

Description

Background

The present invention relates to search control which give a user an improved way to make a selection using a key board and a display.

In certain computing systems, a user uses a mouse to move a cursor on a display screen. A button on the mouse is pushed to indicate the user's desire to make a selection.

For instance, Figure 1, shows an example of what may appear on a display screen in the prior art. List of application names 3 appear enclosed in a selection box. A cursor 2 appears on the screen controlled by a mouse (not shown). When the mouse moves on a surface, the cursor moves on the screen. When a user wants to select one of applications 3 he moves the mouse such that cursor 2 is placed over his selection. The user then pushes a button on the mouse, which causes the selection to be highlighted. The user then moves cursor 2 to be within box 8, labelled Select. Once there the user again pushes the button on the mouse. The computer then acts upon the user's selection.

Alternatively, in order to make a selection, once a user has placed cursor 2 over a selection, some prior art systems allow a user to push the button twice in quick succession. Other systems may have two buttons on a mouse, one used for highlighting a selection, and one used for when a user finally wants to make a selection. Finally, in some systems, pushing a button on a mouse down may cause a selection to be highlighted. Releasing the button may cause the selection to be made.

Often times only a limited number of selections may be displayed at one time. For instance, in Figure 1, only nine applications in alphabetical order are shown. However, a total list of the applications may be much larger. The other selections may be addressed by using scroll bar 4. Scroll bar 4 contains a scroll region 7, an arrow box 5 and an arrow box 6. In Figure 1 scroll region 7 is at the border of arrow box 5. This indicates that the first entries of the list of applications are shown. When scroll region 7 is at the border of arrow box 6, this indicates that the last entries of the list of applications are shown. When scroll region 7 is in between these extreme positions, this indicates some intermediate entries of the list of applications are being shown.

Scroll region 7 may be moved by various methods. For instance, when scroll region 7 is not at the border of arrow box 6, a user may scroll down the shown list of applications by placing cursor 2 in arrow 6 and depressing a button on the mouse. Upon each depression of the button the top

displayed entry disappears, a new bottom entry appears at the bottom and all the other selections move upward. Also, scroll region 7 moves incrementally downward. Similarly, placing cursor 2 in arrow 5 and depressing the button on the mouse causes the list of applications to be scrolled upward and scroll region 7 to be moved incrementally upward. Further, the list of applications may be scrolled by placing cursor 2 in scroll regions 7 and depressing the button on the mouse. The scroll region will then follow cursor 2 up and down scroll bar 4 until the button is released. Upon release, entries in the list of applications would appear which would correspond to the location of scroll region 7 on scroll bar 4.

An article in Communications of the ACM, Volume 29, No. 4, April 1986, pages 312-318, New York, by L. Koved et al., entitled "Embedded menus: selecting items in context", describes a menu technique in which selectable items are embedded in on-screen text which indicates the context of the items. In one embodiment, the selectable items are identified by underlining. The user moves a cursor around the screen to point to the item to be selected. On pressing a designated key, the item is selected.

US-A-3753233 describes a data entry system with a video display and a keyboard. A display mask is used to guide a user through an input. The mask is split into fields, and for each field a number of frequently used, alternative items are displayed. The user selects the desired item by deleting all of the items in the field which are not desired, leaving only the desired item. A cursor is provided to move between fields and to move between items in a field.

As can be seen, the prior art methods are visual, easy to use methods of selecting an entry from a list. Nevertheless, when a list of entries is very long, it may be inconvenient for a user to have to move a cursor to try and locate the exact entry. Further, many typists prefer to remove their fingers from the keyboard as seldom as possible. In some prior art methods, however, it is sometimes necessary to use a mouse to make a selection.

Summary of the Invention

The present invention is defined in the claims.

In accordance with the preferred embodiment of the present invention, an improved apparatus and method for selecting entries within a plurality of entries is presented. The preferred embodiment of the invention includes a search control processor which causes an edit box and a list box to be displayed on a display. In the list box is displayed a subset of entries from a plurality of entries. As letters are typed on a keyboard, the letters are

displayed in the edit box. The search control processor causes a first entry from the plurality of entries to be highlighted when the first letter(s) of the first entry match the letters displayed in the edit box and when the first entry in alphabetical order before any other entry from the plurality of entries whose first letter(s) match the letter (s) displayed in the edit box. When a user presses "ENTER" or some other designated key on the keyboard the search control processor selects the entry highlighted on the screen.

Since often the list box is not sufficiently large to display all entries in the plurality of entries, when the first entry whose first letter(s) match the letters in the edit box is not displayed, the search control processor will cause the list box to scroll so that the first entry is displayed. Also if the first letter(s) of no entry from the plurality of entries matches the letter(s) in the edit box, the search control processor will cause the list box to be scrolled to the top of the list of entries, and depressing the "ENTER" key will have no effect. Alternately, depressing the "ENTER" key could result in an error message.

When there are a large number of entries in a list, the present invention allows a user to make a selection quickly, with a minimum amount of key-strokes. It is not necessary for his hands to leave the keyboard. Additionally, the visual display aids the user in determining that he has made a correct choice.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Figure 1 is a block diagram of a display demonstrating a prior way of selecting an entry from a list of entries.

Figure 2A shows a block diagram of a computing system in accordance with the preferred embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 2B shows a mouse in accordance with the preferred embodiment of the present invention.

Figures 3 through 7 shows display which illustrate how selections may be made in accordance with the preferred embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 8 is a copy of a program which implements a search control processor in accordance with the preferred embodiment of the present invention.

Description of the Preferred Embodiment

Figure 2A shows a computing system in accordance with the preferred embodiment of the present invention. A monitor 14, a mouse 20 and a keyboard 19 are coupled to a computer 18. A memory 10 is resident within computer 18 as represented by arrow 21.

Memory 10, may, for example, contain an application program 11, an application program 12, an application program 13, a main help module 16 and system intrinsics 17.

Application programs 12, 13 and 14 call a main help module 16. Within main help module is a search control processor 15. Search control processor 15 utilizes system intrinsics 17 to display a selection box 30 shown in Figures 3 through 7.

An example of code embodying search control processor 15 is included with this application as Figure 8. The code is written in the "C" programming language and calls system intrinsics 17. System intrinsics 17 may be routines within an operating system such as Windows, available from Microsoft Corporation, having a business address at 16011 NE 36th Way, Redmond, WA 98073-9717.

Figure 2B shows a top view of mouse 20. Mouse 20 includes a button 27 and a button 28.

Figure 3 shows selection box 30 as displayed on display 14. Within selection box 30 is a list box 34. Within list box 34 selection entries 33 are displayed. In the present embodiment, each entry from selection entries 33 describes a topic which for which a "help" program will provide information on. Thus, for instance, a user can get information on icons by selecting the entry from the selection of displayed entries 33 which says "Icon".

In this preferred embodiment, selection of entries using a mouse may be done in the way described in the discussion of Prior Art of Figure 1. As in Figure 1, a scroll bar 32 may be used by in the selection process.

In Figure 3, there is additionally included an edit box 31. Edit box 31 may be used to type in the name of the selection. This allows the user to make a selection using keyboard 19, and without using mouse 30. For instance, rather than using a mouse to select the entry labelled "Close", a user could, using keyboard 19, type in the letters "c" "l" "o" "s" "e". The word "close" appear in edit box 31. Upon pressing "ENTER" on keyboard 19, search control processor 15 would cause the entry "Close" to be selected. As explained below, although a user may completely spell out "c" "l" "o" "s" "e", in the preferred embodiment of the present invention, it is not necessary to type in all the letters. As will be made clear from the following discussion, typing in the letter "c" "l" "o" followed by pressing "ENTER" is sufficient to select the entry "Close".

Letters typed into edit box 31 also interacts with displayed entries 33 in list box 34 to allow for a shorthand method to select entries. When a first letter is typed into edit box 31, search control processor 15 causes the first selection in list box with the same first letter to be highlighted. For instance, if the letter "s" is typed in edit box 31,

the entry "Select Item" would be highlighted, as is shown in Figure 4. If a user presses "ENTER" on keyboard 19, search control processor 15 will cause the entry "Select Item" to be selected.

If instead the user types another letter, search control processor 15 causes the first entry in list box 34 with the same first two letters to be highlighted. For instance, if the user typed in the letter "e", the entry "Select Item" would remain highlighted. If, instead, the user typed in the letter "h", the entry "Shadow" would be highlighted, as shown in Figure 5. If the user now presses "ENTER" on keyboard 19, search control processor 15 will cause the entry "Shadow" to be selected.

This process continues for every letter typed into edit box 31. If at this point the user presses "BACKSPACE" on keyboard 19, the "h" will disappear from edit box 31. Additionally, the highlighting in list box 34 will match the entry in edit box 31, so that the entry "Shadow" will no longer be highlighted, but instead the entry "Select Item" will be highlighted, as shown in Figure 4. If the user presses "ENTER" on keyboard 19, search control processor 15 will cause the entry "Select Item" to be selected.

If the list of entries is larger than may be displayed within list box 34, this does not prevent non-displayed entries from being selected. Search control processor 15 will continue to search through non-displayed entries looking for a match. If a match is found search control processor 15 will scroll displayed entries 33 to display the entry that matches. For instance, if edit box 31 were to contain the letters "sh" as shown in Figure 5, and the user additionally types in the letter "o" search control processor 15 will scroll down to highlight an entry "Show" as shown in Figure 6.

If there is no entry that matches, search control processor 15 will scroll list box 34 to the top of the list of entries and no entries will be highlighted. For instance, if edit box 31 contains "sho" as in Figure 6, and the user additionally types the letter "p", search control processor 15 will find no match, that is there is no entry which starts with the letters "shop". Therefore, search control processor 15 will scroll to the top of the list as shown in Figure 7. If the user presses "ENTER" nothing will happen. An alternate embodiment could allow for an error message to be displayed.

Claims

1. A method of operation in a computing system having a keyboard (19) and a display (14) for allowing a user from the keyboard (19) to select a selected entry from a plurality of entries (33), the method comprising the steps of:

(a) displaying in a first region (31) on the display (14) letters typed in by the user on the keyboard (19);
 (b) displaying in a second region (34) on the display (14) a first subset of the plurality of entries (33);
 (c) highlighting on the display a first entry whose first letter(s) match the letter(s) displayed in the first region (31) when the first entry is in alphabetical order before any other entry from the plurality of entries (33) whose first letter(s) match the letter(s) displayed in the first region (31);
 (d) making the highlighted entry the selected entry when the user presses a first designated key on the keyboard (19); and
 (e) displaying the first subset of the plurality of entries (33) in the second region (34), highlighting no entry, and making the selected entry equal to the null set when the first letter(s) of no entry in the plurality of entries match the letter(s) displayed in the first region.

2. A method according to claim 1, wherein step (c) additionally comprises the following sub-step:

(c1) displaying in the second region (34) a second subset of the plurality of entries (33) which includes the first entry when the first entry is not in the first subset of the plurality of entries (33).

3. A method according to claim 1 or 2, further comprising the steps of:

deleting from the first region (31) the last letter displayed in the first region upon the user pressing a second designated key on the keyboard; and

highlighting on the display a second entry whose first letter(s) match the letter(s) displayed in the first region (31) when the second entry is in alphabetical order before any other entry from the plurality of entries (33) whose first letter(s) match the letter(s) displayed in the first region (31).

4. An apparatus for selecting a selected entry from a plurality of entries (33) in a computing system having a display (14) and a keyboard (19), the apparatus comprising:

display control means (17) coupled to the display (14) for displaying things on the display; and

search control processor means, coupled to the display control means (15) and responsive to the keyboard (19), for causing the display control means (15) to display information



the entry "Select Item" would be highlighted, as is shown in Figure 4. If a user presses "ENTER" on keyboard 19, search control processor 15 will cause the entry "Select Item" to be selected.

If instead the user types another letter, search control processor 15 causes the first entry in list box 34 with the same first two letters to be highlighted. For instance, if the user typed in the letter "e", the entry "Select Item" would remain highlighted. If, instead, the user typed in the letter "h", the entry "Shadow" would be highlighted, as shown in Figure 5. If the user now presses "ENTER" on keyboard 19, search control processor 15 will cause the entry "Shadow" to be selected.

This process continues for every letter typed into edit box 31. If at this point the user presses "BACKSPACE" on keyboard 19, the "h" will disappear from edit box 31. Additionally, the highlighting in list box 34 will match the entry in edit box 31, so that the entry "Shadow" will no longer be highlighted, but instead the entry "Select Item" will be highlighted, as shown in Figure 4. If the user presses "ENTER" on keyboard 19, search control processor 15 will cause the entry "Select Item" to be selected.

If the list of entries is larger than may be displayed within list box 34, this does not prevent non-displayed entries from being selected. Search control processor 15 will continue to search through non-displayed entries looking for a match. If a match is found search control processor 15 will scroll displayed entries 33 to display the entry that matches. For instance, if edit box 31 were to contain the letters "sh" as shown in Figure 5, and the user additionally types in the letter "o" search control processor 15 will scroll down to highlight an entry "Show" as shown in Figure 6.

If there is no entry that matches, search control processor 15 will scroll list box 34 to the top of the list of entries and no entries will be highlighted. For instance, if edit box 31 contains "sho" as in Figure 6, and the user additionally types the letter "p", search control processor 15 will find no match, that is there is no entry which starts with the letters "shop". Therefore, search control processor 15 will scroll to the top of the list as shown in Figure 7. If the user presses "ENTER" nothing will happen. An alternate embodiment could allow for an error message to be displayed.

Claims

1. A method of operation in a computing system having a keyboard (19) and a display (14) for allowing a user from the keyboard (19) to select a selected entry from a plurality of entries (33), the method comprising the steps of:

(a) displaying in a first region (31) on the display (14) letters typed in by the user on the keyboard (19);

(b) displaying in a second region (34) on the display (14) a first subset of the plurality of entries (33);

(c) highlighting on the display a first entry whose first letter(s) match the letter(s) displayed in the first region (31) when the first entry is in alphabetical order before any other entry from the plurality of entries (33) whose first letter(s) match the letter(s) displayed in the first region (31);

(d) making the highlighted entry the selected entry when the user presses a first designated key on the keyboard (19); and

(e) displaying the first subset of the plurality of entries (33) in the second region (34), highlighting no entry, and making the selected entry equal to the null set when the first letter(s) of no entry in the plurality of entries match the letter(s) displayed in the first region.

2. A method according to claim 1, wherein step (c) additionally comprises the following sub-step:

(c1) displaying in the second region (34) a second subset of the plurality of entries (33) which includes the first entry when the first entry is not in the first subset of the plurality of entries (33).

3. A method according to claim 1 or 2, further comprising the steps of:

deleting from the first region (31) the last letter displayed in the first region upon the user pressing a second designated key on the keyboard; and

highlighting on the display a second entry whose first letter(s) match the letter(s) displayed in the first region (31) when the second entry is in alphabetical order before any other entry from the plurality of entries (33) whose first letter(s) match the letter(s) displayed in the first region (31).

4. An apparatus for selecting a selected entry from a plurality of entries (33) in a computing system having a display (14) and a keyboard (19), the apparatus comprising:

display control means (17) coupled to the display (14) for displaying things on the display; and

search control processor means, coupled to the display control means (15) and responsive to the keyboard (19), for causing the display control means (15) to display information



and for allowing the selection of the selected entry, the search control processor means including:

edit box means for causing the search control processor to display in a first region (31) of the display (14), letters typed in on the keyboard (19),

list display means, for causing the search control processor to display in a second region (34) of the display (14), in alphabetical order, a first subset of the plurality of entries (33),

highlight means for causing the search control processor to highlight on the display (14) a first entry displayed in the second region when the search controller processor means determines that the first letter(s) in the first entry match the letter(s) displayed in the first region (31) when the first entry is in alphabetical order first among entries from the plurality of entries (33) whose first letter(s) match the letter(s) displayed in the first region (31); and,

selection means for making the first entry the selected entry when the search control processor means determines that a designated key on the keyboard (19) is pressed.

5. An apparatus according to claim 4 wherein the highlight means additionally comprises means for causing the display control means (15) to display in the second region (34) a second subset of the plurality of entries (33) when the search control processor means determines that the first entry is not in the first subset of the plurality of entries (33).

6. An apparatus according to claim 5 wherein the search control processor means additionally includes:

means for causing the display control means to display the first subset of the plurality of entries (33) in the second region and highlighting no entry when the first letter(s) of no entry in the plurality of entries (33) match the letter(s) displayed in the first region (31); and,

means for making the selected entry equal to the null set when the first letter(s) of no entry in the plurality of entries (33) match the letter(s) displayed in the first region (31).

Patentansprüche

1. Betriebsverfahren für ein Rechensystem mit einer Tastatur (19) und einer Anzeige (14), wobei ein Benutzer über die Tastatur (19) einen ausgewählten Eintrag aus mehreren Einträgen (33) auswählen kann, bei dem

(a) Buchstaben, welche vom Benutzer über die Tastatur (19) eingegeben wurden, in einem ersten Bereich (31) auf der Anzeige (14) angezeigt werden,

(b) eine erste Untermenge der mehreren Einträge (33) in einem zweiten Bereich (34) auf der Anzeige (14) angezeigt wird,

(c) ein erster Eintrag auf der Anzeige hervorgehoben wird, dessen erste(r) Buchstabe(n) mit dem (den) im ersten Bereich (31) angezeigten Buchstaben übereinstimmen, wenn der erste Eintrag in alphabetischer Reihenfolge vor jedem anderen Eintrag der mehreren Einträge (33) steht, deren erste(r) Buchstabe(n) mit dem (den) im ersten Bereich (31) angezeigten Buchstaben übereinstimmen,

(d) der hervorgehobene Eintrag zum ausgewählten Eintrag gemacht wird, wenn der Benutzer eine erste bestimmte Taste der Tastatur (19) drückt, und

(e) die erste Untermenge der mehreren Einträge (33) im zweiten Bereich (34) angezeigt wird, kein Eintrag hervorgehoben wird und der ausgewählte Eintrag gleich der Nullmenge gemacht wird, wenn der (die) erste(r) Buchstabe(n) keines Eintrages der mehreren Einträge mit dem (den) im ersten Bereich angezeigten Buchstaben übereinstimmen.

2. Verfahren nach Anspruch 1, bei dem der Schritt (c) zusätzlich den folgenden Unterschritt umfaßt:

(c1) Anzeigen einer zweiten Untermenge der mehreren Einträge (33), die den ersten Eintrag umfaßt, im zweiten Bereich (34), wenn der erste Eintrag nicht in der ersten Untermenge der mehreren Einträge (33) ist.

3. Verfahren nach Anspruch 1 oder 2, mit den weiteren Verfahrensschritten:

Löschen des letzten im ersten Bereich angezeigten Buchstabens aus dem ersten Bereich (31), wenn der Benutzer eine zweite bestimmte Taste auf der Tastatur drückt, und

Hervorheben eines zweiten Eintrages auf der Anzeige, dessen erste(r) Buchstabe(n) mit dem (den) im ersten Bereich (31) angezeigten Buchstaben übereinstimmen, wenn der zweite Eintrag in alphabetischer Reihenfolge vor jedem anderen Eintrag der mehreren Einträge (33) steht, deren erste(r) Buchstabe(n) mit dem (den) im ersten Bereich (31) angezeigten Buchstaben übereinstimmen.

4. Vorrichtung zum Auswählen eines ausgewählten Eintrages von mehreren Einträgen (33) in



einem Rechensystem mit einer Anzeige (14) und einer Tastatur (19), mit:

einer Anzeige-Steuereinrichtung (17), die mit der Anzeige (14) verbunden ist, um Dinge auf der Anzeige anzuzeigen, und

einer Suchsteuerungs-Prozessoreinrichtung, die mit der Anzeige-Steuereinrichtung (15) verbunden ist und auf die Tastatur (19) anspricht, so daß die Anzeige-Steuereinrichtung (15) Information anzeigt und der ausgewählte Eintrag ausgewählt werden kann, wobei die Suchsteuerungs-Prozessoreinrichtung folgende Merkmale aufweist:

eine Editierkasten-Einrichtung, die bewirkt, daß der Suchsteuerungsprozessor mit der Tastatur (19) eingegebene Buchstaben in einem ersten Bereich (31) der Anzeige (14) anzeigt,

eine Listenanzeige-Einrichtung, die bewirkt, daß der Suchsteuerungsprozessor eine erste Untermenge der mehreren Einträge (33) in alphabetischer Reihenfolge in einem zweiten Bereich (34) der Anzeige (14) anzeigt,

eine Hervorhebungs-Einrichtung, die bewirkt, daß der Suchsteuerungsprozessor einen ersten im zweiten Bereich angezeigten Eintrag auf der Anzeige hervorhebt, wenn die Suchsteuerungs-Prozessoreinrichtung ermittelt, daß der (die) erste(n) Buchstabe(n) des ersten Eintrags mit dem (den) im ersten Bereich (31) angezeigten Buchstaben übereinstimmen, wenn der erste Eintrag in alphabetischer Reihenfolge der erste der mehreren Einträge (33) ist, deren erste(r) Buchstabe(n) mit dem (den) im ersten Bereich (31) angezeigten Buchstaben übereinstimmen, und

eine Auswahleinrichtung, um den ersten Eintrag zum ausgewählten Eintrag zu machen, wenn die Suchsteuerungs-Prozessoreinrichtung ermittelt, daß eine bestimmte Taste der Tastatur (19) gedrückt wurde.

5. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 4, bei der die Hervorhebungs-Einrichtung zusätzlich eine Vorrichtung aufweist, die bewirkt, daß die Anzeige-Steuereinrichtung (15) im zweiten Bereich (34) eine zweite Untermenge der mehreren Einträge (33) anzeigt, wenn die Suchsteuerungs-Prozessoreinrichtung ermittelt, daß der erste Eintrag nicht in der ersten Untermenge der mehreren Einträge (33) enthalten ist.

6. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 5, bei der die Suchsteuerungs-Prozessoreinrichtung ferner folgende Merkmale aufweist:

eine Vorrichtung, die bewirkt, daß die Anzeige-Steuereinrichtung die erste Untermenge der mehreren Einträge (33) im zweiten Bereich anzeigt und keinen Eintrag hervorhebt,

wenn der (die) erste(n) Buchstabe(n) keines Eintrages der mehreren Einträge (33) mit dem (den) im ersten Bereich (31) angezeigten Buchstaben übereinstimmen, und

eine Vorrichtung, die den ausgewählten Eintrag gleich der Nullmenge macht, wenn der (die) erste(n) Buchstabe(n) keines Eintrags der mehreren Einträge (33) mit dem (den) im ersten Bereich (31) angezeigten Buchstaben übereinstimmen.

Revendications

1. Procédé de fonctionnement dans un système informatique équipé d'un clavier (19) et d'un écran de visualisation (14) pour permettre à un utilisateur de sélectionner à partir du clavier (19) une entrée sélectionnée parmi une pluralité d'entrées (33), le procédé comprenant les étapes suivantes:

(a) afficher dans une première zone (31) sur l'écran de visualisation (14) des lettres frappées sur le clavier (19) par l'utilisateur;

(b) afficher dans une seconde zone (34) sur l'écran de visualisation (14) un premier sous-ensemble de la pluralité d'entrées (33);

(c) sur-éclairer sur l'écran de visualisation une première entrée dont une première lettre (s) coïncide avec la lettre (s) affichée dans la première zone (31), lorsque la première entrée précède par ordre alphabétique toute autre entrée de la pluralité d'entrées (33) dont une première lettre (s) coïncide avec la lettre affichée dans la première zone (31);

(d) affecter l'entrée sur-éclairée en entrée sélectionnée lorsque l'utilisateur presse une première touche désignée sur le clavier (19); et

(e) afficher le premier sous-ensemble de la pluralité d'entrées (33) dans la seconde zone (34), ne pas sur-éclairer d'entrée, et affecter l'ensemble nul à l'entrée sélectionnée lorsque aucune entrée de la pluralité d'entrées n'a la première lettre (s) coïncidant avec la lettre (s) affichée dans la première zone.

2. Procédé conforme à la revendication 1, dans lequel l'étape (c) comprend également la sous-étape suivante:

(c1) afficher dans la seconde zone (34) un second sous-ensemble de la pluralité d'entrées (33) incluant la première entrée, lorsque la première entrée n'est pas comprise dans le premier sous-ensemble de la pluralité d'entrées (33).

3. Procédé conforme à la revendication 1 ou 2, comprenant également les étapes suivantes: supprimer dans la première zone (31) la der-



- nière lettre affichée dans la première région, lorsque l'utilisateur presse une seconde touche désignée sur le clavier; et sur-éclairer sur l'écran de visualisation une seconde entrée dont une première lettre (s) coïncide avec la lettre (s) affichée dans la première zone (31), lorsque la première entrée précède par ordre alphabétique toute autre entrée de la pluralité d'entrées (33) dont la première lettre (s) coïncide avec la lettre (s) affichée dans la première région (31).
4. Appareil pour sélectionner une entrée sélectionnée parmi une pluralité d'entrées (33) dans un système informatique équipé d'un écran de visualisation (14) et d'un clavier (19), l'appareil comprenant:
- des moyens de commande d'affichage (17) associés à l'écran de visualisation (14) pour afficher des objets sur l'écran de visualisation; et
 - des moyens à processeur de commande de recherche, associés aux moyens de commande d'affichage (15) et répondant au clavier (19), pour faire afficher des informations par les moyens de commande d'affichage (15) et pour autoriser la sélection de l'entrée sélectionnée, les moyens à processeur de commande de recherche incluant:
 - des moyens à case d'édition pour faire afficher par le processeur de commande de recherche des lettres frappées sur le clavier (19) et cela dans la première zone (31) de l'écran de visualisation (14);
 - des moyens d'affichage de liste pour faire afficher par ordre alphabétique par le processeur de commande de recherche un premier sous-ensemble de la pluralité d'entrées (33) et cela dans la seconde zone (34) de l'écran de visualisation (14);
 - des moyens de sur-éclairage pour faire sur-éclairer sur l'écran de visualisation (14) par le processeur de commande de recherche une première entrée affichée dans la seconde région, lorsque les moyens à processeur de commande de recherche déterminent que la première lettre (s) de la première entrée coïncide avec la lettre (s) affichée dans la première zone (31) et lorsque la première entrée est première par ordre alphabétique parmi les entrées de la pluralité d'entrées (33) dont la première lettre (s) coïncide avec la lettre affichée dans la première zone (31); et
 - des moyens de sélection pour affecter la première entrée en entrée sélectionnée lorsque les moyens à processeur de commande de recherche déterminent qu'une touche désignée sur le clavier (19) est pressée.
5. Appareil conforme à la revendication 4 dans lequel les moyens de sur-éclairage comprennent également des moyens pour faire afficher dans la seconde zone (34) par les moyens de commande d'affichage (15) un second sous-ensemble de la pluralité d'entrées (33) lorsque les moyens à processeur de commande de recherche déterminent que la première entrée n'est pas comprise dans le premier sous-ensemble de la pluralité d'entrées (33).
6. Appareil conforme à la revendication 5 dans lequel les moyens à processeur de commande de recherche comprennent également: des moyens pour faire afficher dans la seconde zone le premier sous-ensemble de la pluralité d'entrées (33) par les moyens de commande d'affichage et pour ne sur-éclairer aucune entrée lorsque aucune entrée de la pluralité d'entrées (33) n'a la première lettre (s) coïncidant avec la lettre (s) affichée dans la première zone (31); et des moyens pour affecter l'ensemble nul à l'entrée sélectionnée lorsque aucune entrée de la pluralité d'entrées (33) n'a la première lettre (s) coïncidant avec la lettre (s) affichée dans la première zone (31).