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United States Patent [19]

Knox

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[54] **METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR DYNAMIC CONFIGURATION OF AN INPUT DEVICE**

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** **400/89**; 400/90; 400/472

[58] **Field of Search** 400/89, 90, 493.2, 400/472; 341/23

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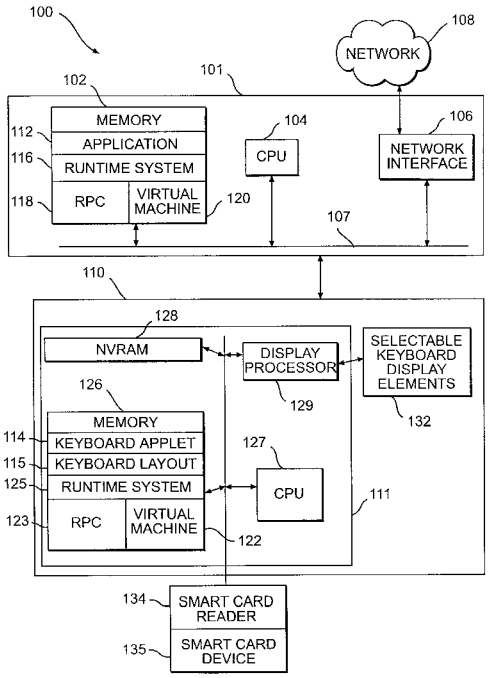
[57] **ABSTRACT**

A system and method is provided that displays different symbols on an input device corresponding to different input device layouts. On a keyboard type input device, each key on the keyboard has an individually controllable display device which displays one or more symbols in a given symbol set. Software detects which keyboard layout should be used, downloads the keyboard layout over a network, such as the Internet, and causes the display device in each key to display the appropriate symbol or symbols. A virtual machine embedded in the keyboard provides a platform independent execution enviromnent and simplifies the development of different types of input device layouts. This unique arrangement obviates the need for purchasing different keyboards and software to accommodate the different character sets used by different languages or different specialized software applications.

26 Claims, 6 Drawing Sheets