METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR PROVIDING CONFIGURABILITY AND CUSTOMIZATION OF ADAPTIVE USER-INPUT FILTRATION

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Technical Field:

The present invention relates to a method and apparatus for data processing. Specifically, the method involves creation of user-input data in a graphical user interface in a computer system.

2. Description of Related Art:

Graphical user interfaces, or "GUI's" as they are often designated, are an increasingly common and popular feature of computers, especially personal computers (PC's). One of the many advantages of such GUI's is that they allow a user to enter commands by selecting and manipulating graphical display elements, such as icons, through a variety of input devices. GUI's significantly reduce the amount of information that a user must recall in order to use a computer effectively. As a result of the ever-increasing popularity of GUI's, a variety of different means for using and navigating through various applications have been developed.

Various methods currently exist for allowing a user to control aspects of pointing device operation. For example, the Microsoft Windows interface enables a user to access a mouse dialog box whereby the user can adjust

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the tracking speed, which refers to the speed at which the mouse pointer moves across the display, and double-click speed, which refers to the rate at which Windows recognizes double-clicks of a mouse button. One feature of the mouse that is not controllable using the Windows GUI is an adaptive responsiveness of the pointer displayed on a display device to mouse movement. Such a feature would be especially beneficial in cases where the user is a small child or an older person, neither of whom typically have the manual dexterity necessary to control a mouse or other pointing device accurately, and hence, the position of the pointer on the display. There are also a set of disabilities that make the regular operation of a pointing device difficult and possibly impossible, such as trembling hands/fingers. As our population grows older and becomes increasingly dependent on computers, this will become more of an issue.

The problems associated with using pointing devices can be broadened by recognizing that similar problems may be associated with input devices in general. For example, if a person generally speaks with a stutter, the input voice patterns may be poorly recognized for that person by a voice recognition system. In another case, the person's stutter may make voice annotations impractical.

In these cases, a person may be unable to effectively use certain aspects of the computer system without extensive efforts to customize the computer system so that it is adapted to the personal characteristics of the user.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a user with an ability to configure a filter, according to a user's personal characteristics, for user-input data generated by an input device. Moreover, in a preferred implementation the individual characteristics are portable with the user through the use of a customized adaptive input profile. The customized adaptive input profile may be stored on a network or within a smart card so that the customized parameters are accessible when the user requires the use of a particular client or workstation in a distributed data processing environment, a stand-alone device capable of utilizing a customized adaptive input profile, or a device capable of operating in both connected and stand-alone mode.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The novel features believed characteristic of the invention are set forth in the appended claims. The invention itself, however, as well as a preferred mode of use, further objectives and advantages thereof, will best be understood by reference to the following detailed description of an illustrative embodiment when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 depicts a pictorial representation of a distributed data processing system in which the present invention may be implemented;

Figure 2 is a block diagram depicting a data processing system, which may be implemented as a server in a distributed data processing system;

Figure 3 is a block diagram illustrating a general data processing system in which the present invention may be implemented;

Figure 4 is a block diagram depicting software components or modules that may be found in a data processing system that implements the present invention;

Figure 5 is a flowchart depicting a process for customization, auto-configuration, and storage of a customized adaptive input profile;

Figures 6A-6F depict exemplary graphical user interface windows in which a data processing system may

provide a user with the ability to execute an auto-configuration utility for configuring a customized adaptive input profile;

Figures 6G-6J depict exemplary graphical user interface windows in which a user may or may not identify a preference for a handedness parameter setting to be stored in customized adaptive input profile;

Figure 6K depicts a flowchart for a general method in which a preference for a handedness parameter setting is identified, verified, and stored in customized adaptive input profile; and

Figure 7 is a flowchart depicting a process of using a customized adaptive input profile to filter user input data.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

With reference now to the figures, **Figure 1** depicts a pictorial representation of a distributed data processing system in which the present invention may be implemented.

Distributed data processing system **100** is a network of computers in which the present invention may be implemented. Distributed data processing system **100** contains a network **102**, which is the medium used to provide communications links between various devices and computers connected together within distributed data processing system **100**. Network **102** may include permanent connections, such as wire or fiber optic cables, or temporary connections made through telephone connections.

In the depicted example, a server **104** is connected to network **102** along with storage unit **106**. In addition, clients **108**, **110**, and **112** also are connected to a network **102**. These clients **108**, **110**, and **112** may be, for example, personal computers or network computers. For purposes of this application, a network computer is any computer, coupled to a network, which receives a program or other application from another computer coupled to the network. In the depicted example, server **104** provides data, such as boot files, operating system images, and applications to clients **108-112**. Clients **108**, **110**, and **112** are clients to server **104**. Distributed data processing system **100** may include additional servers, clients, and other devices not shown. In the depicted example, distributed data

processing system **100** is the Internet with network **102** representing a worldwide collection of networks and gateways that use the TCP/IP suite of protocols to communicate with one another. At the heart of the Internet is a backbone of high-speed data communication lines between major nodes or host computers, consisting of thousands of commercial, government, educational, and other computer systems that route data and messages. Of course, distributed data processing system **100** also may be implemented as a number of different types of networks, such as for example, an intranet, a local area network (LAN), or a wide area network (WAN).

Figure 1 is intended as an example, and not as an architectural limitation for the processes of the present invention.

Referring to **Figure 2**, a block diagram depicts a data processing system, which may be implemented as a server, such as server **104** in **Figure 1**, in accordance to the present invention. Data processing system **200** may be a symmetric multiprocessor (SMP) system including a plurality of processors **202** and **204** connected to system bus **206**. Alternatively, a single processor system may be employed. Also connected to system bus **206** is memory controller/cache **208**, which provides an interface to local memory **209**. I/O bus bridge **210** is connected to system bus **206** and provides an interface to I/O bus **212**. Memory controller/cache **208** and I/O bus bridge **210** may be integrated as depicted.

Peripheral component interconnect (PCI) bus bridge **214** connected to I/O bus **212** provides an interface to PCI local

bus **216**. A number of modems **218-220** may be connected to PCI bus **216**. Typical PCI bus implementations will support four PCI expansion slots or add-in connectors. Communications links to network computers **108-112** in **Figure 1** may be provided through modem **218** and network adapter **220** connected to PCI local bus **216** through add-in boards.

Additional PCI bus bridges **222** and **224** provide interfaces for additional PCI buses **226** and **228**, from which additional modems or network adapters may be supported. In this manner, server **200** allows connections to multiple network computers. A memory-mapped graphics adapter **230** and hard disk **232** may also be connected to I/O bus **212**, as depicted either directly or indirectly.

Those of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the hardware depicted in **Figure 2** may vary. For example, other peripheral devices, such as optical disk drive and the like, also may be used in addition or in place of the hardware depicted. The depicted example is not meant to imply architectural limitations with respect to the present invention.

The data processing system depicted in **Figure 2** may be, for example, an IBM RISC/System 6000 system, a product of International Business Machines Corporation in Armonk, New York, running the Advanced Interactive Executive (AIX) operating system.

With reference now to **Figure 3**, a block diagram illustrates a data processing system in which the present invention may be implemented. Data processing system **300** is an example of a client computer. Data processing system

300 employs a peripheral component interconnect (PCI) local bus architecture. Although the depicted example employs a PCI bus, other bus architectures such as Micro Channel and ISA may be used. Processor **302** and main memory **304** are connected to PCI local bus **306** through PCI bridge **308**. PCI bridge **308** also may include an integrated memory controller and cache memory for processor **302**. Additional connections to PCI local bus **306** may be made through direct component interconnection or through add-in boards. In the depicted example, local area network (LAN) adapter **310**, SCSI host bus adapter **312**, and expansion bus interface **314** are connected to PCI local bus **306** by direct component connection. In contrast, audio adapter **316**, graphics adapter **318**, and smart card adapter **319** are connected to PCI local bus **306** by add-in boards inserted into expansion slots. Expansion bus interface **314** provides a connection for a keyboard and mouse adapter **320**, modem **322**, and additional memory **324**. SCSI host bus adapter **312** provides a connection for hard disk drive **326**, tape drive **328**, and CD-ROM drive **330** in the depicted example. Typical PCI local bus implementations will support three or four PCI expansion slots or add-in connectors. Data processing system **300** could be connected through graphics adapter **318** to a computer display (not shown) and through smart card adapter **319** to a smart card reader (not shown).

An operating system runs on processor **302** and is used to coordinate and provide control of various components within data processing system **300** in **Figure 3**. The operating system may be a commercially available operating

system such as OS/2, which is available from International Business Machines Corporation. "OS/2" is a trademark of International Business Machines Corporation. An object oriented programming system such as Java™ may run in conjunction with the operating system and provides calls to the operating system from Java™ programs or applications executing on data processing system **300**. "Java" is a trademark of Sun Microsystems, Inc. Instructions for the operating system, the object-oriented operating system, and applications or programs are located on storage devices, such as hard disk drive **326**, and may be loaded into main memory **304** for execution by processor **302**. Those of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the hardware in **Figure 3** may vary depending on the implementation. Other internal hardware or peripheral devices, such as flash ROM (or equivalent nonvolatile memory) or optical disk drives and the like, may be used in addition to or in place of the hardware depicted in **Figure 3**. Also, the processes of the present invention may be applied to a multiprocessor data processing system.

For example, data processing system **300**, if optionally configured as a network computer, may not include SCSI host bus adapter **312**, hard disk drive **326**, tape drive **328**, and CD-ROM **330**, as noted by the box with the dotted line **332** in **Figure 3** denoting optional inclusion. In that case, the computer, to be properly called a client computer, must include some type of network communication interface, such as LAN adapter **310**, modem **322**, or the like. As another example, data processing system **300** may be a stand-alone

system configured to be bootable without relying on some type of network communication interface, whether or not data processing system **300** comprises some type of network communication interface. As a further example, data processing system **300** may be a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) device which is configured with ROM and/or flash ROM in order to provide non-volatile memory for storing operating system files and/or user-generated data.

The depicted example in **Figure 3** and above-described examples are not meant to imply architectural limitations with respect to the present invention.

Certain classes of users encounter difficulty while using input devices. Such users would include novices, individuals with poor fine-motor-movement control, individuals with medical conditions or symptoms that cause involuntary tremors or motion that would be translated to movement of the pointing device using the ordinary settings for control. The present invention provides these classes of users with an easy method of customizing a computer system's adaptive filtering properties that are used during the acquisition of input data from an input device. In order to provide this capability, the present invention analyzes a user's unfiltered input data in order to create a customized adaptive input profile for the user. In so doing, the present invention masks the difficulties that a user would encounter in setting parameters using prior art methods. Use of the present invention would provide several advantages, including reduction of errors in

input, increased usability and user satisfaction with computer system use, individually customizable settings for individual users of the same hardware, and adaptability of the computer system to changes in the user's physical condition or behavior.

With reference now to **Figure 4**, a block diagram depicts software components or modules that may be found in data processing system **300** to implement the present invention. The components shown in **Figure 4** are meant to be exemplary only and should not be used to limit the functionality of adaptive input filter **440** or customized adaptive input profile **470**.

Operating system **400** provides access to system hardware and resources through application programming interfaces (API's). An API such as input event handler **420** might transfer input data from a user through operating system **400** to an application or applet that expects to receive the user input. An application, such as application **410**, then processes the user data to accomplish user tasks and may present the user data to a user through a graphical user interface. Application **410** calls functions or methods in the API of input event handler **420** in order to receive the user input data. Input event handler **420** provides a high-level software interface between application **410** and the low-level software interface provided by device drivers **430A-430C**. In this manner, application **410** receives input data or messages for input events after input processing within operating system **400**. Significant data processing may be

performed on the user input within operating system **400** before application **410** receives the user input data.

Input event handler **420** provides input events by receiving either raw input data from device drivers **430A-430C** or filtered or massaged input data from adaptive input filter **440**. Device drivers **430A-430C** provide a low-level software interface between the hardware of data processing system **300** and the hardware represented by input devices **431A-431C**. Input devices **431A-431C** may be devices such as a mouse or keyboard (not shown in **Figure 3**) in data processing system **300**. A keyboard or mouse would be connected to data processing system **300** through keyboard and mouse adapter **320**. Input devices **431A-431C** generate hardware interrupts in standard protocols to signal data processing system **300** and to provide data to hardware adapters such as keyboard and mouse adapter **320**. Device drivers **430A-430C** then receive the interrupts and data through registered interrupt sectors within operating system **400** in a manner that is well known in the art.

Device driver **430A** may be identical to device driver **430B** or similar to device driver **430B** if input device **431A** is identical to or similar to input device **431B**. Separate instances of identical device drivers may be registered in operating system **400** in order to provide hardware and system support for similar input devices. A plurality of similar input devices could be connected to data processing system **300** if data processing system **300** is employed as a multi-user device or in a multi-user

environment such as a game console with similar input devices for multiple users.

Device drivers **430A-430C** accept the user input data and buffer the data for further processing within operating system **400**. Other software components, such as input event handler **420** or adaptive input filter **440**, may query a device driver in order to receive or transfer the buffered input data. Input event handler **420** may receive the input data from a device driver and package the data into an input event that is queued to application **410**.

Adaptive input filter **440** may provide an intermediate-processing step between device drivers **430A-430C** and input event handler **420**. Adaptive input filter **440** filters or massages the user input data in order to provide adaptive processing of user input data that is individualized or customized to a specific user. In order to act as an intermediate processing step for the input data, adaptive input filter **440** may have registered or hooked various methods into input event handler **420** so that input events are routed through adaptive input filter **440** before being routed to application **410**. In this manner, adaptive input filter **440** may massage or filter the input data before application **410** receives the raw input events. Rather than acting or processing raw input data, application **410** will process the massaged or filtered user input data that it receives from adaptive input filter **440**. The intermediate processing, provided by adaptive input filter **440**, would be transparent to application **410**.

Adaptive input filter **440** filters or massages the user input data according to customized adaptive input profile **470**. Customized adaptive input profile **470** contains predetermined, individualized, or customized user settings, characteristics, parameters, or algorithms that describe the manner in which the input data from a particular type of input device in use by a particular user should be filtered or massaged. As the user has previously configured customized adaptive input profile **470**, the output data from application **410** based upon the filtered input data will be displayed to the user through a graphical user interface in a manner which will be expected by the user. Because a user has previously configured the adaptive input filter **440**, any input data echoed to a display device will not be a true reflection of the raw input data generated by input devices **430A-430C**, yet the specific user should recognize that the output data generated by application **410** is not in error but rather is in accordance with the previously configured customized adaptive input profile **470**.

As shown by the dotted lines in **Figure 4**, the customized adaptive input profile **470** may be stored external to application **410** or operating system **400** on a distributed data processing system **100** or network **102**. Adaptive input filter **440** may retrieve customized adaptive input profile **470** across network **102** or may retrieve it locally within data processing system **300** depending upon the hardware configuration of data processing system **300** and the software configuration

choices registered within operating system **400**. If customized adaptive input profile **470** is stored on network **102**, customized adaptive input profile **470** is available to a specific user whenever the specific user uses a data processing system **300** on network **102**. For example, if a user establishes a session on clients **108**, **110**, or **112**, customized adaptive input profile **470** will be available to all clients. In this manner, the individualized or customized user settings and parameters are portable with the user. In other words, a network-computing environment that is user-aware will provide the individual characteristics and settings from customized adaptive input profile **470** such that they are portable with the user.

Rather than storing customized adaptive input profile **470** on network **102**, it may be alternatively stored on a smart card. A smart card is generally a small circuit board with built-in logic, firmware, and storage that provides the smart card with some kind of independent decision-making ability. Typically, a smart card is a credit card sized device that contains integrated circuits with limited amounts of "intelligence". By storing customized adaptive input profile **470** on a smart card, the user possesses an easily transportable physical device containing a user-specific profile for personally configuring the use of an input device.

Smart cards are currently becoming more widely used and accepted. They are expected to be used as personal

identification devices in a wide range of applications and hardware devices. In such an environment, it would be unnecessary to have a separate smart card for every particular application or hardware device. In such an environment, a single smart card could be used to identify a specific user and to provide user-specific settings and preferences for a variety of input devices. The customized adaptive input profile **470** could be stored on a single smart card along with other user data such as bank account information, health records, etc.

A user may insert a smart card containing customized adaptive input profile **470** into a smart card reader or device **460** that interfaces with smart card device driver **450** in operating system **400**. Adaptive input filter **440** could retrieve customized adaptive input profile **470** through smart card device driver **450**. Smart card device driver **450** may provide a low-level software interface to smart card adapter **319**.

By storing customized adaptive input profile **470** on network **102** or on a smart card, the adaptive input profile is readily available for filtering and massaging user input data from a class of input devices that has been previously configured for customized adaptive input. For example, a user could expect that an input device on client **108** functions in a customized manner similar to an input device of the same type on client **110** without requiring the user to perform a system configuration setup on the different client machines.

For example, a user could establish a session on

client **108**. As the user moves an input device, such as a mouse, the input device will generate input data that is filtered or massaged by adaptive input filter **440** in a manner which is expected by the user in accordance with customized adaptive input profile **470**. In a different session established at some other time on client **110**, the user's movement of an input device of the same type would generate similar input data after being massaged by adaptive input filter **440** on client **110**, again, in accordance with customized adaptive input profile **470**. The customized adaptive input profile **470** follows the user in a convenient manner without requiring the user to configure a local machine.

Customized adaptive input profile **470** may simply store parameters and settings as data values that are employed by adaptive input filter **440** in predetermined and pre-stored functions and algorithms within adaptive input filter **440**. In this manner, customized adaptive input profile **470** may require relatively little memory. Alternatively, customized adaptive input profile **470** may contain adaptive programming as well as current settings and parameters. In this case, a user's customized profile stores the instructions for the specific massaging and filtering algorithms to accommodate that specific user's use of an input device. In other words, customized adaptive input profile **470** then provides the data and algorithms for massaging and filtering the input data generated by that user's manipulation of a class of input devices. Adaptive input filter **440** would employ

the parameters and algorithms from customized adaptive input profile **470** in its processing of the user input data rather than using the algorithms pre-stored within adaptive input filter **440**.

One example of a filtering algorithm applied to user-input data would be a smoothing function applied to mouse-movement data when the user has provided a customized adaptive input profile with settings or parameters for a mouse device. The user may desire to customize the mouse movement to overcome a personal, physical disability of a hand tremor. In this case, the smoothing function may calculate a mouse pointer speed over a screen coordinate space and an inertial constant. Rather than transferring the current pointer position as input data, the filter may generate user-input data of approximate coordinate-space positions for the pointer by computing new locations based upon previous locations, the speed of the movement of the mouse, inertial values, and a combination of parameters retrieved from the customized adaptive input profile. The pointer on the display device will then track the mouse movement in a customized manner.

With reference now to **Figure 5**, a flowchart depicts a process for customization, auto-configuration, and storage of a customized adaptive input profile. The process begins (step **500**) with the operating system **400** identifying a specific user (step **510**). As each user logs on to operating system **400** and establishes a user session, operating system **400** must identify a specific

user from the many users registered on network **102** or data processing system **300**. The identification may be accomplished by the user inputting a user ID and password or, alternatively, a user may insert a smart card into smart card reader/device **460**. As smart card device **460** reads the user's smart card, smart card device driver **450** may relay user identification data to operating system **400** so that it may identify a user that desires to establish a session on operating system **400**. Other well-known manners may be used to identify a specific user, such as voice print analysis, fingerprint identification, etc.

The customization process continues when a user triggers modification or generation of customized adaptive input profile **470** (step **520**). The user may generate the request through a system command or utility by selecting an icon that provides access to the auto configuration process. The particular manner in which operating system **400** presents the customization and auto-configuration process or utility may vary among different operating systems or various local installations of operating system **400**. If adaptive input filter **440** is a prominent feature within operating system **400**, operating system **400** may provide a quick and easy method for accessing the auto-configuration utility through a one-step process on the desktop of the graphical user interface presented by operating system **400** on data processing system **300**. Operating system **400** may provide default processing in which an auto-configuration utility

is automatically presented to the user when operating system **400** cannot access or cannot locate a customized adaptive input profile **470** for the specific user. Alternately, the operating system 400 may activate an auto-configuration utility based on analysis of user input. The determination of the need to execute the auto-configuration utility should not be limited to the examples described above as many different methods may be employed to determine when a user requires the modification or generation of customized adaptive input profile **470**.

The customization process continues when the customization or auto-configuration utility provides choices to the user of the available and configurable input device or devices that are present in data processing system **300** or client **108, 110,** or **112** (step **530**). The auto-configuration utility retrieves information from operating system **400** as to which devices should be presented to the user in a graphical user interface. Operating system **400** may poll for available input devices or may have pre-stored information concerning the registration of input devices **431A-431C**. There may be instances of input devices that are available yet not configurable. However, it is envisioned that all input devices connected to operating system **400** are configurable as it is the input data generated by an input device which is being manipulated rather than the physical hardware of the input device.

The customization process continues when the user

specifies a user-input device or multiple input devices to be configured or customized (step **540**). Depending on the desires of the user and the availability of multiple devices, a user may specify a single input device or multiple input devices. If the user is configuring multiple input devices, then the customization process may loop in an iterative manner until all of the specified input devices have been configured. Although the description here provides for multiple input devices, the present invention is not limited to multiple device implementation, and is also intended to include implementations which are limited to a single input device.

The auto-configuration utility guides the user through the auto-configuration process for each specified input device (step **550**). The user may be guided to manipulate or use an input device to generate input data that will be analyzed by the auto-configuration or customization utility. The manner in which the user manipulates or uses each input device will be dependent upon the type of input device.

The auto-configuration or customization utility then modifies or generates customized adaptive input profile **470** (step **560**). By analyzing the previously generated input data from the input device to be customized, the auto-configuration or customization utility can determine appropriate settings and parameters for a specific user that will be retrieved at a later time to filter or massage the input data generated by an input device of

the same type being used by the specific user. The auto-configuration or customization utility may also assign or generate an algorithm based on the analyzed user input data.

The customization process then continues with the storage of customized adaptive input profile **470** in an appropriate location (step **570**). As noted previously with respect to **Figure 4**, customized adaptive input profile **470** may be stored locally on data processing system **300**, on network **102**, or on a smart card. The customization utility chooses between these locations in an appropriate manner. For example, if a user has previously inserted a smart card into smart card reader **460**, the customization utility may recognize the availability of storage on the smart card and may store customized adaptive input profile **470** on the smart card. If the user had established a session in a client-server environment in which all customized adaptive input profiles for all users were stored in a specific server on network **102**, then the customization utility may store the newly modified or generated customized adaptive input profile **470** on the same server. The auto-configuration process then completes (step **580**).

With reference now to **Figures 6A-6F**, graphical user interface windows depict an exemplary manner in which data processing system **300** may provide a user with the ability to execute an auto-configuration utility for configuring customized adaptive input profile **470**. During the execution of the auto-configuration utility,

as described above with respect to **Figure 5**, a user selects one or multiple input devices to be configured and is then guided through various input activities in order to learn the physical capabilities of the user and/or the experience level of the user in manipulating or using various input devices.

Figure 6A depicts a graphical user interface window **600** in which a user specifies which input device or devices the user intends to configure. The user would use the appropriate default input device as a pointing mechanism to choose the intended device or devices. Prior to displaying graphical user interface window **600** to the user, the auto-configuration utility has either detected the input devices that are available and configurable or has queried operating system **400** for information on the available and configurable input devices. Graphical user interface window **600** shows the following input devices that have been previously determined to be available and configurable: touch screen **601**; keyboard **602**; mouse **603**; electronic pen or stylus **604**; microphone **605**; joystick **606**; touch pad **607**; track ball **608**; virtual reality or VR glove **609**. The listed input devices are merely examples of input devices that may be configured. However, the list should not be interpreted as being an exhaustive list of potentially available input devices. Moreover, most of the examples for the present invention involve the act of manipulation with respect to input devices with physical movement by human hand. However, input devices may be used rather

than manipulated. For example, microphone **605** may be used without manipulation through input of sound waves.

Figure 6B depicts graphical user interface window **620** that presents icons **621-628**. As shown in graphical user interface window **620**, the user is instructed to click on the icons presented to the user. Each of the individual icons **621-628** may be highlighted in a sequential manner to indicate an icon upon which a user should click, or each of the icons **621-628** may be presented individually and sequentially in various regions of window **620** in order to require the user to move an input device and click on a newly designated region in which the individual icon appears. In this manner, the auto-configuration utility may judge the user's experience level or ability in moving the input device to reach the various regions of window **620**. The user may also be instructed to click, double-click, or triple-click a button or other selector on the current input device. In this case, the auto-configuration utility will measure the user's speed in clicking the input device buttons or other selection mechanism.

While the various speeds of movement and uses of selection mechanisms may be limited by a user's physical capabilities, the various measurements made by the auto-configuration utility may simply be measuring the user's preferences in manipulating an input device. A casual user of an input device may be physically able to manipulate an input device as well as an experienced user but may choose to manipulate the input device more

slowly. In either case, the auto-configuration utility may judge the manner in which a specific user manipulates an input device, generate appropriate user parameters, and then create or modify the specific user's customized adaptive input profile **470** accordingly. Similarly, mouse configuration for devices with two or more buttons must be manually set as right or left-handed currently. Many left-handed persons use a right-handed mouse configuration. This setting would be automatically set during the icon clicking activity in Figure 6B.

Figure 6C depicts a graphical user interface window **630** in which a user is asked to draw lines **631-636.** In **Figure 6D,** graphical user interface window **640** depicts an example in which a user is instructed to draw a circle 641. In **Figure 6E,** graphical user interface window **650** depicts an example in which a user is instructed to draw a rectangle **651.** In **Figure 6F,** a graphical user interface window **660** depicts an example in which a user is instructed to draw an ellipse **661.** In each of the examples in **Figures 6C-6F,** the auto-configuration utility will track the user's motion time and intent in manipulating the input device. These examples are intended to be illustrative rather than exhaustive and the invention is not to be construed as limited to the specific examples provided.

As the user input data is captured, the auto-configuration utility may analyze and translate the user's ability to trace various geometric figures into appropriate settings, parameters, and algorithms that

best enable a user to approximate the geometric figures. For example, a user with a muscular tremor may create jagged lines rather than straight lines. The auto-configuration utility would sense the user's inability to manipulate the input device to follow the geometric figures. The auto-configuration utility would then create appropriate settings, parameters, or algorithms which, when applied by adaptive input filter **440** to the input data generated by the user, massages or filters the input data in such a manner that the processed input data is presented through operating system **400** to application **410** as if a user manipulated the input device in a manner that closely approximates the geometric figure.

In this manner, data processing system **300** is trained so that it may compensate for preferences and physical limitations of particular users in a manner that assists the user in completing various input tasks. Adaptive input profile **470** may be modified so that it is preset or retrained when the capabilities of the specific user change. For persons who are physically challenged, adaptive input filter **440** may obviate the need for customized physical hardware. In another, less extreme circumstance, adaptive input filter **440** may merely compensate for handedness in particular users. For example, a left-handed user may use a VR glove that was specifically designed to be used by right-handed persons. Since the VR glove may generate data for a left-handed person improperly, customized adaptive input profile **470** may be created to compensate for the mis-aligned input

generated by the left-handed person. In this case, a separate VR glove is not required for left-handed persons versus right-handed persons.

In order for adaptive input filter **440** to compensate for handedness in particular users, adaptive input filter **440** may require a handedness parameter within customized adaptive input profile **470**. A handedness parameter may be set in a variety of manners. For example, the auto-configuration utility could detect handedness during the portion of the customization process shown in **Figure 6B**. As described previously, **Figure 6B** instructs a user to click on presented icons. By analyzing the user's method of selecting or clicking on icons, the auto-configuration utility could determine the user's preferences for a selection mechanism on the input device and set a parameter accordingly.

At some other time during a user's session on data processing system **300**, outside of the use of the auto-configuration utility, adaptive input filter **440** may monitor the user's input and detect a pattern of use which implies a modification for generation of a handedness parameter setting. For example, a user may be neither left handed or right handed and may be ambidextrous. After the ambidextrous user has changed hands and used the input device in a slightly different manner, adaptive input filter **440** may detect the sequence of inputs indicating cross handed use.

For example, a common mouse button mapping scheme is typically given as the left button on the mouse being

MouseButton1 and the right button on the mouse being MouseButton2.

Figure 6G shows a typical selection of an icon. In many graphical user interfaces, the use of MouseButton2 provides a secondary menu of actions that may be performed on a selected icon. Graphical user interface window **670** shows the selection of icon **671** representing application IconApp through pointing device or cursor **673** and selection of MouseButton2. With this action, menu **672** has been presented as a pop-up menu for the user. In most circumstances, the user will proceed to select one of the menu choices provided in the pop-up menu. The selected menu item provides an action that will be performed on the selected icon. In this case, no further mouse button actions are performed in conjunction with icon **671**. Adaptive input filter **440** may then presume that the previous sequence of input actions were not directed to a change of the setting of the handedness parameter.

If, however, the user proceeds to provide another MouseButton event, the user may be indicating that the normal progression of selecting a menu item was not desired but instead a change in the handedness parameter was desired. In this case, the user may be performing an action similar to that shown in **Figure 6I**. Graphical user interface window **675** shows a user clicking MouseButton1 on icon **671**. Adaptive input filter **440** may detect this pattern of the second mouse button event as an indication to reset the handedness parameter.

If the user then proceeds to select icon **671** with MouseButton1, adaptive input filter **440** may determine that a preference for right handedness has been provided. As a contrary example, if a user has selected icon **671** with MouseButton2, adaptive input filter **440** may have determined that the user was identifying a preference for left handedness.

With reference now to **Figure 6K**, a flowchart depicts a general method in which a preference for a handedness parameter setting is identified, verified, and stored in customized adaptive input profile **470**. The process starts (step **690**) with a user inputting data with an input device (step **691**). Adaptive input filter **440** identifies a potential handedness preference in the pattern of use in the input device (step **692**). Adaptive input filter **440** then verifies whether a user desires to set the potential handedness preference within customized adaptive input profile **470** (step **693**). This may be verified through an appropriate method, such as a dialogue window. Adaptive input filter **440** then sets, upon confirmation, the handedness parameter and customized adaptive input profile **470** (step **694**). The process then returns to the appropriate location (step **695**).

The example given is not intended to limit the scope of the invention to a mouse input device but is intended to apply to other devices for which the handedness of operation may affect use.

Handedness may be determined while gathering input

data on selecting icons, or it may be detected by detection of a specific pattern of use. Thus a novice or casual user could be identified when entering a program, such as through a prompt "click here to begin", whereas an expert user could trigger the change by repeating a pattern intentionally to switch handedness during operation.

These illustrations and examples are not intended to limit the current invention to those specific applications. A customized adaptive input profile could also be generated to account for individual and cultural differences in gestures used for selection or input, regardless of whether the input device used for gesture input was a VR glove, video camera, or other device.

Likewise, a customized adaptive input profile can be generated to "normalize" keyboard input by setting such attributes as repeat rate (typematic), "sticky keys", "bouncy keys", "slow keys", and so forth. These attributes would be controlled or modified through the customized adaptive input profile by keyboard-related parameters that are generated during the auto-configuration utility or by analyzing a specific pattern of use. For example, the auto-configuration utility may direct the user to type a sample sentence and correct errors within the sentence. During this period of typing, the user's characteristics of typing, such as overall speed, amount of time between keystrokes, quality of keystrokes, amount of typing mistakes, etc., are analyzed to generate the keyboard-related parameters. In

this manner, the user is not required to be familiar with system-related terminology, such as "sticky keys" or "bouncy keys". Moreover, even if the user were familiar with these terms and with the fact that the user's system provides this capabilities, the user is not required to search through computer system utilities trying to find the location or interface that sets these parameters. Again, an expert user could trigger parameter changes by repeating a pattern intentionally to switch paremeter settings during operation.

With reference now to **Figure 7**, a flowchart depicts an example of using customized adaptive input profile **470** to filter user input data. The process begins (step **700**) when operating system **400** identifies a specific user (step **710**). As noted previously with respect to **Figure 5**, many equivalent methods may be used to identify a specific user. Once a specific user is identified, adaptive input filter **440** obtains customized adaptive input profile **470** for the particular user (step **720**). As noted previously with respect to **Figure 4**, customized adaptive input profile **470** may be stored in various locations, and adaptive input filter **440** retrieves customized adaptive input profile **470** from the appropriate location according to the method in which it has been stored. If the specific user has inserted a smart card into smart card reader **460**, adaptive input filter **440** will retrieve customized adaptive input profile **470** from the smart card on which it is stored. If operating system **400** is configured such that all

adaptive input profiles are stored on a server on network **102**, adaptive input filter **440** will retrieve customized adaptive input profile **470** across the network.

The process continues when a user manipulates an input device to generate user input data (step **730**). An input device may send the input data to a device driver that routes the user input data to adaptive input filter **440** for intermediate processing before adaptive input filter **440** releases the processed data to input event handler **420**.

After adaptive input filter **440** receives the user input data, it will massage or filter the recently received user input data to create user input data according to customized adaptive input profile **470**. As noted previously with respect to **Figures 4** and **6**, adaptive input filter **440** may employ various methods for filtering and massaging the user input data.

Adaptive input filter **440** releases the filtered or massaged user input data by sending or transferring the data to input event handler **420** (step **750**). A determination is then made as to whether the user is still using the input device (step **760**). If it is determined that the user is still using the input device, then the process returns to step **730** so that the user may continue to input data using the input device. If it is determined that the user is not using the input device, then the process completes (step **770**).

As described above with respect to **Figures 4 - 7**, the present invention provides a user with an ability to

configure a filter for the input data generated by an input device according to a user's personal characteristics. The present invention provides a graphical user interface shell or wrapper for individualizing user settings, parameters, or algorithms so that the system adapts to user-specific characteristics in order to minimize "errors" in the use of input devices. Moreover, the individual characteristics are portable with the user through the use of a customized adaptive input profile. The customized adaptive input profile may be stored on a network or within a smart card so that the customized parameters are accessible when the user requires the use of a particular client or workstation in a distributed data processing environment. Another advantage of the present invention is that it minimizes the differences between someone with much greater experience or greater physical capacity over someone with limited experience or limited capacity.

Previous input methods have used mapping techniques so that a specific input pattern from a particular user is mapped to a particular encoded value. For example, a voice recognition system may be trained to recognize the particular sound data input pattern generated by the voice of a user in an attempt to map the sound data to a specific encoded value. In this invention, generic input patterns are filtered and massaged in a continuous process that is not dependent upon recognition of discrete input patterns. For example, if a person

generally speaks with a stutter, the customized adaptive input profile for that person may contain the appropriate parameters so that all input voice data from that person is massaged and filtered in a manner that corrects for the stutter in the input voice patterns so that the system may properly recognize all of the voice patterns input by that particular person. In other words, previous systems, such as gesture recognition systems or voice recognition systems, have been tailored to recognize and filter particular input patterns for a particular input device. In the present invention, input devices can be customized on-the-fly and in a portable and convenient manner. In addition, the design of the present invention allows for easy maintenance and extension through inclusion of additional input devices and/or algorithms to improve adaptation.

It is important to note that while the present invention has been described in the context of a fully functioning data processing system, those of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the processes of the present invention are capable of being distributed in a form of a computer readable medium of instructions and a variety of forms and that the present invention applies equally regardless of the particular type of signal bearing media actually used to carry out the distribution. Examples of computer readable media include recordable-type media such a floppy disc, a hard disk drive, a RAM, and CD-ROMs and transmission-type media such as digital and analog communications links.

The description of the present invention has been presented for purposes of illustration and description, but is not intended to be exhaustive or limited to the invention in the form disclosed. Many modifications and variations will be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art. The embodiment was chosen and described in order to best explain the principles of the invention, the practical application, and to enable others of ordinary skill in the art to understand the invention for various embodiments with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated.



CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

1. A method for processing input data from a user of a data processing system, the method comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

receiving input data generated by an input device; and

filtering the input data according to a prestored adaptive input profile customized for the user.

2. The method according to claim 1 wherein the customized adaptive input profile is stored on a smart card.

3. The method according to claim 1 wherein the customized adaptive input profile comprises predetermined settings or parameters that characterize the user's manner of use of the input device.

4. The method according to claim 1 wherein the customized adaptive input profile comprises predetermined algorithms that characterize the user's manner of use of the input device.

5. The method according to claim 1 wherein the data processing system comprises a plurality of input devices and wherein the customized adaptive input profile comprises predetermined configuration data for at least one of the plurality of input devices.

6. The method according to claim 1 wherein the data processing system comprises an adaptive input filter that employs the customized adaptive input profile to accomplish the step of filtering.

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7. A method for processing input data from a user of a data processing system, the method comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

receiving input data generated by an input device;

filtering the input data to detect a characterization of handedness by the user.

8. The method according to claim 7 wherein a handedness parameter within the customized adaptive input profile is set upon verification of the characterization of handedness of the user.

9. A method for processing input data from a user of a data processing system, the method comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

receiving input data generated by an input device;

filtering the input data in order to create a customized adaptive input profile; and

storing a customized adaptive input profile.

10. The method according to claim 9 further comprising retrieving and accessing a customized adaptive input profile for use in filtering input data associated with input from a specific user.

11. The method according to claim 9 wherein the data processing system provides a graphical-user-interface wrapper or shell with which the user interacts in order to acquire input data.

12. The method according to claim 9 wherein the data processing system automatically detects and presents to the user all input devices available for application or

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generation of a customized adaptive input profile.

13. The method according to claim 9 wherein the data processing system automatically detects input data that is used to generate or modify a customized adaptive input profile for the user.

14. The method according to claim 9 wherein the data processing system automatically detects the handedness of the user in cases where an input device can be customized for left or right handed use.

15. The method according to claim 9 wherein the customized adaptive input profile comprises predetermined settings or parameters that characterize the user's manner of use of the input device.

16. The method according to claim 9 wherein the customized adaptive input profile comprises predetermined algorithms that characterize the user's manner of use of the input device and that are used to filter the input data.

17. The method according to claim 9 wherein the customized adaptive input profile adapts a plurality of input devices and wherein the customized adaptive input profile comprises predetermined configuration data for at least one of the plurality of input devices.

18. The method according to claim 9 wherein the customized adaptive input profile comprises a plurality of customized adaptive input profiles for a single user with separate profiles for the left and right handed use of specific input devices for at least one of the plurality of input devices.

19. The method according to claim 9 wherein the

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customized adaptive input profile adapts a plurality of input devices and wherein each input device may filter input according to a specific customized adaptive input profile for a specific user for the specific device.

20. The method according to claim 9 wherein the data processing system stores the customized adaptive input profile in full or in part on a local memory storage device.

21. The method according to claim 9 wherein the data processing system stores the customized adaptive input profile in full or in part on a remote memory storage device in a distributed computing environment.

22. The method according to claim 9 wherein the data processing system retrieves or accesses the customized adaptive input profile in full or in part from a local memory storage device.

23. The method according to claim 9 wherein the data processing system retrieves or accesses the customized adaptive input profile in full or in part from a remote memory storage device in a distributed computing environment.

24. The method according to claim 9 wherein the data processing system comprises an adaptive input filter that employs the customized adaptive input profile to accomplish the step of filtering input data.

25. The method according to claim 9 wherein the data processing system stores the customized adaptive input profile in full or in part on a portable removable memory storage device.

26. The method according to claim 25 wherein the

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portable removable memory storage device is a smart card.

27. The method according to claim 9 wherein the data processing system retrieves or accesses the customized adaptive input profile in full or in part from a portable removable memory storage device.

28. The method according to claim 27 wherein the portable removable memory storage device is a smart card.

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