform nach Fig. 3 ist das Anzeigefeld/Zeiger 4 nicht zweigeteilt, sondern liegt als insbesondere durchsichtiges Feld auf dem länglichen Feld 1 bzw. den Einzelfeldern 2 auf. Hierbei braucht das Anzeigefeld im linken Bereich der Fig. 3 nicht einen Rahmen besitzen, sondern es stellt sich schon genügend durch seine unterschiedliche Farbe dar. Ferner können die Einzelfelder 2 nicht nur Beschriftungen sondern auch zusätzlich und alternativ Symbole oder Bilder zeigen wie dies in den rechten Bereichen der Figuren dargestellt ist. Auch kann das Anzeigefeld/Zeiger 4 ein Bild oder Symbol bilden, darstellen oder aufweisen.

Patentansprüche

1. Statusanzeige für ein Computerprogramm mit einem länglichen Feld (1), auf dem ein Anzeigefeld (4) oder Zeiger wandert, dessen jeweilige Stellung auf dem länglichen Feld (1) den

Status angibt, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das längliche Feld (1) aus mehreren aneinander angrenzenden Einzelfeldern (2) zusammengesetzt ist, die jeweils ein Bedienfeld oder einen Bedienknopf bilden, bei dessen Betätigung in den dazugehörigen Programmbereich verzweigt oder die dazugehörige Programmfunktion ausgeführt wird, wobei das Anzeigefeld (4) oder der Zeiger sich stets in oder auf demjenigen Einzelfeld (2) befindet, in dessen zugehörigem Programmbereich/Programmfunktion der Benutzer sich jeweils befindet.

2. Statusanzeige nach Anspruch 1, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Anzeigefeld oder der Zeiger (4) mehrere Stellungen in oder auf dem Einzelfeld (2) einnimmt, je nach dem in welchem Unterbereich des dazugehörigen Programmbereichs/Programmfunktion der Benutzer sich befindet.
3. Statusanzeige nach Anspruch 1 oder 2, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Anzeigefeld oder der Zeiger (4) farbig und/oder durchsichtig ist.
4. Statusanzeige nach einem der vorherigen Ansprüche, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Anzeigefeld oder der Zeiger (4) in seiner Größe gleich oder kleiner als ein Einzelfeld (2) ist.
5. Statusanzeige nach einem der vorherigen Ansprüche, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Anzeigefeld oder der Zeiger (4) in seiner Breite (B) einen Bruchteil (1/a) der Breite eines Einzelfeldes aufweist, wobei der Bruchteil (1/a) der Anzahl (a) der Unterbereiche des Programmbereichs/Programmfunktion entspricht.
6. Statusanzeige nach einem der vorherigen Ansprüche, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das längliche Feld (1) waagrecht und/oder senkrecht angeordnet ist.
7. Statusanzeige nach einem der vorherigen Ansprüche, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß zwei oder mehr längliche Felder (1) parallel nacheinander oder übereinander angeordnet sind.

1

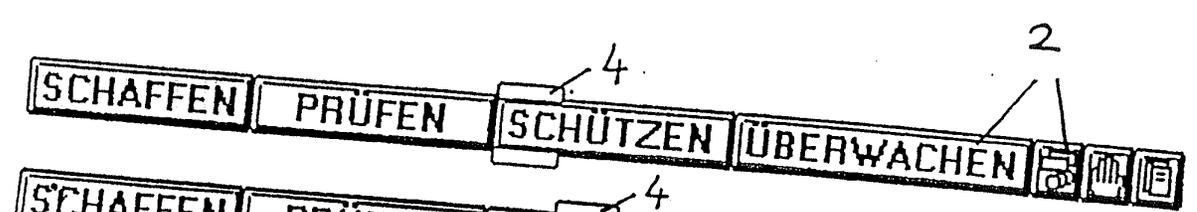


Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

EP 0 584 392 A1



Europäisches
Patentamt

EUROPÄISCHER RECHERCHENBERICHT

Nummer der Anmeldung

EP 92 11 4701

EINSCHLÄGIGE DOKUMENTE			
Kategorie	Kennzeichnung des Dokuments mit Angabe, soweit erforderlich, der maßgeblichen Teile	Betrifft Anspruch	KLASSIFIKATION DER ANMELDUNG (Int. Cl.5)
X	FR-A-2 663 140 (APPLE COMPUTER, INC.) * Seite 2, Zeile 6 - Seite 3, Zeile 5; Abbildungen 2,3 * * Seite 3, Zeile 16 - Seite 4, Zeile 10 * * Seite 4, Zeile 21 - Zeile 26 * * Ansprüche 3-8 *	1-4,6,7	G06F3/033
A	EP-A-0 342 838 (IBM CORPORATION) * Zusammenfassung; Abbildungen 5A-5F * * Seite 8, Zeile 7 - Zeile 12; Abbildungen 6A-6D *	2,6,7	RECHERCHIERTE SACHGEBIETE (Int. Cl.5) G06F
A	EP-A-0 459 174 (IBM CORPORATION) * Zusammenfassung * * Seite 4, Zeile 28 - Seite 5, Zeile 9; Abbildung 5 *	1,2	
A	IBM TECHNICAL DISCLOSURE BULLETIN Bd. 33, Nr. 3B, August 1990, ARMONK, NY, US Seiten 31 - 32 'Min-Max Slider' * Seite 31, Zeile 1 - Zeile 5 * * Seite 31, Zeile 17 - Zeile 22 *	3,5	
Der vorliegende Recherchenbericht wurde für alle Patentansprüche erstellt			
Recherchenort	Abschlußdatum der Recherche	Prüfer	
DEN HAAG	13 MAI 1993	BRAVO P.	
KATEGORIE DER GENANNTEN DOKUMENTE		I : der Erfindung zugrunde liegende Theorien oder Grundsätze E : älteres Patentdokument, das jedoch erst am oder nach dem Anmeldedatum veröffentlicht worden ist D : in der Anmeldung angeführtes Dokument L : aus andern Gründen angeführtes Dokument	
X : von besonderer Bedeutung allein betrachtet Y : von besonderer Bedeutung in Verbindung mit einer andern Veröffentlichung derselben Kategorie A : technologischer Hintergrund			

IBM 1503 01.83 (P0421)

PTO 96-2990

EP 584,392 A1

Translation of European Patent Application No. 584,392 A1

IPC: C1⁵: G06F 3/033

Applicant and Inventor: Helge B. Cohausz

Application Date: August 28, 1992

Publication Date: March 2, 1994 (Patentblatt 94/09)

Original German Title: Statusanzeige

STATUS INDICATOR

Abstract

The invention relates to a status indicator for a computer program having an oblong field 1 on which an indicator field 4 or a cursor moves, whose respective position indicates the status on the oblong field 1, with the oblong field 1 comprising a plurality of individual fields 2 which are adjacent to one another. Each of these fields constitutes a control panel or control button, which, upon being activated, branches into the associated program area or executes the associated program function; and the indicator field 4 or the cursor is always located on the individual field 2 in whose associated program area/program function the user is currently located.

Specification

The invention relates to a status indicator in a computer program having an oblong field on which an indicator field or cursor moves, whose respective position indicates the status on the oblong field.

Different status indicators in the form of oblong fields are known. For example, oblong indicator instruments are known in which a cursor moves along a straight scale. It is also known how to arrange an oblong field at the edge of a window, especially of a text window, with a button field arranged at both ends of the oblong field in which an indicator button moves and is displaceable between both button fields, resulting in the content, especially the text, being moved around within the window. The position of the moving button on the oblong status field indicates only approximately at which location in the entire text the window is located, i.e., it must be estimated how far to move the button in order to reach a certain location in the text.

It is the objective of the invention to provide a status indicator which indicates very precisely at which location one is in the program, in a text, or in an information range, with only a simple operation being required.

The problem under consideration is solved according to the invention in that the oblong field comprises a plurality of individual fields which are adjacent to one another, each of

which constitutes an operating field or a control button which, upon being activated, branches into the associated program area or executes the associated program function, with the indicator field or the cursor always being located on the individual field in whose associated program area/program function the user is currently located.

With this type of status indicator the indicator field or cursor moves over the individual fields and thus indicates very precisely at which location in the program or information one is located, since the individual fields represent portions of the individual program, text or information, i.e., sections, paragraphs, chapters or segments of information. The respective location of the program, text, or information segment is thus precisely indicated. Moreover, the individual fields are control panels or control buttons, which, when activated (clicked on) lead to the respective program area, text, or information segment. The status indicator thus has the double function of operating like a menu and of displaying exactly where in the program or in the body of information the operator or user is located.

It is especially advantageous that the indicator field or the cursor assumes a plurality of positions in or on the individual fields, depending on where the user is in the sub-area or the associated program area. This allows for an even finer division of the individual fields, i.e., the indicator field, or cursor can be located at different locations within the

individual field and can therefore show in which area of the associated program area the user is.

It is especially advantageous if the indicator field or the cursor is colored and/or transparent. It is also especially advantageous if the size of the indicator field or cursor is equal to or smaller than the individual field.

A very precise indication is provided if the width of the indicator field or cursor is a fraction of the width of an individual field, with the fraction corresponding to the number of sub-areas of the program areas.

Embodiments of the status indicator are shown in Figs. 1 to 3.

Fig. 1 is a status indicator in the form of an oblong field 1 comprising a plurality of individual fields 2, with the individual fields, which are of equal height but differ in length, being arranged closely adjacent to one another. This type of oblong field 1 is already marked in the embodiment and it is usually arranged horizontally at the upper and lower edge on the monitor screen where it is visible during the entire program. As an alternative or additionally, the oblong field can also be arranged vertically at the left and/or right edge of the screen. Two or more oblong fields may also be arranged horizontally, vertically, or parallel to one another. Each individual field is associated with a defined program area or a defined program function, with the individual fields being arranged successively in accordance with the logical and/or timed running of the

program. In this case, important and/or large program or content areas can be represented by a longer and/or larger individual field than smaller or less important program areas or program functions.

One of the individual fields is activated by clicking a mouse cursor or typing with a finger such that the activation of the individual field results in a function corresponding to the respective program area or respective program function, i.e., switching to a program area or a program function occurs. In this case the oblong status indicator can represent a menu in which the individual fields represent menu points or menu subjects.

Along the oblong status indicator and therefore, field 1, an indicator field or cursor 4 moves which indicates at which location in the program or in which program function the user of the program is (this user may also be a machine, a computer or a program). In the embodiment according to Fig. 1 a two-part indicator field 4 is used which moves with an upper region along the upper edge and with a lower region along the lower edge of the oblong field 1. The indicator field or the cursor 4 can always have the same length as an individual field 2, such that the indicator field/cursor 4 skip from one individual field to another; see the embodiment according to Fig. 3, outer right. right.

Alternatively, the indicator field/cursor 4 may also be shorter than an individual field 2 such that the position of the

indicator field/cursor within a region of an individual field 2 shows at which location in the program area the user is. Thus, an even more precise indication is obtained. The indicator field in the program areas can, in this case, be configured very long and very narrow in order to be able to show many positions within an individual field 2. If the indicator field/cursor is moved in this case, the indicator field/cursor moves in small increments over an individual field.

In another modification, the different lengths of the individual fields correspond to the different lengths of the program area, such that especially the length of the individual field corresponds to the size of the program area or the program function.

In the left region of the embodiment according to Fig. 3, the indicator/cursor 4 is not divided into two parts, instead it is superimposed, especially as transparent field, on the oblong field 1 or the individual fields 2. In this case the indicator field in the left region in Fig. 3 need not have a frame, since enough is already displayed due to the difference in color of the field. Further, the individual fields 2 may not only display writing but additionally, and as an alternative, also symbols or pictures as represented in the right region of the Figures. The indicator/cursor 4 can also show or be provided with a picture or a symbol.

Claims

1. A status indicator for a computer program having an oblong field (1) on which an indicator field (4) or a cursor moves, whose respective position indicates the status on the oblong field (1), characterized in that the oblong field (1) is provided with a plurality of individual fields (2) which are adjacent to one another, with each of these fields forming a control panel or control button, which, upon being activated, branches into the associated program area or executes the associated program function, with the indicator field 4 or the cursor always being located on the individual field 2 in whose associated program area/program function the user is currently located.

2. Status indicator according to claim 1, characterized in that the indicator field or the cursor (4) occupies a plurality of positions in or on the individual field (2) depending on the sub area of the associated program area/program function in which the user is.

3. Status indicator according to claim 1 or 2, characterized in that the indicator field or the cursor (4) is colored and/or transparent.

4. Status indicator according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the indicator field or the cursor (4) is equal in size or smaller than an individual field (2).

5. Status indicator according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the indicator field or cursor (4) is a fraction $(1/a)$ of the width (B) of an individual field, with the fraction $(1/a)$ corresponding to the number (a) of sub-areas of the program areas/program function.

6. Status indicator according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the oblong field (1) is horizontally and/or vertically arranged.

7. Status indicator according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that two or more oblong fields (1) are arranged in parallel succession or one above the other.

US Patent & Trademark Office
Translation Branch
Martha Witebsky - March 20, 1996



US005146556A

United States Patent [19]

Hullot et al.

[11] Patent Number: **5,146,556**

[45] Date of Patent: **Sep. 8, 1992**

- [54] **SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR MANAGING GRAPHIC IMAGES**
- [75] Inventors: **Jean-Marie Hullot, Palo Alto; Steven P. Jobs, Woodside; Christopher M. Franklin, Saratoga, all of Calif.**
- [73] Assignee: **NeXT Computer, Inc., Redwood City, Calif.**
- [21] Appl. No.: **660,905**
- [22] Filed: **Feb. 27, 1991**

Related U.S. Application Data

- [63] Continuation of Ser. No. 256,764, Oct. 11, 1988, abandoned.
- [51] Int. Cl.¹ **G06F 15/40**
- [52] U.S. Cl. **395/159; 395/155; 340/706**
- [58] Field of Search **364/518, 521, 522; 340/706, 747, 731, 734, 750; 395/155, 159**

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- Primary Examiner*—Gary V. Harkcom
- Assistant Examiner*—Phu K. Nguyen
- Attorney, Agent, or Firm*—Laurence S. Rogers; Jeffrey H. Ingerman

[57] ABSTRACT

A graphic user interface for a computer is provided in which representations of application programs can be placed on the display in a specified area reserved for such a purpose in which area they could not be so readily obscured and forgotten, and which includes a facility for controlling the placement of such representations within the reserved area. The graphic images are guided into specific locations, or "docks" in the reserved area, and their removal from the docks is restricted to prevent accidental withdrawal.

54 Claims, 4 Drawing Sheets

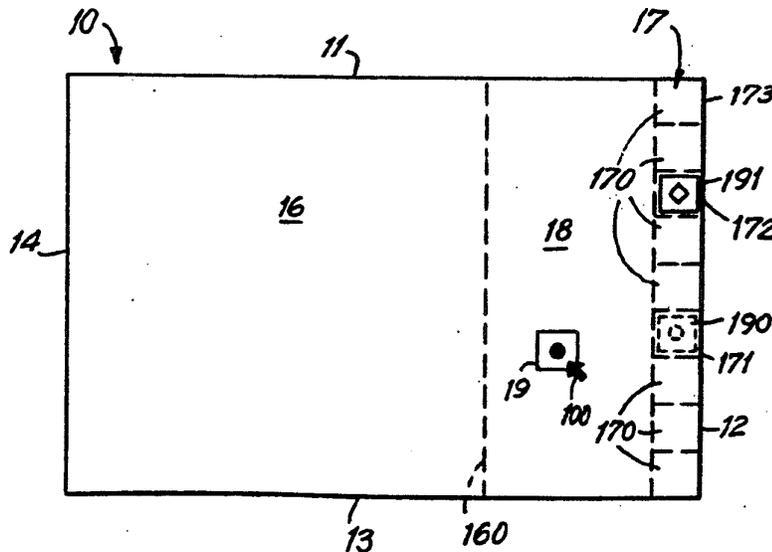


FIG. 1

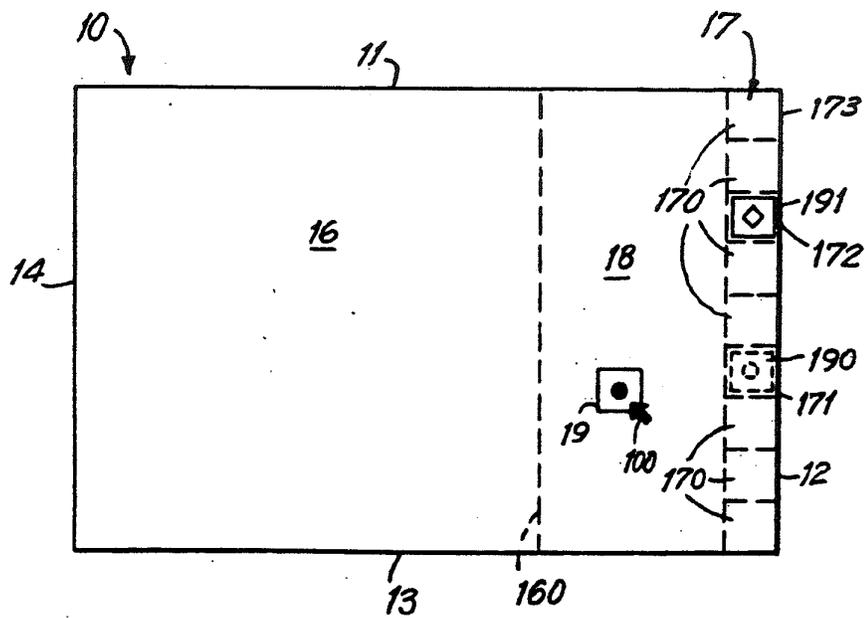


FIG. 2

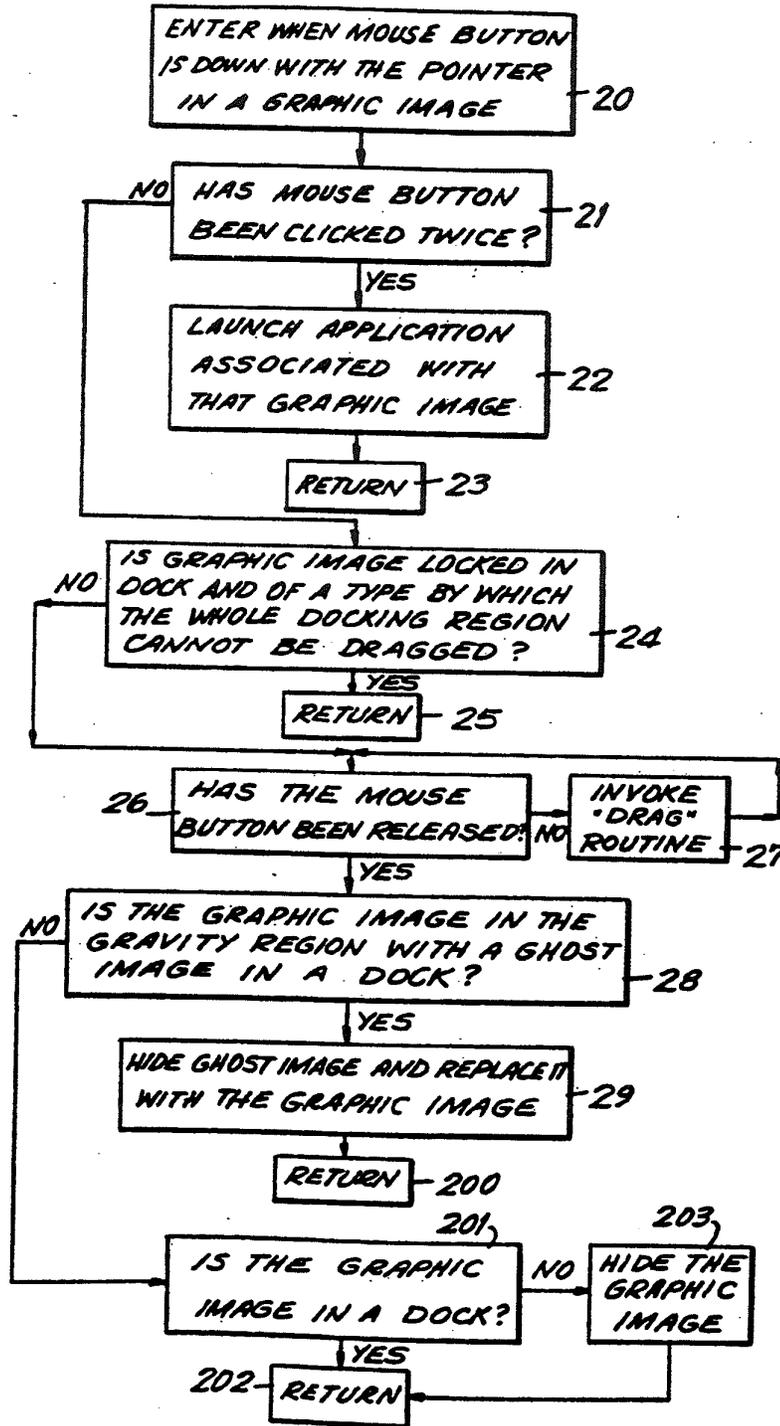


FIG. 3

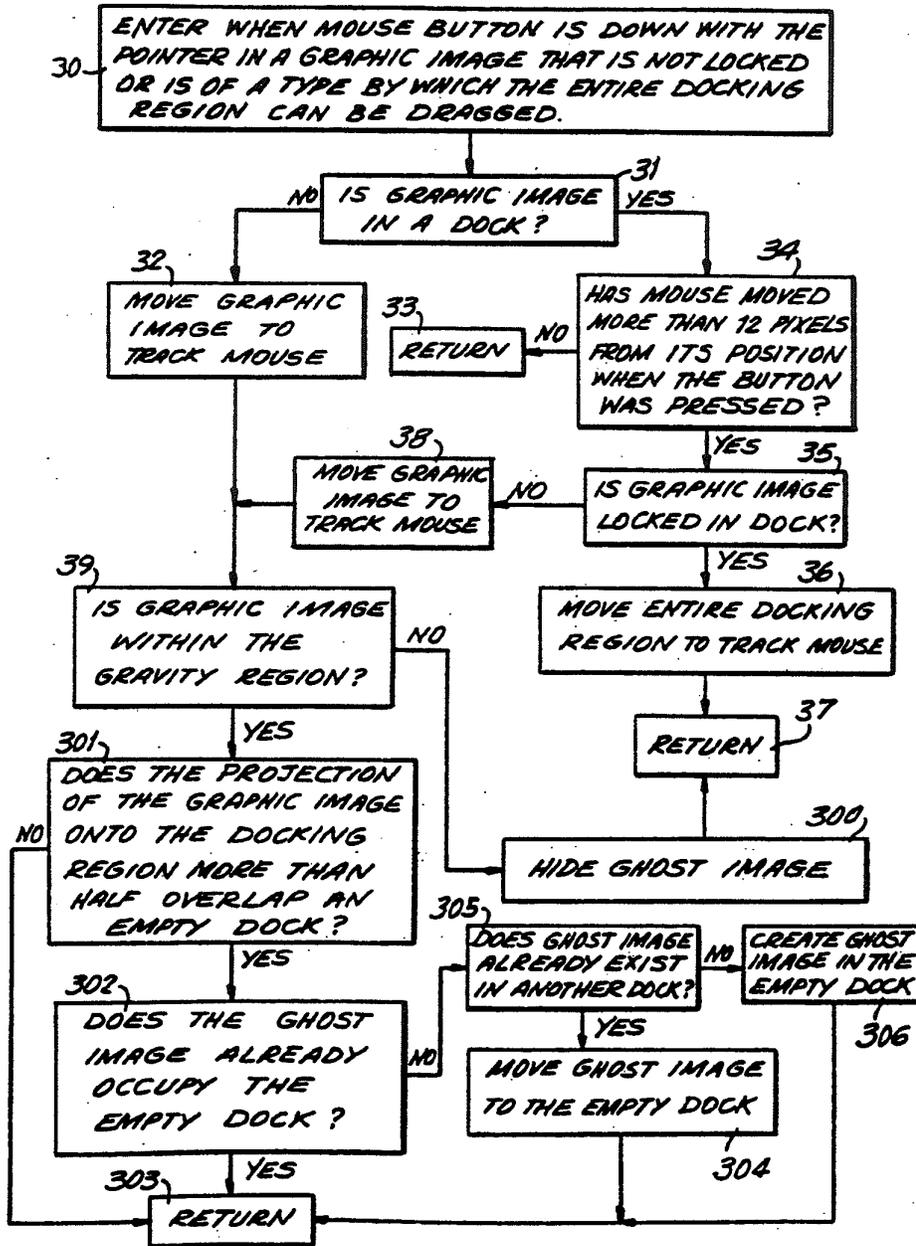
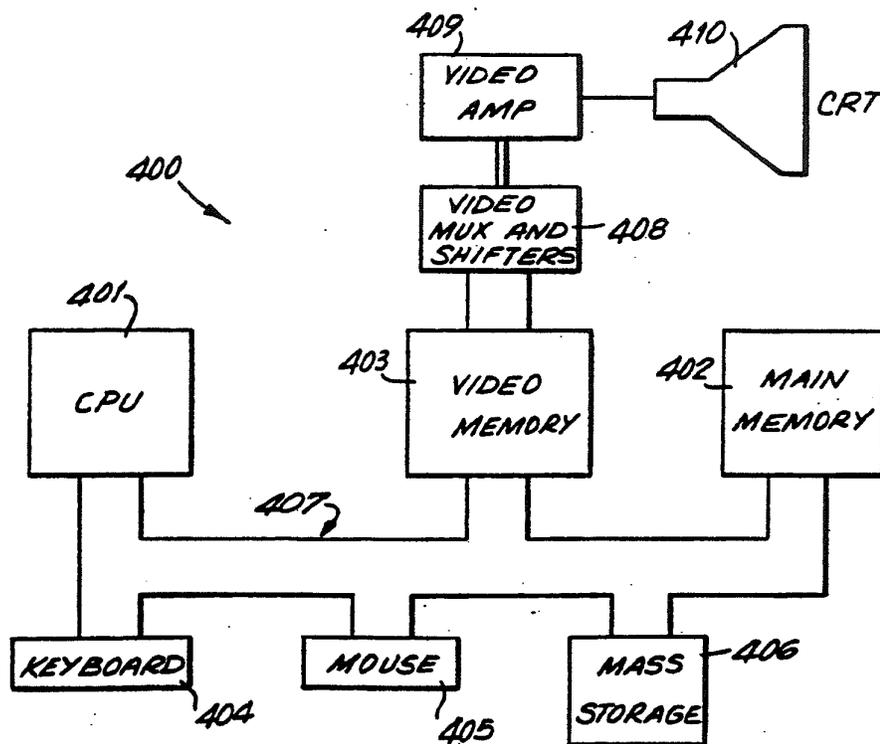


FIG. 4



SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR MANAGING GRAPHIC IMAGES

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application is a continuation of copending U.S. patent application Ser. No. 07/256,764, filed Oct. 11, 1988, now abandoned.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to computers having graphical-oriented user interfaces. More particularly, this invention relates to a system and method for managing graphic images on the display of such a computer.

Computer systems are known in which the operating system provides a graphic interface with the computer user. The user can run application programs, manipulate files, and perform substantially all other functions needed by the average user by manipulating graphic images on the computer's display, either by using cursor control keys and other keyboard keys or by using a cursor controlling peripheral device such as a joystick, "mouse," or track ball.

In such systems, when a program is loaded into the system it is frequently represented on the display by a small graphic image which identifies the program to the user. For example, a word processing program might be represented by a graphic image of a piece of paper having lines of text on it and a writing instrument such a pencil or quill pen writing on the page. This is particularly so if the program is running in the background—e.g., on a multi-tasking computer—but has been removed from the screen. On a multi-tasking computer, several programs can be running at once, each of which would be represented by its own graphic image.

In addition to representing loaded programs, whether running or not, by these small graphic images, graphic interfaces represent programs and data in "windows" on the display. The windows can be moved around the display by the user, who can also adjust their size. In a multi-tasking computer system, in which several different programs can be running simultaneously, each program can have several windows, including a master, or menu, window, whose location but not size is adjustable, and one or more data windows both the size and location of which can be adjusted, representing, in a word processor for example, the document or documents being worked on. Windows can overlap and obscure one another, although the user has some control over which windows appear in front of which other windows.

If the number of windows on a display becomes too great, the user may choose to remove some or all of them from the display to unclutter the display. For instance, the windows associated with a particular program may be removed, and replaced by a graphic image representing the still-running program. Alternatively, the user might choose to remove from the display only certain data windows associated with one application, in which case the windows will be replaced by one or more small graphic images representing the fact that that data is in use. These graphic images, if subject to being covered over by windows remaining on the screen, might become "lost" or forgotten by the user, but the amount of computer resources consumed by keeping the forgotten data in place when it may no longer be necessary is small. However, if a user decides

to remove an entire application with all its associated windows from the screen, and those windows become covered and forgotten, a relatively large amount of computer resources might be consumed in continuing to run an application program that is no longer being used. In addition, if a graphic image representing a program that is not running is covered and forgotten, a large amount of system memory might be occupied which otherwise could be used in another application.

Therefore, it would be desirable to be able to provide a graphic user interface for a computer in which representations of application programs could be placed on the display in a specified region reserved for such a purpose in which area they could be readily accessed and not so readily obscured and forgotten.

It would also be desirable to be able to provide in such an interface a facility for controlling the placement of such representations within the reserved region.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is an object of this invention to provide a graphic user interface for a computer in which representations of application programs can be placed on the display in a specified region reserved for such a purpose in which region they can be readily accessed and not so readily obscured and forgotten.

It is also an object of this invention to provide in such an interface a facility for controlling the placement of such representations within the reserved region.

In accordance with this invention, there is provided, in a computer system having a visual display on which application programs are represented by graphic images, which graphic images are capable of being moved within boundaries of the display and of being overlaid by window and other images displayed on the visual display, a graphic image display control system having means for moving the graphic images within the boundaries, means for providing within the boundaries a region for parking the graphic images, and means for controlling entry, responsive to movement of the graphic image by the moving means, of a graphic image into the parking region. The system also provides limitations on the withdrawal of the graphic images from the parking region.

A method by which the system operates is also provided.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The above and other objects and advantages of the invention will be apparent upon consideration of the following detailed description, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which like reference characters refer to like parts throughout, and in which:

FIG. 1 is a representation of a computer display showing various regions defined thereon according to the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a flow diagram of a portion of a process implemented by the system and method of the invention when a user attempts to move a graphic image representing an application program;

FIG. 3 is a flow diagram of a portion of another process implemented by the system and method of the invention when a user attempts to move a graphic image representing an application program; and

FIG. 4 is a block diagram of an exemplary hardware configuration for a computer on which the system and method of the invention are implemented.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

FIG. 1 is a diagrammatic representation of a computer display divided into regions according to an exemplary embodiment of the present invention. Display 10 (e.g., a cathode-ray tube monitor) has boundaries 11, 12, 13, 14 and is divided by the system (invisibly to the user) into a free-dragging region 16, a parking or "docking" region 17, and a retention or "gravity" region 18 between free-dragging region 16 and docking region 17. Docking region 17 is divided by the system up into individual receptacles or "docks" 170, each the size of a graphic image. A user can move various windows and graphic images around display 10 in known ways. For example, in a system employing a mouse, the user with the mouse moves a pointer 100 on the display to a graphic image to be moved, presses and holds a button or "ear" on the mouse, drags the graphic image to the desired location by moving the mouse while holding down the button, and releases the graphic image when the desired location is reached by releasing the button.

If graphic image 19 is in free-dragging region 16, it can be moved anywhere within that region and it can be moved across border 160 into gravity region 18. Once a graphic image such as graphic image 19 enters gravity region 18, if the user lets go of it by releasing the mouse button, it will be drawn by the system into one of docks 170 in docking region 17. The dock into which it will be drawn is that empty one of docks 170 with which it is most closely vertically aligned. For example, graphic image 19 is most closely vertically aligned with dock 171, and that is the dock into which it is drawn upon release of the mouse button. The user is informed of the particular dock to which graphic image 19 will be drawn upon release of the mouse button by the appearance in that dock of a "ghost" image 190 of graphic image 19. In the exemplary embodiment of the invention, ghost image 190 is a pale version of graphic image 19, but any other type of image may be used to serve the function of ghost image 190.

Ghost image 190 appears in one of docks 170 as long as a graphic image 19 which has been moved into gravity region 18 has not been docked or returned to free-dragging region 16. If the dock 172 with which graphic image 19 is aligned is occupied by another graphic image 191, ghost image 190 appears in the last empty dock 170 with which graphic image 19 was aligned until graphic image 19 is moved vertically to a position substantially aligned with a new empty dock 170 (e.g., the horizontal projection of graphic image 19 onto docking region 17 overlaps more than one half of new empty dock 170). At that time, ghost image 190 will appear in the new empty dock 170. If there is no substantially aligned available position, ghost image 190 appears in the dock position closest to graphic image 19. Wherever ghost image 190 appears, graphic image 19 will move automatically to the location of and replace ghost image 190 when the mouse button is released. This automatic movement is referred to herein as "gravity." If the mouse button is not released, graphic image 19 can be moved anywhere within parking region 17 or gravity region 18, or across border 160 back into free-dragging region 16.

If a user so desires, graphic image 19 can be moved into dock 171 by the user, rather than being moved there automatically by gravity. This manual docking is accomplished by holding the mouse button and moving the graphic image 19 toward dock 171. Graphic image 19 can be moved in gravity region 18 vertically as well as horizontally—thereby changing that one of docks 170 that will become the destination dock 171. Vertical movement of graphic image 19 is allowed even when graphic image 19 begins to overlap docking region 17, but graphic image 19 will "slide behind" any other graphic images in other docks 170, so that it may not be visible for a time until it reaches another empty dock 170. Of course, as explained above, ghost image 190 will remain in the last empty dock 170 until graphic image 19 is substantially aligned with a new empty dock 170.

Thus, as explained above, a user can move graphic image 19 freely into, around, and out of docking region 17 and gravity region 18 as long as the mouse button is not released. However, once a user docks graphic image 19 by releasing the mouse button either in a dock or anywhere in gravity region 18 while ghost image 190 appears in an empty dock 170, graphic image 19 is docked automatically by gravity. An extension of the gravity effect is a hysteresis-type effect according to which a graphic image, once docked, cannot be withdrawn from its dock 171 unless the user with the mouse points to docked graphic image 19, presses the mouse button, and moves the pointer a predetermined distance from its initial position. Preferably, the predetermined distance is less than the width or height of graphic image 19—e.g., 10-12 pixels—to minimize abrupt, discontinuous movement of graphic image 19, although the predetermined distance may be any desired distance. However, once pointer 100 is moved the predetermined distance, assuming the mouse button has been held continuously, graphic image 19 will jump to the position of pointer 100. This hysteresis prevents inadvertent undocking of graphic image 19 in case the user unintentionally presses the mouse button before moving pointer 100 out of dock 171 immediately after docking. Furthermore, it is also possible to lock a graphic image in a dock 170, so that it cannot be undocked without going through additional steps to unlock it. In some cases, the computer system may control the locking and unlocking of graphic images, rather than the user. For example, in the preferred embodiment a graphic image representing the operating system (not shown) is locked in the first dock 173.

In the preferred embodiment, graphic images docked in docking region 17 cannot be overlaid by windows of application programs still appearing on the screen. Thus, a docked graphic image 19 of an application program cannot be forgotten as it might be if the graphic image were left in a random position on display 10. Although it is possible to implement the system of the invention so that some or all docked graphic images can be obscured by at least some types of windows, the location of graphic image 19 in docking region 17 still would make it less likely that graphic image 19 will be forgotten.

Although graphic image 19 is originally introduced into gravity region 18 and docking region 17 from free-dragging region 16, in the preferred embodiment if graphic image 19 is returned to free-dragging region 16 after having been in gravity region 18 or docking region 17, it is automatically removed from display 10. Of course, it can be recalled by the user when desired.

Alternatively, the invention could be implemented so that once returned to free-dragging region 16, graphic image 19 always remains visible and can be moved to any desired location by the user.

Although it is often desirable that docked graphic images in docking region 17 always appear on display 10, there may be occasions when a user would like to clear display 10 for a particular application. For example, the user may be running a graphics application that requires a display having an aspect ratio equal to that of the full area of display 10, or the user may be running a large spreadsheet program and would like to have as many columns visible as possible. For whatever reason a user may want to remove docking region 17 from display 10, the preferred embodiment of the present invention allows such removal in part. According to the preferred embodiment, a portion of docking region 17—and docked graphic images—can be moved off display 10. In the preferred embodiment, this is accomplished by using the mouse to move the operating system graphic image (referred to above) which is locked into docking region 17. Because the operating system graphic image is locked, it cannot be removed from docking region 17. Thus any attempt to move it moves the entire docking region 17 and all other docked images. Docking region 17 in the preferred embodiment is along one edge of display 10 as shown, and movement of docking region 17 as just described is limited to translation along that edge. The maximum translation allowed is that which leaves only the operating system graphic image in dock 173 visible on display 10, so that the user is at least reminded that docking region 17 exists, hopefully prompting the user to check the contents of docking region 17 periodically.

It is not necessary to implement the invention so that docking region 17 is moved by the operating system graphic image. For example, it may be possible to use any locked graphic image to move docking region 17. Alternatively, it may be possible to use any graphic image to move docking region 17. However, whatever the implementation, the user preferably should not be allowed to move docking region 17 so far off display 10 that no docked graphic images are visible. At least the first occupied dock 170 preferably should be visible (the actual first dock 173 might be empty). Further, if the only visible graphic image is not locked, the invention preferably should be implemented in such a way that if that graphic image is removed from docking region 17, the next occupied dock 170 moves onto display 10.

FIG. 2 is a flow diagram of a routine (hereinafter referred to as the "mouseDown" routine), which is invoked, at step 20, each time a user presses a mouse button with pointer 100 in the graphic image of an application program. At step 21, the system tests to see if the mouse button has been pressed twice in rapid succession. If so, the application program associated with the graphic image is initiated at step 22 and the "mouseDown" routine ends at step 23. It is a common feature of graphic interface systems to initiate applications in this way. If there has been only a single press of the mouse button, the system proceeds to step 24, where it tests to see if the graphic image is in a dock and locked there and that it also is of a type by which the entire docking region 17 cannot be dragged. (As discussed above, in the preferred embodiment it is possible to move the entire docking region 17 by moving certain locked graphic images.) If it is, the "mouseDown" routine ends at step 25. Otherwise, the system proceeds to

step 26 to test whether or not the mouse button has been released. If not, the "Drag" routine (described below) is invoked at step 27, and the system loops back to step 26. (Having reached step 27 from step 24, it is known that graphic image 19 is either not locked, in which case it can be moved by the "Drag" routine, or it is locked but is of a type by which the entire docking region 17 can be moved by the "Drag" routine.) If at step 26 the mouse button has been released, the system proceeds to step 28 to test whether or not graphic image 19 is within gravity region 18 with a ghost image 190 in a dock 170. If so, ghost image 190 is removed at step 29 and replaced by graphic image 19, and the "mouseDown" routine ends at step 200. Otherwise, the system tests at step 201 to see whether or not graphic image 19 is in a dock 170. If it is, it remains there and the "mouseDown" routine ends at 202. Otherwise, graphic image 19 is not in a dock 170, and it has already been determined at step 28 that it is not within gravity region 18 with a ghost image 190 in a dock 170, so that it must be in free-dragging area 16. Therefore, graphic image 19 is hidden, or removed from display 10, at step 203, and the "mouseDown" routine ends at step 202.

FIG. 3 is a flow diagram of the "Drag" routine, referred to above, which is invoked at step 27 in FIG. 2. The routine is entered at step 30. At step 31, the system tests to see if graphic image 19 is in a dock 170. If graphic image 19 is not in a dock 170, it is moved at step 32 to the new position selected with the mouse, and the "Drag" routine continues with the test at step 39 (described below). If graphic image 19 is in a dock 170, then the system tests at step 34 to see if the pointer has been moved by the mouse more than 12 pixels (or any other predetermined number of pixels) from its location when the mouse button was first depressed. If not, the "Drag" routine ends at step 33. Otherwise, the system tests at step 35 to see if graphic image 19 is locked in dock 170.

If graphic image 19 is locked in dock 170, then the only way the "Drag" routine could have been entered in step 30 is if graphic image 19 is of a type (e.g., the operating system graphic image of the preferred embodiment, discussed above) by which the entire docking region 17 may be moved. Therefore, at step 36 the entire docking region 17 is moved to the new position selected with the mouse (subject to the limitation, discussed above, that docking region 17 cannot, in the preferred embodiment, be moved completely off display 10), and the "Drag" routine ends at step 37. If at step 35 graphic image 19 is not locked in dock 170, then at step 38 graphic image 19 is moved to the new position selected with the mouse. The system then tests at step 39 to see if graphic image 19 is within gravity region 18.

If graphic image 19 is not within gravity region 18, then ghost image 190 is removed from display 10 at step 300 and the "Drag" routine ends at step 37. If graphic image 19 is within gravity region 18, then at step 301 the system tests to see if the projection of graphic image 19 onto docking region 17 overlaps more than one half of an empty dock 170 (meaning, in the preferred embodiment, that if graphic image 19 were slid horizontally to docking region 17, the dock 170 to which it would be closest would be empty). If not, meaning that graphic image 19 is not opposite an empty dock, then the "Drag" routine ends at step 303, with no effect on the location of ghost image 190 (if graphic image 19 has just entered gravity region 18 and never had a ghost image 190, ghost image 190 would not be displayed; if graphic

image 19 had already been in gravity region 18 and a ghost image 190 already occupied some dock 170, then ghost image 190 would remain in the dock it already occupied). If graphic image 19 is opposite an empty dock 170, then at step 302 the system tests to see if ghost image 190 already occupies that empty dock (graphic image 19 has not been moved that far). If ghost image 190 already occupies empty dock 170, then the "Drag" routine ends at step 303. If ghost image 190 does not already occupy empty dock 170, then at step 305 the system tests to see if ghost image 190 already exists in another dock 170. If so, then at step 304 ghost image 190 is moved to empty dock 170, and the "Drag" routine ends at step 303. Otherwise, at step 306 a ghost image 190 is created and displayed in empty dock 170, and the "Drag" routine ends at step 303.

HARDWARE SYSTEM

While the present invention may advantageously be implemented on nearly any conventional computer system, an exemplary computer system 400 on which the present invention is implemented is shown in FIG. 4.

FIG. 4 shows a preferred embodiment of a hardware system 400 implementing the present invention as part of a computer system. In FIG. 4, system 400 includes CPU 401, main memory 402, video memory 403, a keyboard 404 for user input, supplemented by a conventional mouse 405 for manipulating graphic images according to the present invention, and mass storage 406 which may include both fixed and removable media using any one or more of magnetic, optical or magneto-optical storage technology or any other available mass storage technology. These components are interconnected via conventional bidirectional system bus 407. Bus 407 contains 32 address lines for addressing any portion of memory 402 and 403. System bus 407 also includes a 32 bit data bus for transferring data between and among CPU 401, main memory 402, video memory 403, and mass storage 406. In the preferred embodiment of system 400, CPU 401 is a Motorola 68030 32-bit microprocessor, but any other suitable microprocessor or microcomputer may alternatively be used. Detailed information about the 68030 microprocessor, in particular concerning its instruction set, bus structure, and control lines, is available from *MC68030 User's Manual*, published by Motorola Inc., of Phoenix, Ariz.

Main memory 402 of system 400 comprises eight megabytes of conventional dynamic random access memory, although more or less memory may suitably be used. Video memory 403 comprises 256K bytes of conventional dual-ported video random access memory. Again, depending on the resolution desired, more or less such memory may be used. Connected to a port of video memory 403 is video multiplex and shifter circuitry 408, to which in turn is connected video amplifier 409. Video amplifier 409 drives cathode-ray tube (CRT) raster monitor 410. Video multiplex and shifter circuitry 408 and video amplifier 409, which are conventional, convert pixel data stored in video memory 403 to raster signals suitable for use by monitor 410. Monitor 410 is of a type suitable for displaying graphic images having a resolution of 1120 pixels wide by 832 pixels high.

Thus it is seen that a graphic user interface for a computer is provided in which representations of loaded application programs can be placed on the display in a specified area reserved for such a purpose in

which area they could not be so readily obscured and forgotten, and which includes a facility for controlling the placement of such representations within the reserved area. One skilled in the art will appreciate that the present invention can be practiced by other than the described embodiments, which are presented for purposes of illustration and not of limitation, and the present invention is limited only by the claims which follow.

What is claimed is:

1. In a computer system having a visual display on which graphic images are capable of being moved and released within boundaries of said display, a graphic image display control system comprising:

means for moving said graphic images within at least a portion of said display within said boundaries;

means for providing a parking region for said graphic images within said boundaries of said display;

means for providing a retention field, distinct from said parking region, within said portion of said display within said boundaries; and

means for automatically transferring one of said graphic images into said parking region when said one of said graphic images is released in said retention field.

2. The graphic image display control system of claim 1 wherein said means for automatically transferring said one of said graphic images into said parking region comprises:

means for delineating within said parking region at least one receptacle for receiving said one of said graphic images; and

means for transferring said one of said graphic images into an unoccupied one of said at least one receptacle.

3. The graphic image display control system of claim 2 wherein said means for automatically transferring said one of said graphic images into said parking region further comprises means for displaying a location of said unoccupied receptacle when said one of said graphic images, responsive to said moving means, is moved into said retention field.

4. The graphic image display control system of claim 3 wherein said means for automatically transferring said graphic image into said parking region inserts said graphic image into said displayed unoccupied receptacle.

5. The graphic image display control system of claim 2 wherein said transferring means transfers said graphic image into said unoccupied one of said at least one receptacle to which said graphic image is nearest.

6. The graphic image display control system of claim 1 further comprising means for preventing overlying, by at least some other images displayed on said visual display, of at least one of said graphic images in said parking region.

7. The graphic image display control system of claim 1 further comprising means for locking a graphic image into said parking region.

8. The graphic image display control system of claim 1 further comprising means for moving said parking region partially but not completely out of said boundaries of said display.

9. The graphic image display control system of claim 1 wherein said graphic images represent application programs that may be run on said computer system.

10. For use in a computer system having a visual display on which graphic images are capable of being moved and released within boundaries of said display, a

graphic image display control method comprising the steps of:

moving said graphic images within at least a portion of said display within said boundaries;
 providing a parking region for said graphic images within said boundaries of said display;
 providing a retention field, distinct from said parking region, within said portion of said display within said boundaries; and

automatically transferring one of said graphic images into said parking region when said one of said graphic images is released in said retention field.

11. The graphic image display control method of claim 10 wherein said step of automatically transferring said one of said graphic images into said parking region comprises the steps of:

delineating within said parking region at least one receptacle for receiving said one of said graphic images; and

transferring said one of said graphic images into an unoccupied one of said at least one receptacle.

12. The graphic image display control method of claim 11 wherein said step of automatically transferring said one of said graphic images into said parking region further comprises displaying a location of said unoccupied receptacle when said one of said graphic images is moved into said retention field.

13. The graphic image display control method of claim 12 wherein said step of automatically transferring said graphic image into said parking region comprises automatically inserting said graphic image into said displayed unoccupied receptacle.

14. The graphic image display control method of claim 11 wherein said transferring step comprises transferring said graphic image into said unoccupied one of said at least one receptacle to which said graphic image is nearest.

15. The graphic image display control method of claim 10 further comprising preventing overlying, by at least some other images displayed on said visual display, of at least one of said graphic images in said parking region.

16. The graphic image display control method of claim 10 further comprising allowing the locking of a graphic image into said parking region.

17. The graphic image display control method of claim 10 further comprising allowing the movement of said parking region partially but not completely out of said boundaries of said display.

18. The graphic image display control method of claim 10 wherein said graphic images represent application programs that may be run on said computer system.

19. In a computer system having a visual display on which graphic images are capable of being moved on at least a portion of said display, a graphic image display system comprising:

a mouse for moving and releasing said graphic images on said display;

a parking region on said display;
 a retention field, distinct from said parking region, in said portion of said display; and

a programmed processor for automatically inserting one of said graphic images into said parking region when said one of said graphic images is released in said retention field.

20. The graphic image display system of claim 19 further comprising at least one receptacle within said

parking region for receiving said one of said graphic images.

21. The graphic image display system of claim 20 wherein a location of an unoccupied receptacle is displayed when said one of said graphic images is moved into said retention field by said mouse.

22. The graphic image display system of claim 20 wherein said graphic image is automatically inserted into an unoccupied receptacle when said graphic image is released in said parking region.

23. The graphic image display system of claim 22 wherein said graphic image is automatically inserted into an unoccupied receptacle to which said graphic image is nearest.

24. The graphic image display system of claim 19 wherein at least one graphic image in said parking region is incapable of being overlaid by other graphic images displayed on said visual display.

25. The graphic image display system of claim 19 wherein a graphic image may be locked into said parking region.

26. The graphic image display system of claim 19 wherein said parking region may be moved partially but not completely out of said boundaries of said display.

27. The graphic image display system of claim 19 wherein said graphic images represent application programs that may be run on said computer system.

28. In a computer system having a visual display on which graphic images are capable of being moved and released within boundaries of said display, a graphic image display control system comprising:

means for moving said graphic images within at least a portion of said display within said boundaries;

means for providing a parking region within said boundaries of said display; and

means for automatically transferring one of said graphic images into said parking region when said one of said graphic images is released in said portion of said display within said boundaries and outside said parking region.

29. The graphic image display control system of claim 28 wherein said means for automatically transferring said one of said graphic images into said parking region comprises:

means for delineating within said parking region at least one receptacle for receiving said one of said graphic images; and

means for transferring said one of said graphic images into an unoccupied one of said at least one receptacle.

30. The graphic image display control system of claim 29 wherein said means for automatically transferring said one of said graphic images into said parking region further comprises means for displaying a location of said unoccupied receptacle when said one of said graphic images, responsive to said moving means, is moved into an area of said portion of said display from which said means for automatically transferring can automatically transfer said one of said graphic images into said parking region.

31. The graphic image display control system of claim 30 wherein said means for automatically transferring said graphic image into said parking region inserts said graphic image into said displayed unoccupied receptacle.

32. The graphic image display control system of claim 29 wherein said transferring means transfers said

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graphic image into an unoccupied one of said at least one receptacle to which said graphic image is nearest.

33. The graphic image display control system of claim 28 further comprising means for preventing overlying, by at least some other images displayed on said visual display, of at least one of said graphic images in said parking region.

34. The graphic image display control system of claim 28 further comprising means for locking a graphic image into said parking region.

35. The graphic image display control system of claim 28 further comprising means for moving said parking region partially but not completely out of said boundaries of said display.

36. The graphic image display control system of claim 28 wherein said graphic images represent application programs that may be run on said computer system.

37. For use in a computer system having a visual display on which graphic images are capable of being moved and released within boundaries of said display, a graphic image display control method comprising the steps of:

moving said graphic images within at least a portion of said boundaries of said display;

providing a parking region within said boundaries of said display; and

automatically transferring one of said graphic images into said parking region when said one of said graphic images is released in said portion of said display within said boundaries and outside said parking region.

38. The graphic image display control method of claim 37 wherein said step of automatically transferring said one of said graphic images into said parking region comprises the steps of:

delineating within said parking region at least one receptacle for receiving said one of said graphic images; and

transferring said one of said graphic images into an unoccupied one of said at least one receptacle.

39. The graphic image display control method of claim 38 wherein said step of automatically transferring said one of said graphic images into said parking region further comprises displaying a location of said unoccupied receptacle when said one of said graphic images, responsive to said moving means, is moved into an area of said portion of said display from which said one of said graphic images can be automatically transferred into said parking region.

40. The graphic image display control method of claim 39 wherein said step of automatically transferring said graphic image into said parking region comprises automatically inserting said graphic image into said displayed unoccupied receptacle.

41. The graphic image display control method of claim 38 wherein said transferring step comprises transferring said graphic image into an unoccupied one of said at least one receptacle to which said graphic image is nearest.

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42. The graphic image display control method of claim 37 further comprising preventing overlying, by at least some other images displayed on said visual display, of at least one of said graphic images in said parking region.

43. The graphic image display control method of claim 37 further comprising locking a graphic image into said parking region.

44. The graphic image display control method of claim 37 further comprising allowing the movement of said parking region partially but not completely out of said boundaries of said display.

45. The graphic image display control method of claim 37 wherein said graphic images represent application programs that may be run on said computer system.

46. In a computer system having a visual display on which graphic images are capable of being moved on at least a portion of said display, a graphic image display system comprising:

a mouse for moving and releasing said graphic images on said display;

a parking region on said display; and

a programmed processor for automatically inserting one of said graphic images into said parking region when said one of said graphic images is released in said portion of said display within said boundaries and outside said parking region.

47. The graphic image display system of claim 46 further comprising at least one receptacle within said parking region for receiving said one of said graphic images.

48. The graphic image display system of claim 47 wherein a location of an unoccupied receptacle is displayed when said one of said graphic images is moved by said mouse into an area of said portion of said display from which said programmed processor can automatically insert said one of said graphic images into said parking region.

49. The graphic image display system of claim 47 wherein said graphic image is automatically inserted into an unoccupied receptacle when said graphic image is released in said parking region.

50. The graphic image display system of claim 47 wherein said one of said graphic images is automatically inserted into an unoccupied one of said at least one receptacle to which said one of said graphic images is nearest.

51. The graphic image display system of claim 46 wherein at least one graphic image in said parking region is incapable of being overlaid by other graphic images displayed on said visual display.

52. The graphic image display system of claim 46 wherein a graphic image may be locked into said parking region.

53. The graphic image display system of claim 46 wherein said parking region may be moved partially but not completely out of said boundaries of said display.

54. The graphic image display system of claim 46 wherein said graphic images represent application programs that may be run on said computer system.

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Christensen

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(45) **Date of Patent:** ***Dec. 10, 2002**

(54) **METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR DISPLAYING AND ACCESSING CONTROL AND STATUS INFORMATION IN A COMPUTER SYSTEM**

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(*) **Notice:** This patent issued on a continued prosecution application filed under 37 CFR 1.53(d), and is subject to the twenty year patent term provisions of 35 U.S.C. 154(a)(2).

Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

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Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation of application No. 08/316,237, filed on Sep. 30, 1994, now abandoned.

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(52) **U.S. Cl.** **345/779; 345/772**

(58) **Field of Search** **395/345, 350, 395/352, 354, 326, 339, 340, 341, 973, 974; 345/348, 350, 352, 354, 326, 339, 340, 341, 973, 974, 700, 764, 771-772, 776-779, 781, 784, 788, 791, 798-800, 833, 856**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

An interactive computer-controlled display system having a processor, a data display screen, a cursor control device for interactively positioning a cursor on the data display screen, and a window generator that generates and displays a window on a data display screen. The window region provides status and control information in one or more data display areas. The individual data display areas may be controlled through the use of controls and indicators on the control strip itself using cursor control keys.

50 Claims, 13 Drawing Sheets

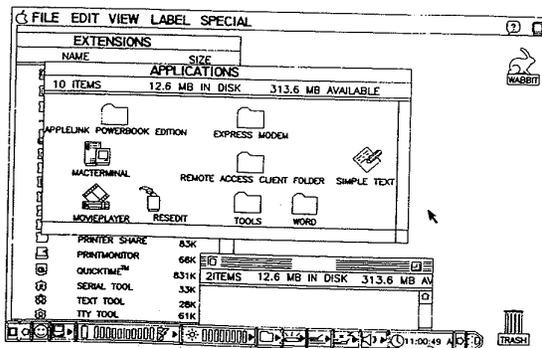
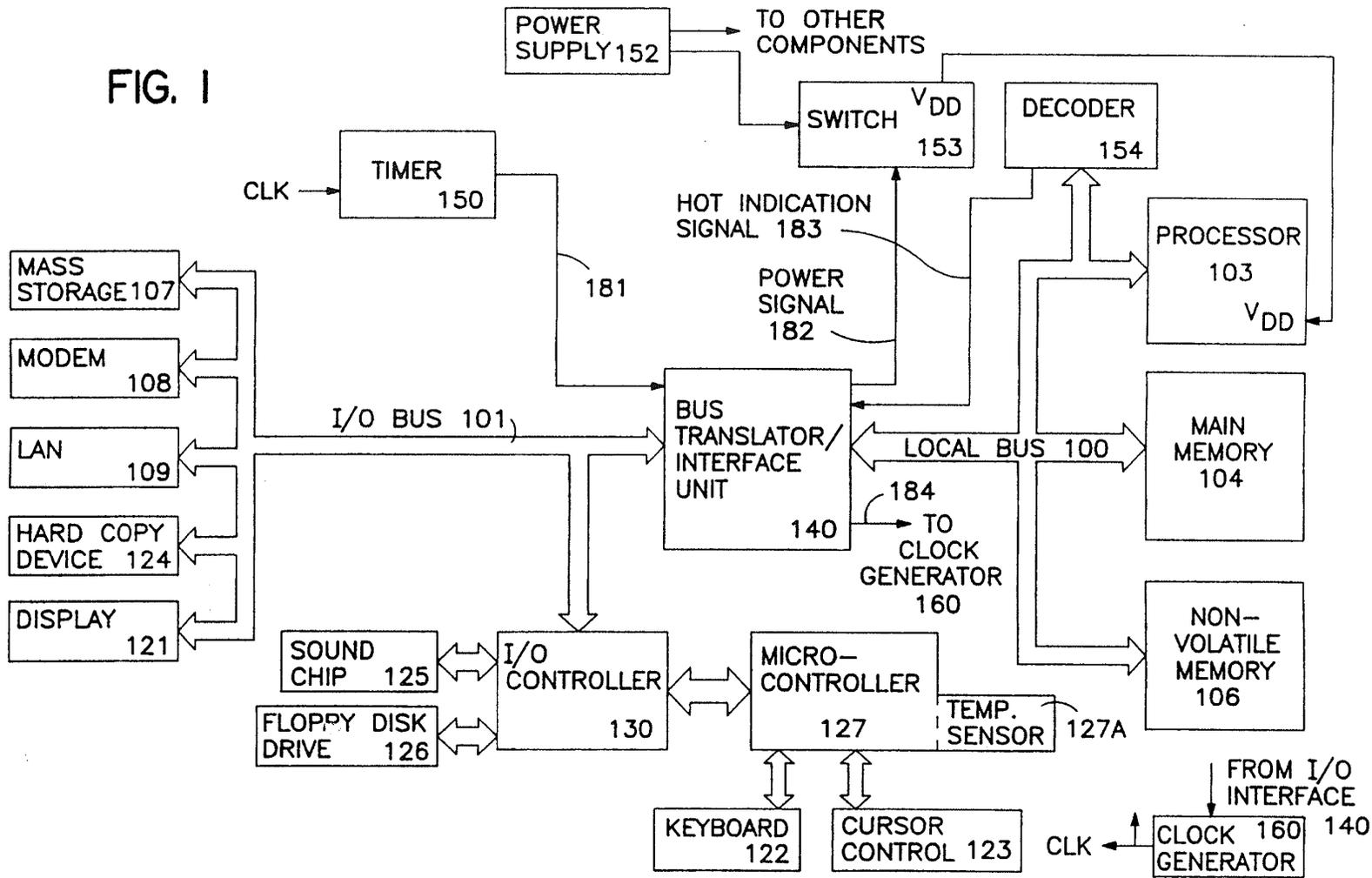


FIG. 1



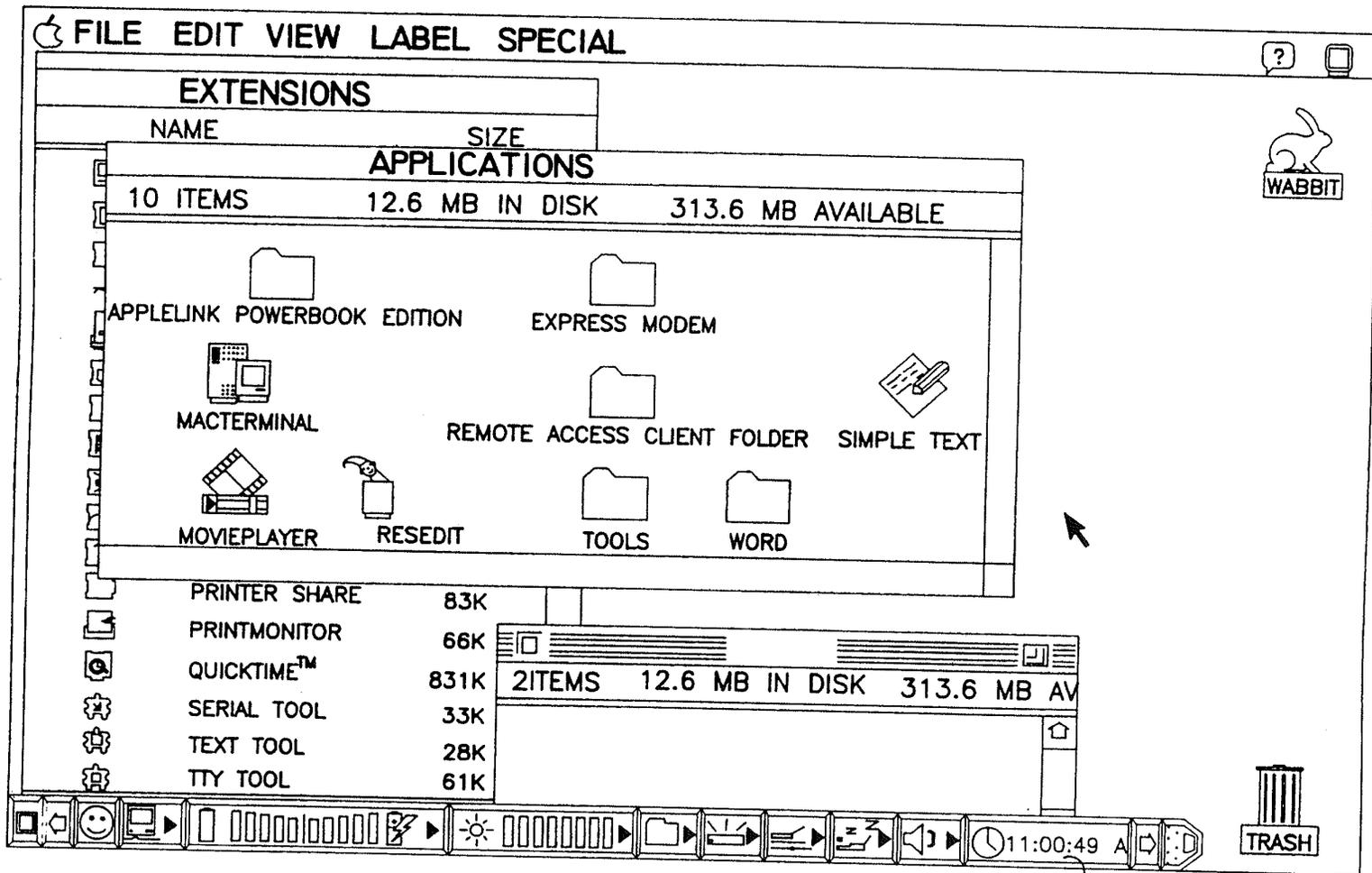


FIG. 2A

200

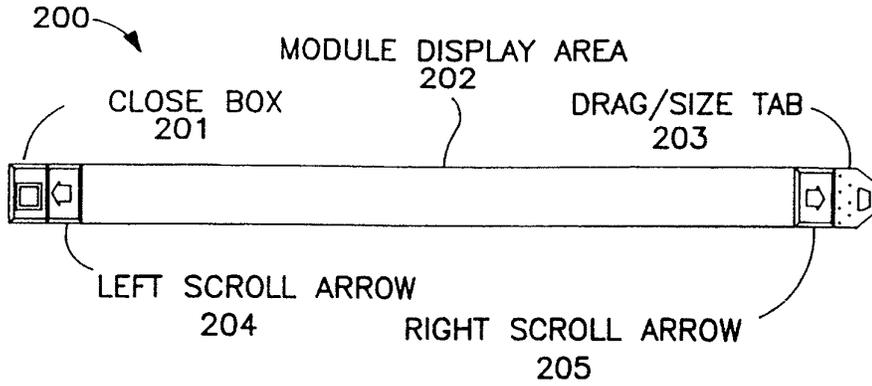


FIG. 2B

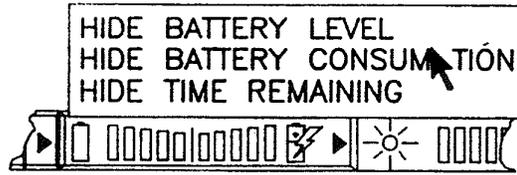


FIG. 2C

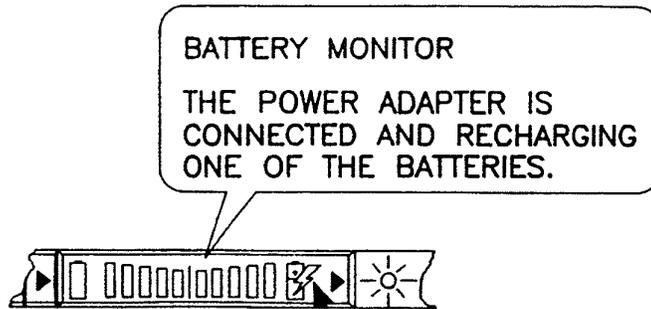


FIG. 2D

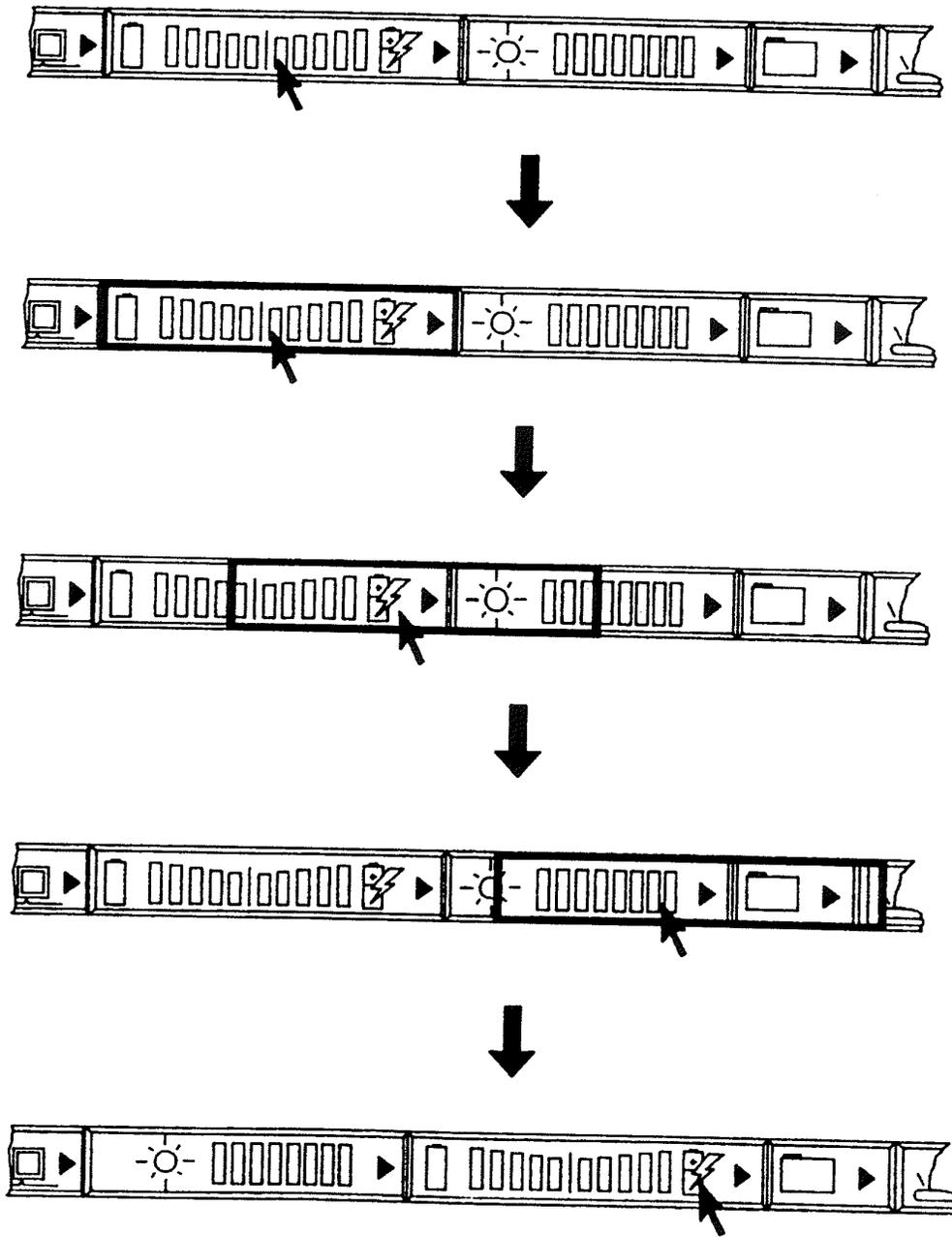


FIG. 2E

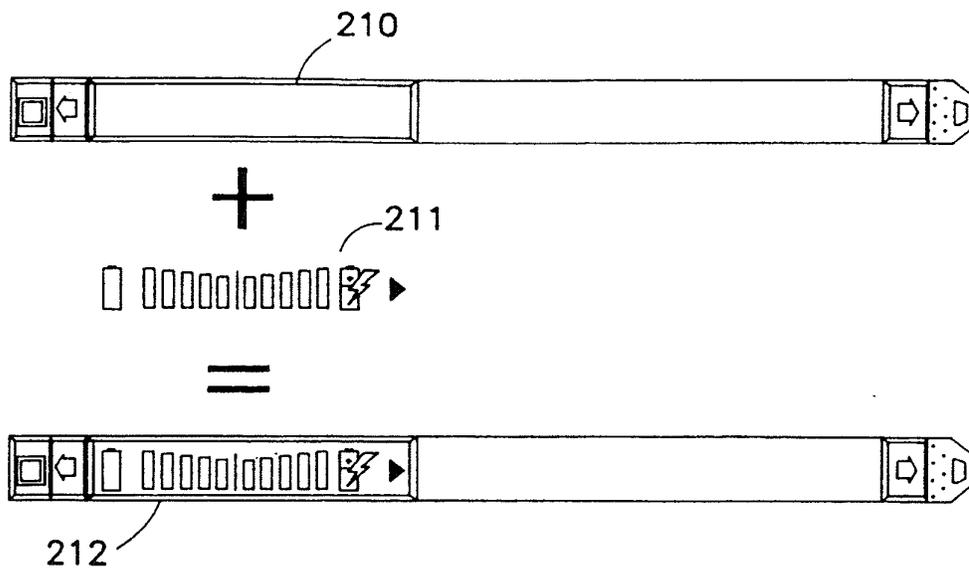


FIG. 2F

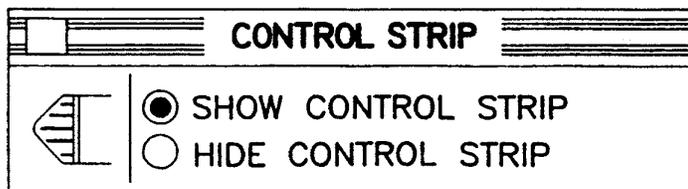
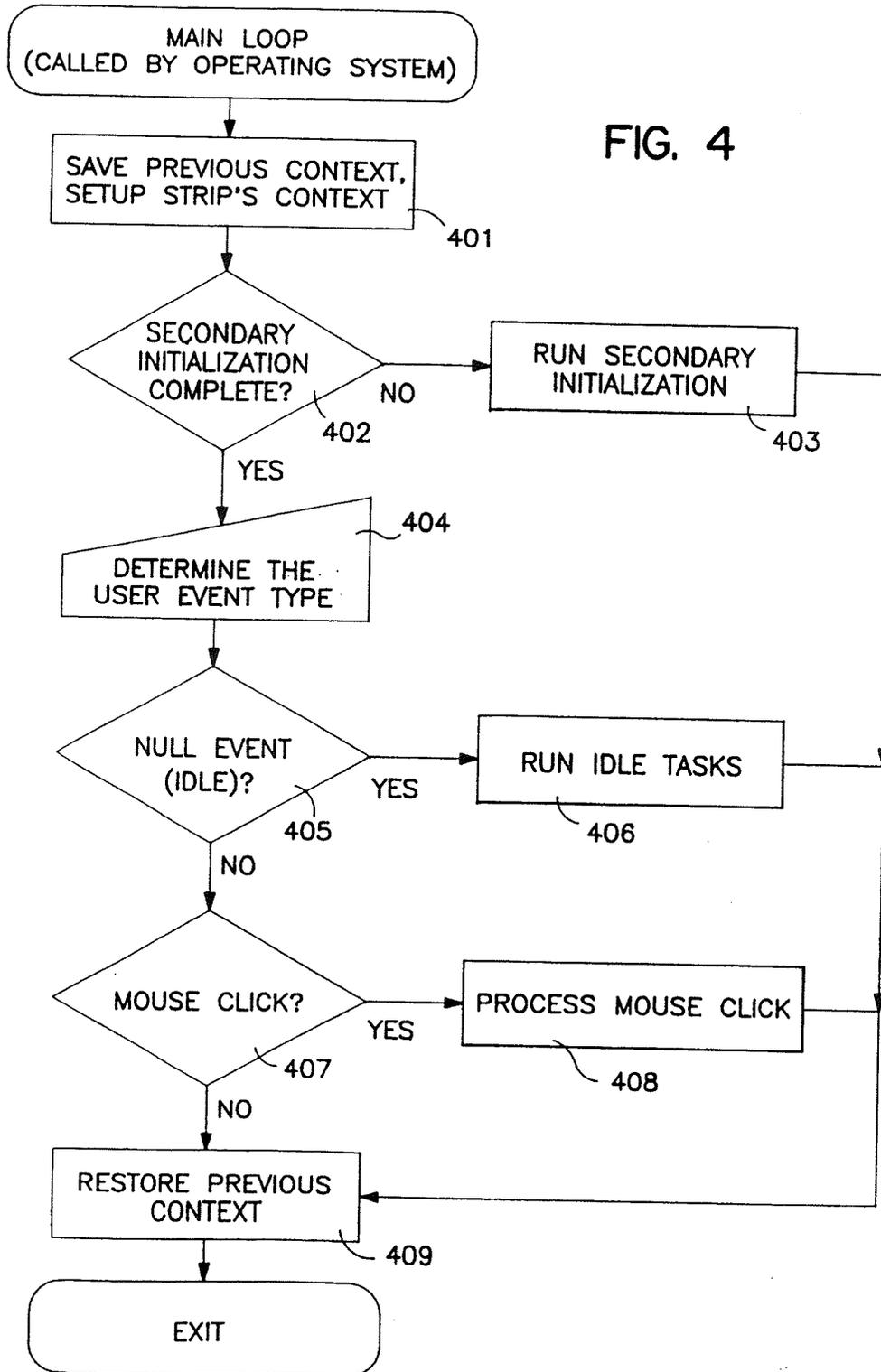


FIG. 3

FIG. 4



CONTROL STRIP MAIN LOOP
/RUN SECONDARY INITIALIZATION

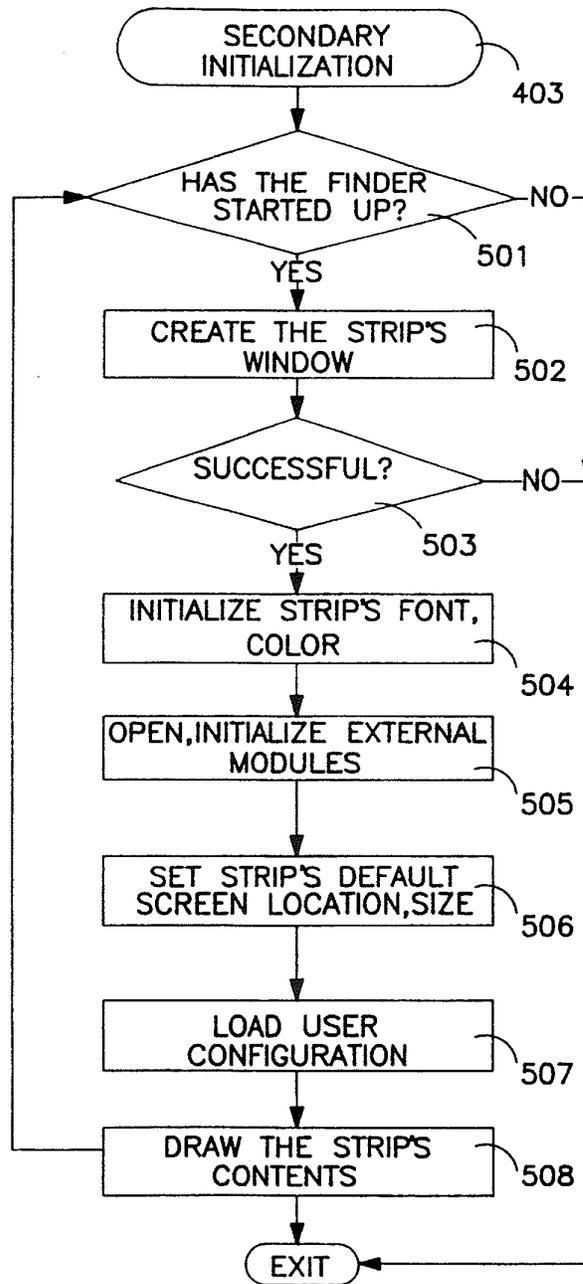


FIG. 5

CONTROL STRIP MAIN LOOP
/OPEN, INITIALIZE EXTERNAL
MODULES

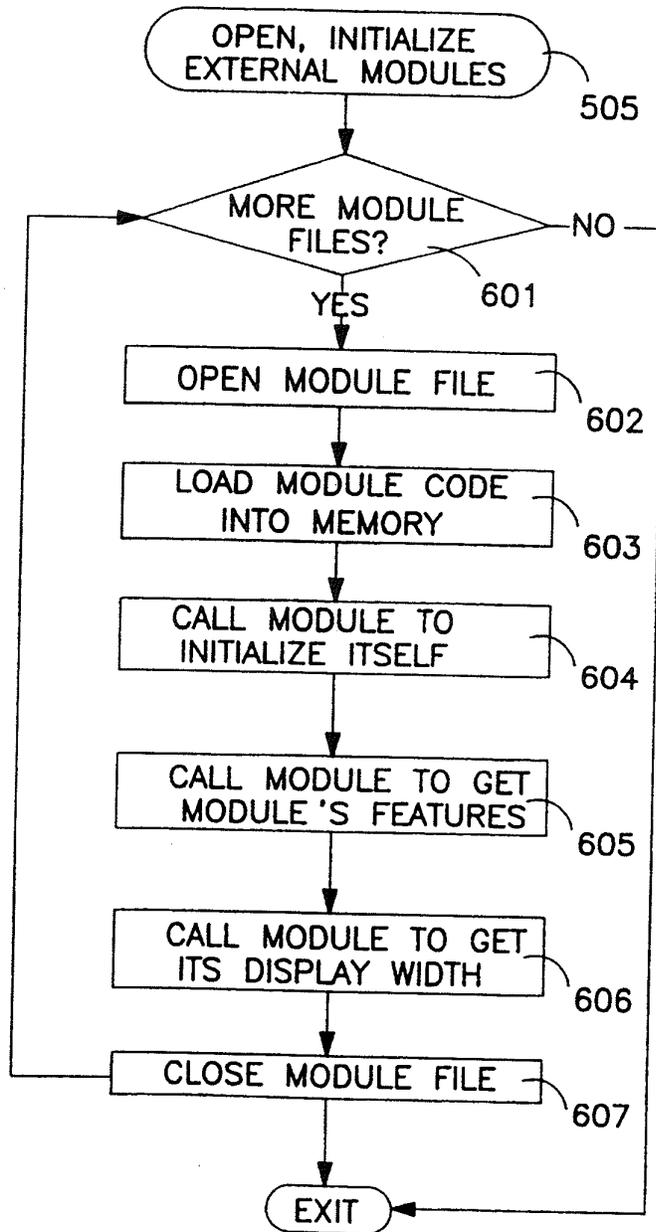


FIG. 6

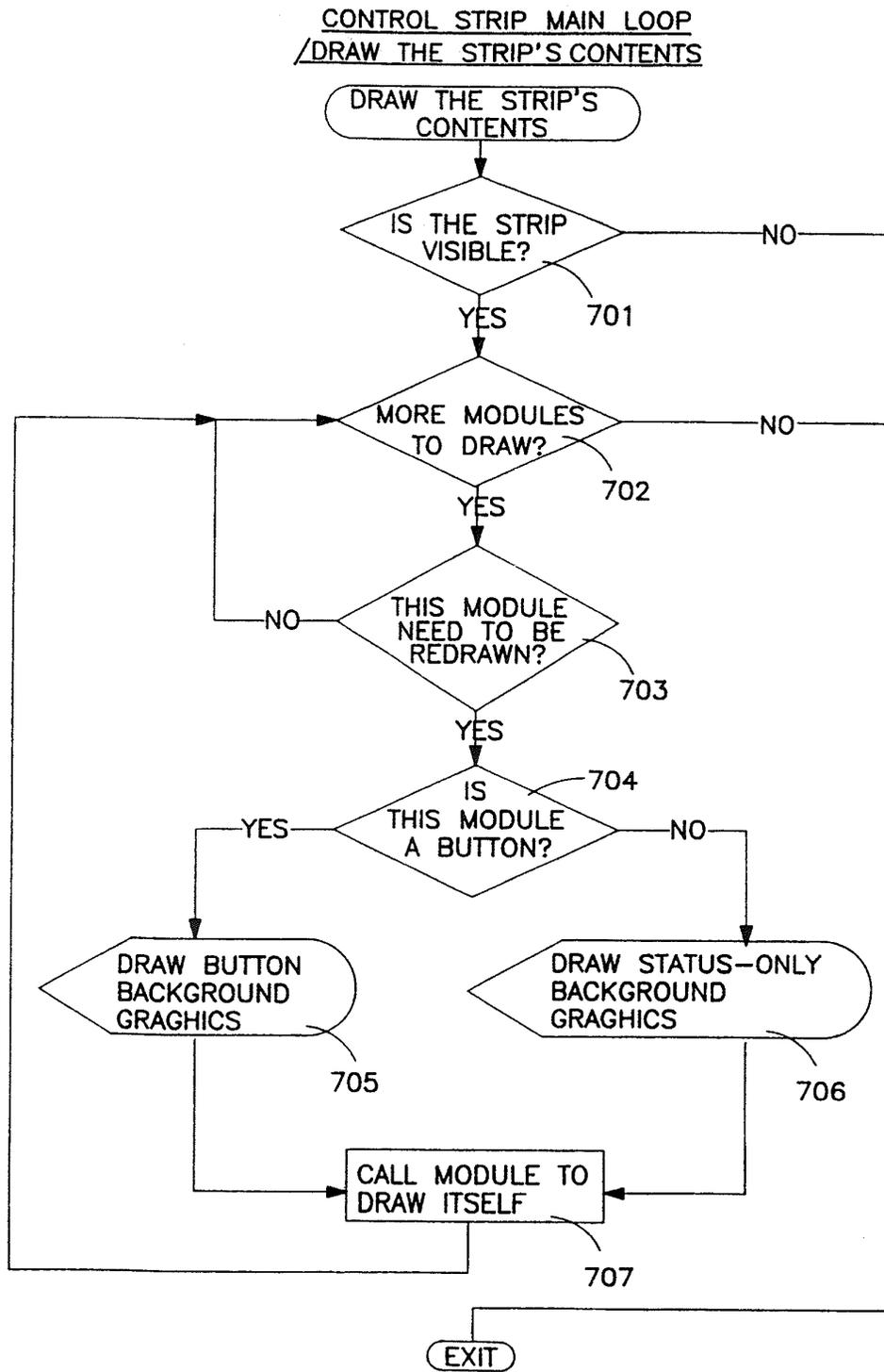


FIG. 7

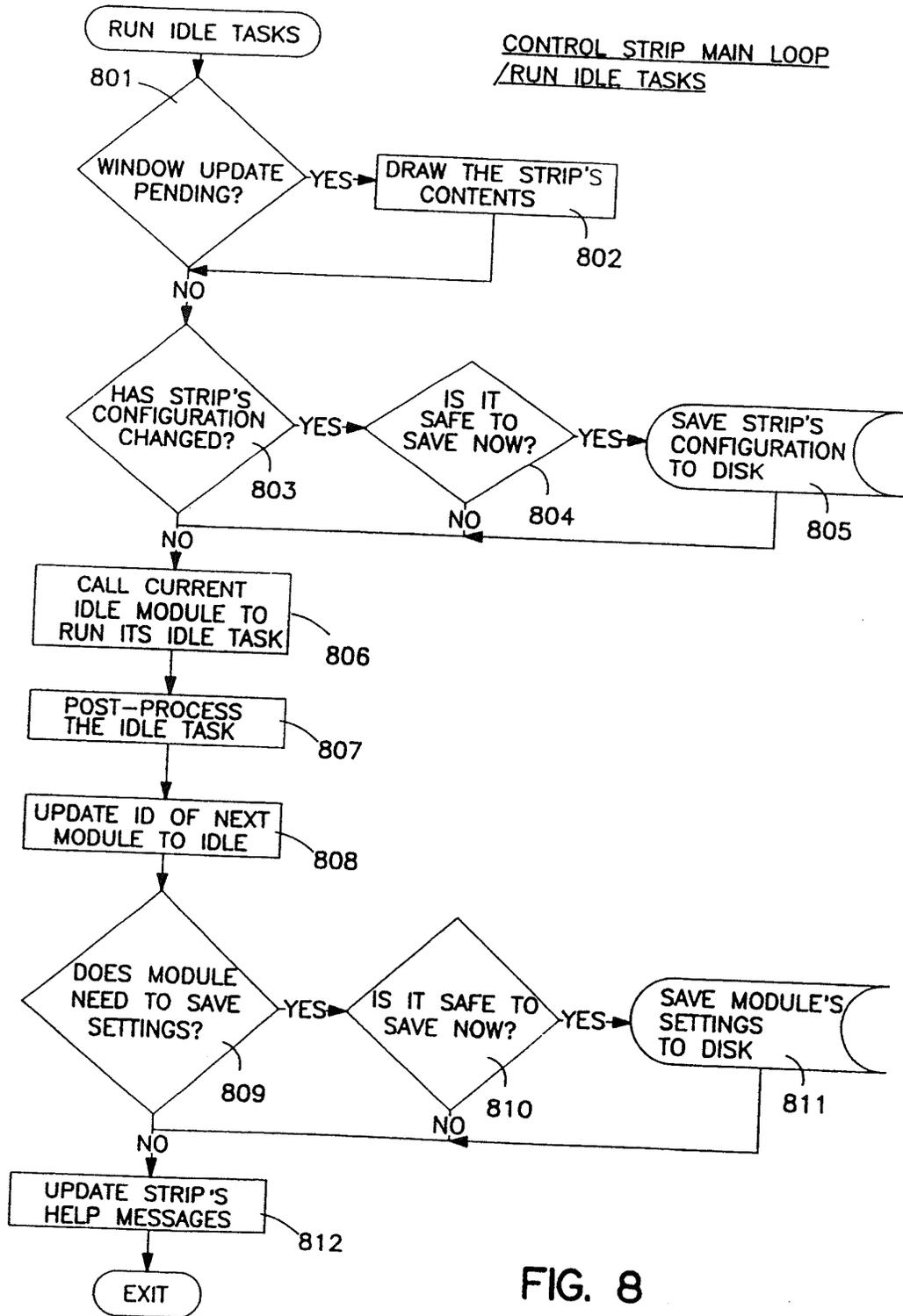


FIG. 8

CONTROL STRIP MAIN LOOP
/PROCESS MOUSE CLICK

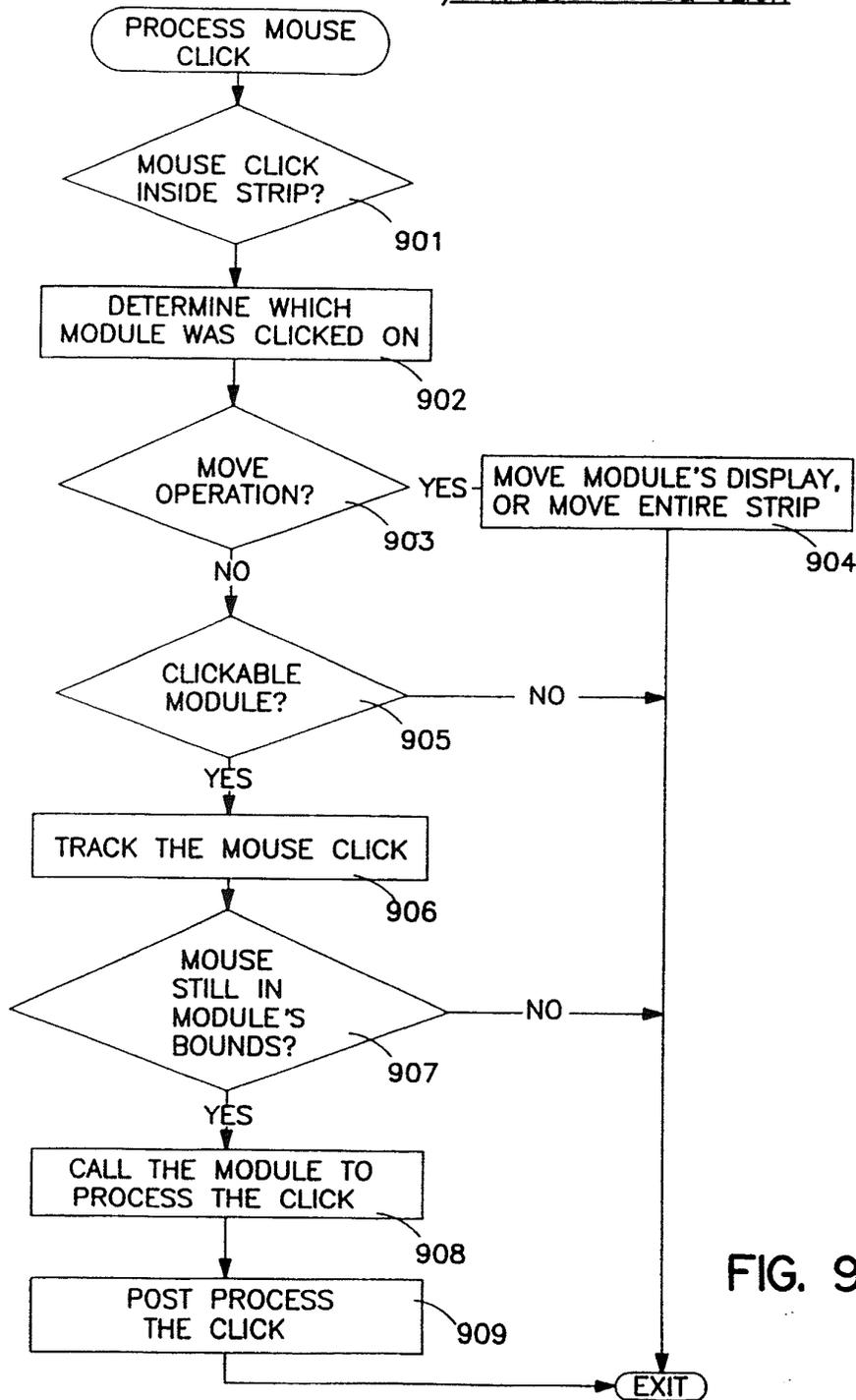


FIG. 9

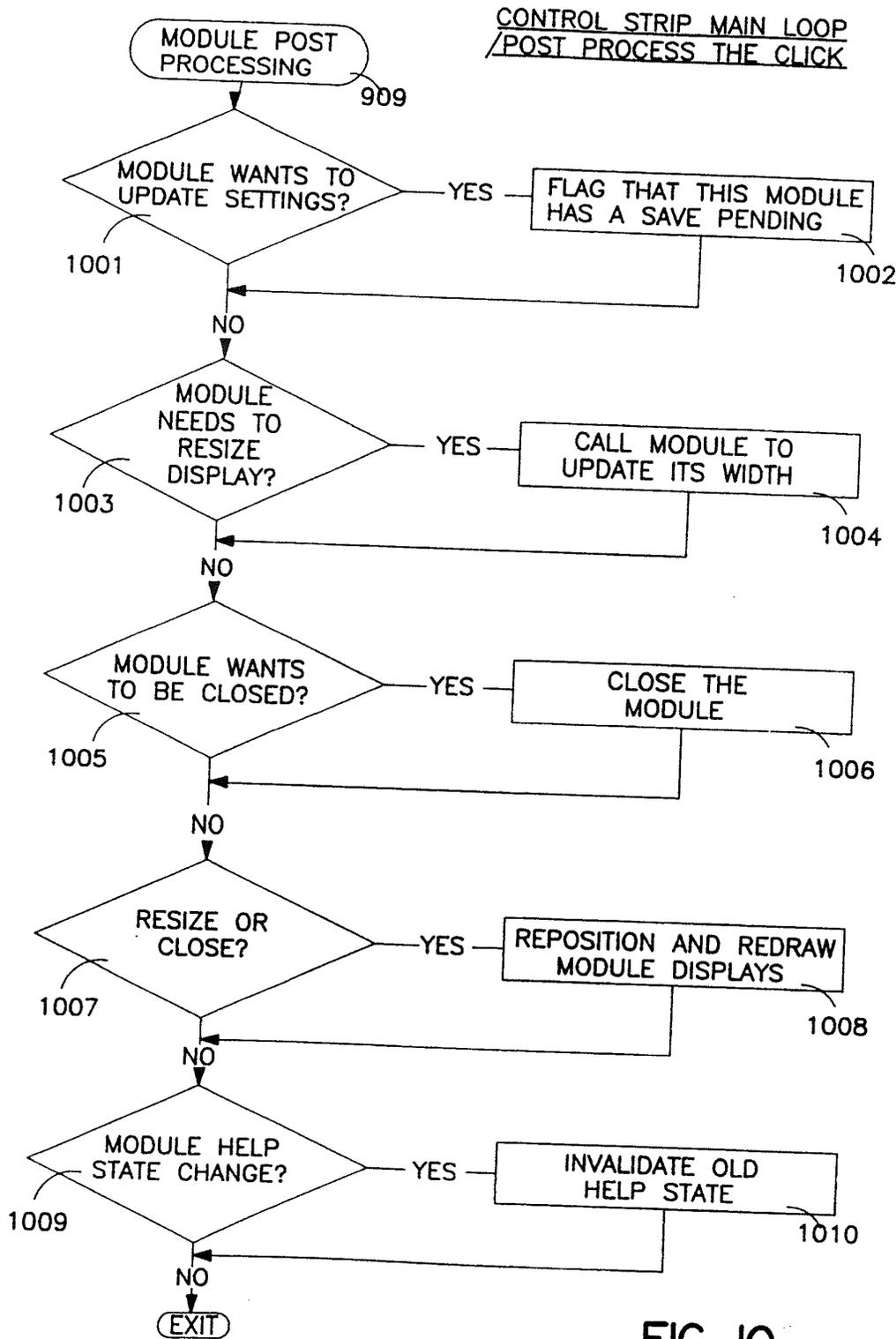


FIG. 10

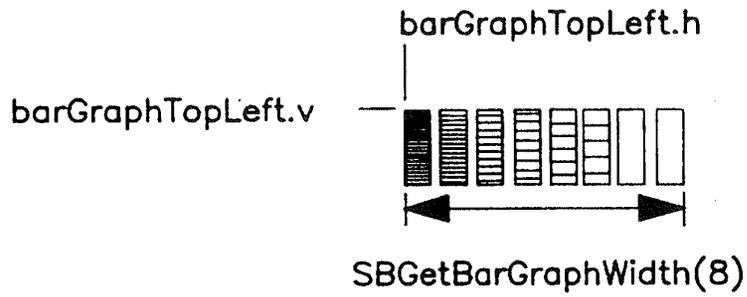


FIG. II

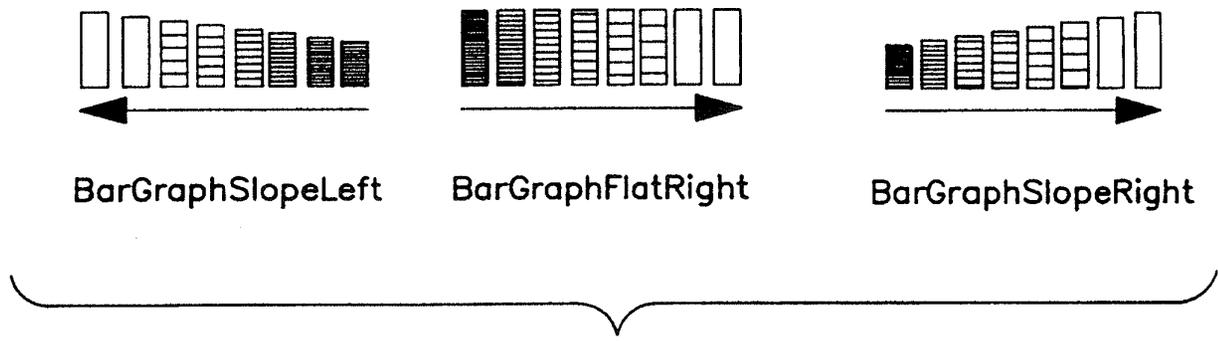


FIG. I2

**METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR
DISPLAYING AND ACCESSING CONTROL
AND STATUS INFORMATION IN A
COMPUTER SYSTEM**

This is a continuation of application Ser. No. 08/316,237, filed Sep. 30, 1994, now abandoned.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to the field of computer systems; particularly, the present invention relates to displaying a status and control function bar or window to enable access of user selected indicia to a computer system user.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Typically, a computer system contains a processor, a bus, and other peripheral devices. The processor is responsible for executing instructions using the data in the computer system. The bus is used by the processor and the peripheral devices for transferring information between one another. The information on the bus usually includes data, address and control signals. The peripheral devices comprise storage devices, input/output (I/O) devices, etc.

Computer systems also include information management systems that coordinate the display of information to the user. Currently, the art in computer display management provides the capability of displaying data in rectangular portions (commonly referred to as windows) of a display screen. Such information management systems include the Finder™ interface of the computer systems manufactured by Apple Computer, Inc. of Cupertino, Calif. Controls are typically provided to resize and move windows within the confines of the physical display boundaries.

Windows may be used to display information regarding application programs, as well as information produced by system programs, that are run on the computer system. Many of these system and control programs provide status and control information and functionality. Some of the system control programs also provide options with respect to the information they provide and the functions they perform. These options can be accessed and/or selected by moving a cursor at a predetermined point in the window and "clicking" a mouse or performing requisite key strokes. Access to these programs may require locating the program (e.g., locating and entering a folder) before execution. The time necessary to access such programs may be unduly long. It is desirable to provide a less obtrusive manner of accessing such system and control programs.

The computer system is often capable of displaying multiple windows or data areas on the display screen at the same time. Windows may overlap each other. The information contained in the portion of the window that is overlapped is not visible. The window that is entirely visible to the computer user is typically the active window. Therefore, a program, such as a system or control program may be running, while another program displaying information in another window is selected as active and thereafter covers, partially or completely, the windows or data areas displayed by the system/control program. Sometimes the user may wish to have an unobstructed view of the system/control data area, regardless of the window selected as active (even when the windows overlap each other). Thus, it is desirable at times to have windows that are always visible to the user. However, it is also desirable to be able to eliminate that window at times based on the user's requirements.

The present invention overcomes these problems by providing a status and control information display. The display of the present invention is in an easily accessible format. Also, the display may be configured to permanently display in a visible manner control and status indicia.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

An interactive computer-controlled display system is described. In the present invention, the display system includes a processor, a data display screen, and a cursor control device for interactively positioning a cursor on the data display screen. The present invention also includes a window generator that generates and displays a window (e.g., a control strip) on a data display screen. In one embodiment, the window comprises a control and/or status window for display on the desktop of the computer system. The window displays graphics depicting at least one display area of indicia. The individual data areas may be controlled through the use of controls and indicators in the window itself using cursor control keys.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention is illustrated by way of example, and not by way of limitation, in the figures of the accompanying drawings and in which like reference numerals refer to similar elements and in which:

FIG. 1 is a block diagram of one embodiment of the computer system of the present invention.

FIG. 2A displays a computer desktop illustrating the control strip of the present invention as well as opened windows.

FIG. 2B illustrates one embodiment of the control strip of the present invention.

FIG. 2C illustrates a pop-up menu displayed from the control strip of the present invention.

FIG. 2D illustrates a help balloon displayed from the control strip of the present invention.

FIG. 2E illustrates the process of moving a display area from one position to another in the control strip.

FIG. 2F shows the control strip window graphics generated by processing logic being combined with graphics generated by a module to illustrate the creation of the resulting control strip.

FIG. 3 illustrates one embodiment of the control panel of the present invention.

FIG. 4 is a flow chart of one embodiment of the process for the control strip of the present invention.

FIG. 5 is a flow chart of one embodiment of the secondary initialization process of the present invention.

FIG. 6 is a flow chart of one embodiment of the open and initialization process for the external modules of the present invention.

FIG. 7 is a flow chart of one embodiment of the process for drawing the contents of the control strip of the present invention.

FIG. 8 is a flow chart of one embodiment of the process for running idle tasks in the sent invention.

FIG. 9 is a flow chart of one embodiment of the process for responding to a mouse click occurring in the control strip of the present invention.

FIG. 10 is a flow chart of one embodiment of the process for post processing a mouse click in the present invention.

FIG. 11 illustrates a bar graph for display in a data display area in the control strip of the present invention.

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FIG. 12 illustrates a bar graph that results after using arrow direction icons.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

A method and apparatus for providing status and control indicia. In the following detailed description of the present invention numerous specific details are set forth, such as types of status indicia, instruction names, etc., in order to provide a thorough understanding of the present invention. However, it will be apparent to one skilled in the art that the present invention may be practiced without these specific details. In other instances, well-known structures and devices are shown in block diagram form, rather than in detail, in order to avoid obscuring the present invention.

The present description includes material protected by copyrights, such as illustrations of graphical user interface images which the assignee of the present invention owns. The assignee hereby reserves its rights, including copyright, in these materials, and each such material should be regarded as bearing the following notice: Copyright Apple Computer, Inc., 1993. The copyright owner has no objection to the facsimile reproduction by anyone of the patent document or the patent disclosure, as it appears in the Patent and Trademark Office file or records, but otherwise reserves all copyrights whatsoever.

Some portions of the detailed descriptions which follow are presented in terms of algorithms and symbolic representations of operations on data bits within a computer memory. These algorithmic descriptions and representations are the means used by those skilled in the data processing arts to most effectively convey the substance of their work to others skilled in the art. An algorithm is here, and generally, conceived to be a self-consistent sequence of steps leading to a desired result. The steps are those requiring physical manipulations of physical quantities. Usually, though not necessarily, these quantities take the form of electrical or magnetic signals capable of being stored, transferred, combined, compared, and otherwise manipulated. It has proven convenient at times, principally for reasons of common usage, to refer to these signals as bits, values, elements, symbols, characters, terms, numbers, or the like.

It should be borne in mind, however, that all of these and similar terms are to be associated with the appropriate physical quantities and are merely convenient labels applied to these quantities. Unless specifically stated otherwise as apparent from the following discussions, it is appreciated that throughout the present invention, discussions utilizing terms such as "processing" or "computing" or "calculating" or "determining" or "displaying" or the like, refer to the action and processes of a computer system, or similar electronic computing device, that manipulates and transforms data represented as physical (electronic) quantities within the computer system's registers and memories into other data similarly represented as physical quantities within the computer system memories or registers or other such information storage, transmission or display devices.

The present invention also relates to apparatus for performing the operations herein. This apparatus may be specially constructed for the required purposes, or it may comprise a general purpose computer selectively activated or reconfigured by a computer program stored in the computer. The algorithms and displays presented herein are not inherently related to any particular computer or other apparatus. Various general purpose machines may be used with

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programs in accordance with the teachings herein, or it may prove convenient to construct more specialized apparatus to perform the required method steps. The required structure for a variety of these machines will appear from the description below. In addition, the present invention is not described with reference to any particular programming language. It will be appreciated that a variety of programming languages may be used to implement the teachings of the invention as described herein.

OVERVIEW OF THE COMPUTER SYSTEM OF THE PRESENT INVENTION

Referring to FIG. 1, an overview of a computer system of the present invention is shown in block diagram form. The present invention may be implemented on a general purpose microcomputer, such as one of the members of the Apple family of personal computers, one of the members of the IBM personal computer family, or one of several other computing and assistant devices which are presently commercially available. Of course, the present invention may also be implemented on a multi-user system while encountering all of the costs, speed, and function advantages and disadvantages available with these machines. The preferred embodiment of the present invention is implemented on an Apple PowerBook™ computer system developed by the assignee of the present invention.

As illustrated in FIG. 1, the computer system of the present invention generally comprises a local bus or other communication means 100 for communicating information, a processor 103 coupled with local bus 100 for processing information, a random access memory (RAM) or other dynamic storage device 104 (commonly referred to as a main memory) coupled with local bus 100 for storing information and instructions for processor 103, and a read-only memory (ROM) or other non-volatile storage device 106 coupled with local bus 100 for storing non-volatile information and instructions for processor 103.

The computer system of the present invention also includes an input/output (I/O) bus or other communication means 101 for communication information in the computer system. A data storage device 107, such as a magnetic tape and disk drive, including its associated controller circuitry, is coupled to I/O bus 101 for storing information and instructions. A display device 121, such as a cathode ray tube, liquid crystal display, etc., including its associated controller circuitry, is also coupled to I/O bus 101 for displaying information to the computer user, as well as a hard copy device 124, such as a plotter or printer, including its associated controller circuitry for providing a visual representation of the computer images. Hard copy device 124 is coupled with processor 103, main memory 104, non-volatile memory 106 and mass storage device 107 through I/O bus 101 and bus translator/interface unit 140. A modem 108 and an ethernet local area network 109 are also coupled to I/O bus 101.

Bus interface unit 140 is coupled to local bus 100 and I/O bus 101 and acts as a gateway between processor 103 and the I/O subsystem. Bus interface unit 140 may also provide translation between signals being sent from units on one of the buses to units on the other bus to allow local bus 100 and I/O bus 101 to co-operate as a single bus.

An I/O controller 130 is coupled to I/O bus 101 and controls access to certain I/O peripherals in the computer system. For instance, I/O controller 130 is coupled to controller device 127 that controls access to an alpha-numeric input device 122 including alpha-numeric and other

keys, etc., for communicating information and command selections to processor 103, a cursor control 123, such as a trackball, stylus, mouse, or trackpad, etc., for controlling cursor movement, and a temperature sensor 127A for measuring the internal system temperature. The system also includes a sound chip 125 coupled to I/O controller 130 for providing audio recording and play back. Sound chip 125 may include a sound circuit and its driver which are used to generate various audio signals from the computer system. I/O controller 130 may also provide access to a floppy disk and driver 126. The processor 103 controls I/O controller 130 with its peripherals by sending commands to I/O controller 130 via local bus 100, interface unit 140 and I/O bus 101.

Batteries or other power supply 152 may also be included to provide power necessary to run the various peripherals and integrated circuits in the computer system. Power supply 152 is typically a DC power source that provides a constant DC power to various units, particularly processor 103. Various units such as processor 103, display 121, etc., also receive clocking signals to synchronize operations within the computer systems. These clocking signals may be provided by a global clock generator or multiple clock generators, each dedicated to a portion of the computer system. Such a clock generator is shown as clock generator 160. In one embodiment, clock generator 160 comprise a phase-locked loop (PLL) that provides clocking signals to processor 103.

In one embodiment, processor 103 is a member of the 68000 family of processors, such as the 68040 processor manufactured by Motorola Corporation of Schaumburg, Ill. The memory in the computer system is initialized to store the operating system as well as other programs, such as file directory routines, control programs, system programs and application programs, and data inputted from I/O controller 130. The operating system running on processor 103 takes care of basic tasks such as starting the system, handling interrupts, moving data to and from memory 104 and peripheral devices via input/output interface unit 140, and managing the memory space in memory 104. In one embodiment, the operating system is stored in ROM 106, while RAM 104 is utilized as the internal memory for the computer system for accessing data and application programs.

Processor 103 accesses memory in the computer system via an address bus within bus 100. Commands in connection with the operation of memory in the computer system are also sent from the processor to the memory using bus 100. Bus 100 also includes a bi-directional data bus to communicate data in response to the commands provided by processor 103 under the control of the operating system running on it.

Of course, certain implementations and uses of the present invention may neither require nor include all of the above components. For example, in certain implementations a keyboard or cursor control device for inputting information to the system may not be required. Furthermore, the computer system may include additional processing units.

OVERVIEW OF THE PRESENT INVENTION

The present invention provides a control and/or status window for display on the desktop of the computer system. The control and status window will be referred to herein as the control strip. The control strip of the present invention is a window of graphics depicting one or more display areas for control and/or status indicia. In one embodiment, each of

the display areas is individually and variably sized. The size of the control strip itself may also be variably sized. In one embodiment, the size may be adjusted such that none, all, or only a portion of the display areas within its boundaries are visible. The size of the control strip may also be varied such that only a portion of one display area is visible in the control strip. FIG. 2A displays a computer desktop illustrating the control strip of the present invention as well as opened windows. FIG. 2B illustrates one embodiment of the control strip of the present invention.

Each of the variably sized data areas may be sensitive to user input for control. That is, a user may interact with the individually display data areas. Different parts of the control strip either display information or act as buttons, or both. Note that buttons may display information on their surface. When the user clicks a button, it is highlighted. In one embodiment, buttons may also display additional elements such as pop-up menus (shown in FIG. 2C) or help messages (e.g., balloons shown in FIG. 2D). Thus, in one embodiment, control of the individual data areas is accomplished, in part, through the use of small button controls and indicators in the form of various icons.

Each of the display areas is associated with a programming module. Each of the modules provides a specific status or control function. In one embodiment, the module is represented by a disk file containing the code necessary for the module to interact with the control strip as well as other elements such as text, icons, pictures, etc. Modules may be designed to be responsive to selection from cursors via a mouse, trackpad, or cursor control keys, such as on a keyboard. Many of the modules are able to provide control to various system functionality, and may provide menus to do the same.

The control strip is a control panel that provides the operating environment for control strip modules. In one embodiment, the control strip runs on any Macintosh™ computer using a System 7.0 or later operating system. The control strip of the present invention may be designed to run on computer systems using other operating systems.

In one embodiment, the control strip is implemented in a private window layer that appears in front of the windows of all the application layers. That is, the control strip window appears on top of all application programming windows that may be generated as part of the execution of an application program. This prevents other windows from obscuring it. In one embodiment, processing logic in the computer system may maintain a list of windows ordered from the frontmost window on the screen being at the top of the list and the bottommost window being at the bottom of the list. Processing logic can maintain the control strip window at the top of the list.

The control strip of the present invention may include windowing configurations that are shown as being horizontal or vertical on the screen. Furthermore, the present invention is not limited to a single row or column of status and control data areas. In other words, multiple rows and columns of module data areas may be included in the window of the control strip.

CONTROL STRIP MANIPULATION

The control strip, such as shown in FIG. 2B, may also be moved to different portions of the display screen. However, in one embodiment, the window for the control strip may be moved to any location on the display as long as the right and/or left edge of the strip is attached to the right or left edge, respectively, of the display. The user may also hold

down the option key and drag the tab 203 of the control strip 200 with the use of a cursor control device (e.g., trackpad, trackball, mouse) to move the control strip to a new position on the display.

In one embodiment, the user may adjust the size of the control strip window. Adjustments to the size of the window may comprise either an increase in the height of the window, the width of the window, or both. In one embodiment, only the width of the control strip window may be altered. The definition and use of windows is well-known in the art. In one embodiment, the control strip 200 has a tab 203 on its unattached end. The user can drag tab 203 to adjust the length of the strip. By "clicking" on tab 203, i.e. selection through the use of the trackpad, mouse, cursor control keys, etc., the user is able to shift from a minimal control strip size to a maximum control strip size, and vice versa. In its minimal size, the graphics of the modules in the control strip are not visible and only the tab is showing. In its maximum size, all of the modules in the control strip are showing. Recognizing cursor controlled selections through the use of trackpad, trackball, mouse, cursor control keys, etc., as well as the tracking of movements of the cursor made by the same are well-known in the art.

Scroll arrows, such as left scroll arrow 204 and right scroll arrow 205, are provided on the control strip that enable the window of the control strip to be scrolled to the left or right, respectively. Use of scroll arrows with windows is well-known in the art.

The user may also hide the control strip. In one embodiment, to make the control strip disappear completely, the user can click the Hide button in the control strip control panel, as described later in conjunction with FIG. 3. A close box 201 is also included in control strip 200. In one embodiment, by holding the option key and clicking a display area, the user can drag the display area to another position in the control strip. An example of the process of moving one display area to another position on the control strip is shown in FIG. 2E. Referring to FIG. 2E, the user selects one of the display areas by, for instance, positioning the cursor over the display area. When the user "clicks" the display area, its border becomes highlighted. While clicking, the display area is dragged to another location in the control strip module display area. When the user has moved the display area to the location of his choice, the user stops "clicking." The control strip display areas are then rearranged.

After the user rearranges the parts of the control strip, the new arrangement is saved. The saving operation may be deferred until resources, such as the hard disk is ready (e.g., spinning) or until just before the computer system is shut down or restarted. In other words, in computer systems in which the hard disk is not turned on all the time in order to save power, the saving operation may be deferred until the hard disk has been turned on by another.

EXEMPLARY CONTROL/STATUS INFORMATION

The control strip of the present invention provides a standard screen location for a collection of individual modules that provide status and control functions. In one embodiment, the control strip functions include a network switch that shows whether a network connection for the computer system, such as an AppleTalk™ network connection, is on or off and lets the user turn the network connection on or off without having to locate and execute other network connection software on the computer system (e.g., without having to open the Chooser™).

The control strip may also include a battery monitor that displays the status of the battery or batteries. In one embodiment, the battery monitor displays the current power drain in a manner similar to a car's miles per gallon (MPG) indicator. The needle for the power drain indicator, indicates the drain relative to the maximum possible. The control strip of the present invention allows this display to be updated frequently so if the user increased the LCD display screen's brightness level, the needle would animate to denote the consequence of the action.

Another control strip module displays the state of File Sharing (e.g., on, off, or users connected) that may be currently employed on the computer system. The file sharing module also lets the user turn file sharing on or off and lets the user open a control panel to control processing to setup file sharing on the computer system.

The control strip of the present invention may also provide a module to allow the internal hard disk power to be turned off (to save power), and to indicate whether it is currently on or off.

The control strip may also provide power settings that allow the user to select between maximum battery conservation or maximum computer performance without opening a control panel. In one embodiment, the power settings portion of the control strip also allow the user to open up the power savings control panel. The control strip of the present invention may also include a function that places the computer in sleep mode or allows the user to select the sound volume.

Other modules, for example, may provide time and/or date information, may list currently running programming applications, may indicate the amount of available memory, may control a CD drive, may provide access to audio controls and status information. Therefore, the control strip acts as a status and control function bar, or windowing area, that provides running modules to be displayed in an arrangement that is to be displayed, such an arrangement being modifiable such that the size of the window or bar may be changed.

In one embodiment, the control strip is controllable through a control panel. An exemplary display of such control panel is shown in FIG. 3. Use of control panels is well-known in the art. Using the control panel in FIG. 3, the user is able to hide or show the control strip by clicking the corresponding button in the control panel. Note that in one embodiment, the control panel may also be used to change the font and size of the text in the control strip window.

PROCESSING LOGIC FOR THE PRESENT INVENTION

The present invention includes computer processing logic for generating the control strip of the present invention. This processing logic is described, in part, in the flow charts shown in FIGS. 4-10. In addition to the computer resources described earlier, the present invention relies upon the availability of an operating system and system functions capable of displaying windows, information in windows, characters, and cursor symbols on the display devices. System functions for interfacing with the cursor control devices and cursor function keys, including the tracking of cursor location within a window, are also required. These resources are standard processing components known in the art.

When the processor of the present invention is first powered up, the operating system logic obtains control and initializes the system components such as read/write

memory, the display device, the cursor control device, the cursor function keys, and keyboard. During this initialization process or in response to a user command, the operating system displays the control strip of the present invention.

In one embodiment, the control strip initialization is performed in two stages. The first stage begins by initially loading at least one routine at start up. Upon loading necessary routines, the operating system allocates storage for global variables use. Next, resources are loaded for use by the control strip processing logic. These resources include the visual components or indicia that is to appear in the control strip, such as pictures, icons, text, etc. The processing logic for the control strip is patched into the operating system.

Later, as a second stage of the initialization during the set up process, the control strip processing logic causes each of the module files to be opened one at a time. The code for the module is loaded. An initialization routine is run in response to a call, during which time, the module itself determines if it can run. This information is conveyed to the control strip. The processing logic then causes the window to be displayed and calls the modules to run themselves and appear in the control strip. FIG. 2F shows the control strip window graphics generated by processing logic being combined with graphics generated by a module to illustrate the creation of the resulting control strip.

FIG. 4 is a flowchart of the processing logic responsible for generating the control strip of the present invention and processing events that occur involving the control strip. In one embodiment, the control strip main processing is called by the operating system. Referring to FIG. 4, the processing begins by saving the previous context and sets up the context of the control strip (processing block 401). The previous context refers to the state of the computer system prior to performing control strip processing. The previous context may correspond to an application program running immediately prior to the control strip processing being called. The context may include settings up its memory space, providing access to its global variables, etc.

Next, a test determines if the secondary initialization has been done (processing block 402). If the secondary initialization has not been done, processing continues at processing block 403 where a secondary initialization process is run, and processing thereafter continues at processing block 409. The secondary initialization process causes the processing logic to initialize the control strip. One embodiment of the secondary initialization process is described in FIG. 5. On the other hand, if the window of the control strip is allocated, processing continues at processing block 404 where the processing logic awaits a user event and determines the type of such an event.

Then a test determines if the user event type is a null event (processing block 405). That is, a test determines whether the user event type is idle or not. If the user event type is a null event, processing continues at processing block 406 where idle tasks are run, and processing thereafter continues at processing block 409. Thus, during idle periods, tasks involved with the control strip window may be run as well as tasks of the modules. Examples of module tasks may include updating help messages (e.g., due to a help feature being enabled on the computer system) and saving updated state information (e.g., display area on screen moved to new location, display area resized, module made invisible; module indicates state is changed and that it must be saved). On the other hand, if the event type is not a null event, processing continues at processing block 407.

At processing block 407, a test determines if there has been a "click" of the mouse within the area defined by the control strip. If there has been a click of the mouse within the control strip, the mouse click is processed (processing block 408), and processing continues at processing block 409. The mouse click processing determines the location of the mouse click, which module in the controls strip was selected, or "clicked-on", if any, and any action to be taken based on that location. One embodiment of the mouse click processing is described in FIG. 9. If a mouse click has not occurred within the control strip, processing continues directly to processing block 409.

At processing block 409, the previous context is restored and the processing logic exits to return control to the operating system.

One embodiment of the secondary initialization process called by the control strip main processing logic is described in a flowchart in FIG. 5. Referring to FIG. 5, the secondary initialization process begins by testing whether the Finder™ has started up (processing block 501). If the Finder™ has not started up, the secondary initialization process ends. However, if the Finder™ has started up, the window of the control strip is created (processing block 502).

Then a test determines whether the creation of the window of the control strip was successful (processing block 503). If the creation of the window of the control strip was not successful, the process ends. The creation of the window may not be successful because, for instance, there is not enough memory, missing system resources, etc. On the other hand, if the creation of the window of the control strip was successful, the font and color of the control strip are initialized (processing block 504). Then external modules are opened and initialized (processing block 505), the default screen location and size of the control strip are set (processing block 506), the user configuration is loaded (processing block 507), and the contents of the control strip are drawn (processing block 508). The user configuration may include screen location for the control strip, the saved display order of the modules, the window size of the control strip, etc. Then the secondary initialization process ends.

The default screen location and size of the control strip are stored in memory and accessed. In one embodiment, these values may be changed by the computer user, such as by interacting with the control strip itself. In another embodiment, the default values are determined and permanently set by a system designer. Note that specification of the font, color, default screen location and size may not be required in lieu of the user configuration. Likewise, by using solely the default settings, the user configuration is not required.

One embodiment of the process for opening and initializing external modules such as may be invoked by the secondary initialization process is shown in FIG. 6. Referring to FIG. 6, the processing logic begins by testing whether there are more module files to be opened (processing block 601). If there are no more module files (e.g., all the modules have been opened and loaded), then the process ends. The modules are opened and initialized one at a time. If there are more module files, the processing logic opens the module file (processing block 602) and loads the module code into memory (processing block 603). The processing logic calls the module to initialize itself (processing block 604). The module is then also called by the processing logic to obtain the features of the module (processing block 605) and to obtain the width of the module's area, as well as features of the module (processing block 606). The features of the module

include help messages to be displayed when the module is "clicked on" with the cursor. Then the module file is closed (processing block 607) and the processing loops back to processing block 601. By looping back to processing block 601, the processing logic is able to provide the initialization procedures to all the modules, such that when all the modules have been processed the process ends. When the process ends, it returns in a manner well-known in the art to the processing logic that called (e.g., initiated) it.

One embodiment of a process for drawing the contents of the control strip (processing block 508), such as used at processing block 508 of FIG. 5, is described in FIG. 7. Referring to FIG. 7, the processing logic initially determines if the control strip is visible (processing block 701). If the control strip is not visible, processing ends. That is, if the user has hidden the control strip, the present invention will not draw its contents.

On the other hand, if the control strip is visible, processing continues at processing block 702 enters a looping structure where the processing logic tests whether there are more modules to draw. If there are no more modules to draw, processing ends and control returns to the process that called it. If there are more modules to draw, processing continues at processing block 703 where the processing logic tests whether the particular module needs to be redrawn. A module may need to be drawn when the information being displayed needs to be updated. For example, as the amount of energy in the battery is changing due to energy consumption from the computer system, an update to the battery indicia in the control strip must be made. If the module does not need to be redrawn, processing loops back to processing block 702 where the more modules test is repeated. On the other hand, if the module needs to be redrawn processing continues at processing block 704 where the processing logic determines whether the module is a button. If the module is a button, processing continues at processing block 705 where the background graphics of the button are drawn, and processing continues to processing block 707. If the module is not a button, the status-only background graphics are drawn (processing block 706) and processing continues at processing block 707. Note that in one embodiment, the type of background graphics may be obtained using a message sent to the module requesting its features.

At processing block 707, the processing logic makes a call to the module to draw itself. That is, it is the responsibility of the module itself to draw its status for control indicia. Thereafter processing loops back to processing block 702.

One embodiment of the processing for running idle tasks in FIG. 4 is described in a flowchart in FIG. 8. Referring to FIG. 8, the processing logic begins by determining whether a window update is pending (processing block 801). If a window update is pending, the processing continues at processing block 802 when the contents of the control strip are drawn. Window updates may be required due to a change in status in one of the modules. Changes may also be due to a reordering of the control strip entries. Note that one embodiment of the process to draw the control strip is shown in FIG. 7. Thereafter processing continues at processing block 803. If a window update is not pending processing continues directly to processing block 803.

At processing 803, processing logic tests whether the configuration of the control strip has changed. If the configuration of the control strip has not changed, processing continues at processing block 806. If the configuration of the control strip has changed, processing continues at processing block 804 where a test determines whether it is safe to

perform a save operation. This determination is based on whether the resources are available (i.e., H.D. is turned on) to perform the save operation. If it is not safe to perform a save operation, processing continues at processing block 806. However, if it is safe to save control strip, processing continues at processing block 805 where the configuration of the control strip is saved to disk. Thereafter processing continues to processing block 806.

At processing block 806, the current idle module is called to run its idle task. In one embodiment, the processing logic of the present invention allows only one module to run its idle tasks during each a call to the processing of FIG. 8 (e.g., the currently designated module) to reduce overhead time. Identification of the current module is based on an ID associated with each of the modules.

Then the idle task undergoes post processing (processing block 807), and the ID of the next module is updated to idle (processing block 808). That is, the module designated as the current module for the next call to the processing of FIG. 8 will be the next module in the list of modules. An example of the post processing is shown in FIG. 10.

Then, the processing logic determines whether the module needs to save settings for use later (processing block 809). If the module does not need to save its settings, processing continues to processing block 812. On the other hand, if the settings of the module are to be saved, the processing logic tests whether the settings may be saved at this time (processing block 810). One reason the settings may not be saved is that the hard disk may be powered down or turned off. If the settings cannot be saved at this time, processing continues at processing block 812. If the settings of the module may be saved at this time, the processing logic causes the module settings to be saved to disk (processing block 811). Thereafter, processing continues at processing block 812.

At processing block 812, the help messages for the control strip are updated, and processing ends and returns to the control of the main processing logic.

One embodiment of the mouse click processing of the present invention, such as used in FIG. 4, is shown in a flowchart in FIG. 9. Referring to FIG. 9, the processing logic determines whether a mouse click has occurred inside the control strip (processing block 901). In one embodiment, this determination may be made by comparing the current location of the cursor with the location of the control strip (e.g., status bar). If a mouse click has not occurred inside the control strip, then processing loops back upon itself, retesting repeatedly until a mouse click does occur. When a mouse click occurs within the control strip, processing continues at processing block 902 where a determination is made as to upon which module the cursor was during the click.

The processing logic then determines whether a move operation is being selected by the mouse (processing block 903). If a move operation has been chosen, the display of the module is moved or the entire control strip is moved (processing block 904) and the processing logic ends the mouse click process and exits to control of the processing logic that called this procedure. The determination of whether to move a module or the entire strip is based on the user's keystrokes or mouse movements. On the other hand, if a move operation is not to occur, processing continues at processing block 905.

At processing block 905 the processing logic determines whether the module on which the click occurred is a "clickable" module, as opposed to a status only module, (processing block 905). That is, the processing logic tests

whether the module provides any additional functionality when a mouse moves the cursor to select an element in the control strip. If the module is not "clickable," processing ends. If the module is clickable, processing continues to process processing block 906 where the mouse click is tracked, i.e., the location of the cursor.

Next, a test determines if the mouse is still within the bounds of the module (processing block 907). If the mouse is not within the bounds of the module, processing ends. However, if the mouse is within the boundaries of the module, the module is called to process the click (processing block 908) and the click undergoes post processing (processing block 909). Thereafter, the process ends.

One embodiment of the process for post processing the mouse click is shown in FIG. 10. Referring to FIG. 10, the processing logic begins by determining whether the module desires to update its settings (processing block 1001). If the settings for the module are to be updated, processing continues at processing block 1002 where a flag is set to indicate that the module has a save pending, and processing continues to processing block 1003. The settings for a module may have to be updated due to user interaction, such as in the case of an option for a module being turned off or a module acquiring data as part of its functionality. If the settings of a module do not have to be updated, processing continues directly to processing block 1003. Setting may need to be updated when the module is displaying information that is changing frequently.

At processing block 1003, a test determines whether the module needs to resize the display. If the display of the module must be resized, processing continues at processing block 1004 where the module is called to update its width. Then processing continues at processing block 1005. On the other hand, if the display of the module does not need to be resized, processing continues directly to processing block 1005.

At processing block 1005, the processing logic determines whether the module desires to be closed. If the module desires to be closed, processing continues at processing block 1006 where the module is closed immediately. Then processing continues at processing block 1007. If the module does not desire to be closed, processing continues to processing block 1007.

At processing block 1007, a test determines whether the control strip is to be resized or closed. If the control strip needs to be resized or closed, processing continues at processing block 1008 where the module displays are repositioned and redrawn, and then processing continues at processing block 1009. If the control strip is not to be resized or closed, processing continues directly to processing block 1009.

At processing block 1009, a test determines whether the help state of the module is to be changed. The help state refers to help messages that the modules provide to users generally. If the help state of the module is to be changed, processing continues at processing block 1010 where the old help state of the module is invalidated and the process ends. If the module help state does not need to be changed, processing ends. Changes to the help state may occur due to a global change in the computer system, such as when a particular help feature (e.g., help balloons) is enabled.

ADDING CONTROL STRIP MODULES

In one embodiment, the control strip of the present invention operates as a shell with individual control and status modules added. Each module and its icons, pictures,

etc., are contained in a file on a disk. The control strip processing logic draws the strip which acts as the background for the individual modules. Each module is responsible for drawing the icons and other objects that make up its user interface.

Contents of Module Files

In one embodiment, the module file includes only a single resource containing the code necessary for the module to interact with the control strip. A module file may contain more than one code resource if it is to provide multifunctional support. In that case, each module in the file is loaded and initialized separately and treated as an independent entity.

Module Interface

The interface of the module to the control strip comprises a code resource. In one embodiment, using the Macintosh™ computer, the type of the code resource is 'sdev'. This code is responsible for performing all of the functions required by the control strip as well as any functions that are custom to the module itself. The module's entry point is at the beginning of the resource and is defined as

```
pascal long ControlStripModule (long message, long
params, Rect *statusRect, GraftPtr statusport);
```

Interactions between a module and the control strip are managed by passing messages to the module to tell it what to do or to obtain information about the module and its capabilities. In one embodiment, each module is required to observe Macintosh™ Pascal register saving conventions; that is, it may trash 680x0 processor registers D0, D1, D2, A0, and A1, but must preserve all other registers across its call. Note that other operating systems and implementations of the present invention may have different restrictions.

The message field comprises a message number from the list in the section "Control Strip Module Messages" that indicates to the module the action to perform.

The params field signifies the result returned by the initialize call to the module. This would typically be a pointer to a pointer (e.g., the handle) to the private variables to be used by the module since modules cannot have global variables. This result is passed to the module on all subsequent calls. Note that in embodiments where modules can have global variables, such a field may be eliminated.

The statusRect field comprises a pointer to a rectangle within the control strip defining the area that a module may draw within.

The statusPort field specifies a pointer to the graphics port of the control strip. The graphics port may be either a color or black-and-white graphics port, and depends on the computer system on which the control strip is running.

The result value returned by the module varies depending on the message sent to it. Results for each message are described below in the sections on the individual messages.

CONTROL STRIP MODULE REFERENCE

In one embodiment, control strip modules interact with the control strip processing logic in three ways: by accepting messages, by calling utility routines, and by calling the operating system manager (e.g., a call to Gestalt selectors). The next three sections describe each of those interactions.

Control Strip Module Messages

In one embodiment, all control strip modules respond to messages from the control strip processing logic, which is responsive to user interaction with the control strip displayed on the screen. The following messages have been defined:

Message name	Message No.	Description
sdevInitModule	0	Initialize the module
sdevCloseModule	1	Clean up before being closed
sdevFeatures	2	Return the feature bits
sdevGetDisplayWidth	3	Return the current width of the module's display
sdevPeriodicTickle	4	Periodic tickle when nothing else is happening
sdevDrawStatus	5	Update the interface in the control strip
sdevMouseClicked	6	User has clicked on the module's display area
sdevSavSettings	7	Save any changed settings in the module's preferences file
sdevShowBalloonHelp	8	Display a help balloon, if the module has one

sdevInitModule

The sdevInitModule message is the first message sent to a module after the module has been loaded from its file. Initialization allows the module to initialize its variables and to determine whether it can run on a particular machine. For example, if the function of the module is to display battery information, it may be only able to run on a portable computer, such as the Powerbook manufactured by Apple Computer.

In response to receiving the sdevInitModule message, the module loads and detaches any resources (e.g., text, code, icons, etc.) in its resource file that will be used. Also, space is allocated in the global variables for handles to those detached resources.

The sdevInitModule message returns a result depending on its success at installing itself. In one embodiment, a positive result (≥ 0) indicates successful installation. The processing logic passes this result value to the module on all subsequent calls. A negative result indicates an error condition, and installation of the module is aborted by the control strip processing logic. Also if a negative result occurs and installation has been aborted, the module does not receive a close message.

sdevCloseModule

The sDevCloseModule message is sent to a module when it should be closed. In one embodiment, the module itself decides when to be closed. A module may be closed when it no longer is required to be running, such as when a battery level indicator no longer needs to be running when the computer system is receiving its power from an outlet. When the module receives this message, it disposes of all the detached resources it loaded as well as its global storage. No result is expected.

sdevFeatures

The sdevFeatures message queries the module for the features it supports. This message returns as its result a bitmap consisting of 1 bits for supported features and 0 bits for unsupported features. In one embodiment, there are 32 bits returned. All undefined bits are reserved for future features, and, in one embodiment, are set to 0. The bits are defined as:

- a) sdevWantMouseClicks (0)—If this bit is set, the control strip notifies the module of mouse down events. If this bit is not set, the control strip assumes that the module only displays status information with no user interaction.
- b) sdevDontAutoTrack (1)—If this bit is set, the control strip highlights the display of the module and then calls the module to perform mouse tracking. In one

embodiment, this bit is set when, for example, a module has a pop-up menu associated with it. If this bit is cleared, the control strip tracks the cursor until the mouse button is released, then sends an sdevMouseClicked message, described below, to the module to notify it that there was a mouse-down event.

- c) sdevHasCustomHelp (2)—If this bit is set, the module is responsible for displaying its own help messages. These help messages may be customized depending on its current state. If the bit is cleared, the control strip displays a generic help message when the cursor passes over the its display area and Balloon Help, or other help-based information provider, is on.

- d) sdevKeepModuleLocked (3)—If this bit is set, the code of the module is kept locked and protected. In one embodiment, this bit is set only if the module is passing the address of one of its routines to a routine external to the module (e.g., installing itself in a queue).

sdevGetDisplayWidth

The sdevGetDisplayWidth message is sent to a module to determine how much horizontal space (in pixels) its display currently requires on the control strip. In response to the message, the module return the number of pixels as its result. In one embodiment, the returned width does not comprise the maximum width required for any configuration, but instead, reflects how much space it currently requires. Note that this useful because, in one embodiment, its possible for a module to request that its display be resized.

sdevPeriodicTickle

The sdevPeriodicTickle message is passed to the module periodically to allow the module to update its display due to changes in its state. In one embodiment, this message occurs at regular intervals, while in other embodiments, there is no minimum or maximum interval between "tickle." In response to the sdevPeriodicTickle message, the module returns, as its result, some bits that signal requests for actions from the control strip processing logic. In one embodiment, there are 32 bits returned. All undefined bits in the result are reserved for future use and, in one embodiment, are set to 0. The bits are defined as:

- a) sdevResizeDisplay (0)—If this bit is set, the module resizes its display. The control strip processing logic sends a sdevGetDisplayWidth message to the module and then updates the control strip on the display.
- b) sdevNeedToSave (1)—If this bit is set, the module needs to save changed settings to disk. The control strip processing logic marks the request but may defer the actual save operation to a better time (e.g., when the hard disk is spinning).
- c) sdevHelpStateChange (2)—If this bit is set, the help message of the module needs to be updated due to a change in state. If a help balloon is being displayed for the module, the control strip processing logic removes the previous help balloon with a new help balloon for the current state.
- d) sdevCloseNow (3)—If this bit is set, the module is requesting to be closed. The control strip processing logic calls the module to save its settings, then calls the module again to close itself by, for example, disposing of any loaded resources, disposing of private storage, etc.

sdevDrawStatus

The sdevDrawStatus message indicates that the module has to redraw its display to reflect the most recent state. In one embodiment, this message is sent when the user clicks on the display area of the module, when any of the display

of the module is resized, or when the control strip itself needs to be updated, perhaps in response to a screen saver deactivation.

The statusRect parameter points to a rectangle bounding the display area of the module, in local coordinates. All drawing done by a module within the bounds of the control strip is limited to the module's display rectangle. In other embodiment, drawing may extend outside the display rectangle of the module. The clipping region of the control strip's window is set to the visible portion of the display rectangle of the module so that all the elements in the display may be drawn. If the clipping region is to be changed, the initial clipping region should be observed to avoid drawing over other items in the control strip.

sdevMouseClicked

When the user clicks in a display area of the module, the control strip processing logic calls the module with the sdevMouseClicked message if the sdevWantMouseClicks bit is set in the features of the module.

If the sdevDontAutoTrack bit is also set, the control strip processing logic draws the display of the module in its highlighted state and then sends the sdevMouseClicked message to the module. If the sdevDontAutoTrack bit is not set, the control strip processing logic tracks the cursor until the mouse button is released. If the cursor is still within the display area of the module, the control strip processing logic sends the sdevMouseClicked message to notify the module that a click occurred. In either case, the module can then perform the appropriate function in response to a mouse-down event.

This message returns the same result as the sdevPeriodicTickle message.

sdevSaveSettings

The sdevSaveSettings message is passed to the module when the control strip processing logic has determined that the configuration information may be saved to the disk (e.g., HD turned on, etc.). In one embodiment, the sdevSaveSettings message is sent only if the module had previously set the sdevNeedToSave bit in the result of a sdevPeriodicTickle or sdevMouseClicked message. The call returns an error code (File Manager, Resource Manager, or the like) indicating the success of the save operation. The control strip processing logic continues to send this message to the module until the module returns a result of 0, indicating a successful save.

sdevShowBalloonHelp

The control strip processing logic calls the module with the sdevShowBalloonHelp message if Balloon Help is turned on, the module has previously set the sdevHasCustomHelp bit in its features, and the cursor is over the module's display area. In such a case, the module calls the Help Manager to display a help balloon describing the current state of the module. The module returns a value of 0 if successful or an appropriate error result if not.

UTILITY ROUTINES

In one embodiment, the control strip processing logic provides a set of utility routines that are available to control strip modules. They are provided to promote a consistent user interface within the control strip and to reduce the amount of duplicated code that each module would have to include to support common functions. Therefore, in an embodiment that does not include these utility routines, a portion or all of the modules may include duplicated code supporting common functions.

SBIsControlStripVisible

The SBIsControlStripVisible routine determines whether the control strip is visible. An exemplary call follows:

pascal Boolean SBIsControlStripVisible ();

The SBIsControlStripVisible routine returns a Boolean value indicating whether or not the control strip is currently visible. It returns a value of "true" if the control strip is visible, or a value of "false" if it's hidden.

In one embodiment, the SBIsControlStripVisible call returns a value of "true" even when the control strip is not visible. That happens whenever the control strip is not accessible in the current environment. As soon as that condition changes, the control strip becomes visible again and the returned value correctly reflects the actual state.

SBShowHideControlStrip

The SBShowHideControlStrip routine shows or hides the control strip. An exemplary call follows:

15 pascal void SBShowHideControlStrip (Boolean showIt);

The SBShowHideControlStrip routine determines the visibility state for the control strip based on the value of the "showIt" parameter. Passing a value of "true" makes the control strip visible, and passing a value of "false" hides it. Modules may not need to call this routine. However, the SBShowHideControlStrip routine provides a means for other software to hide the control strip when it is in the way.

Calling the SBShowHideControlStrip routine with a "showIt" value of "true" may or may not show the control strip, depending on the current environment. If the control strip is not accessible, it does not become visible. If a "showIt" value of "true" is passed to this routine, then the control strip becomes visible when the environment changes.

30 SBSafeToAccessStartupDisk

The SBSafeToAccessStartupDisk routine determines whether the internal hard disk is turned on so that processing logic of the present invention can determine whether to make a disk access or postpone it until a time when the disk is already spinning. An exemplary call follows:

35 pascal Boolean SBSafeToAccessStartupDisk ();

The SBSafeToAccessStartupDisk routine returns a Boolean value of "true" if the disk is turned on and "false" if it is not.

SBOpenModuleResourceFile

The SBOpenModuleResourceFile routine opens a module resource file. An exemplary call follows:

40 pascal short SBOpenModuleResourceFile (OSType fileCreator);

The SBOpenModuleResourceFile routine opens the resource fork of the module file whose creator is "fileCreator", and return the file's reference number as its result. If the file cannot be found or opened, the SBOpenModuleResourceFile routine returns a result of -1.

The SBOpenModuleResourceFile routine also provides a means for a module to load in large or infrequently used resources that it doesn't usually need, but that it requires for a particular operation.

SBLoadPreferences

The SBLoadPreferences routine loads a resource from a preferences file. An exemplary call follows:

55 pascal OSErr SBLoadPreferences (ConstStr255Param prefsResourceName, Handle *preferences);

The SBLoadPreferences routine loads a resource containing a module's configuration information from the preferences file of the control strip. The PrefsResourceName parameter points to a Pascal string containing the name of the resource. The "Preferences" parameter points to a variable that holds a handle to the resource read from the file. The handle does not need to be preallocated.

60 If either prefsResourceName or preferences contains a nil pointer, the SBLoadPreferences routine does nothing and returns a result of paramErr. If the resource is successfully

loaded, the SBLoadPreferences routine returns a result of 0. The SBLoadPreferences routine also returns other Memory Manager and Resource Manager errors if it fails during some art of the process.

SBSavePreferences

The SBSavePreferences routine saves a resource to a preferences file. An exemplary call follows:

```
pascal OSErr SBSavePreferences (ConstStr255Param
    prefsResourceName, Handle preferences);
```

The SBSavePreferences routine saves a resource containing a module's configuration information to the preferences file of the control strip. The PrefsResourceName parameter points to a Pascal string containing the name of the resource. The "preferences" parameter contains a handle to a block of data which will be written to the file.

If either prefsResourceName or preferences has a nil value, the SBSavePreferences routine does nothing and returns a result of paramErr. if the resource is successfully saved, the SBSavePreferences routine returns a result of 0. The SBSavePreferences routine can also return other Memory Manager and Resource Manager errors if it fails during some part of the process.

SBGetDetachedString

The SBGetDetachedIndString routine obtains a string from a detached resource. An exemplary call follows:

```
pascal void SBGetDetachedIndString (StringPtr the
    String, Handle stringList, short whichString);
```

The SBGetDetachedIndString routine is the detached resource version of GetIndString. The parameter thestring points to a Pascal string; the stringList is a handle to a detached 'STR#' resource; and whichString is the index (1-n) into the array of Pascal strings contained in the detached resource. The SBGetDetachedIndString routine copies the string whose index is whichString into the space pointed to by theString. If whichString is out of range, the SBGetDetachedIndString routine returns a zero-length string.

SBGetDetachIconSuite

The SBGetDetachIconSuite routine sets up a detached icon suite. An exemplary call follows:

```
pascal OSErr SBGetDetachIconSuite (Handle
    *theIconSuite, short theResID, unsigned long selector);
```

The SBGetDetachIconSuite routine creates a new icon suite, loads all of the requested icons, and then detaches the icons. The parameter theIconSuite points to the location where the handle to the icon suite is stored; the parameter theResID is the resource ID of the icons that make up the icon suite; and the parameter "selector" indicates which icons are to be loaded into the suite. In one embodiment, the "selector" parameter contains one (or a combination of) the following values:

svAllLargeData	0x000000FF	load large 32-by-32-pixel icons ('ICN#', 'ic14', 'ic18')
svAllSmallData	x0000FF00	load small 16-by-16-pixel icons ('ics#', 'ics4', 'ics8')
svAllMiniData	0x00FF0000	load mini 12-by-12-pixel icons ('icm#', 'icm4', 'icm8')

These values may be ORed together to load combinations of icon sizes. The SBGetDetachIconSuite routine returns an appropriate error code if it's unsuccessful, or 0 if it was able to load the icon suite. Note that if none of the icons comprising the icon suite could be found, the call returns the error "resNotFound. In one embodiment, the SBGetDetachIconSuite routine is called only when the resource file of the

module is open. This is typically the case during a module's initialization call.

SBTrackPopupMenu

The SBTrackPopupMenu routine manages a pop-up menu. An exemplary call follows:

```
pascal short SBTrackPopupMenu (const Rect
    *moduleRect, MenuHandle theMenu);
```

The SBTrackPopupMenu routine handles setting up and displaying a pop-up menu associated with a module. The module passes a pointer to its display rectangle and a handle to the menu to use. In one embodiment the menu is displayed immediately above and adjacent to the display rectangle of the module, yet this is not required. By doing so, the user is allowed to view the current configuration or to change the settings. The SBTrackPopupMenu routine returns an indication as to which menu item was selected, or 0 if no item was selected (e.g., because the user moved the cursor outside the menu's bounds).

SBTrackSlider

The SBTrackSlider routine displays and sets an arbitrary parameter. An exemplary call follows:

```
pascal short SBTrackSlider (const Rect *moduleRect,
    short ticksOnSlider, short initialValue);
```

The SBTrackSlider routine displays an unlabeled slider above the module's display rectangle. The slider may be used for displaying and setting the state of an arbitrary parameter. The parameter "ModuleRect" contains a pointer to the module's display rectangle; "ticksOnSlider" is the upper bounds of the value returned by the slider; and "initialValue" is the starting position (0 to ticksOnSlider-1). When the user releases the mouse button, the SBTrackSlider routine returns the final position.

SBSHowHelpString

The SBSHowHelpString routine displays a help balloon. An exemplary call follows:

```
pascal OSErr SBSHowHelpString (const Rect
    *moduleRect, StringPtr helpstring);
```

The SBSHowHelpString routine displays a module's help balloon. The module passes a pointer to its display rectangle and a pointer to a Pascal string, and the routine displays the balloon if possible. If the help dstring has a length of 0 or the Help Manager is unable to display a balloon, an error result is returned. If the SBSHowHelpString routine successfully displays the help balloon, it returns a result of 0.

SBGetBarGraphWidth

The SBGetBarGraphWidth routine determines how wide a bar graph drawn by the SBDrawBarGraph routine (described below) will be so that a module can calculate its display width. An exemplary call follows:

```
pascal short SBGetBarGraphWidth (short barCount);
```

The SBGetBarGraphWidth routine returns the width of a bar graph containing barCount segments. If barCount has a value less than 0, the SBGetBarGraphWidth routine returns a width of 0.

SBDrawBarGraph

The SBDrawBarGraph routine draw as bar graph. An exemplary call follows below:

```
pascal void SBDrawBarGraph (short level, short
    barCount, short direction, Point barGraphTopLeft);
```

The SBDrawBarGraph routine draws a bar graph containing the number of segments specified by the barCount parameter in a module's display area. If the value of barCount is less than or equal to 0, the SBDrawBarGraph routine does nothing.

The bar graph is drawn relative to the location specified by barGraphTopLeft. FIG. 11 illustrates the manner in which the point barGraphTopLeft determines the position of the bar graph.

The "level" parameter determines how many segments are highlighted. The value of "level" should be in the range of 0 to barCount - 1. If the value of "level" is less than 0, no segments in the bar graph are highlighted; if "level" is greater than or equal to barCount, all segments in the bar graph are highlighted.

The direction parameter specifies which way the bar graph will be drawn to show a larger level. In one embodiment, the direction parameter specifies one of the following values:

```
#define BarGraphSlopeLeft -1 //max end of sloping
graph is on the left #define BarGraphFlatRight 0 //max
end of flat graph is on the right #define BarGraphSlopeRight 1 //max end of sloping graph is on the right
```

FIG. 12 illustrates the resulting bar graph for each direction value. The arrows indicate which way an increasing level value is displayed. In one embodiment, for sloped versions of the bar graph, the number of segments specified by the barCount value may not be larger than 8. If a larger barCount value is passed, the SBDrawBarGraph routine draws nothing.

SBModalDialogInContext

The SBModalDialogInContext routine may be used in place of the ModalDialog routine to prevent background applications from being run while the modal dialog window is visible. An exemplary call is as follows:

```
pascal void SBModalDialogInContext
(ModalFilterProcPtr filterProc, short *itemHit);
```

The SBModalDialogInContext routine is a special version of ModalDialog that doesn't allow background applications to be run while a modal dialog window is visible. The SBModalDialogInContext routine is used when the occurrence of context switching is not desired.

GESTALT SELECTOR

The control strip processing logic installs two "Gestalt" selectors to return information to locations external to the computer system. One selector returns software attributes, and the other returns the current version of the processing logic (e.g., software).

gestaltControlStripAttr

The selector "gestaltControlStripAttr ('sdev') return 32 bits describing the attributes of the current version of the control strip processing logic. In one embodiment, only the following bit is defined:

```
gestaltControlStripExists 0 1=control strip is installed
gestaltControlStripVersion
```

The selector gestaltControlStripVersion ('csvr') returns the version of control strip processing logic that is installed. The format of the returned version is the same as that of the numeric part of a Macintosh™ computer system resource, that is:

Bits 31-24	Major part of the version, in BCD
Bits 23-20	Minor part of the version, in BCD
Bits 19-16	Bug release version, in BCD
Bits 15-8	Release stage: \$80=final \$60=beta \$40=alpha \$20=development
Bits 7-0	Revision level of nonreleased version, in binary

Whereas many alterations and modifications of the present invention will no doubt become apparent to a person of ordinary skill in the art after having read the foregoing

description, it is to be understood that the particular embodiment shown and described by way of illustration is in no way intended to be considered limiting. Therefore, references to details of the preferred embodiment are not intended to limit the scope of the claims which in themselves recite only those features regarded as essential to the invention.

Thus, a method and apparatus for generating a window displaying control and status indicia has been described.

I claim:

1. An interactive computer-controlled display system comprising:

- a processor;
- a data display screen coupled to the processor;
- a cursor control device coupled to said processor for positioning a cursor on said data display screen;
- a window generation and control logic coupled to the processor and data display screen to create an operating environment for a plurality of individual programming modules associated with different application programs that provide status and/or control functions, wherein the window generation and control logic generates and displays a first window region having a plurality of display areas on said data display screen, wherein the first window region is independently displayed and independently active of any application program, and wherein each of the plurality of display areas is associated with one of the plurality of individual programming modules, the first window region and the plurality of independent display areas implemented in a window layer that appears on top of application programming windows that may be generated; and

an indicia generation logic coupled to the data display screen to execute at least one of the plurality of individual programming modules to generate information for display in one of the plurality of display areas in the first window region, wherein at least one of the plurality of display areas and its associated programming module is sensitive to user input, and further wherein the window generation and control logic and the indicia generation logic use message-based communication to exchange information to coordinate activities of the indicia generation logic to enable interactive display activity.

- 2. The display system defined in claim 1 wherein the first window region comprises a control strip.
- 3. The display system defined in claim 1 wherein said at least one display area is variably sized.
- 4. The display system defined in claim 1 wherein size of the first window region is variable.
- 5. The display system defined in claim 4 wherein the first window region is sized such that none of the plurality of display areas is visible.
- 6. The display system defined in claim 4 wherein the first window region is sized such that all of the plurality of display areas are visible.
- 7. The display system defined in claim 4 wherein the first window region is sized such that a portion of the plurality of display areas is visible.
- 8. The display system defined in claim 1 wherein at least one of the plurality of the display areas only displays information.
- 9. The display system defined in claim 1 wherein at least one of the display areas acts to provide access to control information when selected.
- 10. The display system defined in claim 9 wherein said at least one of the plurality of display areas displays an additional display element.

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- 11. The display system defined in claim 1 wherein each of the plurality of display areas is individually and variably sized.
- 12. The display system defined in claim 1 wherein the first window region always appears in front of application windows.
- 13. The display system defined in claim 1 wherein the first window region is implemented in a private window layer that appears in front of windows for all applications layers.
- 14. An interactive computer-controlled display system comprising:
 - a processor;
 - a data display screen coupled to the processor;
 - a cursor control device coupled to said processor for positioning a cursor on said data display screen;
 - window generation and control logic coupled to the processor and data display screen to create an operating environment for a plurality of individual programming modules associated with different application programs that provide status and/or control functions, wherein the window generation and control logic generates and displays a first window-region having a plurality of display areas on said data display screen, wherein the first window region is independently displayed and independently active of any application program, and wherein each of the plurality of display areas is associated with one of the plurality of individual programming modules, the first window region and the plurality of independent display areas implemented in a window layer that appears on top of application programming windows that may be generated; and
 - at least one indicia graphics generation logic coupled to the processor and the window generation and control logic, wherein said at least one indicia graphics generation logic generates user sensitive graphics for display in at least one data display area by executing at least one of the plurality of individual programming modules;
 - wherein the window generation and control logic determines when said at least one data display area has been selected by the user and signals said at least one indicia graphics generation logic in response to user selection, and further wherein said at least one indicia graphics generation logic initiates a response from said at least one of the plurality of programming modules.
- 15. The display system defined in claim 14 wherein the first window region is always visible to the user.
- 16. The display system defined in claim 14 wherein the first window region comprises a control strip.
- 17. The display system defined in claim 14 wherein said at least one display area is variably sized.
- 18. The display system defined in claim 14 wherein each of the plurality of display areas is individually and variably sized.
- 19. The display system defined in claim 14 wherein the first window region always appears in front of application windows.
- 20. The display system defined in claim 14 wherein the first window region is implemented in a private window layer that appears in front of windows for all applications layers.
- 21. A method for generating control information comprising:
 - creating an operating environment for a plurality of individual programming modules associated with dif-

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- ferent application programs that provide status and/or control functions;
- generating a first window sized to accommodate a plurality of display areas for indicia resulting from executing at least one of the plurality of individual programming modules, wherein each of the plurality of display areas is associated with one of the plurality of individual programming modules, and wherein the first window is independently displayed and independently active of any application program, the first window region and the plurality of independent display areas implemented in a window layer that appears on top of application programming windows that may be generated;
- displaying the indicia in each of said plurality of display areas by executing one of a plurality of individual programming modules corresponding to each indicia;
- selecting one of the indicia, wherein the selecting comprises a first programming module determining which of said plurality of display areas is selected and sending a message to a programming module of said plurality of individual programming modules responsible for generating a display of a selected indicia;
- said programming module performing a function in response to a selection.
- 22. The method defined in claim 21 wherein one of said plurality of indicia comprises status information.
- 23. The method defined in claim 21 wherein one of said plurality of indicia comprises control information.
- 24. The method defined in claim 21 further comprising:
 - the first programming module requesting a set of features supported by said programming module, wherein said requesting comprises sending a first message to said programming module; and
 - said programming module returning a second message indicative of features supported by said programming module, such that said first programming module interacts with said programming module in response to user interaction with the first programming module based on indicated features as set forth by said programming module.
- 25. A system comprising:
 - a window generation and control logic to create an operating environment for a plurality of individual programming modules associated with different application programs that provide status and/or control functions, wherein the window generation and control logic generates and displays a first window region having a plurality of display areas, wherein the first window region is independently displayed and independently active of any application program, and wherein each of the plurality of display areas is associated with one of the plurality of individual programming modules, the first window region and the plurality of independent display areas implemented in a window layer that appears on top of application programming windows that may be generated;
 - an indicia generation logic coupled to the data display screen to execute at least one of the plurality of individual programming modules to generate information for display in one of the plurality of display areas in the first window region, wherein at least one of the plurality of display areas and its associated programming module is sensitive to user input, and further wherein the window generation and control logic and the indicia generation logic use message-based com-

munication to exchange information to coordinate activities of the indicia generation logic to enable interactive display activity.

26. An interactive computer-controlled display system comprising:

- a means for positioning a cursor on a data display screen;
- a means for creating an operating environment for a plurality of individual programming modules associated with different application programs that provide status and/or control functions, wherein a first window region is displayed having a plurality of display areas on said data display screen, wherein the first window region is independently displayed and independently active of any application program, and wherein each of the plurality of display areas is associated with one of the plurality of individual programming modules, the first window region and the plurality of independent display areas implemented in a window layer that appears on top of application programming windows that may be generated; and
- a means for executing at least one of the plurality of individual programming modules to generate information for display in one of the plurality of display areas in the first window region, wherein at least one of the plurality of display areas and its associated programming module is sensitive to user input, wherein an interactive display activity is enabled.

27. The display system defined in claim 26 wherein the first window region comprises a control strip.

28. The display system defined in claim 26 wherein said at least one of the plurality of display areas is variably sized.

29. The display system defined in claim 26 wherein size of the first window region is variable.

30. The display system defined in claim 29 wherein the first window region is sized such that none of the plurality of display areas is visible.

31. The display system defined in claim 29 wherein the first window regions is sized such that all of the plurality of display areas are visible.

32. The display system defined in claim 29 wherein the first window regions is sized such that a portion of the plurality of display areas is visible.

33. The display system defined in claim 26 wherein said at least one of the plurality of display areas only displays information.

34. The display system defined in claim 26 wherein said at least one of the plurality of display areas acts to provide access to control information when selected.

35. The display system defined in claim 34 wherein said at least one of the data areas display an additional display element.

36. The display system defined in claim 26 wherein each of the plurality of display areas is individually and variably sized.

37. The display system defined in claim 26 wherein the first window region always appears in front of application windows.

38. The display system defined in claim 26 wherein the first window region is implemented in a private window layer that appears in front of windows for all application layers.

39. An interactive computer-controlled display system comprising:

- a means for positioning a cursor on said data display screen;
- a means for creating an operating environment for a plurality of individual programming modules associ-

ated with different application programs that provide status and/or control functions, wherein a first window region is displayed having a plurality of display areas on said data display screen, wherein the first window region is independently displayed and independently active of any application program, and wherein each of the plurality of display areas is associated with one of the plurality of individual programming modules, the first window region and the plurality of independent display areas implemented in a window layer that appears on top of application programming windows that may be generated;

a means for generating user sensitive graphics for display in at least one data display area;

a means for determining when said at least one data display area has been selected by the user; and

a means for initiating a response from said at least one of the plurality of programming modules.

40. The display system defined in claim 39 wherein the first window region is always visible to the user.

41. The display system defined in claim 39 wherein the first window region comprises a control strip.

42. The display system defined in claim 39 wherein said at least one data display area is variably sized.

43. The display system defined in claim 39 wherein each of the plurality of display areas is individually and variably sized.

44. The display system defined in claim 39 wherein the first window region always appears in front of application windows.

45. The display system defined in claim 39 wherein the first window region is implemented in a private window layer that appears in front of windows for all applications layers.

46. A computer readable medium containing executable computer program instructions, which when executed by a data processing system, cause the data processing system to perform a method for generating control information comprising:

creating an operating environment for a plurality of individual programming modules associated with different application programs that provide status and/or control functions;

generating a first window sized to accommodate a plurality of display areas for indicia resulting from executing at least one of the plurality of individual programming modules, wherein each of the plurality of display areas is associated with one of the plurality of individual programming modules, and wherein the first window is independently displayed and independently active of any application program, the first window region and the plurality of independent display areas implemented in a window layer that appears on top of application programming windows that may be generated;

displaying the indicia in each of the plurality of display areas by executing one of a plurality of individual programming modules corresponding to each indicia; and

selecting one of the indicia, wherein the selecting comprises a first programming module determining which of the plurality of display areas is selected and sending a message to a programming module of the plurality of individual programming modules responsible for generating a display of a selected indicia, and the programming module performing a function in response to a selection.

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- 47. The computer readable medium as set forth in claim 46 wherein ones of the indicia comprises status information.
- 48. The computer readable medium as set forth in claim 46 wherein one of the indicia comprises control information.
- 49. The computer readable medium as set forth in claim 46 further comprising:
 - the first programming module requesting a set of features supported by said programming module, wherein requesting comprises sending a first message to said programming module; and
 - said programming module returning a second message indicative of features supported by said programming module, such that said first programming module interacts with said programming module in response to user interaction with the first programming module based on indicated features as set forth by said programming module.
- 50. A system comprising:
 - a means for window generation and control to create an operating environment for a plurality of individual programming modules associated with different application programs that provide status and/or control functions, wherein the means for window generation and control generates and displays a first window

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- region having a plurality of display areas, wherein the first window region is independently displayed and independently active of any application program, and wherein each of the plurality of display areas is associated with one of the plurality of individual programming modules, the first window region and the plurality of independent display areas implemented in a window layer that appears on top of application programming windows that may be generated;
- a means for indicia generation coupled to the data display screen to execute at least one of the plurality of individual programming modules to generate information for display in one of the plurality of display areas in the first window region, wherein at least one of the plurality of display areas and its associated programming module is sensitive to user input, and further wherein the means for window generation and control and the means for indicia generation use message-based communication to exchange information to coordinate activities of the means for indicia generation to enable interactive display activity.

* * * * *

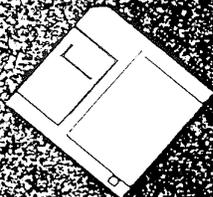
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Stephen Harris, et al

1 Select Default to discard all the customizing to the Power Bar—the removing, adding, and grouping you did—and return the Power Bar to WordPerfect’s original setup. Everything changes back to the default except the Font Face and Font Size changes discussed earlier.

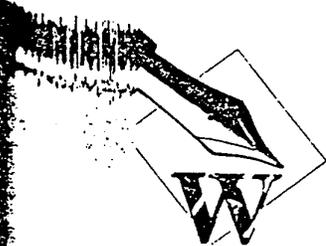
5 The secret to the Power Bar is to display only the features critical to your work, because the Power Bar does not expand or reshape like the Button Bar or Menu Bar. The number of Buttons that will fit on the Power Bar is limited by space, and some Buttons are larger than
10 others. So choose them wisely. You might want to discard all the buttons relating to fonts, because you can use the Font Button Bar. Better still, the next section explores an easy way to access all the font attributes from the Status Bar.

15 Discovering the Customizable Status Bar

In most programs, the Status Bar just sits there reporting what the designers thought was useful information. That is not the case with
20 WordPerfect 6.0 for Windows’ Status Bar. You decide what information you want reported, and the items you put on the Status Bar actually do things when you double-click on them. Insert turns into Typeover; Date can insert the date into your document; and the Font dialog box can be called up with just two mouse clicks on the Font
25 status box.

Modifying the Status Bar

30 Like the other WordPerfect bars, items on the Status Bar can be added, deleted, or rearranged. This bar only holds one row of items, so put your best, most commonly used features on this bar. Perform the following steps to learn how to make the Status Bar work overtime for you.





By default, the Status Bar displays at all times. You can turn it on or off by selecting **Status Bar** from the **View** menu. The Status Bar is a global feature whose configuration is stored in your personal configuration file, **WPSET.BIF**, rather than in a template. Unlike the Button Bar only one Status Bar is available, and you cannot save multiple versions of it.

If the Status Bar is not displayed at the bottom of your screen, select **Status Bar** from the **View** menu to turn it on.

1. Select **File**, **Preferences**, and then choose **Status Bar** to bring up the Status Bar Preferences dialog box (see fig. 26.42). You also can click on the Status Bar with your right mouse button to bring up the QuickMenu, and then choose **Preferences**.

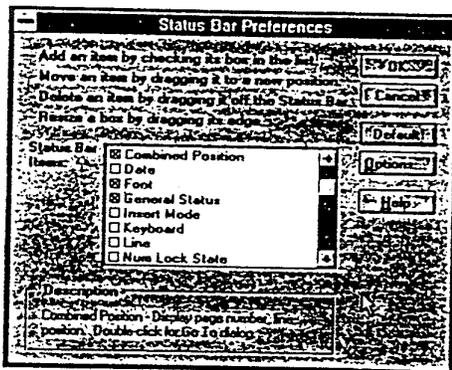


Figure 26.42
The Status Bar
Preferences dialog
box.

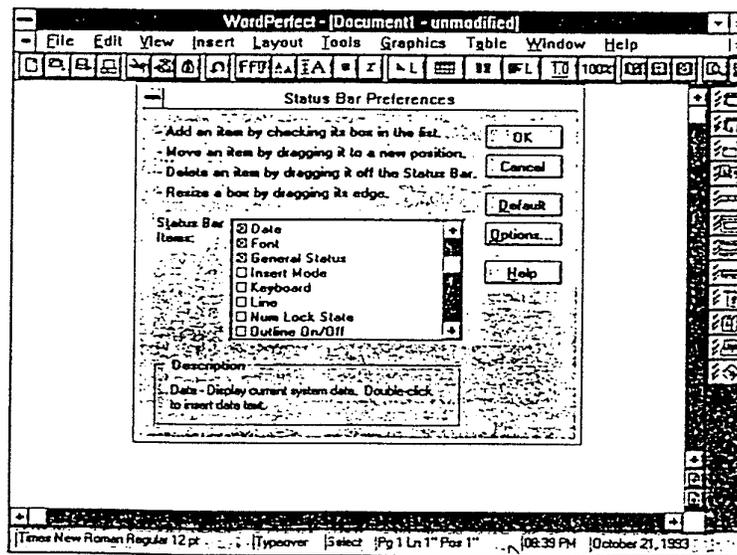
2. Double-click on the Insert box on the Status Bar, and it changes to Typeover. Place your cursor to the right of the Insert box on the Status Bar. The cursor becomes a two-headed arrow. Click and drag to the left, to the end of the word Typeover.

The Insert/Typeover box is now smaller, which provides some space on the right of the bar. Use this space to add a feature.



3. Scroll down the Status Bar Items list box until you come to Time (12 hour). Click on this selection to place a check mark next to it. The time immediately appears on the Status Bar in a box on the right of the bar.
4. Scroll back up and click on the Date entry in the list box. An Attention box appears asking you to resize or delete an entry on the Status Bar to make room for the new date box. Click on OK. Using the same click-and-drag technique as in step 2, reduce the size of the Font box on the left of the Status Bar. Do the same to the Position box (fourth one from the left), until the Date box is fully on-screen.
5. Shorten the size of the Date box, and then lengthen the Font and Position boxes until they look like figure 26.43.

Figure 26.43
A Status Bar with
new entries.



6. Using the left mouse button, click and drag the Select box off the Status Bar. Drop the Select box onto the workspace, and then release the mouse button. You just deleted an item from the Status Bar. Your cursor did not turn into a trash can like it

