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(54) **DEVICE INPUT SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED USERS**

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(71) Applicant: **Sumit Dagar**, New Delhi (IN)

(72) Inventor: **Sumit Dagar**, New Delhi (IN)

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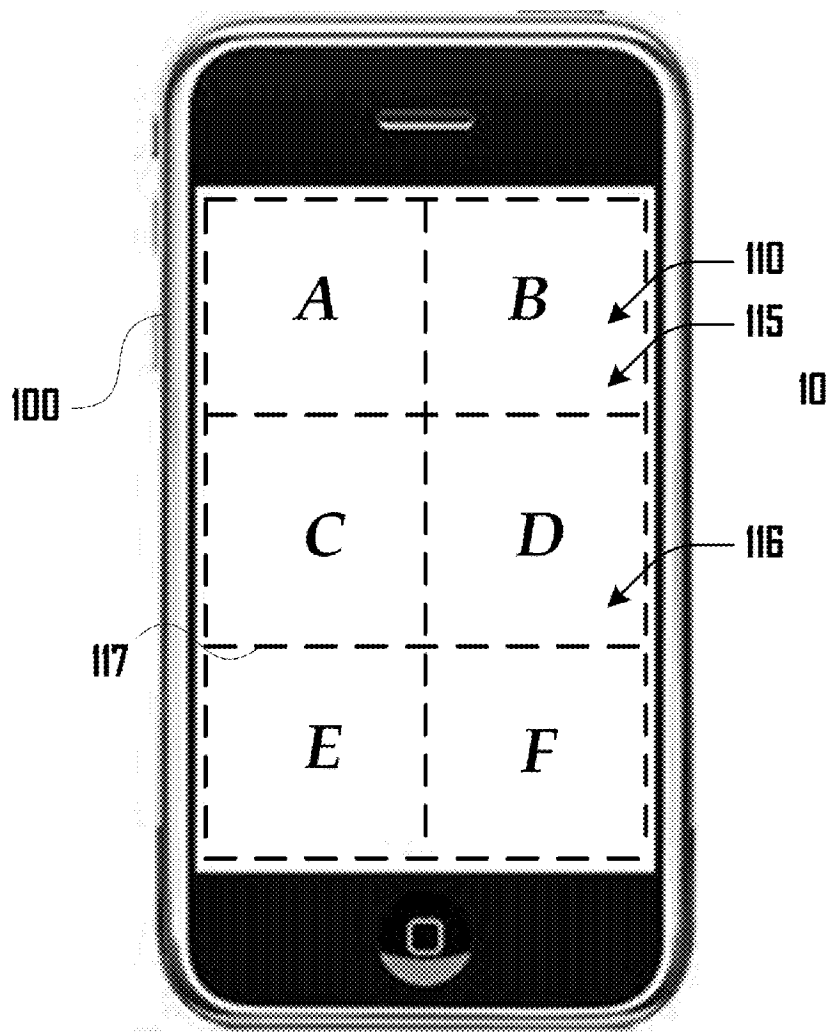
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<i>G06F 3/041</i>	(2006.01)

(57)

ABSTRACT

A device and user interface for visually impaired users for, and methods for manufacturing and using same. One aspect includes a method of providing a device user interface for visually impaired users and receiving touch-based user input via the interface, the method including: replacing automatically a default device user interface with the device user interface for visually impaired users; presenting via a touch screen of the user device a first menu item comprising menu text; and presenting via a speaker of the user device a first audio message corresponding to the first menu item text. Another aspect includes a user device for visually impaired users comprising a touch screen configured to receive touch input from a user and present a touch-input interface for Braille input comprising a plurality of input regions defined by and separated by input region boundaries.



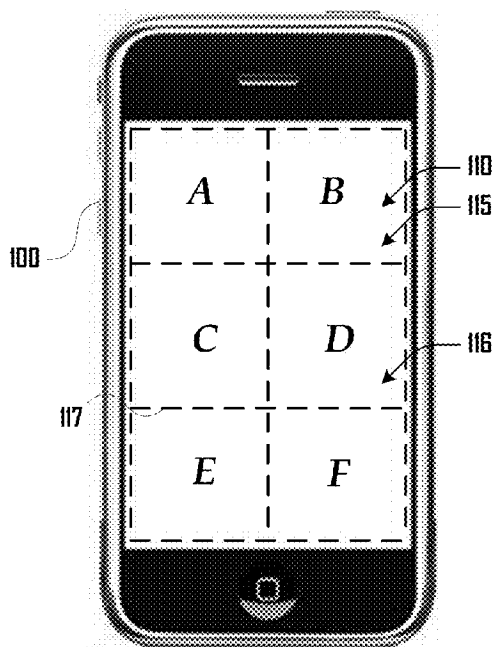


Fig. 1A

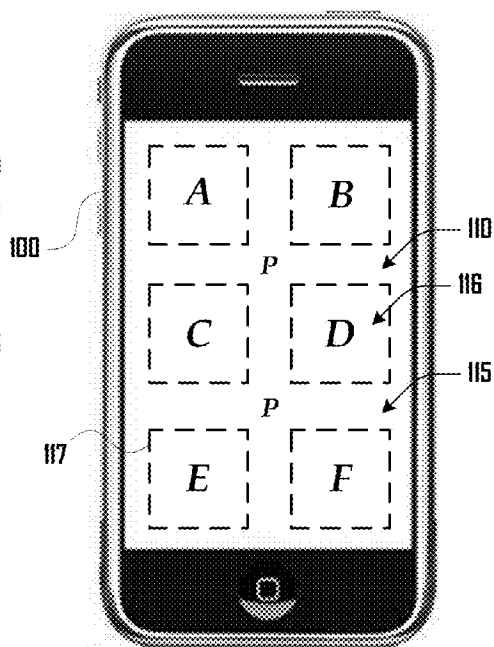


Fig. 1B

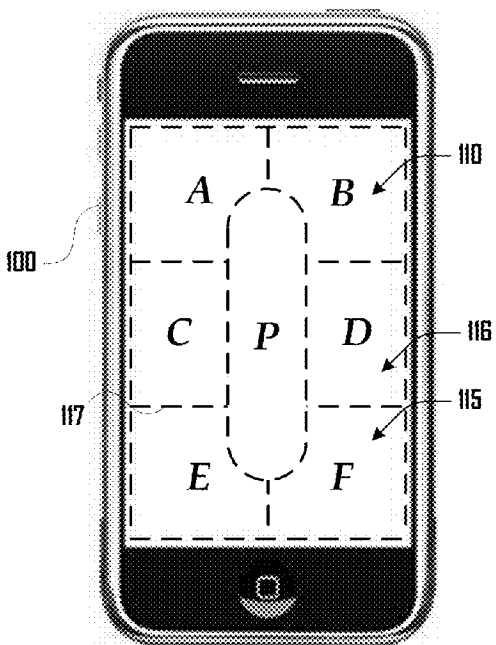


Fig. 1C

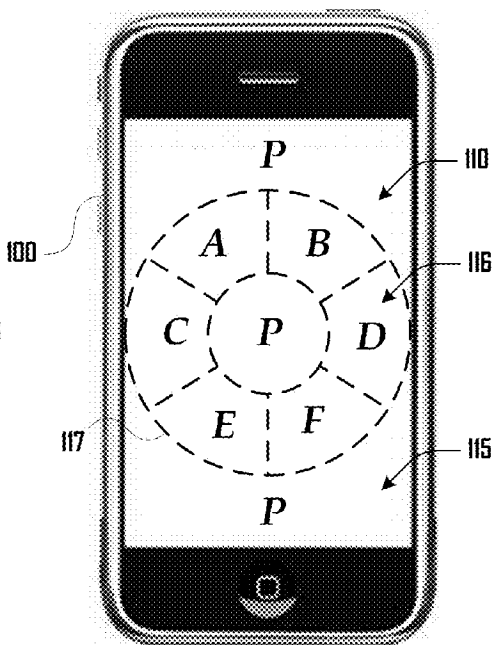


Fig. 1D

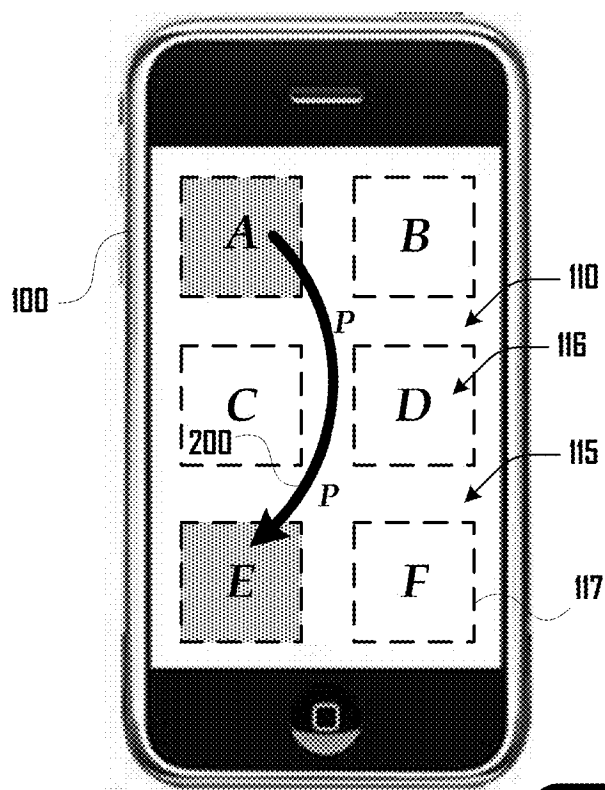


Fig. 2A

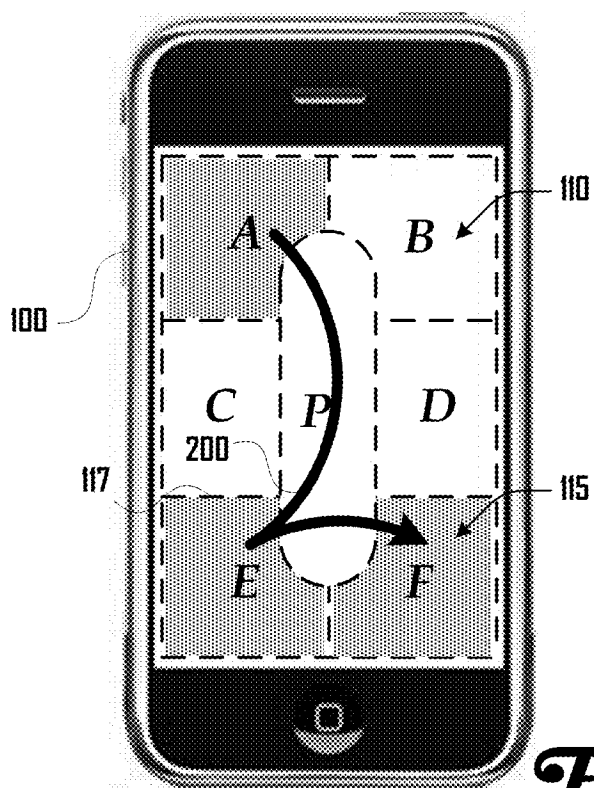


Fig. 2B

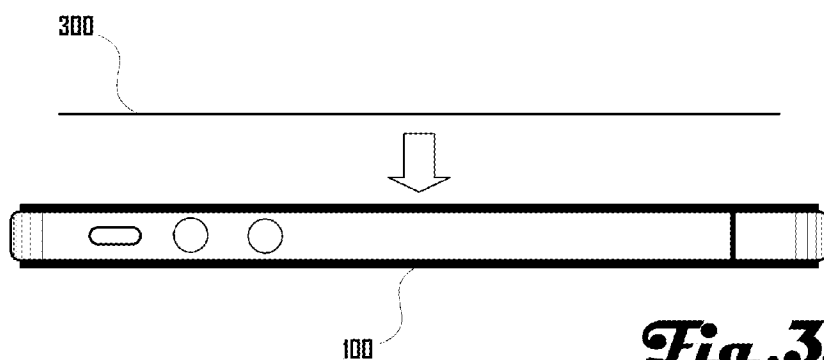


Fig. 3A

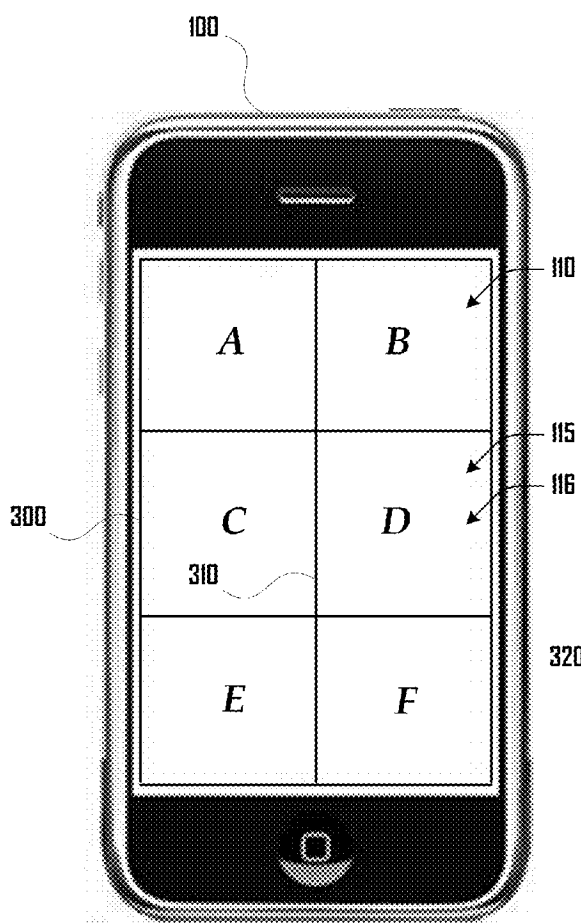


Fig. 3B

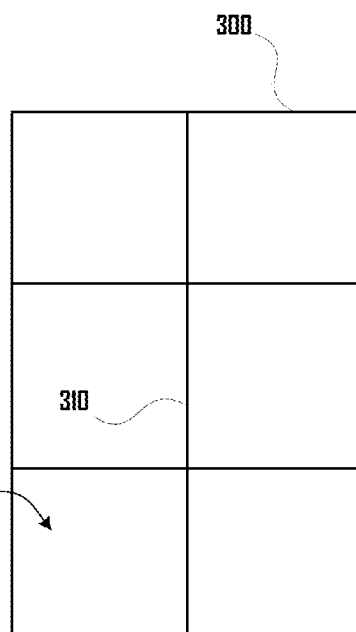


Fig. 3C

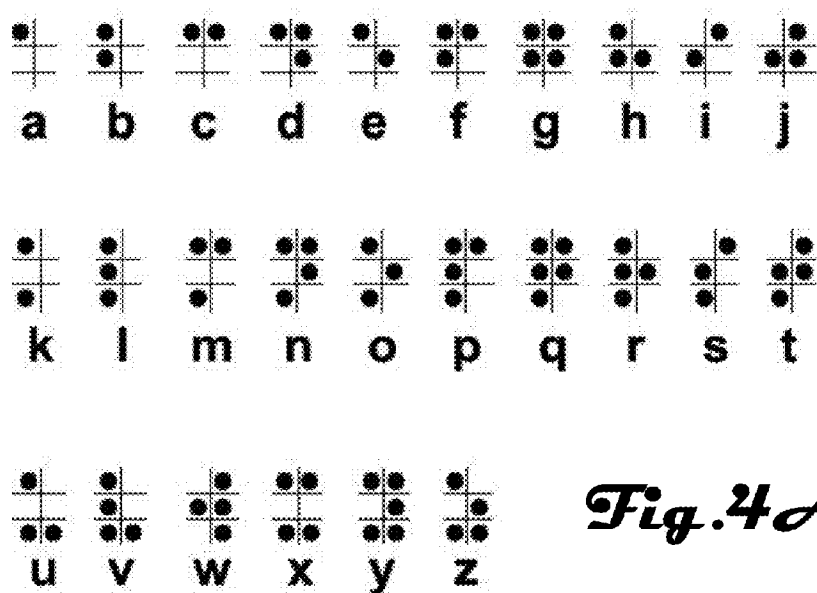


Fig. 4A

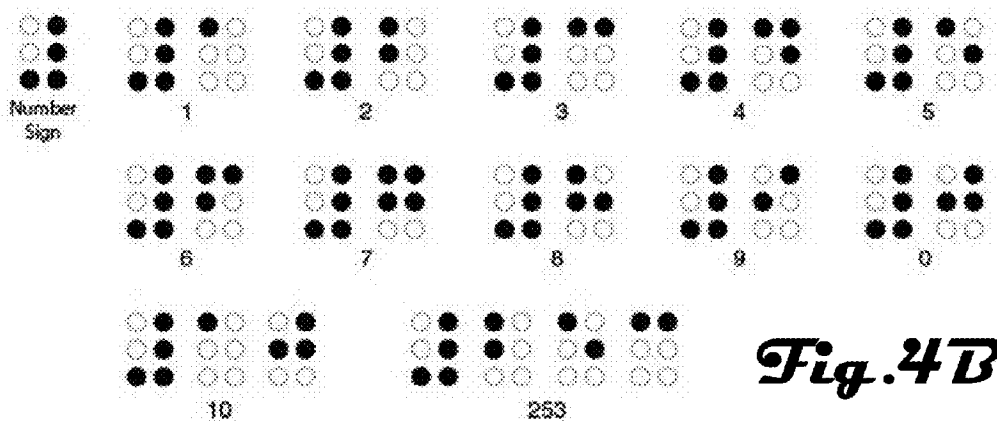
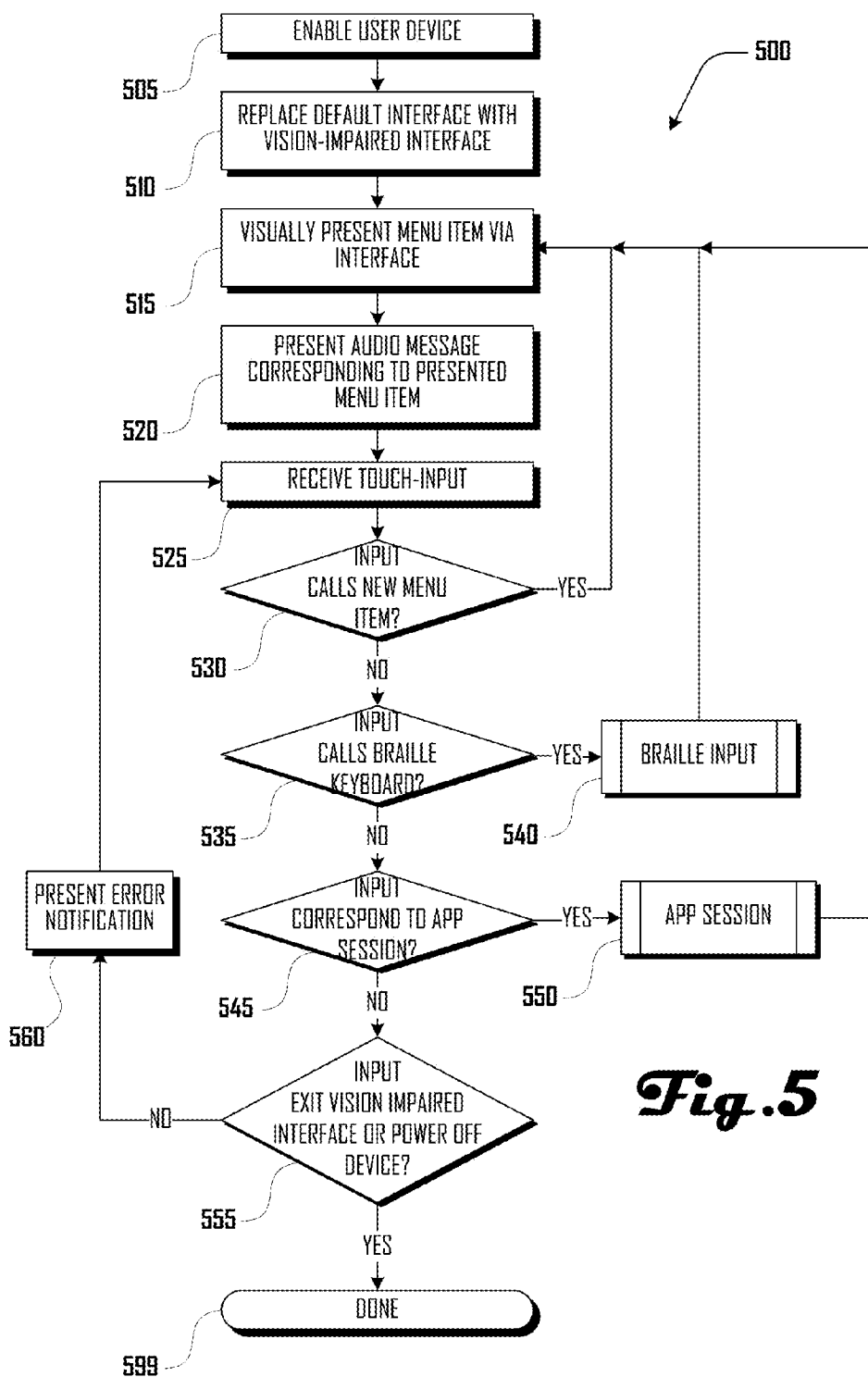


Fig. 4B



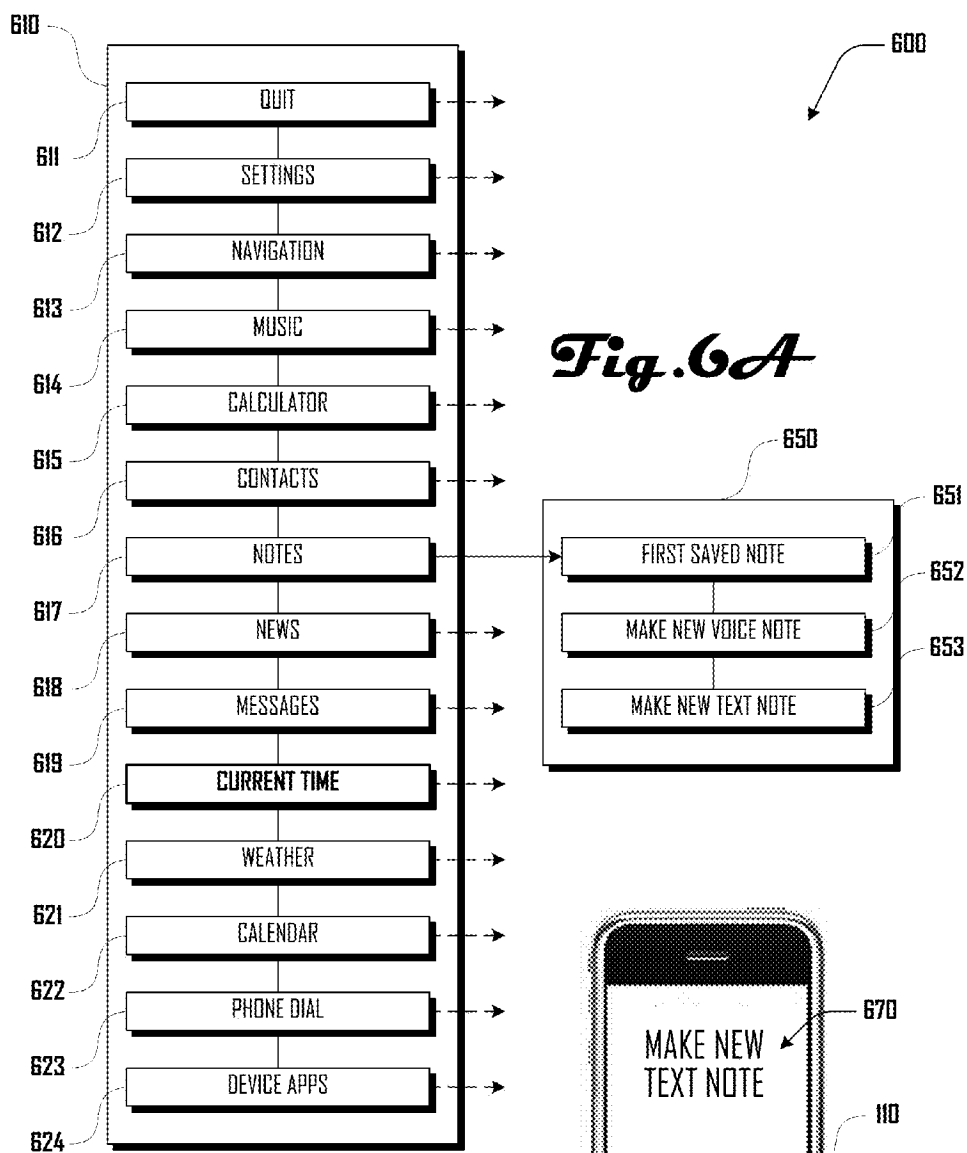


Fig. 6B

**Swipe Right** to unlock phone.

When phone is activated, you can swipe from left to right to unlock phone. For best use, switch to screen lock : none in your android settings.

**Swipe Up/Down** to scroll up/down.

On any item, you can swipe to scroll. You can also **swipe and hold** to scroll faster. For example, when browsing contacts, swipe to go one by one, swipe and hold to go alphabet by alphabet.

**Tap** to enter/Okay.

On any item, you can tap to enter or move ahead. For example, Tap on a message content will take you to typing pad for typing reply.

**Swipe Left** to go back/cancel.

You can swipe left at any time cancel an action or to go back. For example, on incoming call, swipe left to cancel.

Note: this action does not work on typing pads.

**Tap and Hold** to get extra options.

You can tap and hold at any time to get options related to entry on screen. For example, when on message content, tap and hold to get forward/call options.

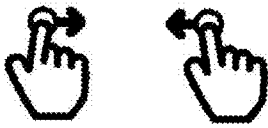
**Two finger Tap and Hold** to get information.

You can tap with two finger and hold at any time to get information related to entry on screen. For example, when in home list, this action tells battery remaining.

**Swipe down with two finger** to repeat.

You can swipe down with two fingers to repeat the content on screen. For example, when typing, swipe down two fingers to repeat the typed content.

Fig.7



Move your finger around to listen number/symbol.

This is standard 12-key numpad, move your finger around to hear number/symbol under your finger.



Lift your finger to type the number/symbol.

When you hear the intended number, lift your finger. The number will be spoken again and will be typed.



Lift and tap multiple times to enter alphabets.

Alphabets are arranged on numbers. After lifting your finger to hear intended number, you can tap (anywhere) on screen to hear alphabets on number. When you stop tapping, alphabet is typed.



Two finger swipe left and hold to delete.

You can use two finger (placed at a distance) to swipe from right towards left of screen and hold them there. This will delete last typed character. Longer hold will delete all content.



Two finger swipe right and hold to give space.

You can use two finger (placed at a distance) to swipe from left towards right of screen and hold them there. This will add a space after last typed character. Longer hold will add enter.



Two finger Swipe down to hear content.

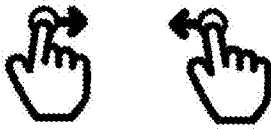
You can swipe down with two fingers to repeat the content on screen. For example, when typing, swipe down two fingers to repeat the typed content.



Tap and hold to get options/exit.

You can tap and hold at any time to get options related to typed content. This gesture is also the way for exiting typing screen.

Fig. 8



Move your finger around to pin tones.

The phone screen is divided into six big boxes, these are for Braille pin 1 to 6. Touch the respective boxes to type the pins. You can touch these boxes in any order.



Lift your finger when all required pins are typed.

When you lift your finger, the typed character is spoken out.



Lift and tap quickly to type disconnected pins.

In case disconnected pins need to be typed, lift finger and tap quickly on the intended boxes. You can also use multiple fingers.



Two finger swipe left and hold to delete.

You can use two finger (placed at a distance) to swipe from right towards left of screen and hold them there. This will delete last typed character. Longer hold will delete all content.



Two finger swipe right and hold to give space.

You can use two finger (placed at a distance) to swipe from left towards right of screen and hold them there. This will add a space after last typed character. Longer hold will add enter.



Two finger Swipe down to hear content.

You can swipe down with two fingers to repeat the content on screen. For example, when typing, swipe down two fingers to repeat the typed content.



Tap and hold to get options/exit.

You can tap and hold at any time to get options related to typed content. This gesture is also the way for exiting typing screen.

Fig. 9

DEVICE INPUT SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED USERS

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims the benefit of Indian Patent Application No. 481/MUM/2014 titled “Tactile coupling for vision-independent operation of electronic devices” filed on 11 Feb. 2014. This application is hereby incorporated herein by reference in its entirety and for all purposes.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Conventional electronic devices such as tablet computers and smart phones provide robust and user-friendly touch interfaces for users with normal sight. However, such devices are typically difficult, if not impossible to use by visually impaired users. In addition to not being able to see text and other icons that are present on the screen of such devices, input via touch-keyboards, or the like, that are presented on a smooth touch-screen of the device also makes text input difficult or impossible for such vision impaired users.

[0003] In view of the foregoing, a need exists for an improved device and interface for visually impaired users in an effort to overcome the aforementioned obstacles and deficiencies of conventional passenger information systems.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0004] FIGS. 1A-D illustrate example embodiments of a touch-input interface on a user device, where the touch-input interface comprises a plurality of input regions.

[0005] FIGS. 2A and 2B illustrate a method of inputting characters via six-dot Braille using the touch-input interface of FIGS. 1B and 1C respectively.

[0006] FIG. 3A illustrates how an input guide can be coupled to the touch screen of the user device of FIGS. 1A-D

[0007] FIG. 3B illustrates an example embodiment of an input guide coupled over the touch-input interface of the user device of FIG. 1A.

[0008] FIG. 3C illustrates the input guide shown in FIG. 3B.

[0009] FIGS. 4A and 4B illustrate codes for six-dot Braille input that can be used with the touch-input interfaces shown in FIGS. 1A-D.

[0010] FIG. 5 illustrates a method for providing a device interface for visually impaired users in accordance with an embodiment.

[0011] FIG. 6A illustrates an example representation of a menu system of an interface for visually impaired users, in accordance with an embodiment.

[0012] FIG. 6B illustrates visual presentation of a menu item in accordance with an embodiment.

[0013] FIGS. 7-9 illustrate example touch gestures for a device interface in accordance with various embodiments.

[0014] It should be noted that the figures are not drawn to scale and that elements of similar structures or functions are generally represented by like reference numerals for illustrative purposes throughout the figures. It also should be noted that the figures are only intended to facilitate the description of the preferred embodiments. The figures do not illustrate every aspect of the described embodiments and do not limit the scope of the present disclosure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0015] Since currently-available electronic devices are deficient, a device and interface for visually impaired users that allows for conventional devices to be used by vision-impaired users can prove desirable and provide a basis for a wide range of applications for vision-impaired users of conventional electronic devices. This result can be achieved, according to one embodiment disclosed herein, by a user device **100** as illustrated in FIGS. 1A-D.

[0016] Turning to FIGS. 1A-D, the user device **100** is shown as comprising a touch-screen **110** that defines touch-input interface **115** having a plurality of input regions **116** (labeled A-F) and a portal region P. As described herein the touch-input interface **115** can be used to input Braille using various methods including the six-dot system illustrated in FIGS. 4A and 4B.

[0017] For example, FIG. 1A illustrates an embodiment of a touch-input interface **115** having six input regions A-F arraigned in a 2x3 rectangle, with respective input regions A-F abutting along their boundaries **117**.

[0018] FIG. 1B illustrates another embodiment of a touch-input interface **115** having six input regions arraigned in two columns having three rows. Additionally, the touch-input interface **115** shown in FIG. 1B also comprises a portal region P, which surrounds and separates each of the input regions A-F.

[0019] FIG. 1C illustrates a further embodiment of a touch-input interface **115** having six input regions A-F arraigned in a 2x3 rectangle, with respective input regions A-F abutting along their boundaries **117**, and an elongated centrally-located portal region P that abuts a portion of each of the six input regions A-F.

[0020] FIG. 1D illustrates yet another embodiment of a touch-input interface **115** having six input region wedges A-F that collectively have a circular outer perimeter and that collectively surround a circular portal region P. Portal regions P are also above and below the outer perimeter of the input region wedges A-F.

[0021] The example embodiments of touch interfaces **115** shown in FIGS. 1A-D should not be construed to limit the shape of the interfaces **115** including portal regions P and regions **116**. Such regions, **116**, P can be any suitable size and/or shape in further embodiments, including circles, triangles, an irregular shape, or the like.

[0022] In accordance with various embodiments, the touch-input interface **115** can be used for input of six-dot Braille characters as illustrated in FIGS. 4A and 4B. For example, a user can contact the touch screen with a finger within any of the input regions **116**; remove the finger from the touch screen; and again contact the touch screen with a finger within any of the input regions **116** to select inputs that correspond to a portion of a six-dot Braille character. In various embodiments, touching a given input region **116** can trigger a sound, haptic feedback and/or change the color, pattern or other visual aspect of the display of the input region **116**.

[0023] Additionally, in further embodiments, absence of further input region selections can trigger the currently selected set of input regions **116** as the desired six-dot character. For example, referring to FIG. 1A and FIG. 4A, if a user touched input region A, and then did not touch any further input regions **116** within a set time period, then the character “a” would be the output. However, if a user touched input

region A, then touched input region D, and then did not touch any further input regions **116** within a set time period, then the character “e” would be the output. In various embodiments, the order of the touched regions does not change the output character. In further embodiments, re-touching a selected input region **116** can de-select that input region **116**, or re-touching a selected input region **116** may have no effect on the input region **116** and it may remain selected. Additionally, in some embodiments, when an output character is generated, a sound can be produced (e.g., the character can be recited), haptic feedback can be generated (e.g., vibration) and/or the character can be displayed.

[0024] Additionally, in some embodiments, a user can maintain contact with the touch screen **110** while selecting a plurality of input regions **116** in the touch-input interface **115**. For example, in some embodiments, a user can touch a first input region **116** with a finger, and drag the finger on the screen to one or more additional input regions **116**. For example, referring to the touch-track **200** shown in FIG. 2A, if a user first touched input region A with a finger and then dragged the finger through the portal region P and into input region E, and then did not touch any further input regions **116** and/or removed the finger from the touch screen within a set time period, then the character “k” would be the output as indicated in FIG. 4A.

[0025] In another example, and referring to touch-track **200** shown in FIG. 2B, if a user first touched input region A with a finger and then dragged the finger through the portal region P and into input region E, then dragged the finger through the portal region P and into input region F, and then did not touch any further input regions **116** and/or removed the finger from the touch screen within a set time period, then the character “u” would be the output as indicated in FIG. 4A. As discussed above, in some embodiments, when an output character is generated, a sound can be produced (e.g., the character can be recited), haptic feedback can be generated and/or the character can be displayed.

[0026] Accordingly, portal region(s) P can provide a portion of the input interface **115** where input regions **116** are not selected, which can provide a buffer for selections of input regions **116** and can provide an area where a user can drag a finger when selecting input regions that are not directly adjacent. In the examples shown in FIGS. 2A and 2B, the portal region P allows a user to maintain contact with the touch screen **110** when selecting non-adjacent input regions A and E and avoid selecting region C.

[0027] In various embodiments, a user can use any suitable combination of swipe-input and input that includes lifting a finger off the screen **110** while inputting a given character. Alternatively, in some embodiments, a user can be required to use swipe-input. For example, in such embodiments, lifting a finger off the screen **110** after selecting one or more input regions **116** via swipe-input can trigger output of a character based on the selected one or more input regions **116**. Additionally, while various embodiments described herein relate to Braille six-dot/six-pin input methods, further embodiments can include any suitable input method including eight-dot/eight-pin input, grade I, II or III Braille, including Braille in any suitable language, or the like.

[0028] As described in more detail herein, an input interface **115** can be provided as a portion of a device interface for visually impaired users that substantially replaces a default device interface. However, in further embodiments, an input interface **115** can be provided as an alternative input method

that is part of a default device interface. For example, smartphones and other user devices **100** can allow a user to download and/or select alternative keyboards or input methods (e.g., a qwerty touch keyboard, a qwertz touch keyboard, a Dvorak touch keyboard, a Maltraon touch keyboard, voice typing, or the like). Accordingly, an input interface **115** as described herein can be such an alternative input method.

[0029] Turning to FIGS. 3A-C, in various embodiments, it can be desirable to couple an interface guide **300** to the touch screen **110** of the user device **100**, which corresponds to the touch-input interface **115**, and input regions **116** thereof. For example, as illustrated in FIG. 3C, the interface guide **300** can comprise a plurality of raised portions **310** and flat portions **320** that respectively correspond to the input regions **116** and the boundaries **117** between input regions. In other words, the interface guide **300** can provide a tactile indication as to whether the user is touching a boundary **117** of an input region **116** or portal region P and/or touching an input region **116** or portal region P.

[0030] Although the input guide **300** illustrated in FIGS. 3B and 3C can be configured to correspond to the touch-input interface **115** shown in FIG. 1A, the input guide **300** can be configured to correspond to the touch-input interfaces **115** shown in FIGS. 1B-D and any other desirable touch-input interface **115**.

[0031] Additionally, although a raised portion **310** and flat portion **320** are shown as one example, this should not be construed to be limiting on the many other embodiments that are within the scope and spirit of the present invention. For example, in one embodiment, the portions **310** that correspond to boundaries **117** of an input region **116** and/or portal region P can be a slot or depression in the input guide **300** instead of a raised portion. In further embodiments, any of the portions **310**, **320** can be different textures so as to provide a suitable indication of different areas. Additionally, in some embodiments, the input guide **300** can include physical indicators such as letters, numbers, symbols, or the like.

[0032] In various embodiments, it can be beneficial for the input guide **300** to be transparent and configured to accommodate touch-input via the touch screen **110** of the user device **100**, even when the input guide **300** is coupled to the user device **100**. In other words, it can be beneficial for the input guide to **300** allow a user to still view content presented on the touch screen **110** and also not substantially interfere with touch input via the touch screen **110**.

[0033] As illustrated in FIG. 3A, in various embodiments, the input guide **300** can be a thin and substantially planar sheet that is configured to be coupled over the touch screen **110** of the user device **100**. The input guide **300** can comprise any suitable material, including vinyl, polyurethane, glass, or the like. The input guide can **300** couple with a touch screen **110** with or without an adhesive.

[0034] Additionally, although the user device **100** is shown as a smart phone in FIGS. 1A-D, 2A, 2B, 3A, and 3B, in further embodiments, the user device can comprise any suitable device and/or screen. For example, in further embodiments, the user device **100** can include a tablet computer, personal data assistant, gaming device, laptop computer, desktop computer, kiosk device, smartwatch, or the like. In further embodiments, a touch-input interface **115** and/or input guide **300** can associated with a touch screen of any suitable size, which may or may not be directly associated with a computing device.

[0035] In various embodiments, it can be desirable for the user device 100 to be a conventional-mass produced user device 100 (e.g., an i-phone, or the like). Instead of requiring a specialized device that is configured for visually impaired users, a conventional device can simply be retrofitted with an input guide 300 and an app can be installed on the device that provides a device interface for visually impaired users. This can be beneficial because the user can use any commonly available device and service provider, which can allow the user to easily upgrade their device, obtain service for their device, and even allow sighted users to use the device because the default interface of the device is likely commonly known. Accordingly, in various embodiments, the user device 100 does not comprise specialized hardware or software for visually impaired users (not including from any such default software or hardware present on the device that might be construed to be for visually impaired users) aside from the input guide 300 and a software (or app) for a device interface for visually impaired users.

[0036] For example, FIG. 5 illustrates a method 500 for providing a device interface for visually impaired users. The method 500 begins, in block 505, where the user device 100 is enabled, which can include turning on the user device 100 or waking the device from a sleep or hibernation mode, or the like.

[0037] In block 510, the default interface of the user device 100 is replaced with a device interface for visually impaired users as described herein. For example, a conventional user interface can comprise a home screen with a plurality of widgets and/or application (app) icons that can be selected by a user or otherwise interacted with. Such a default interface may not be suitable for a vision-impaired user, who may not be able to see or easily see the icons and text on the screen. Accordingly, the device interface for visually impaired users can be presented in place of the default user interface as described herein. In various embodiments, such a replacement can occur automatically, without user interaction.

[0038] In block 515 a menu item is visually presented by the interface, and in block 520, an audio message is presented that corresponds to the visually presented menu item. In various embodiments, a menu item can simply be text that indicates what the menu item is or provides instructions related to the menu item. For example, referring FIG. 6B, menu item 670 shown on the touch screen 110 of the user device 100 can simply be text that reads "CREATE NEW TEXT NOTE," and in such an embodiment an audio message corresponding to this menu item can be a voice that says "Create new text note." Having a large text menu visually displayed and also presented via audio can be beneficial because some users may have no sight, and may therefore need to rely on audio menu indicators alone. Alternatively, some users can have limited sight and may be able to perceive menu item presentations, but only if they are in large text. Additionally, presentation of text on a menu item can also be readable by a person assisting a vision-impaired user.

[0039] Returning to FIG. 5, the method 500 continues, to block 525, where touch input is received via the touch screen 110. Touch input can be various touches, swipes, holds, or the like, that are generated with one or more finger or other suitable input stylus. For example, FIGS. 7-9 illustrate various touch input commands in accordance with one embodiment.

[0040] In block 530 a determination is made whether the input calls a new menu item, and if so, the method 500 cycles

back to block 515 where the new menu item is presented visually, and then continues to block 520 where an audio message associated with the new menu item is also presented. For example, as illustrated in FIG. 6A, the device interface for visually impaired users can comprise a menu system 600 that can be accessed via various touch gestures. Presume that current time menu 620 is a default menu item or that a user otherwise begins on this menu item 620. In such an example, the screen 110 would display the current time and an audio voice would speak the current time.

[0041] If the user desired to create a new text note, then the user could move to the notes menu item 617 by first swiping up on the screen 110 to access the messages menu item 619. Text related to the messages menu item 619 can be displayed and an audio message related to the messages menu item 619 would be presented. The user could again swipe up to access the news menu item 618, and then swipe up again to access the notes menu item 617. In various embodiments, the screen 110 would only display text associated with a single menu item at a time and present an audio message associated with one menu item at a time.

[0042] When presented with the notes menu item 617, the user can tap the screen 110 to access sub-menu 650 that corresponds to notes and creation of notes. The first menu presented can be a first saved note menu item 651, and, in some embodiments, the screen 110 would only display text and present audio related to this note menu item 651. To reach the new text note menu item 653, the user can swipe down on the screen to first reach the new voice note menu item 652, and then swipe down again to reach the new text note menu item 653, which can present a menu item 670 as illustrated in FIG. 6B.

[0043] As shown in FIG. 6A, the example menu structure can comprise a primary menu set 610 having a plurality of menu items 611-624. One or more sub-menu can be associated with each of the menu items 611-624, but for purposes of clarity, only sub-menu 650 associated with the notes menu item 617 is shown here. The present example menu structure 600 should not be construed to limit the many possible structures that are within the scope and spirit of the present invention.

[0044] Returning to FIG. 5, if a given touch input does not call a new menu item, then the method 500 continues to decision block 535, where a determination is made whether the input calls a Braille keyboard. If the given input does call a Braille keyboard, then a Braille input session begins in block 540, and when it is over, the method 500 cycles back to block 515 where a menu item is presented, which may or may not be a new menu item.

[0045] In various embodiments, the Braille keyboard can comprise a touch-input interface 115 having a plurality of input regions 116 as shown in FIGS. 1A-D, 2A and 2B, or any other suitable interface. As described herein text characters can be input one-at-a-time via the touch-input interface 115 via six-dot input as shown in FIGS. 4A and 4B during a Braille input session. The resulting characters can be stored and used in various applications, in relation to a menu item, or the like. For example, in the example shown in FIGS. 6A and 6B, a user can input and store a text note.

[0046] Returning to FIG. 5, if a determination is made in block 535 that the input does not call a Braille keyboard, then the method 500 continues to decision block 545, where a determination is made whether the input corresponds to an app session. If so, then the method 500 continues to block

550, where an app session occurs, and when it is over, the method **500** cycles back to block **515** where a menu item is presented, which may or may not be a new menu item.

[0047] For example, in various embodiments, a user can access conventional apps on the device, which may or may not suspend the presentation of the interface for visually impaired users as discussed herein. For example, in one embodiment, the user can navigate to the device apps menu item **624** as shown in FIG. 6A, and access a sub-menu (not shown) that comprises menu items corresponding to apps that are installed on the device (not shown). By selecting a menu item corresponding to a given app, the app can then launch in a conventional way, including in a way that may support visually impaired users. Closing or otherwise leaving the app can then cause the device to return to the interface for visually impaired users, and such a return can occur without direct user selection, or by default, in accordance with some embodiments.

[0048] Returning to FIG. 5, if a determination is made in block **545** that the input does not call an app session, then the method **500** continues to decision block **555**, where a determination is made whether the input selects an exit of the interface for visually impaired users or a power-off of the user device **100**. If so, then the method **500** is done in block **599**. However, if not, then an error notification is presented in block **560** and the interface for visually impaired users waits for further input to occur in block **525**.

[0049] For example, if a user provides an invalid touch gesture, a gesture that is not applicable at a given menu item, or if a touch gesture is ambiguous, the interface for visually impaired users can present an audio, visual and/or haptic indication of an error, which can allow the user to then provide a new touch input and continue interacting with the interface.

[0050] The described embodiments are susceptible to various modifications and alternative forms, and specific examples thereof have been shown by way of example in the drawings and are herein described in detail. It should be understood, however, that the described embodiments are not to be limited to the particular forms or methods disclosed, but to the contrary, the present disclosure is to cover all modifications, equivalents, and alternatives.

What is claimed is:

1. A user device for visually impaired users, the user device comprising:

- a touch screen configured to:
 - receive touch input from a user; and
 - present a touch-input interface for Braille input comprising a plurality of input regions defined by and separated by input region boundaries.

2. The user device of claim 1, wherein the touch-input interface is configured for six-dot Braille input and comprises six rectangular input regions in a 2×3 arrangement of rows and columns, with the input regions abutting at adjacent input region boundaries.

3. The user device of claim 1, wherein the touch-input interface is configured for six-dot Braille input and comprises six rectangular input regions in a 2×3 arrangement of rows and columns, with the input regions separated by a portal region that surrounds each of the input regions.

4. The user device of claim 1, wherein the touch-input interface is configured for six-dot Braille input and comprises six input regions in a 2×3 arrangement rows and columns,

with the input regions separated by a centrally located and elongated portal region that abuts at least a portion of each input region.

5. The user device of claim 1, wherein the touch-input interface is configured for six-dot Braille input and comprises six input regions that collectively completely surround a centrally-located portal region that abuts at least a portion of each input region.

6. The user device of claim 1, further comprising an input guide coupled over a portion of the touch screen having first physical portions corresponding to the location of the input regions and second physical portions corresponding to the location of the input region boundaries, and

wherein the first and second physical portions have different physical characteristics.

7. The user device of claim 6, wherein the input guide is a planar sheet of transparent material.

8. The user device of claim 6, wherein the input guide is removably coupled to the touch screen.

9. The user device of claim 6, wherein the second physical portions corresponding to the location of the input region boundaries are defined by raised portions compared to the first physical portions corresponding to the location of the input regions.

10. A method of providing a device user interface for visually impaired users and receiving touch-based user input via the interface, the method comprising:

- replacing automatically a default device user interface with the device user interface for visually impaired users;
- presenting via a touch screen of the user device a first menu item comprising menu text;
- presenting via a speaker of the user device a first audio message corresponding to the first menu item text; and
- receiving user touch-input via the touch screen.

11. The method of claim 10, further comprising:

- determining that the received user touch-input calls a Braille keyboard; and

- presenting via the touch screen, in place of the first menu item, a touch-input interface for Braille input comprising a plurality of input regions defined by and separated by input region boundaries.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the touch-input interface is configured for six-dot Braille input and comprises six rectangular input regions in a 2×3 arrangement of rows and columns, with the input regions abutting at adjacent input region boundaries.

13. The method of claim 11, wherein the touch-input interface is configured for six-dot Braille input and comprises six rectangular input regions in a 2×3 arrangement of rows and columns, with the input regions separated by portal region that surrounds each of the input regions.

14. The method of claim 11, wherein the touch-input interface is configured for six-dot Braille input and comprises six input regions in a 2×3 arrangement rows and columns, with the input regions separated by a centrally-located and elongated portal region that abuts at least a portion of each input region.

15. The method of claim 11, wherein the touch-input interface is configured for six-dot Braille input and comprises six input regions that collectively completely surround a centrally located and portal region that abuts at least a portion of each input region.

16. The method of claim **11**, further comprising:
receiving touch input selecting one or more of the input regions;
determining that the touch input selecting one or more of the input regions;
corresponds to a six-dot Braille character; and
presenting via the speaker an audio message indicating the six-dot Braille character.

17. The method of claim **10**, further comprising:
determining user touch-input calls a new menu item;
presenting via a touch screen of the user device a second menu item, the second menu item replacing the first menu item, the second menu item comprising second menu text;
presenting via the speaker of the user device a second audio message corresponding to the second menu item text.

18. The method of claim **10**, further comprising:
determining user touch-input calls an app session;
suspending the device user interface for visually impaired users;
reinstating the default device user interface;
launching the app that was called by the device user input;
and
replacing automatically the default device user interface with the device user interface for visually impaired users when the app session is ended.

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