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method also includes physically depressing the touch screen display, also resulting in the dialing of a selected symbol.

A system for using hardware of a portable electronic device to dial a telephone number is also described. The system includes a portable electronic device that includes a touch screen display, a processor, and a memory. The system also includes instructions stored in the memory and acted upon by the processor to render on the touch screen display a virtual rotary dial pad that enables dialing of both numeric and non-numeric symbols. The instructions also direct the device to generate tactile, audio or visual feedback upon the dialing of a symbol. The touch screen of the system is physically depressible. The instructions direct the device to dial symbols that are touched when the display is physically depressed.

A further embodiment is a computer medium that comprises a software module to perform a method of dialing a telephone number using a portable electronic device. The medium includes instructions for dialing a symbol that is displayed on the touch screen display, touched and dragged to a predetermined location. The available symbols are both numeric and non-numeric. The medium includes instructions for speed dialing, for presenting sensory feedback upon dialing of a symbol, and for accelerated dialing using a depressible touch screen display.

Yet another embodiment includes a method of using a depressible touch screen display of a portable electronic device to dial a telephone number. The method includes touching a symbol to be dialed, the symbol rendered on the touch screen display. The method also includes physically depressing the touch screen display in order to dial the selected number. Upon depressing the display, the selected symbol is rotated to a predetermined location on the display and then counter-rotated back to its original location on the display, thereby dialing the selected symbol.

A further embodiment includes a method of providing speed dial on a virtual rotary dial pad of a portable electronic device. The method includes touching a speed dial symbol, dragging the symbol to a predetermined location on a touch screen display of the device, and holding the selected symbol at the predetermined location for a predetermined duration of time. Virtual rotary dial pads that include both numeric and non-numeric symbols may be toggled by touching the center of the dial pads.

Other examples, embodiments and applications related to the above description but not heretofore explained in detail are nevertheless considered pertinent and are to be considered within the scope of the following claims.

What is claimed as new and desired to be protected by Letters Patent of the United States is:

1. A portable electronic device comprising:
 - a touch screen display;
 - a communication system that allows the portable electronic device to send and receive wireless communications; and
 - a virtual rotary dial pad presented on the display, the dial pad enabling a user of the portable electronic device to dial numeric and non-numeric symbols and to call a telephone number using the display and the communication system;

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the virtual rotary dial pad having a specific location on the display to which a selected numeric or non-numeric symbol may be rotated;

the virtual rotary dial pad enabled to perform a speed dial function responsive to rotation of the selected symbol to the specific location and holding the selected symbol at the specific location for a specific duration of time in conjunction with physical depression of the display.

2. The device of claim 1, wherein the virtual rotary dial pad rotates when individual numeric and non-numeric symbols are dialed.

3. The device of claim 1, further comprising a feedback generator that generates feedback to the user when a numeric or non-numeric symbol has been rotated to the specific location.

4. The device of claim 3, wherein the feedback generator is a vibrator of the device.

5. The device of claim 3, wherein the feedback generator is a speaker of the device.

6. The device of claim 3, wherein the feedback generator is the display.

7. A method of dialing a telephone number using a virtual rotary dial pad on a portable electronic device, the method comprising:

touching a symbol on a touch screen display of the portable electronic device, the available symbols being both numeric and non-numeric;

dragging the touched symbol to a specific location on the display, thereby resulting in the touched symbol being dialed; and

performing a speed dial function responsive to the dragged symbol being held at the specific location for a specific duration of time in conjunction with physical depression of the display.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the step of dragging the touched symbol to the specific location results in each selectable symbol of the virtual rotary dial pad being rotated.

9. The method of claim 7, further comprising generating feedback to a user when the touched symbol is dragged to the specific location.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the generated feedback is one of a vibration, an audio, and a visual feedback.

11. A system for using hardware of a portable electronic device to dial a telephone number, the system comprising:

a portable electronic device that includes a touch screen display, a processor, and a memory; and

instructions stored in the memory and acted upon by the processor to:

render on the touch screen display a virtual rotary dial pad that enables dialing of both numeric and non-numeric symbols; and

perform a speed dial function responsive to one of said symbols being dragged to a specific location on the touch screen display and held at the specific location for a specific duration of time in conjunction with physical depression of the display.

12. The system of claim 11, wherein the instructions direct the device to generate tactile, audio or visual feedback upon the dialing of a symbol.