

TURBULENCE MITIGATION FOR TOUCH SCREEN SYSTEMS

BACKGROUND

5 The present disclosure relates generally to data processing systems and, in particular, to data processing systems that include touch screen systems. Still more particularly, the present disclosure relates to a method and apparatus for managing a touch screen system based on acceleration of the touch screen system.

10 An aircraft may have many different types of systems used to control the operation of the aircraft. These systems may include hydraulic systems, mechanical systems, and electrical systems.

15 Electrical systems may include, for example, systems for communications, navigation, flight control, collision avoidance, and other types of systems. Many of the different systems in an aircraft may have a display and physical control used to control the different systems. For example, these controls may include switches, dials, and other suitable types of controls.

20 In an effort to reduce the amount of space needed in a cockpit for the different electrical systems, different systems may be combined into a single system or may share a display. For example, several flight instruments and controls may be combined into a single display and control system for that display. In this manner, less space may be needed for these systems in the cockpit of an aircraft.

25 For example, an aircraft may include a primary flight display in which information such as altitude, pitch, roll, and other information about the aircraft may be displayed. As another example, a multifunction display may be present in the aircraft with multiple buttons that may be used to display information in numerous configurable ways. This multifunction display may be used to display information such as a navigation route, a moving map, weather radar information, airport information, and other suitable types of information.

30 These and other types of information may be displayed on a display in which the operator of the aircraft may interact with a graphical user interface on the display through a user input device. This user input device may include, for example, a keyboard, a mouse, a joystick, a touch screen, and other suitable types of devices. Electronic flight bags (EFBs) and other devices such as tablet computers are using

touch screen displays more frequently. In many cases, these displays may be the primary interface for user input.

During certain operating conditions, the ability of an operator to manipulate user input devices such as keys, keyboards, a mouse, or other input devices may become more difficult than desired. For example, some input devices may be more difficult than desired to use during certain maneuvers of the aircraft such as takeoff and landing. In another example, other conditions such as the weather also may make the use of input devices more difficult. Therefore, it would be desirable to have a method and apparatus that takes into account at least some of the issues discussed above, as well as other possible issues.

SUMMARY

In one illustrative embodiment, an apparatus comprises a touch screen system, an acceleration detector located within the touch screen system, and an input manager in communication with the acceleration detector. The acceleration detector is configured to detect acceleration of the touch screen system. The input manager is configured to initiate an action when the acceleration of the touch screen system reduces usability of the touch screen system.

In another illustrative embodiment, a method for managing a touch screen system is present. Data generated by an acceleration detector about acceleration of the touch screen system is received. The acceleration detector is located within the touch screen system. An action is initiated by an input manager when the acceleration of the touch screen system reduces usability of the touch screen system.

In another illustrative embodiment, an aircraft control system comprises a network in an aircraft, data processing systems in the aircraft, a touch screen system, an acceleration detector, and an input manager. The data processing systems are connected to the network and are configured to control operation of the aircraft. The touch screen system is configured display a graphical user interface with a number of controls configured to receive user input for the data processing systems to control the operation of the aircraft. The acceleration detector is located within the touch screen system. The acceleration detector is configured to detect acceleration of the touch screen system. The input manager in communication with the acceleration detector. The input manger is configured to initiate an action when the acceleration of the touch

screen system reduces usability of the number of controls displayed in the graphical user interface on the touch screen system.

The features and functions can be achieved independently in various embodiments of the present disclosure or may be combined in yet other embodiments in which further details can be seen with reference to the following description and drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

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

Figure 1 is an illustration of an aircraft in accordance with an illustrative embodiment;

Figure 2 is an illustration of a block diagram of an information processing environment in accordance with an illustrative embodiment;

Figure 3 is an illustration of a block diagram of a touch screen system in accordance with an illustrative embodiment;

Figure 4 is an illustration of a graphical user interface in accordance with an illustrative embodiment;

Figure 5 is another illustration of a graphical user interface with a change in controls in accordance with an illustrative embodiment;

Figure 6 is an illustration of a disabled graphical user interface in accordance with an illustrative embodiment;

Figure 7 is an illustration of a flowchart of a process for managing a touch screen system in accordance with an illustrative embodiment; and

Figure 8 is an illustration of a block diagram of a data processing system in accordance with an illustrative embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The illustrative embodiments recognize and take into account one or more different considerations. For example, the illustrative embodiments recognize and take into account that touch screen systems may further reduce the amount of space needed in a cockpit for different functions. With a touch screen system, input may be generated

by a user touching the screen with a digit, stylus, or other suitable input device to generate input to perform various functions. In this manner, space allocated for user input devices such as keys, a keyboard, a mouse, and other input devices may be reduced.

5 The illustrative embodiments also recognize and take into account that the usability of touch screen systems may be affected by acceleration of those systems. Further, the illustrative embodiments recognize and take into account that touch screen systems may be portable within the aircraft. For example, touch screen systems may take the form of a tablet computer, a portable display device with a touch screen, and
10 other portable forms.

A touch screen system also may take the form of an electronic flight bag (EFB). An electronic flight bag is an electronic information management device that helps flight crews perform tasks more easily and efficiently with less paper. An electronic flight bag may include an aircraft operating manual, a flight crew operating
15 manual, navigation charts, and other suitable types of information. With respect to navigation charts, the electronic flight bag may provide a moving map. Additionally, the electronic flight bag also may provide functions such as performance takeoff calculations or other suitable functions.

The illustrative embodiments also recognize and take into account that
20 these types of touch screen systems and other types of touch screen systems may have reduced usability depending on acceleration of the systems that may occur. For example, during the operation of an aircraft, acceleration of a touch screen system may reduce an ability of an operator to generate desired input.

For example, an operator may be unable to press a desired key
25 depending on the amount of acceleration that occurs with the touch screen system. The acceleration on the touch screen system also may result in the operator pressing an undesired key on the touch screen system.

The illustrative embodiments also recognize and take into account that
30 some sources of acceleration that may affect the ability to use a touch screen system include turbulence that may be encountered by an aircraft. Other sources of acceleration may be from vibrations occurring during takeoff, landing, and other phases of flight.

Thus, the illustrative embodiments provide a method and apparatus for managing a touch screen system. In one illustrative embodiment, an apparatus comprises a touch screen system, an acceleration detector, and an input manager. The acceleration detector is located within the touch screen system. The acceleration detector is configured to detect acceleration of the touch screen system. The input manager is in communication with the acceleration detector and is configured to initiate an action when the acceleration of the touch screen system reduces usability of the touch screen system.

With reference now to the figures and, in particular, with reference to **Figure 1**, an illustration of an aircraft is depicted in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. In this illustrative example, aircraft **100** has wing **102** and wing **104** attached to fuselage **106**. Aircraft **100** includes engine **108** attached to wing **102** and engine **110** attached to wing **104**.

Fuselage **106** has nose section **112** and tail section **114**. Horizontal stabilizer **116**, horizontal stabilizer **118**, and vertical stabilizer **120** are attached to tail section **114** of fuselage **106**.

In these illustrative examples, aircraft **100** also may include touch screen system **122** within the interior of aircraft **100**. Touch screen system **122** is a device that may be used by an operator of aircraft **100** in these illustrative examples.

When touch screen system **122** is implemented in accordance with an illustrative embodiment, acceleration of touch screen system **122** that reduces the usability of touch screen system **122** may be detected by touch screen system **122**. In response to detecting acceleration of touch screen system **122** that reduces usability of touch screen system **122**, an action may be initiated with respect to touch screen system **122**.

Turning now to **Figure 2**, an illustration of a block diagram of an information processing environment is depicted in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. In this depicted example, information processing environment **200** may comprise network data processing system **202**. Further, network data processing system **202** may be located in platform **204**. Aircraft **100** in **Figure 1** is an example of one implementation for platform **204**.

In these illustrative examples, network data processing system **202** may include data processing systems **206** and network **208**. Data processing systems **206**

may be configured to control operation of platform **204**. Further data processing system **206** may be configured to monitor platform **204**.

As depicted, data processing systems **206** may be connected to network **208**. The connection of data processing systems **206** to network **208** may be through
5 wired connections, optical fiber connections, wireless connections, and other suitable types of connections that may provide communication to network **208**, data processing systems **206**, or a combination of the two.

As used herein, a first component "connected to" a second component means that the first component can be connected directly or indirectly to the second
10 component. In other words, additional components may be present between the first component and the second component. The first component is considered to be indirectly connected to the second component when one or more additional components are present between the two components. When the first component is directly
15 connected to the second component, no additional components are present between the two components.

In these illustrative examples, data processing systems **206** may take various forms. For example, data processing system **210** in data processing systems **206** may be a computer, a line replaceable unit, a flight management system, a navigation computer, an autopilot, a mobile phone, a tablet computer, or some other
20 suitable type of device that may process information. Typically, data processing system **210** may include a processor as well as other components that allow for processing of information **212**.

In these illustrative examples, touch screen system **214** also may be present in platform **204**. Touch screen system **214** may be configured to receive user
25 input for data processing systems **206** to control operation of platform **204**.

Touch screen system **214** may be fixed touch screen system **215** or portable touch screen system **216**. When touch screen system **214** takes the form of fixed touch screen system **215**, touch screen system **214** may be connected to platform **204**. For example, touch screen system **214** may be part of an input and output system
30 implemented in data processing system **210**.

When touch screen system **214** takes the form of portable touch screen system **216**, touch screen system **214** may be movable by an operator. For example, portable touch screen system **216** may be in communication with data processing

system **210** but not physically connected to data processing system **210**. For example, portable touch screen system **216** may be selected from one of a tablet computer, a mobile phone, a laptop computer, an electronic flight bag, a portable display device, and some other suitable type of portable device in which touch screen system **214** may be implemented.

The portable device also may be handheld. In one illustrative example, when touch screen system **214** takes the form of a tablet computer, the tablet computer may be an iPad. The iPad is available from Apple, Inc. In another illustrative example, touch screen system **214** may be an electronic flight bag.

As depicted, touch screen system **214** is configured to detect acceleration **217** of touch screen system **214** that reduces usability **218** of touch screen system **214**. Usability **218** of touch screen system **214** may be considered to be reduced when information **212** cannot be input or manipulated using touch screen system **214** in a desired manner.

In these illustrative examples, usability **218** may be considered to be reduced when user input from an operator results in increased errors as a result of acceleration **217** to touch screen system **214**. In these illustrative examples, acceleration **217** may cause undesired movement to touch screen system **214**. In particular, acceleration **217** of touch screen system **214** may have a magnitude and a direction. During a period of time, acceleration **217** may have different magnitudes, different directions or both different magnitudes and different directions.

In these illustrative examples, acceleration **217** may be caused by at least one of vibrations, turbulence, waves, wind, and operation of platform **204**. As used herein, the phrase "at least one of", when used with a list of items, means different combinations of one or more of the listed items may be used and only one of each item in the list may be needed. For example, "at least one of item A, item B, and item C" may include, without limitation, item A or item A and item B. This example also may include item A, item B, and item C or item B and item C.

For example, acceleration **217** of touch screen system **214** may result from operation of platform **204** when platform **204** is a vehicle, a ship moving in water with waves, a ship moving in water with wind, an aircraft in turbulence, a ground vehicle moving on a rough surface, operation of thrusters on a spacecraft, landing of an aircraft, takeoff of an aircraft, and other sources of acceleration **217**.

As depicted, acceleration detector **219** within touch screen system **214** is configured to detect acceleration **217** of touch screen system **214**. Acceleration detector **219** may be implemented using various devices. For example, acceleration detector **219** may be implemented using an accelerometer system. The accelerometer system may include one or more accelerometers.

Acceleration detector **219** is configured to generate data **220** based on detection of acceleration **217** of touch screen system **214**. Data **220** may include, for example, without limitation, intensity of the acceleration, frequency of movement oscillation, and other suitable types of data. The intensity may be acceleration values measured in g-force.

In these illustrative examples, input manager **222** is configured to receive data **220**. Input manager **222** may be implemented using hardware, software, or a combination of the two. When software is used, the operations performed by input manager **222** may be implemented in program code configured to run on a processor unit. When hardware is employed, the hardware may include circuits that operate to perform the operations in input manager **222**.

In these illustrative examples, the hardware may take the form of a circuit system, an integrated circuit, an application specific integrated circuit (ASIC), a programmable logic device, or some other suitable type of hardware configured to perform a number of operations. With a programmable logic device, the device is configured to perform the number of operations. The device may be reconfigured at a later time or may be permanently configured to perform the number of operations. Examples of programmable logic devices include, for example, a programmable logic array, a programmable array logic, a field programmable logic array, a field programmable gate array, and other suitable hardware devices. Additionally, the processes may be implemented in organic components integrated with inorganic components and/or may be comprised entirely of organic components excluding a human being. For example, the processes may be implemented as circuits in organic semiconductors.

In the illustrative examples, input manager **222** may be implemented in a number of different locations. For example, input manager **222** may be implemented with at least one of touch screen system **214**, network data processing system **202**, data processing system **210**, and in some other suitable location.

Input manager **222** is configured to determine when acceleration **217** of touch screen system **214** reduces usability **218** of touch screen system **214** using data **220** received from acceleration detector **219**. The determination of when acceleration **217** is considered to reduce usability **218** of touch screen system **214** may be made by
5 determining whether acceleration **217** of touch screen system **214** is greater than selected threshold **230**. In these illustrative examples, selected threshold **230** may be, for example, an acceleration value measured in m/s^2 .

Different metrics may be monitored by input manager **222** for comparison to selected threshold **230**. For example, input manager **222** may monitor at least one of
10 duration of the vibrations from the oscillations, intensity of the vibrations, frequency of the vibrations, change in intensity, change in frequency, variance in form of observed probability of distribution of events because of the vibrations, and other suitable metrics. These different metrics may be compared to selected threshold **230** for the metric. Additionally, selected threshold **230** also may be selected based on the phase of flight
15 of when platform **204** takes the form of aircraft **100**. As a result, selected threshold **230** may be selected for each metric of interest and used to determine whether action **224** should be initiated.

Further, selected threshold **230** may be based on empirical research on the perceived intensity, frequency, duration of turbulence events, and impact on system
20 usability. These tolerances are based on the standard deviation for the events causing the vibrations and may be applied to each of the three axes in which vibrations may occur. In this manner, dynamic monitoring may occur with an ability to change selected threshold **230** during monitoring based on the metrics being monitored and other factors such as phase of flight.

When acceleration **217** of touch screen system **214** is detected such that usability **218** of touch screen system **214** is reduced, input manager **222** initiates action **224**. Action **224** may be initiated with respect to touch screen system **214**. Action **224**
25 may include at least one of disabling touch screen system **214**, generating an alert, enabling voice input, requesting confirmation of an input made to touch screen system **214**, and other suitable types of actions. Action **224** may be any action configured to
30 reduce undesired entry of information **212** into touch screen system **214** in these illustrative examples.

Additionally, input manager **222** may continue to receive data **220** about acceleration **217** of touch screen system **214** generated by acceleration detector **219**. Using data **220**, input manager **222** may determine whether acceleration **217** no longer reduces usability **218** of touch screen system **214**. This determination may be made by
5 comparing acceleration **217** to selected threshold **230**. In some illustrative examples, acceleration **217** may be compared to another selected threshold **232** rather than selected threshold **230**. In other words, the threshold used to determine when usability **218** of touch screen system **214** is no longer reduced may be different from the threshold used to determine when usability **218** of touch screen system **214** is reduced.

10 In these illustrative examples, action **224** may be first action **234**. When input manager **222** determines usability **218** of touch screen system **214** is no longer reduced, input manager **222** may initiate second action **236**. Second action **236** may reverse action **224** in these illustrative examples. For example, second action **236** may include at least one of enabling touch screen system **214** and disabling requesting
15 confirmation of an input made to touch screen system **214**.

Further, in some illustrative examples, usability **218** may have levels of reduced usability **240**. As input manager **222** detects a reduction in usability **218** of touch screen system **214**, this reduction in usability **218** may be identified as a level within levels of reduced usability **240**.

20 In other words, input manager **222**, is configured to determine a level of reduced usability in levels of reduced usability **240** for touch screen system **214**. Additionally, input manager **222** is configured to initiate action **224** based on the level of reduced usability in levels of reduced usability **240** identified for touch screen system **214**.

25 Each time a different level of reduce usability is identified in levels of reduced usability **240**, action **224** may be initiated. In other words, as the reduction in usability **218** of touch screen system **214** is identified, additional actions may be initiated. For example, one level in levels of reduced usability **240** may result in action **224** taking the form of generating an alert. A greater level of reduced usability in levels
30 of reduced usability **240** may result in requesting confirmation of input to touch screen system **214**. An even greater level of reduced usability in levels of reduced usability **240** may result in disabling touch screen system **214**.

Turning now to **Figure 3**, an illustration of a block diagram of a touch screen system is depicted in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. In this depicted example, a number of different components are illustrated for touch screen system **214**. As depicted, touch screen system **214** comprises structure **300**, touch screen **302**, and acceleration detector **219**.

In these illustrative examples, structure **300** may take various forms. For example, structure **300** may be a housing, a frame, a panel, or some other suitable type of structure.

Touch screen **302** is associated with structure **300**. When one component is “associated” with another component, the association is a physical association in the depicted examples. For example, a first component, touch screen **302**, may be considered to be associated with a second component, structure **300**, by being secured to the second component, bonded to the second component, mounted to the second component, welded to the second component, fastened to the second component, and/or connected to the second component in some other suitable manner. The first component also may be connected to the second component using a third component. The first component may also be considered to be associated with the second component by being formed as part of and/or an extension of the second component.

Touch screen **302** is a physical device and includes display **306** and input system **308**. In these illustrative examples, touch screen **302** is an electronic display that is also configured to detect the presence and location of a touch within display **306** using input system **308**.

Display **306** may be implemented using a number of different types of display devices. For example, display **306** may be a liquid crystal display, a light emitting diode display, or other suitable types of display devices.

Input system **308** is configured to be placed in association with display **306** such that user input **310** may be generated in response to touch **312** by operator **314**. In these illustrative examples, user input **310** may be made to input system **308** to control operation of platform **204**, which may be, for example, aircraft **100**.

In these illustrative examples, operator **314** is a human operator. Touch **312** may be generated by operator **314** touching input system **308** on display **306** with a digit. In other illustrative examples, touch **312** may be generated by operator **314** manipulating a stylus or other device to touch input system **308** on display **306**.

In these illustrative examples, graphical user interface **316** may be displayed on display **306** on touch screen **302**. Graphical user interface **316** may be an interface to a program. The program maybe, for example, a program in a navigation system, an autopilot, an environmental control system, an in-flight entertainment system, a weather information system, and other suitable types of systems in network data processing system **202** in **Figure 2**.

In these illustrative examples, number of controls **318** may be displayed on graphical user interface **316**. Number of controls **318** is a number of graphical controls that may be used to generate user input to enter information, manipulate information, or perform other operations on information. User input **310** in touch screen system **214** may be to manipulate number of controls **318** displayed in graphical user interface **316** to control operation of aircraft **100**.

As used herein, a “number of” when used with reference to items means one or more items. For example, number of controls **318** is one or more controls.

Number of controls **318** may take various forms. For example, number of controls **318** may be at least one of a button, a key, a slider, a dial, a check box, a keyboard, and other suitable types of controls. In these illustrative examples, acceleration detector **219** may be associated with at least one of touch screen **302** and structure **300**.

As depicted, selected threshold **230** used by input manager **222** in **Figure 2** to determine when touch screen system **214** has reduced usability may be selected based on graphical user interface **316**. In other words, when graphical user interface **316** changes to a different graphical user interface or is modified, selected threshold **230** also may change. This change may take into account number of controls **318** present in graphical user interface **316** as well as the shape and size of number of controls **318**. As number of controls **318** change, graphical user interface **316** is considered to change in a manner that may result in the use of a different value for selected threshold **230**.

In these illustrative examples, action **224** in **Figure 2** with respect to graphical user interface **316** may include changing state **320** for graphical user interface **316**. Changing state **320** for graphical user interface **316** may include disabling graphical user interface **316**, reducing a functionality of graphical user interface **316** displayed on touch screen **302**, disabling a portion of number of controls **318**, changing

a size of at least a portion for number of controls **318**, changing functionality for the portion of number of controls **318**, and other suitable changes to state **320** for graphical user interface **316**. As depicted, the portion of number of controls **318** may be some or all of number of controls **318**. Second action **236** in **Figure 2** with respect to graphical user interface **316** may include at least one of increasing a functionality of graphical user interface **316** to an original level, returning a size of number of controls **318** in graphical user interface **316** to an original size, and other suitable actions.

Acceleration detector **219** may be connected to at least one of touch screen **302** and structure **300** in a manner such that acceleration detector **219** detects acceleration **217** in **Figure 2** of touch screen **302** in touch screen system **214**. By including acceleration detector **219** within touch screen system **214**, the detection of acceleration **217** is actually for touch screen **302** rather than other components that may be present in platform **204** in **Figure 2**.

In other words, acceleration detector **219** detects acceleration **217** in **Figure 2** for touch screen **302** in touch screen system **214** rather than for other components or structures in platform **204**. This type of detection may be useful in detecting acceleration **217** of touch screen **302** when touch screen system **214** is not connected to another structure or system in platform **204** in **Figure 2**. In other words, acceleration detector **219** may be configured to detect acceleration **217** of touch screen **302** rather than other components that may not be connected to touch screen **302**. In this manner, data **220** in **Figure 2** generated by acceleration detector **219** may more accurately reflect acceleration **217** of touch screen **302** for use in determining when usability **218** of touch screen **302** in touch screen system **214** is reduced.

In some illustrative examples, acceleration detector **219** may be located within structure **300**. For example, when touch screen system **214** takes the form of a tablet computer such as, for example, without limitation, an iPad, acceleration detector **219** is located within structure **300** which may take the form of a housing. In another example, when touch screen system **214** takes the form of an electronic flight bag, acceleration detector **219** is also located within the housing for the electronic flight bag. In this manner, accelerations detected by acceleration detector **219** are those of the tablet computer or the electronic flight bag rather than other components or structures in a platform such as an aircraft.

The illustration of information processing environment **200** and the different components in **Figure 2** and **Figure 3** are not meant to imply physical or architectural limitations to the manner in which an illustrative embodiment may be implemented. Other components in addition to or in place of the ones illustrated may be used. Some components may be unnecessary. Also, the blocks are presented to illustrate some functional components. One or more of these blocks may be combined, divided, or combined and divided into different blocks when implemented in an illustrative embodiment.

For example, data processing system **210** may not be connected to network **208** and may be a separate component that does not interact with other data processing systems in data processing systems **206** in network data processing system **202**. In another illustrative example, touch screen system **214** also may include a processor unit and may be configured to process information **212**. When touch screen system **214** includes the processor unit, touch screen system **214** may be a data processing system and not just a display with an input system.

Figures 4-6 are illustrations of a graphical user interface on which actions may be taken when acceleration of a touch screen system reduces the usability of the touch screen system. Turning first to **Figure 4**, an illustration of a graphical user interface is depicted in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. In this depicted example, graphical user interface **400** is an example of one implementation for graphical user interface **316** as shown in block form in **Figure 3**.

Graphical user interface **400** is an example of a graphical user interface on which an action may be taken when acceleration **217** is detected on touch screen system **214** that reduces usability **218** of touch screen system **214** in **Figure 2**. In particular, the acceleration on the touch screen system reduces usability **218** of touch screen system **214** by reducing the ability of operator **314** to enter user input **310** in **Figure 3** into graphical user interface **400**.

In this illustrative example, graphical user interface **400** displays map **402** with number of controls **404**. Number of controls **404** is a number of graphical controls displayed in graphical user interface **400**. In this example, number of controls **404** takes the form of buttons **405**. As depicted, number of controls **404** includes control **406**, control **408**, control **410**, and control **412**.

As depicted, control **406** is a “delete” button, control **408** is a “clear all” button, control **410** is a “highlight” button, and control **412** is a “menu” button. Control **406** may delete input in field **414** or may delete a last action that has occurred in map **402**. Control **408** may clear all input made to map **402**. Control **410** may highlight portions of map **402**. Control **412** may display a menu with other functions or controls on map **402**.

With reference now to **Figure 5**, an illustration of a graphical user interface with a change in controls is depicted in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. In this illustrative example, number of controls **404** has been changed to include only a portion of number of controls **404** present in graphical user interface **400** in **Figure 4**.

In this illustrative example, number of controls **404** includes control **500** and control **502**. Control **500** is a “highlight” button and control **502** is a “menu” button. Controls for delete and clear have been removed in graphical user interface **400**. The controls for deleting and clearing all have been omitted in graphical user interface **400** because of acceleration **217** of touch screen system **214** in **Figure 2** including graphical user interface **400**. These controls are removed to prevent an unintended deletion or clearing of information from graphical user interface **400**.

As depicted, control **500** and control **502** have been increased in size with graphical user interface **400**. This change of control **500** for highlighting and control **502** for displaying the menu occurs to increase the likelihood that these controls may be selected even though acceleration is present in touch screen system **214**. In other words, the change in graphical user interface **400** is performed to increase usability **218** of touch screen system **214** in which graphical user interface **400** is displayed.

Turning now to **Figure 6**, an illustration of a disabled graphical user interface is depicted in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. In this illustrative example, graphical user interface **400** is disabled in view of the acceleration that reduces usability **218** of touch screen system **214** in **Figure 2**. In this illustrative example, alert **600** is displayed to indicate that graphical user interface **400** has been disabled. In this illustrative example, alert **600** is displayed as a pop-up window in graphical user interface **400**.

Alert **600** states “disabled high turbulence” to indicate to operator **314** in **Figure 3** that graphical user interface **400** cannot be used at the present time. In particular, graphical user interface **400** may be disabled by disabling an ability of a user

to manipulate controls **404**. In other words, controls **404** are disabled. In some illustrative examples, the user may be provided with an option to override the disablement of controls **404**.

The illustration of graphical user interface **400** in **Figures 4-6** is not meant to limit the manner in which actions may be taken on a graphical user interface. These illustrations are only meant to be illustrative examples rather than limiting examples. For example, in other illustrative examples, graphical user interface **400** may request confirmation of the selection of one or more of number of controls **404**. In still other illustrative examples, other types of controls other than buttons **405** may be present. For example, other types of controls that may be used in addition to or in place of buttons **405** may include sliders, dials, and other suitable types of controls. In another illustrative example, user input may be received using voice commands in addition to or in place of number of controls **404** on graphical user interface **400**. These voice commands may be used to perform functions such as zoom functions, switching applications, entering commands, and other suitable functions.

With reference now to **Figure 7**, an illustration of a flowchart of a process for managing a touch screen system is depicted in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. The process illustrated in **Figure 7** may be implemented in information processing environment **200** in **Figure 2**. In particular, the process may be implemented to manage touch screen system **214** in **Figure 2**. Further, the process may be implemented within input manager **222** in **Figure 2**.

The process begins by receiving data generated by an acceleration detector about acceleration of a touch screen system (operation **700**). In this illustrative example, the acceleration detector is located within the touch screen system.

A determination is made as to whether the acceleration of the touch screen system reduces usability of the touch screen system using the data (operation **702**). In operation **702**, a level of reduced usability of the touch screen system may be identified.

If the acceleration reduces the usability of the touch screen system, an action is initiated with respect to the touch screen system (operation **704**). In operation **704**, the action selected may be based on the level of reduced usability identified for the touch screen system. In operation **704**, the action may place the touchscreen system

into an alternate mode from the normal mode in which the touchscreen system operates.

The process receives additional data generated by the acceleration detector about the acceleration of the touch screen system (operation **706**). A determination is made as to whether the acceleration of the touch screen system no longer reduces the usability of the touch screen system (operation **708**). If the acceleration of the touch screen system no longer reduces the usability of the touch screen, a second action is initiated (operation **710**) with the process terminating thereafter.

With reference again to operation **702**, if the acceleration of the touch screen system does not reduce the usability of the touch screen system, the process returns to operation **700** as described above. Turning back to operation **708**, if the acceleration of the touch screen system still reduces the usability of the touch screen system, the process returns to operation **706** as described above.

The flowcharts and block diagrams in the different depicted embodiments illustrate the architecture, functionality, and operation of some possible implementations of apparatuses and methods in an illustrative embodiment. In this regard, each block in the flowcharts or block diagrams may represent a module, a segment, a function, and/or a portion of an operation or step. For example, one or more of the blocks may be implemented as program code, in hardware, or a combination of the program code and hardware. When implemented in hardware, the hardware may, for example, take the form of integrated circuits that are manufactured or configured to perform one or more operations in the flowcharts or block diagrams.

In some alternative implementations of an illustrative embodiment, the function or functions noted in the blocks may occur out of the order noted in the figures. For example, in some cases, two blocks shown in succession may be executed substantially concurrently, or the blocks may sometimes be performed in the reverse order, depending upon the functionality involved. Also, other blocks may be added in addition to the illustrated blocks in a flowchart or block diagram.

For example, the process in **Figure 7** may include operations that allow changing between a normal mode and an alternate mode. The modes of operation may be changed by the operator in the illustrative examples.

Turning now to **Figure 8**, an illustration of a block diagram of a data processing system is depicted in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. Data processing system **800** may be used to implement data processing systems **206**, data processing system **210**, touch screen system **214**, and other suitable devices in information processing environment **200** in **Figure 2**.

In this illustrative example, data processing system **800** includes communications framework **802**, which provides communications between processor unit **804**, memory **806**, persistent storage **808**, communications unit **810**, input/output unit **812**, and display **814**. In this example, communication framework may take the form of a bus system.

Processor unit **804** serves to execute instructions for software that may be loaded into memory **806**. Processor unit **804** may be a number of processors, a multi-processor core, or some other type of processor, depending on the particular implementation.

Memory **806** and persistent storage **808** are examples of storage devices **816**. A storage device is any piece of hardware that is capable of storing information, such as, for example, without limitation, data, program code in functional form, and/or other suitable information either on a temporary basis and/or a permanent basis. Storage devices **816** may also be referred to as computer readable storage devices in these illustrative examples. Memory **806**, in these examples, may be, for example, a random access memory or any other suitable volatile or non-volatile storage device. Persistent storage **808** may take various forms, depending on the particular implementation.

For example, persistent storage **808** may contain one or more components or devices. For example, persistent storage **808** may be a hard drive, a flash memory, a rewritable optical disk, a rewritable magnetic tape, or some combination of the above. The media used by persistent storage **808** also may be removable. For example, a removable hard drive may be used for persistent storage **808**.

Communications unit **810**, in these illustrative examples, provides for communications with other data processing systems or devices. In these illustrative examples, communications unit **810** is a network interface card.

Input/output unit **812** allows for input and output of data with other devices that may be connected to data processing system **800**. For example, input/output unit **812** may provide a connection for user input through a keyboard, a mouse, and/or some other suitable input device. Further, input/output unit **812** may send output to a printer.

5 Display **814** provides a mechanism to display information to a user.

Instructions for the operating system, applications, and/or programs may be located in storage devices **816**, which are in communication with processor unit **804** through communications framework **802**. The processes of the different embodiments may be performed by processor unit **804** using computer-implemented instructions,
10 which may be located in a memory, such as memory **806**.

These instructions are referred to as program code, computer usable program code, or computer readable program code that may be read and executed by a processor in processor unit **804**. The program code in the different embodiments may be embodied on different physical or computer readable storage media, such as
15 memory **806** or persistent storage **808**.

Program code **818** is located in a functional form on computer readable media **820** that is selectively removable and may be loaded onto or transferred to data processing system **800** for execution by processor unit **804**. Program code **818** and computer readable media **820** form computer program product **822** in these illustrative
20 examples. In one example, computer readable media **820** may be computer readable storage media **824** or computer readable signal media **826**.

In these illustrative examples, computer readable storage media **824** is a physical or tangible storage device used to store program code **818** rather than a medium that propagates or transmits program code **818**.

25 Alternatively, program code **818** may be transferred to data processing system **800** using computer readable signal media **826**. Computer readable signal media **826** may be, for example, a propagated data signal containing program code **818**. For example, computer readable signal media **826** may be an electromagnetic signal, an optical signal, and/or any other suitable type of signal. These signals may be
30 transmitted over communications links, such as wireless communications links, optical fiber cable, coaxial cable, a wire, and/or any other suitable type of communications link.

The different components illustrated for data processing system **800** are not meant to provide architectural limitations to the manner in which different

embodiments may be implemented. The different illustrative embodiments may be implemented in a data processing system including components in addition to and/or in place of those illustrated for data processing system **800**. Other components shown in **Figure 8** can be varied from the illustrative examples shown. The different
5 embodiments may be implemented using any hardware device or system capable of running program code **818**.

Thus, one or more illustrative embodiments provide a method and apparatus for managing a touch screen system. With an input manager such as input manger **222** in **Figure 2**, the operation of the touch screen system may be managed to
10 reduce undesired input of information into the touch screen system. In these illustrative examples, the detection of acceleration of the touch screen system is made by a device associated with the touch screen system rather than a device that may be located elsewhere in a platform. In this manner, when the touch screen system is a display, a tablet PC, a mobile device, or some other portable device, acceleration of the touch
15 screen system that reduces usability of the touch screen system may be managed to avoid undesired inputs into the touch screen system. In this manner, one or more illustrative embodiments may provide greater accuracy in the entry of information into network data processing systems or data processing systems in a platform. In this manner, more reliable use of a platform may occur with less errors or undesired results.

Further the illustrative embodiments may be applied to the use of touch
20 screen systems in other types of platforms other than aircraft **100**. For example, the platform may be a mobile platform, a stationary platform, a land-based structure, an aquatic-based structure, and a space-based structure. More specifically, the platform, may be a surface ship, a tank, a personnel carrier, a train, a spacecraft, a space station,
25 a satellite, a submarine, an automobile, a power plant, a bridge, a dam, a house, a manufacturing facility, a building, and other suitable platforms in which acceleration may occur with respect to touch screen systems in the platforms that reduce usability of the touch screen systems in those platforms.

The description of the different illustrative embodiments has been
30 presented for purposes of illustration and description, and is not intended to be exhaustive or limited to the embodiments in the form disclosed. Many modifications and variations will be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art. Further, different illustrative embodiments may provide different features as compared to other illustrative

embodiments. The embodiment or embodiments selected are chosen and described in order to best explain the principles of the embodiments, the practical application, and to enable others of ordinary skill in the art to understand the disclosure for various embodiments with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated.

5

CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

- 5 1. An apparatus comprising:
a touch screen system (214);
an acceleration detector (219) located within the touch screen system (214),
wherein the acceleration detector (219) is configured to detect acceleration (217) of the
touch screen system (214); and
10 an input manager (222) in communication with the acceleration detector (219)
and configured to initiate an action (224) when the acceleration (217) of the touch
screen system (214) reduces usability (218) of the touch screen system (214).
- 15 2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the acceleration detector (219) is configured to
generate data (220) about the acceleration (217) of the touch screen system (214) and
the input manager (222) is configured to receive data (220) from the acceleration
detector (219) and determine when the acceleration (217) of the touch screen system
(214) reduces the usability (218) of the touch screen system (214) using the data (220).
- 20 3. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the acceleration (217) reduces the usability
(218) of the touch screen system (214) when the acceleration (217) of the touch screen
system (214) has a magnitude is greater than a selected threshold (230).
- 25 4. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the selected threshold (230) is based on a
graphical user interface (316) displayed on the touch screen system (214).
5. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the action (224) is selected from at least one
of disabling the touch screen system (214), reducing functionality of a graphical user
interface (316) displayed on the touch screen system (214), disabling a portion of a
30 number of controls (318) in the graphical user interface (316), increasing a size of at
least the portion of the number of controls (318) in the graphical user interface (316)
displayed on the touch screen system (214), changing a functionality of the portion of
the number of controls (318), generating an alert, enabling voice input, and requesting

confirmation of an input made to the touch screen system (214).

6. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the action (224) is a first action (234) and wherein the input manager (222) is configured to initiate a second action (236) when the
5 acceleration (217) of the touch screen system (214) no longer reduces the usability (218) of the touch screen system (214).

7. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the second action (236) is selected from at least one of enabling the touch screen system (214), increasing a functionality of a
10 graphical user interface (316) to an original level, and returning a size of a number of controls (318) in the graphical user interface (316) to an original size.

8. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the input manager (222) is configured to determine a level of reduced usability of the touch screen system (214) and initiate the
15 action (224) based on the level of reduced usability of the touch screen system (214).

9. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the acceleration (217) is caused by at least one of vibrations, turbulence, waves, wind, and operation of a platform.

20 10. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the touch screen system (214) is selected from one of a tablet computer, a flight management system, a navigation computer, an autopilot, a mobile phone, a laptop computer, and a portable display device.

11. A method for managing a touch screen system (214), the method comprising:
25 receiving data (220) generated by an acceleration detector (219) about acceleration (217) of the touch screen system (214), wherein the acceleration detector (219) is located within the touch screen system (214); and
initiating, by an input manager (222), an action (224) when the acceleration (217) of the touch screen system (214) reduces usability (218) of the touch screen system
30 (214).

12. The method of claim 11 further comprising:

determining, by the input manager (222), when the acceleration (217) of the touch screen system (214) reduces the usability (218) of the touch screen system (214) using the data (220).

5 13. The method of claim 11, wherein the acceleration (217) reduces the usability (218) of the touch screen system (214) when the acceleration (217) of the touch screen system (214) has a magnitude that is greater than a selected threshold (230).

10 14. The method of claim 13, wherein the selected threshold (230) is based on a graphical user interface (316) displayed on the touch screen system (214).

15 15. The method of claim 11, wherein the action (224) is selected from at least one of disabling the touch screen system (214), reducing functionality of a graphical user interface (316) displayed on the touch screen system (214), disabling a portion of a number of controls (318) in the graphical user interface (316), increasing a size of at least the portion of the number of controls (318) in the graphical user interface (316) displayed on the touch screen system (214), changing a functionality of the portion of the number of controls (318), generating an alert, enabling voice input, and requesting confirmation of an input made to the touch screen system (214).

20 16. The method of claim 11, wherein the action (224) is a first action (234) and wherein the input manager (222) is configured to initiate a second action (236) when the acceleration (217) of the touch screen system (214) no longer reduces the usability (218) of the touch screen system (214).

25 17. The method of claim 16, wherein the second action (236) is selected from at least one of enabling the touch screen system (214), increasing a functionality of a graphical user interface (316) to an original level, and returning a size of controls in the graphical user interface (316) to an original size.

30 18. The method of claim 11, wherein the acceleration detector (219) is an accelerometer system.

19. The method of claim 11, wherein the acceleration (217) is vibrations caused by operation of a vehicle, a ship moving in water with waves, a ship moving in water with wind, an aircraft (100) in turbulence, a ground vehicle moving on a rough surface, operation of thrusters on a spacecraft, landing of an aircraft (100), and takeoff of the aircraft (100).

20. An aircraft control system comprising:

a network (208) in an aircraft (100);

data processing systems (206) in the aircraft (100), wherein the data processing systems (206) are connected to the network (208) and are configured to control operation of the aircraft (100);

a touch screen system (214) configured display a graphical user interface (316) with a number of controls (318) configured to receive user input (310) for the data processing systems (206) to control the operation of the aircraft (100);

an acceleration detector (219) located within the touch screen system (214), wherein the acceleration detector (219) is configured to detect acceleration (217) of the touch screen system (214); and

an input manager (222) in communication with the acceleration detector (219) and configured to initiate an action (224) when the acceleration (217) of the touch screen system (214) reduces usability (218) of the number of controls (318) displayed in the graphical user interface (316) on the touch screen system (214).