

HANDHELD ELECTRONIC DEVICE AND KEYPAD PROVIDING ENHANCED USABILITY AND REDUCED SIZE, AND ASSOCIATED METHOD

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ABSTRACT

An improved handheld electronic device, keypad, and method in accordance with the invention meet these and other needs. An improved handheld electronic device having an improved keypad provides enhanced usability and reduced size by organizing its keys in pairs, with a pair of keys being disposed on a support. Each key of a pair of keys is
10 individually actuatable. An actuation of a key causes a primary conductor associated with the key set to electrically connect a pair of contacts and to cause a secondary conductor associated with the key to electrically connect another pair of contacts. The primary conductor is a collapsible dome or a tactile switch that can electrically connect the pair of contacts and that can provide a particular tactile feedback to the user. The secondary
15 conductor is a conductor other than a collapsible dome or a tactile switch. An actuation of any key or of any pair of keys thus provides to the user a consistent tactile feedback, i.e., from a collapse of a single dome. An improved method in accordance with the invention is also disclosed.

Fig. 2