controller **50** receives information from microcomputer system **40** and transmits the information to left display **4** and right display **5**. Also, a book reader controls display of material through left thumb pad input **46** and right pad input **47** to transmit information through left input controller **41** and right input controller **42** to the corresponding displays.

In the preferred embodiment of the electronic book, the book is opened to open the control circuitry and present material that is inputted through input means **43**. If the reader previously has touched a control area to cause a bookmark function, the bookmarked pages are displayed. When there has been no bookmark, the display screens display title pages of books or other information to enable the reader to use the thumb to select a book by touching the control area associated with the book selection function. The reader may use the left thumb to display the first page of the selected book by touching the associated touch control area on the left thumb pad **8**, and use the right thumb on the right thumb pad **9** to display the last page. When reading the book, the reader uses the left thumb to present a simulation of turning one page forward by touching the associated touch control area. The page can also be turned one page backward by touching the associated touch control area on the right thumb pad. The left thumb is used to touch the left leafing touch control area **27** to present simulated forward leafing and simulated rearward leafing through the book at a speed controlled by the speed of movement of the thumb. Forward leafing results from thumb movement from the inner end of the thumb pad toward the outer end, and movement in the opposite direction results in simulated rearward leafing. On the right thumb pad **9**, rearward leafing is simulated by outward movement of the right thumb, and forward leafing results from inner movement. A page may be bookmarked by touching the associated touch control area. The turning of the pages and other functions are performed while the hands and thumbs are in the positions normally used to hold a printed book while reading.

In an alternate embodiment of the electronic book, the thumb pads incorporate means for indicating the amount read relative to the amount to be read in a complete book, and for doing so in a manner emulating the corresponding attribute of the printed book. FIG. **7** illustrates one specific embodiment, in which tapered left thumb pad **68** and tapered right thumb pad **69** are associated with left housing **62** and right housing **63**, respectively. Thumb pad **68** has a pad wall **79**, and thumb pad **69** has a pad wall **80**, each pad wall being formed of a transparent or translucent plastic material, such as PLEXIGLAS plastic or acrylic plastic. Thumb pads **68** and **69** each have touch control areas **75** and **77**, and leafing control areas **76** and **78** corresponding to touch control areas **26**, **28** and leafing control areas **27**, **29** of the embodiment of FIG. **3**. A left pad display **81** is mounted under wall **79**, and right display **82** is mounted under wall **80**. The displays, which may be LCD type displays, are positioned and sized to be viewed through pad walls **79** and **80** and to present information occupying substantially the entire length and height of the pad walls. The displays each present two bands running the length of the displays, a light colored or white band and a dark colored band, such as light band **83** and dark band **84** in FIG. **7**. During the course of their presentation, the bands will vary in width relative to each other to indicate how much has been read. In order to understand the use of the bands it is desirable to refer to attributes of a printed book. When a book is open and the reader is at the beginning of a book, there are no pages or few pages at the left side of the book, and all or most pages are at the right side. As the book is read, the stack of pages and page ends increases at the left side and decreases at the right side until all are at the left side. In this invention, the light colored band denotes the appearance of a stack of page ends, and the dark band denotes the absence of page ends, and the relative width of the two changes as the book is read to simulate the positions of the page ends. The presentation of the bands in displays **72**, **73** is controlled by the microcomputer system **40** (FIG. **6**), specifically through display controller **50**, left input controller **41**, and right input controller **42**, so that presentation of the bands is synchronized with the presentation of material to be read. Examples are illustrated in FIGS. **8**(*a*) through **8**(*d*). The width of a stack of page ends is denoted by the width of light band **83** relative to dark band **84**. In FIG. **8**(*a*), the narrow band **83** indicates that the reader is at the beginning of the book. The band **83** in FIG. **8**(*b*) indicates that the reader has read one quarter of the book. No dark band **84** is displayed when the reader has read one-half of the book as in FIG. **8**(*c*), and in FIG. **8**(*d*) band **83** indicates the reader has completed three-quarters of the book. The indicators in thumb pads **68** and **69** give an indication of the portion completed in the manner of a printed book without adding extraneous information on the face of the page displays presenting the contents of the book.

While the invention has been described with reference to specific embodiments, the description is illustrative of the invention and is not to be construed as limiting the invention. Various modifications and applications may occur to those skilled in the art without departing from the true spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. In an electronic book comprising a left housing and a right housing connected by a hinge means for opening and closing in the manner of a printed book, a left display on said left housing and right display on said right housing disposed in the manner of facing pages of a printed book for displaying contents of printed material, data input means for inputting data representing the contents of printed material, data processing means for processing said data, control means for operation by a reader to control presentation of said data on said displays, and a power source, the improvement comprising:

a left thumb pad extending the full length of the free outer end of said left housing; and

a right thumb pad extending the full length of the free outer end of said right housing;

both of said thumb pads being disposed for placement of the thumbs on said thumb pads by said reader in the positions commonly used by readers of printed books while reading printed books;

said left housing having an inner spine end portion opposite said left thumb pad;

said right housing having an inner spine end portion opposite said right thumb pad;

said left portion and said right end portion being rounded in the manner of the rounded pages of an open printed book; and

said hinge means has a traveling pivot point and maintains contact between the rounded inner spine end portions of said left housing and said right housing throughout said opening and closing in the manner of a book.

2. The electronic book of claim **1**, wherein both said left thumb pad and said right thumb pad are tapered outwardly and rearwardly relative to the front of said displays in the manner of the tapered page ends of an open printed book.

3. The electronic book of claim **2**, wherein said left thumb pad and said right thumb pad are convexly curved around a longitudinal axis.