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Withers & Rogers LLP
2 London Bridge
London, SE1 9RA
United Kingdom
withersrogers.com

European Patent Office
D-80298 München
Germany

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European Patent Application No. 18195408.2
UNLOCKING A DEVICE BY PERFORMING GESTURES ON AN UNLOCK IMAGE
Apple Inc.

We write in advance of the Hearing scheduled to take place on 29 June 2023 and in response to the annex to the Summons to Attend Oral Proceedings pursuant to Rule 115(1) EPC dated 30 April 2021.

We request that the application is allowed in amended form in accordance with the set of claims 1 to 14 submitted herewith. We reserve the right to file additional Requests in advance or during the above-mentioned Oral Proceedings.

We intend to amend the description of the application to conform with the formal requirements of the EPC once an allowable claim set has been agreed with the Examining Division. In order to reach an allowable claim set, and to mitigate the need for Oral Proceedings, the undersigned intends to contact the Primary Examiner prior to the scheduled hearing date in order to discuss the allowability of the hereby-filed claim set.

Amendments

Claim 1 has been amended to recite "detecting occurrence of an event at the device when the device is in a locked state, the event associated with an application on the device, wherein the event comprises an incoming phone call" (emphasis added). This amendment finds basis throughout the description of the parent application, for example in paragraph [0091] ("*the device 700 is locked and has received an incoming call*").

Claim 1 has been further amended to recite "wherein the application interface is associated with a phone application". This amendment finds basis throughout the description of the parent application, for example in paragraph [0091] ("*displaying a prompt 706 to the user, informing the user of the incoming call" clearly indicates that the application interface is associated with a phone application as the prompt relates to an incoming call*") in combination with paragraph [0092] ("*a set of virtual buttons 708 appears and increases in optical intensity (…) The virtual buttons 708 are associated with the prompt 706; the virtual buttons shown in Figure 7B - 7D allow the user to decline or accept the incoming call*" clearly indicate that the application interface presented while the device is transitioning from the locked state to an unlocked state is associated with a phone application).

Claim 2 has been deleted in the interests of clarity and conciseness as equivalent subject-matter has been introduced in claim 1. The rest of the claims have been renumbered accordingly.

Currently numbered claim 8 (previously numbered claim 9) has been corrected to recite "a first user-interface state" and "a second user-interface state" (emphasis added). This correction addresses a typo and does not add matter.

Added Matter

As a preliminary observation, we note that claim 1 relates to the embodiments illustrated in Figures 7A-D and paragraphs [0091]-[0093] of the parent application.

Sections 5.3 and 5.4 of the Summons object to the features of claim 1 "the event associated with an application on the device" and "displaying an application interface (708) for the application associated with the event" as adding matter. It is argued in said sections, that the description distinguishes between active applications and events and implying that it is improper to structure claim 1 to e.g. display an application if the unlock action is performed on an unlock image corresponding to an event.

Claim 1 has now been amended to specify that "the event associated with an application on the device, wherein the event comprises an incoming phone call" and that "displaying an application interface (708) for the application associated with the event, wherein the application interface is associated with a phone application".

The above wording clearly finds support in Figures 7A-D of the parent application and paragraphs [0091]-[0093], which describe detecting occurrence of an event comprising an incoming phone call (prompt 706, "*Incoming call from: John Doe mobile*") and in response to detecting a gesture that satisfies a predefined condition (the user dragging the unlock image 702 along the channel 704 in the direction of movement 712), transitioning the device from the initial locked state to an unlocked state (paragraph [0091] "*the user can unlock the device 700 in order to accept or decline the incoming call*") and displaying an application interface for the application associated with the event, wherein the application interface is associated with a phone application (the set of virtual buttons 708 "Decline" and "Accept" which according to paragraph [0092] "*allow the user to decline or accept the incoming call*", thus clearly being associated with a phone application).

As such, we submit that the above wording satisfies Article 76(1) EPC, and the objection raised in sections 5.3 and 5.4 of the Summons are overcome.

Section 5.5 of the Summons further argues that Figures 9-11F illustrate at least two unlock images and points to paragraph [0099] of the parent application to substantiate that two unlock images must be displayed, one for the active application and one for the corresponding event.

However, as mentioned above, claim 1 relates to the embodiment described in Figures 7A-D and paragraphs [0091]-[0093] of the parent application. It is clear from said figures and paragraphs that there is only one unlock image ("unlock image 702"). The contents of Figures 9-11F relate to some embodiments, but not necessarily to all embodiments. The skilled person would find no teaching that would cause them to consider the limitations described in Figures 9-11F as necessarily applying to the embodiment described in Figures 7A-D.

As such, we submit that the above wording satisfies Article 76(1) EPC, and the objection raised in section 5.5 of the Summons is overcome.

For completeness sake we present indicators of support from the parent application for all features of claim 1:

> *"detecting occurrence of an event at the device when the device is in a locked state, the event associated with an application on the device, wherein the event comprises an incoming phone call".*

Paragraph [0091] ("In Figure 7A, the device 700 is locked and has received an incoming call").

> *"in response to detecting occurrence of the event, displaying on the touch-sensitive display a user interface that includes information (706) about the event and a graphical, interactive user-interface object (702) for accessing functionality associated with the event",*

Paragraph [0091] ("*The device 700 is displaying a prompt 706 to the user, informing the user of the incoming call, on the touch screen 714. The device is also displaying the unlock image 702 and channel 704 so that the user can unlock the device 700 in order to accept or decline the incoming call*").

> *"detecting a gesture on the graphical, interactive user-interface object of the user interface on the touch-sensitive display that satisfies a predefined condition.*

Paragraph [0092] ("*the user is in the process of dragging the unlock image 702 along the channel 704 in the direction of movement 712*") in combination with paragraph [0044] ("*the unlock action is a predefined gesture performed on the touch screen… the predefined gesture may include a contact of the touch screen on the left edge (to initialize the gesture), a horizontal movement of the point of contact to the opposite edge while maintaining continuous contact with the touch screen, and a breaking of the contact at the opposite edge (to complete the gesture).*")

> *"in response to detecting the gesture that satisfies the predefined condition, transitioning the device from the locked state to an unlocked state and displaying an application interface (708) for the application associated with the event, wherein the application interface is associated with a phone application".*

Paragraph [0093] ("*the user completes the unlock action by dragging the unlock image to the right end of the channel 704 and releasing the unlock image 702. The device 700 transitions to the unlock state… the virtual buttons 708 are at their final optical intensity levels, as illustrated by their solid outlines. At this point the user may interact with the virtual buttons 708 and accept or decline the incoming call*").

Section 5.6 of the Summons argues that the phrase "wherein the application interface is associated with a phone application" is not derivable from the earlier application. We respectfully disagree with this assertion. As explained above, paragraph [0093] clearly indicates that the application interface directly enables the user to accept or decline an incoming call, and therefore it is associated with a phone application which is responsible for accepting or declining incoming calls. Therefore, we submit that this wording finds basis in the parent application as mentioned above.

Section 5.7 of the Summons questions whether previously numbered claims 3-8 (currently numbered claims 2-7 find basis in the parent application. We provide indicators of basis below:

- Claim 2 finds basis in paragraph [0091] of the parent application ("*a prompt 706 to the user, informing the user of the incoming call*") in combination with Figures 7A-D which indicate that the prompt is notification of the incoming phone call.
- Claim 3 finds basis in paragraph [0091] of the parent application as above, in combination with Figures 7A-D which indicate that prompt identifies the caller, thus comprises an identifier.
- Claim 4 finds basis in paragraph [0092] of the parent application ("*the virtual buttons shown in Figure 7B - 7D allow the user to decline or accept the incoming call*") in combination with Figures 7A-D which indicate that the application interface comprises an interface object dedicated to accepting the call.
- Claim 5 finds basis in paragraph [0092] of the parent application ("*the virtual buttons shown in Figure 7B - 7D allow the user to decline or accept the incoming call*") in combination with Figures 7A-D which indicate that the application interface comprises an interface object dedicated to declining the call.
- Claim 6 finds basis in paragraph [0091] of the parent application ("*informing the user of the incoming call*") in combination with paragraph [0060] ("*an event that may require the user's attention (e.g., incoming call or message*)" which indicates that a call is only one type of possible events)
- Claim 7 finds basis in paragraphs [0091] and [0060] of the parent application as above.

Based on the above, we submit that all objections based on Article 76(1) EPC have been overcome.

Clarity

Section 6.2 notes that the terms of previously numbered claim 9 (currently numbered claim 8) "the first user-interface state" and "the second user-interface state" lack antecedent. Currently numbered claim 8 has been amended to correct the typo relating to the respective article of these terms, and therefore now recites "a first user-interface state" and "a second user-interface state". As such, we submit that this objection has been overcome.

Novelty and Inventive Step

D1 discloses a method in which a user of a device, whilst actively on a call, can access a "Note" function, allowing the user to make notes about the call (e.g. D1, col. 4, lines 64-65). Thus D1 starts in an unlocked state, and so does not disclose detecting occurrence of an event while the device is locked, as required by claim 1.

Consequently, D1 also does not disclose, "in response to detecting the occurrence of the event (when the device is in a locked state), displaying on the touch-sensitive display a user interface that includes information (706) about the event and a graphical, interactive user-interface object (702) for accessing functionality associated with the event". In particular, the "Note" button used by the examiner to allegedly disclose the user-interface object is only displayed when the call is active, not upon detection of the occurrence in the locked state.

Claim 1 is therefore novel over D1.

Similarly, neither D2 nor any of the other cited documents describe the above-mentioned feature.

A technical effect of the above distinguishing feature is that it provides a mechanism by which events (e.g. incoming phone calls or messages) can be detected and be notified to the user whilst the device is in the locked state. In response, the user can quickly and efficiently access functionality relating to the event by interacting with the UI object, rather than having to unlock the phone, and then separately access an associated application. Thus the distinguishing features of claim 1 provide for more efficient interaction between the user and device, whilst still providing the security of a locked state.

The objective technical problem to be solved could be formulated as "how to provide efficient user interaction with a device in a locked state".

Taking D1 as the closest prior art, the skilled person would have no reason to consider implementing the solution of claim 1. D1 does not consider the occurrence of events whilst the device is locked. Even if the skilled person were to refer to D2 they would still be unable to find the claimed solution as D2 also does not consider the occurrence of events whilst the device is locked. None of the other cited documents disclose the solution of claim 1, and so could not be combined with D1 to solve the technical problem.

Consequently, the skilled person, starting from D1 would have to exercise inventive skill to arrive in all features of claim 1, and therefore claim 1 is inventive. The same reasoning applies if D2 was to be considered the closest prior art.

Concluding Remarks

The submitted Requests represent a genuine effort to resolve the objections and issued raised during the examination process to date. Even if the submitted claim set is not considered to be allowable, should the Examiner consider the amendments to move the claims to a direction likely to lead to allowance with further amendments we would be willing to explore any such further amendments with the Examiner.

To that end, it is requested that the Examiner reviews the submitted Requests in good time prior to scheduled Oral Proceedings. It is the Representative's intention to contact the Examiner prior to the Oral Proceedings to discuss the merits of the Requests.

Should agreement on an allowable set of claims be reached either before or during the Oral Proceedings then amended pages of the description will of course be submitted as appropriate.

Callum Wardle
Professional Representative
Withers & Rogers LLP