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In embodiments, the overlay is substantially transparent (for example, from about 90% to about 100% light transmissive) or at least light transmissive enough so that an operator with full visual acuity can see through the overlay without interference. A fully sighted user may thus assist the visually impaired operator in efficiently learning to use this system. In other embodiments, the overlay can be opaque. See FIG. 11. In these cases, the overlay would resemble the display on the screen over which it would be placed. This would still allow a sighted person to train a visually impaired person to use the overlay with a device.

The overlays can be made of any of a variety of materials or substrates including, but not limited to, plastics, fibrous material such as paper, nonwoven fabrics, thin metal foils, thin layers of rubber materials such as neoprene.

Any number of methods may be used to hold the overlay to the screen. For example, the overlay can simply press fit to the screen. Many plastics are sufficient for press fitting. Embodiments have used 2 mil PVC or rubber. If a screen is sufficiently vertical, the overlay may still have difficulty staying in place. In cases where the overlay will not stay in place by press fit alone, other methods of securing the overlay in place may be used. These include, but are not limited to, clipping, use of a non-permanent adhesive, and taping. Tabs that extend beyond the edge of a screen may be used as well. Also, an adhesive material may be used to hold the overlay to a screen, such as, for example, the adhesive layer on the back of Post-It™ notes by 3M.

In embodiments, an overlay may cover the entire screen. In other embodiments, an overlay may only cover part of a screen or part of a display on the screen.

The claims, as originally presented and as they may be amended, encompass variations, alternatives, modifications, improvements, equivalents, and substantial equivalents of the embodiments and teachings disclosed herein, including those that are presently unforeseen or unappreciated, and that, for example, may arise from applicants/patentees and others.

What is claimed is:

1. An overlay for use with a display screen, comprising at least one first tactilely readable area, wherein the display screen includes a first feature thereon, wherein the tactilely readable area includes information in a tactilely readable format, and wherein the information identifies a first feature displayed on the screen, wherein the overlay resembles the display on the screen over which it is placed.

2. The overlay of claim 1, wherein the tactilely readable area includes raised protrusions.

3. The overlay of claim 2, wherein the protrusions are Braille characters.

4. The overlay of claim 1, wherein the overlay further comprises at least one second tactilely readable area corresponding to a feature of a second graphical display on the screen.

5. The overlay of claim 1, wherein the screen is a touch-sensitive screen and the feature is selectable by touch.

6. The overlay of claim 1, further comprising means for holding the overlay in place over the screen.

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7. A tactile method for using a device having a touch sensitive screen that has a first display thereon, comprising:

placing a first overlay on the screen, the first overlay corresponding to the first display on the screen and including a first tactilely readable area, the first tactilely readable area including information in a tactilely readable format, the information being specific to a first selectable feature located in the first display on the screen;

determining a location of and information about the first selectable feature on the screen by tactilely reading the first tactilely readable area on the overlay;

selecting the first selectable feature;

receiving a signal from the device;

removing the first overlay on the screen in response to the signal received;

placing a second overlay on the screen, the second overlay corresponding to a second display on the screen and including a second tactilely readable area, the second tactilely readable area including information in a tactilely readable format, the information being specific to a second selectable feature located in the second display on the screen;

determining a location of and information about the second selectable feature on the screen by tactilely reading the second tactilely readable area on the overlay; and

selecting the second selectable feature.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the first tactilely readable area includes raised protrusions.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the protrusions include Braille characters.

10. The method of claim 7, wherein selecting the first selectable feature includes pressing the screen at the location of the desired feature.

11. The method of claim 7, wherein selecting the second selectable feature includes entering data through a keyboard.

12. The method of claim 7, wherein the signal is an audio signal.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the audio signal is a voice instruction.

14. The method of claim 12, wherein the signal is a sequence of beeps, where the number of beeps correspond to the second overlay.

15. The method of claim 7, wherein the device is at least one of a scanner, a printer, and a copier.

16. A plurality of overlays for use with a screen upon which a plurality of displays may appear, wherein each of the plurality of overlays corresponds to one of the plurality of displays and resembles that display, and wherein each overlay has at least one tactilely readable area, wherein each tactilely readable area includes information specific to a feature of the display corresponding to the overlay, the information being in a tactilely readable format.

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