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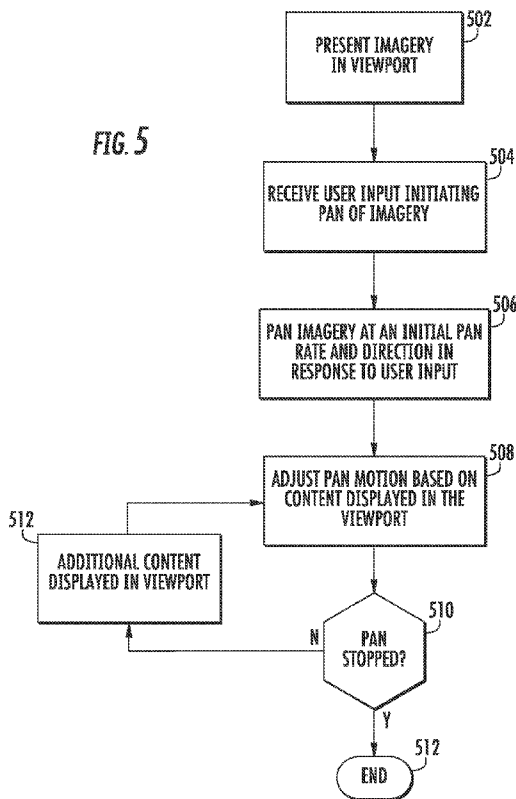
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(54) Title: METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR CONTROLLING IMAGERY PANNING BASED ON DISPLAYED CONTENT



(57) Abstract: Systems and methods for navigating imagery, such as geographic imagery, are provided. A user can initiate an imagery pan in a viewport presented on a display of a computing device by throwing the imagery in the viewport. The motion of the imagery pan can be controlled based on content displayed in or near the viewport such that the imagery pan is more likely to land near predominate features depicted in the viewport. For instance, features depicted in the viewport can act as "friction" or "gravity" on the imagery pan, adjusting the pan rate and/or pan direction of the imagery as the imagery pans across the viewport. In particular aspects, the motion of the imagery pan can be adjusted based on weights associated with features depicted in or near the viewport. Features with higher weights will affect the motion of the imagery pan more than features with lower weights.

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METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR CONTROLLING IMAGERY PANNING BASED ON DISPLAYED CONTENT

FIELD

[0001] The present disclosure relates generally to navigating imagery, and more particularly to imagery panning based on content displayed in the imagery.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Improvements in computer processing power and content delivery have led to the development of interactive imagery, such as interactive geographic imagery. Services such as Google Maps are capable of displaying various images of a geographic location from a variety of perspectives. Such services can include a user interface that includes a viewport displaying at least a portion of geographic imagery, such as map imagery, satellite imagery, oblique view imagery, and street level imagery, of a geographic area from various angles and/or viewpoints.

[0003] User interfaces for interactive imagery systems typically include one or more navigation tools that allow a user to pan, tilt, rotate, and zoom the imagery in the viewport. For instance, a user can pan the imagery in the viewport by interacting with the imagery and dragging the imagery in various directions. Certain interactive systems allow a user to navigate the imagery by “throwing” the imagery in the viewport. As one example, a user interacting with a touch screen interface can throw the imagery in the viewport using a finger swipe. This causes the imagery to pan in the general direction of the finger swipe. As another example, a user can throw the imagery in the viewport by selecting the imagery and dragging a user manipulable cursor using a mouse or touchpad.

[0004] When the user throws the imagery in the viewport, the imagery pans in the general direction of the throw at a pan rate that typically decays over time. The view of the imagery typically lands or stops panning at an arbitrary and unpredictable location. This requires the user to perform further manipulations to the view of the imagery to obtain a desired view, frustrating the interactive viewing experience of the user. To counteract this unpredictability, certain interact systems have made the lowered the inertia of the imagery pan in response to the user input. This is undesirable as it removes the ability to easily and quickly pan the imagery long distances in the viewport through a simple gesture.

SUMMARY

[0005] Aspects and advantages of the invention will be set forth in part in the following description, or may be obvious from the description, or may be learned through practice of the invention.

[0006] One exemplary aspect of the present disclosure is directed to a computer-implemented method for displaying imagery. The method includes presenting a viewport displaying at least a portion of geographic imagery; receiving a user input initiating an imagery pan of the imagery in the viewport; and panning the imagery in response to the user input. The method further includes adjusting the motion of the imagery in the viewport during the imagery pan based at least in part on content displayed in the viewport. For example, the method can include adjusting a pan rate of the imagery based at least in part on content displayed in the viewport. As another example, the method can include adjusting a pan direction based at least in part on content displayed in the viewport.

[0007] Other exemplary implementations of the present disclosure are directed to systems, apparatus, computer-readable media, devices, and user interfaces for adjusting the motion of imagery in a viewport based on content displayed in the viewport.

[0008] These and other features, aspects and advantages of the present invention will become better understood with reference to the following description and appended claims. The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated in and constitute a part of this specification, illustrate embodiments of the invention and, together with the description, serve to explain the principles of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] A full and enabling disclosure of the present invention, including the best mode thereof, directed to one of ordinary skill in the art, is set forth in the specification, which makes reference to the appended figures, in which:

[0010] FIG. 1 depicts an exemplary system for displaying imagery according to an exemplary embodiment of the present disclosure;

[0011] FIG. 2 depicts an exemplary computing device having a user interface presenting geographic imagery in a viewport according to an exemplary embodiment of the present disclosure;

[0012] FIGS. 3A-3D depict an exemplary imagery pan in response to a user input;

[0013] FIG. 4 depicts a graphical representation of the pan rate of the imagery pan depicted in FIGS. 3A-3D;

[0014] FIG. 5 depicts a flow diagram of an exemplary method according to an exemplary embodiment of the present disclosure;

[0015] FIG. 6 depicts a flow diagram of an exemplary method according to an exemplary embodiment of the present disclosure;

[0016] FIGS. 7A-7D depict an exemplary image pan in response to a user input according to an exemplary embodiment of the present disclosure;

[0017] FIG. 8 depicts a graphical representation of the pan rate of the imagery pan depicted in FIGS. 7A-7D;

[0018] FIGS. 9A-9D depict an exemplary image pan in response to a user input according to an exemplary embodiment of the present disclosure;

[0019] FIG. 10 depicts a graphical representation of the pan rate of the imagery pan depicted in FIGS. 9A-9D;

[0020] FIG. 11 depicts a flow diagram according to an exemplary embodiment of the present disclosure; and

[0021] FIGS. 12A-12D depict an exemplary imagery pan in response to a user input according to an exemplary embodiment of the present disclosure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0022] Reference now will be made in detail to embodiments of the invention, one or more examples of which are illustrated in the drawings. Each example is provided by way of explanation of the invention, not limitation of the invention. In fact, it will be apparent to those skilled in the art that various modifications and variations can be made in the present invention without departing from the scope or spirit of the invention. For instance, features illustrated or described as part of one embodiment can be used with another embodiment to yield a still further embodiment. Thus, it is intended that the present invention covers such modifications and variations as come within the scope of the appended claims and their equivalents.

[0023] Generally, the present disclosure is directed to navigating imagery, such as geographic imagery. A user can initiate a pan of the imagery in a viewport presented on a display of a computing device by throwing the imagery in the viewport. For instance, a user can perform a finger swipe on a touch screen interface to throw the imagery in the viewport.

After a throw action, the imagery can pan across the viewport at an initial pan rate that decays over time. The initial pan rate can be variable based on the user input. For instance, a faster user gesture, such as a relative fast finger swipe, can result in the initial pan rate being relatively high. A slower user gesture can result in the initial pan rate being relatively slow.

[0024] According to aspects of the present disclosure, the initial inertia of the imagery pan is loosened up in response to the throw action such that the imagery pans at a greater pan rate in the viewport upon user interaction with the imagery. The imagery pan can be controlled based on content displayed in the viewport such that the imagery pan is more likely to land at or near predominate features depicted in the viewport, facilitating a user's navigation of the imagery.

[0025] In one implementation, an imagery pan in response to a throw action can be controlled or adjusted based on weights assigned to features depicted in the viewport or near the viewport. Predominate features in the imagery can be assigned greater weights than less predominate features in the imagery. For instance, a large city can have a higher weight than a smaller city. A busy neighborhood can have a higher weight than a sparse area. A road through a desert can have a higher weight than an empty section of the desert.

[0026] The weights can be assigned to features using any suitable criteria. For instance, the weights can be assigned to features in the imagery based on rankings used to prioritize features for display in the imagery. In addition, the weights can be assigned based on personal information optionally provided by a user, such as favorite locations, most visited locations, most viewed locations, current location of the user, personal preferences, and other settings and/or information provided by the user.

[0027] When the imagery is thrown in the viewport, the panning of the imagery in response to the throw is adjusted based on the weights assigned to features displayed in the viewport. In one example, the weights assigned to features can act as "friction" on the imagery, slowing down the imagery pan as the features pass through the viewport. A feature having a higher weight will slow down the imagery pan more than a feature having a low weight. For example, a feature with a relatively high weight can slow down a relatively fast imagery pan and can stop a relatively slow imagery pan. A feature with a relatively low weight may barely affect a relatively fast imagery pan, but could further slow a relatively slow imagery pan.

[0028] In another example, the weights assigned to features displayed in the viewport can act as "gravity" on the imagery. In particular, the direction of the imagery pan in response to

the throw action by the user can be adjusted based on the weights assigned to features depicted in the imagery. For instance, the direction of the imagery pan can be adjusted such that that imagery pans more towards features with higher weights than features with lower rates.

[0029] In this manner, the present disclosure provides for more convenient navigation of imagery when panning imagery in viewports. The loosening of the inertia of the imagery pan allows for convenient panning across large distances or portions of the imagery. By providing for the control of the imagery pan based on content displayed in the viewport, the imagery is more likely to land or pass over features of interest to a user when the user initiates a throw action of the imagery. As a result, the user can experience a more user friendly and convenient navigation experience when interacting with the imagery.

[0030] FIG. 1 depicts an exemplary interactive system 100 for displaying imagery according to an exemplary embodiment of the present disclosure. The present disclosure is discussed with reference to geographic imagery, such as map imagery, satellite imagery, oblique view imagery, street level imagery, and other geographic imagery. Those of ordinary skill in the art, using the disclosures provided herein, should understand that the present subject matter is equally applicable for use with any type of imagery, such as the three-dimensional imagery provided in Google Earth, aerial view imagery or other suitable imagery.

[0031] As illustrated, system 100 includes a computing device 110 for displaying geographic imagery to a user. The computing device 110 can take any appropriate form, such as a personal computer, smartphone, desktop, laptop, PDA, tablet, or other computing device. The computing device 110 includes a display 118 for displaying the imagery to a user and appropriate input devices 115 for receiving input from the user. The input devices 115 can include, for instance a touch screen, a touch pad, data entry keys, a mouse, speakers, and/or a microphone suitable for voice recognition. A user can request imagery by interacting with an appropriate user interface presented on the display 118 of computing device 110. The computing device 110 can then receive imagery and associated data and present at least a portion of the imagery through a viewport on any suitable output device, such as through a viewport set forth in a browser presented on the display 118. An exemplary user interface having a viewport for presenting imagery will be discussed with reference to FIG. 2.

[0032] Referring still to FIG. 1, the computing device 110 includes a processor(s) 112 and a memory 114. The processor(s) 112 can be any known processing device. Memory 114 can include any suitable computer-readable medium or media, including, but not limited to, RAM, ROM, hard drives, flash drives, or other memory devices. Memory 114 stores information accessible by processor(s) 112, including instructions that can be executed by processor(s) 112. The instructions can be any set of instructions that when executed by the processor(s) 112, cause the processor(s) 112 to provide desired functionality. For instance, the instructions can be software instructions rendered in a computer-readable form. When software is used, any suitable programming, scripting, or other type of language or combinations of languages can be used to implement the teachings contained herein. Alternatively, the instructions can be implemented by hard-wired logic or other circuitry, including, but not limited to application-specific circuits.

[0033] The computing device 110 can include a network interface 116 for accessing information over a network 120. The network 120 can include a combination of networks, such as cellular network, WiFi network, LAN, WAN, the Internet, and/or other suitable network and can include any number of wired or wireless communication links. For instance, computing device 110 can communicate through a cellular network using a WAP standard or other appropriate communication protocol. The cellular network could in turn communicate with the Internet, either directly or through another network.

[0034] Computing device 110 can communicate with another computing device 130 over network 120. Computing device 130 can be a server, such as a web server, that provides information to a plurality of client computing devices, such as computing devices 110 and 150 over network 120. Computing device 130 receives requests from computing device 110 and locates information to return to computing devices 110 responsive to the request. The computing device 130 can take any applicable form, and can, for instance, include a system that provides mapping services, such as the Google Maps services provided by Google Inc.

[0035] Similar to computing device 110, computing device 130 includes a processor(s) 132 and a memory 134. Memory 134 can include instructions 136 for receiving requests for geographic imagery from a remote client device, such as computing device 110, and for providing the requested information to the client device for presentation to the user. Memory 134 can also include or be coupled to various databases 138 containing information for presentation to a user. In addition, computing device 130 can communicate with other databases as needed. The databases can be connected to computing device 130 by a high

bandwidth LAN or WAN, or could also be connected to computing device 130 through network 120. The databases, including database 138, can be split up so that they are located in multiple locales.

[0036] Database 138 can store store map-related information, at least a portion of which can be transmitted to a client device, such as computing device 110. For instance, database 138 can store map tiles, where each tile is an image of a particular geographic area.

Depending on the resolution (e.g. whether the map is zoomed in or out), a single tile can cover a large geographic area in relatively little detail or just a few streets in high detail. The map information is not limited to any particular format. For example, the images can include street maps, satellite images, oblique view images, aerial images, or combinations of these.

[0037] The various map tiles are each associated with geographical locations, such that the computing device 130 is capable of selecting, retrieving and transmitting one or more tiles in response to receipt of a geographical location. The locations can be expressed in various ways including but not limited to latitude/longitude positions, street addresses, points of interest on a map, building names, and other data capable of identifying geographic locations.

[0038] The database 138 can also include points of interest. A point of interest can be any item that is interesting to one or more users that is associated with a geographical location. For instance, a point of interest can include a landmark, stadium, park, monument, restaurant, business, building, or other suitable point of interest. A point of interest can be added to the database 138 by professional map providers, individual users, or other entities. As will be discussed in more detail below, the database 138 can store weights associated with the points of interest that can be used to control the navigation of imagery in the viewport presented on a computing device, such as computing device 110. The computing device 130 can transmit the weights to a client device along with map tiles and other information during navigation of the imagery, such as during an imagery pan.

[0039] The database 138 can also store street information. In addition to street images in the tiles, the street information can include the location of a street relative to a geographic area or other streets. For instance, it can store information indicating whether a traveler can access one street directly from another street. Street information can further include street names where available, and potentially other information, such as distance between intersections and speed limits.

[0040] In particular embodiments, the database 138 can include user information that is optionally provided by a user to enhance the user's viewing and navigation experience. Exemplary user information can include favorite locations, most visited locations, current location, preferences, and/or settings provided by the user that can be used to enhance the interactive viewing experience of the user. The user information can be used to determine weights associated with features and/or points of interest such that the weights can be tailored to individual users.

[0041] Computing device 130 can provide information, including geographic imagery weights, and other associated information, to computing device 110 over network 120. The information can be provided to computing device 110 in any suitable format. The information can include information in HTML code, XML messages, WAP code, Flash, Java applets, xhtml, plain text, voiceXML, VoxML, VXML, or other suitable format. The computing device 110 can display the information to the user in any suitable format. In one embodiment, the information can be displayed within a browser, such as Google Chrome or other suitable browser.

[0042] FIG. 2 depicts an exemplary computing device 110 having a user interface 200, such as a browser, presented on a display 118. The computing device 110 of FIG. 2 is illustrated as a tablet computing device. However, those of ordinary skill in the art, using the disclosures provided herein, should understand that computing device 110 can be any suitable computing device. User interface 200 includes a viewport 210 that displays geographic imagery 220. The geographic imagery 220 depicted in FIG. 2 comprises street map imagery. Geographic imagery 220 can also include satellite imagery, oblique view imagery, aerial imagery, three-dimensional imagery, or other suitable imagery.

[0043] A user can interact with geographic imagery 220 by interacting with various navigation tools 230. For instance, a user can pan, tilt, rotate and/or zoom the imagery 220 using navigation tools 230 to obtain different views of the geographic imagery. According to aspects of the present disclosure, a user can pan the imagery (i.e. move the imagery in the viewport in different directions) by "throwing" imagery in the viewport. For instance, a user can initiate a throw of the imagery by swiping a finger across a touch screen. This will cause the imagery to pan across the viewport in the general direction of the finger swipe at an initial speed or pan rate that is based on the speed of the finger swipe. The pan rate of the imagery pan will decay over time until the imagery comes to rest in the viewport. Other user interactions can initiate a throw of the imagery in the viewport. For instance, a user can

initiate a throw by dragging a mouse across the display, by dragging a finger across a touchpad, or through other suitable user interactions.

[0044] FIGS. 3A-3D depict an exemplary imagery pan in a viewport 210 of a user interface 200 in response to a user input throwing the imagery across the viewport 210. As shown in FIG. 3A, the viewport displays geographic imagery 220 at a first location. A user that wishes to view another portion of the geographic imagery 220 can initiate a throw of the imagery by a finger swipe or other suitable gesture. This causes the imagery to pan in the general direction of the finger swipe such that feature 225 comes into view as shown in FIG. 3B. Feature 225 can be any suitable object, item, information, or other feature depicted in the imagery 220. For example, feature 225 can be a city, town, neighborhood, street, body of water, building, monument, address, stadium, arena, or other suitable point of interest. The imagery 220 will continue to pan across the viewport 210 in response to the user input as shown in FIG. 3C until the imagery 220 comes to rest as shown in FIG. 3D.

[0045] FIG. 4 provides a graphical representation of the pan rate associated with the imagery pan illustrated in FIGS. 3A-3D. In particular, FIG. 4 plots the pan rate (speed) of the imagery pan as a function of time in response to a user input initiating a throw of the imagery. The initial pan rate P_0 can be dependent on the user gesture, such as the speed of a finger swipe. For instance, a faster finger swipe can result in a higher initial pan rate. A slower finger swipe can result in a lower initial pan rate. As shown by curve 410, the pan rate steadily declines over time until the pan rate is zero where the imagery comes to rest. While curve 410 represents a linear decline in the pan rate, other suitable relationships can be used. For instance, the pan rate can decline exponentially until the imagery comes to rest.

[0046] The slope of curve 410 represents the rate of decline in the pan rate of the imagery and provides an indication of the "inertia" of the throw. The "inertia" of the throw dictates how long it takes for the imagery to come to rest after a throw action. For instance, the inertia of the throw can be loosened up (i.e. increased) such that it takes longer for the imagery to come to rest after the user input throwing the imagery. This is illustrated by curve 420. The inertia of the throw can also be tightened (i.e. decreased) such that the imagery comes to rest in a shorter period of time as illustrated by curve 430. The inertia of a throw can be adjusted by settings associated with an interactive imagery system, such as settings input by a user.

[0047] Referring back to FIG. 3D, the imagery has been thrown such that the feature 225 has passed out of view in the viewport 210. Accordingly, a user desirous of viewing feature

225 will have to further navigate the imagery 220 such that the feature 225 comes back into view. This can disrupt the interactive navigation experience of the user and lead to user frustration. According to aspects of the present disclosure, the imagery pan in response to a user input is controlled based on content displayed in the viewport such that it is more likely that the imagery comes to rest with relevant features displayed in the viewport.

[0048] FIG. 5 depicts an exemplary computer-implemented method (500) for controlling the pan of imagery in response to user input according to an exemplary embodiment of the present disclosure. The exemplary method (500) can be implemented using any computing device, such as the computing device 110 of FIG. 1. In addition, although FIG. 5 depicts steps performed in a particular order for purposes of illustration and discussion, the methods discussed herein are not limited to any particular order or arrangement. One skilled in the art, using the disclosures provided herein, will appreciate that various steps of the methods can be omitted, rearranged, combined and/or adapted in various ways.

[0049] At (502), the method includes presenting imagery in the viewport. For instance, the computing device 110 can present geographic imagery, such as map imagery, satellite imagery, aerial imagery, and/or oblique view imagery, in viewport 210 of a user interface 200 presented on a display 118 of computing device 110. At (504), the method includes receiving a user input initiating a pan of the imagery in the viewport. The user input can be any suitable input from a user initiating a pan of the imagery. For instance, a user input, such as a finger swipe or other gesture, can be received to throw the imagery in the viewport. At (506), the method pans the imagery in response to the user input at an initial pan rate and direction. For instance, the processor 112 of the computing device 110 can initiate a pan of the imagery in the viewport 210 in response to user input provided via a suitable input device 115. The initial pan rate and direction of the imagery pan can be based on the user input. For example, in the case of a finger swipe, the initial pan rate and direction of the imagery pan can be based on the speed and direction of the finger swipe.

[0050] At (508), the method adjusts the motion of the imagery in the viewport based on content displayed in or near the viewport. For instance, the processor 112 of the computing device 110 can adjust characteristics of the imagery pan, such as pan rate and pan direction, based on one or more features displayed in or near the viewport 210. The features depicted in the viewport can affect the motion of the imagery pan in various ways. In one example, features depicted in the viewport can act as “friction” on the imagery pan, slowing the pan rate of the imagery pan as the imagery pans across the viewport. The friction applied by

features depicted in the viewport facilitate navigation of the imagery by making the imagery more likely to land in an area where relevant features are presented to a user after a imagery throw. The features can also act as “gravity” on the imagery pan, adjusting the direction of the imagery pan such that more predominate features of the imagery are depicted in the viewport after the imagery pan comes to rest.

[0051] FIG. 6 depicts one exemplary method (600) for adjusting the pan motion based on content displayed in the viewport according to an exemplary embodiment of the present disclosure. The method of FIG.6 can be implemented by any computing device, such as by the processor 112 of the computing device 110 of FIG. 1. In addition, although FIG. 6 depicts steps performed in a particular order for purposes of illustration and discussion, the methods discussed herein are not limited to any particular order or arrangement. One skilled in the art, using the disclosures provided herein, will appreciate that various steps of the methods can be omitted, rearranged, combined and/or adapted in various ways.

[0052] At (602), the method identifies features displayed in the viewport. For instance, the processor 112 of computing device 110 can identify features that are currently displayed in the viewport 210. The number of features displayed in the viewport can be dependent on the zoom level of the imagery. Imagery at a high zoom level will have fewer features than imagery at a lower zoom level. The features depicted in the viewport will affect the motion of the imagery as the imagery pans across the viewport.

[0053] At (604), the method includes accessing weights assigned to the features depicted in the viewport. For instance, the computing device 110 can send a request to computing device 130 for imagery to be displayed during an imagery pan. Upon receipt of this request, the computing device 130 can provide, via a network, geographic imagery for display during the imagery pan as well as weights associated with features depicted in the viewport. Alternatively, the computing device 110 could access weights previously downloaded from the computing device 130 and stored in a local memory. The characteristics of the imagery pan can be adjusted, for instance by the processor 112 of the computing device 110, based on the weights associated with the features depicted in the viewport.

[0054] The weights can be assigned to the features using any suitable criteria. For instance, the weights can be assigned based on information associated with the feature, such as population, size, popularity, number of searches associated with the feature, amount of information associated with the feature, current events associated with the feature, or other suitable criteria. In one embodiment, the weights can be assigned to the features using

priority rankings used to prioritize features for display in the imagery. As is known, a different number of features in the imagery can be displayed depending on the zoom level of the imagery. Features of relatively higher importance are typically displayed in the imagery before features of relatively low importance. The weights assigned to the features can be based on similar criteria to determining rankings for prioritizing these features for display. For instance, the weights can be based on population, popularity, size, number of search queries related to the feature, or other suitable criteria.

[0055] The weights assigned to particular features can also be based on user information optionally provided by a user, such as favorite locations, most visited locations, most viewed locations, settings, preferences or other information optionally provided by a user. This information can be used to personalize the navigation experience of a particular user such that features of interest to a particular user will have a greater effect on the motion of the imagery as it pans across the viewport.

[0056] At (606), the method includes adjusting the pan rate based on the weights assigned to features depicted in the viewport. For example, the processor 112 can adjust the pan rate of the imagery in the viewport 210 presented on the display 118 of computing device 110 based on features depicted in the imagery. In one embodiment, the method can include slowing down the pan rate based on the weights of features depicted in the viewport. As an example, the method can include summing all of the weights depicted in the viewport and adjusting the pan rate of the imagery pan in proportion to the total weight of all features.

[0057] As another example, the method can include summing all of the weights within a predefined perimeter or radius about the center of the viewport and adjusting the pan rate of the imagery pan in proportion to the total weight of these features. The perimeter or radius can be predefined and in certain cases can be set to encompass features that are not displayed in the viewport. In this manner, the present disclosure can adjust the motion of an imagery pan on features that are near or adjacent to the viewport, but are not displayed in the viewport.

[0058] In a particular embodiment, the pan rate can be adjusted based on the following:

$$P_1 = P_0 - \mu I$$

where P_1 is the adjusted pan rate; P_0 is the initial pan rate; μ is a weighting factor determined as a function of the weights assigned to features in the viewport (such as the sum of all weights associated with features depicted in the viewport) and I is associated with the natural decay rate of the imagery pan in response to the throw. The weighting factor μ can be

determined in any suitable manner. For instance, the weighting factor μ can be determined as a function of the sum of all weights assigned to features depicted in the viewport.

Alternatively, the weighting factor μ can be determined as function of all weights within a predefined radius or perimeter about the center of the viewport.

[0059] As illustrated from the above formula, the weighting factor μ increases the deceleration rate of the imagery pan in proportion to the weights of features depicted in the viewport. The greater the weight of the features depicted in the imagery, the stronger the frictional force slowing down the imagery pan. In this manner, the features act as “friction” on the imagery pan, slowing down the imagery.

[0060] At (608) the method includes panning the imagery at the adjusted pan rate. For instance, after determining an adjusted pan rate based on the features depicted in the viewport, the processor 112 of the computing device 110 can pan the imagery at the adjusted pan rate such that the motion of the imagery across the viewport during the imagery pan is altered. This process can then repeat itself based on additional content displayed in the imagery as the imagery pans across the viewport until the imagery comes to rest.

[0061] For example, referring back to FIG. 5, the method determines at (510) whether the imagery pan has come to a rest. If so, the method terminates as shown at (512). If the imagery has not come to a rest, the imagery pan continues across the viewport such that additional content is displayed in the viewport (512). For instance, the computing device 110 can send a request to the computing device 130 for additional imagery to be displayed in the viewport during the imagery pan. Upon receipt of this request, the computing device 130 can provide the additional imagery along with associated weights to the computing device 110. As shown in FIG. 5, the pan motion can then be further adjusted (508) based on the additional content until the imagery pan eventually comes to a rest.

[0062] FIGS. 7A-7D depict an exemplary imagery pan in a viewport 210 of a user interface 200 in response to a user input throwing the imagery across the viewport 210 according to an exemplary embodiment of the present disclosure. As shown in FIG. 7A, the viewport displays geographic imagery 220 at a first location. A user that wishes to view another portion of the geographic imagery 220 can initiate a throw of the imagery by a finger swipe or other suitable gesture. This causes the imagery to pan in the general direction of the finger swipe at an initial pan rate such that feature 225 comes into view as shown in FIG. 7B.

[0063] As discussed above, feature 225 can be any suitable object, item, information, or other feature depicted in the imagery 220. The present illustration will be discussed with

reference to a single feature 225 for illustrative purposes. Those of ordinary skill in the art, using the disclosures provided herein, will understand that many features can be depicted in the viewport during the imagery pan and that each of these features can affect the motion of the imagery in a manner similar to the single feature 225.

[0064] Once the feature 225 comes into view as shown in FIG. 7B, the pan rate of the imagery pan will slow down at a greater rate as illustrated in FIGS. 7C and 7D until the imagery 220 comes to rest. As shown in FIG. 7D, the feature 225 is depicted at or near the center of viewport 210 when the imagery 220 comes to rest. This is because the weight associated with feature 225 has slowed down the imagery pan, making it more likely for the imagery pan to come to rest with feature 225 displayed in the viewport 210.

[0065] FIG. 8 graphically depicts the pan rate associated with the imagery pan illustrated in FIGS. 7A-7D. In particular, FIG. 8 plots the pan rate of the imagery pan as a function of time in response to a user input initiating a throw of the imagery. As shown by curve 440, the pan rate steadily declines from the initial pan rate P_0 over time until the feature 225 comes into view at time t_1 . At this instant, the rate at which the pan rate decelerates is increased as a result of the feature 225 being depicted in the viewport. This is illustrated by curve 442 which shows the pan rate more rapidly declining until the pan rate reaches zero at about time t_2 .

[0066] As shown by curve 445, had the feature 225 not affected the motion of the imagery pan, the imagery pan would have come to rest at a later time t_3 which could have resulted in the feature 225 being out of view in the viewport. However, because the feature 225 affects the motion of the viewport, the feature 225 comes to rest at or near the center of the viewport (as shown in FIG. 7D), improving the navigation experience of the user.

[0067] FIGS. 9A-9D illustrate another exemplary imagery pan in a viewport 210 of a user interface 200 in response to a user input throwing the imagery according to an exemplary embodiment of the present disclosure. As shown in FIG. 9A, the viewport displays geographic imagery 220 at a first location. A user that wishes to view another portion of the geographic imagery 220 can initiate a throw of the imagery by a finger swipe or other suitable gesture. This causes the imagery to pan in the general direction of the finger swipe at an initial pan rate such that feature 225 comes into view as shown in FIG. 9B. The feature 225 will act as friction on the imagery pan, slowing the pan rate of the imagery pan. As the imagery continues to pan as shown in FIG. 9C, an additional feature 227 comes into view. The additional feature 227 will also affect the imagery pan, further slowing the imagery pan

until the imagery comes to rest at FIG. 9D. While FIGS. 9A-9D are discussed with reference to two features 225 and 227 for illustration purposes, those of ordinary skill in the art, using the disclosures provided herein, will understand that many features can be depicted in the viewport during the imagery pan and that each of these features can affect the motion of the imagery in a manner similar to the features 225 and 227.

[0068] This imagery pan of FIGS. 9A-9D is graphically depicted in FIG. 10, which plots the pan rate of the imagery as a function of time. As shown by curve 450, the imagery pans at an initial pan rate P_0 that naturally decays over time. At time t_1 , the feature 225 comes into view and causes the pan rate to decelerate at a greater rate as illustrated by curve 452. At time t_2 , the additional feature 227 comes into view causing a further deceleration of the pan rate as illustrated by curve 454. The cumulative effect of the features 225 and 227 on the imagery pan cause the imagery to come to rest quicker when compared to the natural decay of the pan rate shown by curve 455. As a result, the imagery is more likely to come to rest with both features 225 and 227 displayed in the viewport, improving the navigation experience of the user.

[0069] Because the imagery 220 in FIGS. 9A-9D is zoomed out relative to the imagery 220 depicted in FIGS. 7A-7D, the imagery 220 of FIGS. 9A-9D will display more features when compared to imagery 220 of FIGS. 7A-7D. These additional features can have a greater cumulative effect on the motion of the imagery during the imagery pan. In certain cases this can be undesirable. To offset the display of additional features at different zoom levels, the weights assigned to the features that are used to adjust the motion of the imagery pan can be reduced or increased based on the zoom level of the imagery. Alternatively, the initial pan rate of the imagery pan can be set higher or lower depending on the zoom level to achieve desired imagery pan characteristics. For instance, a user input initiating a throw of the imagery at a lower zoom level (with more features displayed) can cause a higher initial pan rate when compared to a user input initiating a throw of the imagery at a higher zoom level (less features depicted).

[0070] The above examples have been discussed with reference to features acting as “friction” on the imagery pan. According to additional aspects of the present disclosure, the features can also act as “gravity” on the imagery pan and thus affect not only the pan rate, but the pan direction of the imagery pan. For instance, FIG. 11 depicts an exemplary method (700) for adjusting the motion of the imagery pan based on content displayed in the viewport according to an exemplary embodiment of the present disclosure. The method of FIG. 11 can

be implemented by any computing device, such as by the processor 112 of the computing device 110 of FIG. 1. In addition, although FIG. 11 depicts steps performed in a particular order for purposes of illustration and discussion, the methods discussed herein are not limited to any particular order or arrangement. One skilled in the art, using the disclosures provided herein, will appreciate that various steps of the methods can be omitted, rearranged, combined and/or adapted in various ways.

[0071] At (702) the method identifies features displayed in the viewport. . For instance, the processor 112 of computing device 110 can identify features that are currently displayed in the viewport 210. At (704) the method access weights assigned to the features. As discussed above, the features displayed in the viewport can be assigned weights based on any suitable criteria, such as rankings used to prioritize features for display and/or information optionally provided by a user.

[0072] The method then adjusts the pan direction of the imagery pan based on weights assigned to the features (706). For example, the processor 112 can adjust the pan direction of the imagery in the viewport 210 presented on the display 118 of computing device 110 based on weights associated with features depicted in the imagery. The initial pan direction can be adjusted such that a significant feature, is more likely to be displayed in the center of the imagery when the imagery comes to rest.

[0073] In one example embodiment, the pan direction can be adjusted as a function of both weight assigned to a particular feature and a distance and direction of the feature from the center of the viewport. For example, each feature can be assigned a vector having a value determined as a function of the weight assigned to the feature and the distance of the feature from the center of the viewport. The direction associated with the vector can be determined as a function of the direction of the feature relative to the center of the viewport. The adjusted pan direction can be determined by calculating the vector sum of all features depicted in the viewport.

[0074] In this example, features with higher weights will affect the pan direction of the imagery more than features with lower weights. In addition, features that are closer to the center of the viewport will have a greater effect on the motion of the imagery pan than features further away from the center of the viewport. Moreover, because the adjusted pan direction is determined as a vector sum, the adjusted pan direction can also take into account the direction of the features depicted in the viewport relative to the center of the viewport.

[0075] Referring still to FIG. 11 at (708), the imagery is panned in the adjusted pan direction. For instance, after determining an adjusted pan direction based on the features depicted in the viewport, the processor 112 of the computing device 110 can pan the imagery in the adjusted pan direction such that the motion of the imagery across the viewport during the imagery pan is altered. The process can then repeat itself based on additional content displayed in the imagery until the imagery comes to rest.

[0076] FIGS. 12A-12D depict an exemplary image pan in accordance with the exemplary method (700) of FIG. 11. The imagery pan in FIGS. 12a-12d will be discussed with reference to a single feature 225 for illustration purposes. Those of ordinary skill in the art, using the disclosures provided herein, will understand that many features can be depicted in the viewport during the imagery pan and that each of these features can affect the motion of the imagery in a manner similar to the single feature 225.

[0077] As shown in FIG. 12A, the viewport displays geographic imagery 220 at a first location. A user that wishes to view another portion of the geographic imagery 220 can initiate a throw of the imagery by a finger swipe or other suitable gesture. This causes the imagery to pan generally to the right in an initial pan direction such that feature 225 comes into view as shown in FIG. 12B. The feature 225 will affect the direction of the imagery pan such that it is more likely that the feature 225 will be displayed at the center of the imagery when the imagery comes to rest. For example, FIG. 12C shows that the direction of the imagery pan has been slightly altered such that feature 225 has moved slightly to the right and downward. FIG. 12D illustrates that the direction of the imagery pans has been further altered such that feature 225 is displayed at or near the center of viewport 210.

[0078] While the present subject matter has been described in detail with respect to specific exemplary embodiments and methods thereof, it will be appreciated that those skilled in the art, upon attaining an understanding of the foregoing may readily produce alterations to, variations of, and equivalents to such embodiments. Accordingly, the scope of the present disclosure is by way of example rather than by way of limitation, and the subject disclosure does not preclude inclusion of such modifications, variations and/or additions to the present subject matter as would be readily apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A computer-implemented method for navigating imagery, comprising:
 - presenting a viewport in a user interface of a computing device displaying at least a portion of geographic imagery;
 - receiving a user input initiating an imagery pan of the imagery displayed in the viewport; and
 - in response to the user input, panning the imagery at a pan rate and pan direction dependent on the user input;characterized in that the method further comprises adjusting characteristics of the imagery pan based on one or more features of the imagery displayed in the viewport
2. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein adjusting characteristics of the imagery pan comprises slowing the pan rate based on the one or more features such that the imagery pan is more likely to stop panning with the one or more features displayed in the viewport.
3. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein adjusting characteristics of the imagery pan comprises adjusting the pan direction of the imagery pan based on the one or more features such that the imagery pan is more likely to stop panning with the one or more features displayed in the viewport.
4. The computer implemented method of claim 1, wherein adjusting characteristics of the imagery pan comprises:
 - identifying the one or more features displayed in the viewport;
 - accessing a weight assigned to each of the one or more features; and
 - adjusting the pan rate or pan direction of the imagery pan based on the weight assigned to each of the one or more features.
5. The computer-implemented method of claim 4, where the pan rate or pan direction is adjusted based on the sum of the weights assigned to each of the one or more features displayed in the viewport.
6. The computer-implemented method of claim 4, wherein the weight assigned to each of the one or more features increases a deceleration rate of the pan rate during the imagery pan.
7. The computer-implemented method of claim 4, wherein each of the one or more features is assigned a vector having a value determined as a function of the weight assigned to the feature and the distance of the feature from the center of the viewport, the

direction associated with the vector determined as a function of the direction of the feature relative to the viewport.

8. The computer-implemented method of claim 7, wherein the pan direction is adjusted based on a vector sum of the vectors associated with the one or more features depicted in the viewport.

9. The computer-implemented method of claim 4, wherein the one or more weights assigned to features displayed in the viewport are based at least in part on rankings used to prioritize the features for display in the imagery.

10. The computer-implemented method of claim 4, wherein the one or more weights assigned to features displayed in the viewport are based at least in part on personal information associated with a user.

11. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein panning the imagery in the viewport comprises panning the imagery at an initial pan rate based on the user input, the pan rate decreasing over time independent of the content displayed in the viewport.

12. The computer-implemented method of claim 11, wherein adjusting the characteristics of the imagery pan comprises further decreasing the pan rate based on content displayed in the viewport.

13. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein the user input can be a finger swipe across a touch pad or touch screen interface.

14. A computer-based system for displaying geographic imagery, the system comprising a processing device and a network interface, the processing device configured to:

- provide, via the network interface, geographic imagery for display in a viewport of a user interface;
- receive a request for additional geographic imagery to be displayed during an imagery pan;
- identify one or more weights associated with features in the additional geographic imagery;
- provide, via the network interface, the additional geographic imagery for display in the viewport of the user interface and the one or more weights associated with features depicted in the additional imagery;
- wherein characteristics of the imagery pan are adjusted based on the one or more weights associated with the features in the additional geographic imagery.

15. A computer-readable medium storing computer-readable instructions that when executed by a processing device cause the processing device to perform operations, the operations comprising:

presenting a viewport in a user interface of a computing device displaying at least a portion of geographic imagery;

receiving a user input initiating an imagery pan of the imagery displayed in the viewport; and

in response to the user input, panning the imagery at a pan rate and pan direction dependent on the user input;

characterized in that the operations further comprise adjusting characteristics of the imagery pan based on one or more features of the imagery displayed in the viewport.

16. A computer-implemented method for navigating imagery, comprising:

presenting a viewport in a user interface of a computing device displaying at least a portion of geographic imagery;

receiving a user input initiating an imagery pan of the imagery displayed in the viewport;

panning the imagery in the viewport in response to the user input; and

adjusting the motion of the imagery in the viewport during the imagery pan based at least in part on content displayed in the viewport.

17. The computer-implemented method of claim 16, wherein adjusting the motion of the imagery in the viewport comprises adjusting a pan rate associated with the imagery pan based at least in part on content displayed in the viewport.

18. The computer-implemented method of claim 16, wherein adjusting the motion of the imagery in the viewport comprises adjusting a pan direction associated with the imagery pan based at least in part on content displayed in the viewport.

19. The computer-implemented method of claim 16, wherein the method further comprises adjusting the motion of the imagery based at least in part on content of imagery outside the viewport.

20. The computer-implemented method of claim 16, wherein the motion of the imagery is adjusted based on one or more weights assigned to features displayed in the viewport.

21. The computer-implemented method of claim 20, wherein the motion of the imagery is adjusted based on the sum of all the weights associated with features displayed in the viewport.

22. The computer-implemented method of claim 20, wherein the motion of the imagery is adjusted based on the sum of all the weights associated with features within a predefined perimeter about the center of the viewport.

23. The computer-implemented method of claim 20, wherein the one or more weights assigned to features displayed in the viewport are based at least in part on rankings used to prioritize the features for display in the imagery.

24. The computer-implemented method of claim 20, wherein the one or more weights assigned to features displayed in the viewport are based at least in part on personal information associated with a user.

25. The computer-implemented method of claim 17, wherein adjusting a pan rate associated with the imagery pan comprises decreasing the pan rate of the imagery pan as a function of one or more weights assigned to features displayed in the viewport.

26. The computer-implemented method of claim 18, wherein adjusting a pan direction associated with the imagery pan comprises adjusting the direction of the imagery pan as a function of one or more weights assigned to features displayed in the viewport.

27. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein panning the imagery in the viewport comprises panning the imagery at an initial pan rate based on the user input, the pan rate decreasing over time independent of the content displayed in the viewport.

28. The computer-implemented method of claim 27, wherein adjusting the motion of the imagery in the viewport comprises further decreasing the pan rate based on content displayed in the viewport.

29. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein the user input can be a finger swipe across a touch pad or touch screen interface.

30. A computing device for displaying geographic imagery, the computing device comprising a display device; an input device; a processing device; and a memory; the memory comprising computer-readable instructions for execution by the processing device to cause the processing device to:

present at least a portion of geographic imagery in a viewport on the display device;

initiate an imagery pan of the imagery in the viewport in response to a user input from the input device; and

adjust the motion of the imagery in the viewport during the imagery pan based on content displayed in the viewport.

31. The computing device of claim 30, wherein the computer-readable instructions cause the processing device to adjust the motion of the imagery based on the one or more weights assigned to features displayed in the viewport.

32. The computing device of claim 30, wherein the computer-readable instructions cause the processing device to adjust the motion of the imagery in the viewport during the imagery pan by adjusting a pan rate of the imagery pan as a function of one or more weights assigned to features displayed in the viewport.

33. The computing device of claim 30, wherein the computer-readable instructions cause the processing device to adjust the motion of the imagery in the viewport during the imagery pan by adjusting a pan direction of the imagery pan as a function of one or more weights assigned to features displayed in the viewport.

34. The computing device of claim 30, wherein the imagery pan has an initial pan rate and an initial pan direction based on the user input, the pan rate decreasing over time independent of the content displayed in the viewport.

35. The computing device of claim 34, wherein computer-readable instructions cause the processor to further decrease the pan rate based at least in part on content displayed in the viewport.

36. The computing device of claim 34, wherein the computer-readable instructions cause the processor to adjust the initial pan direction based at least in part on content displayed in the viewport.

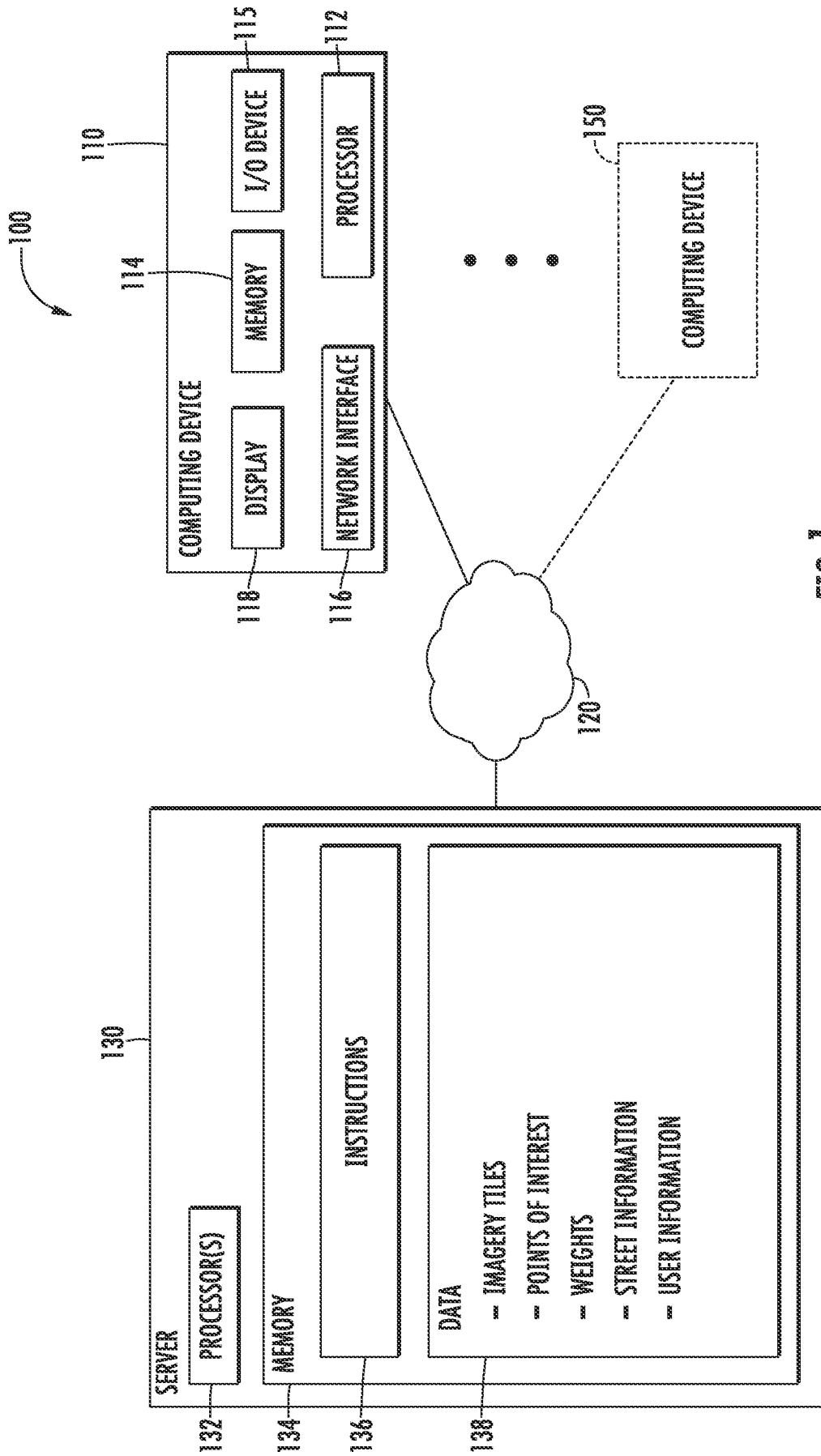


FIG. 1

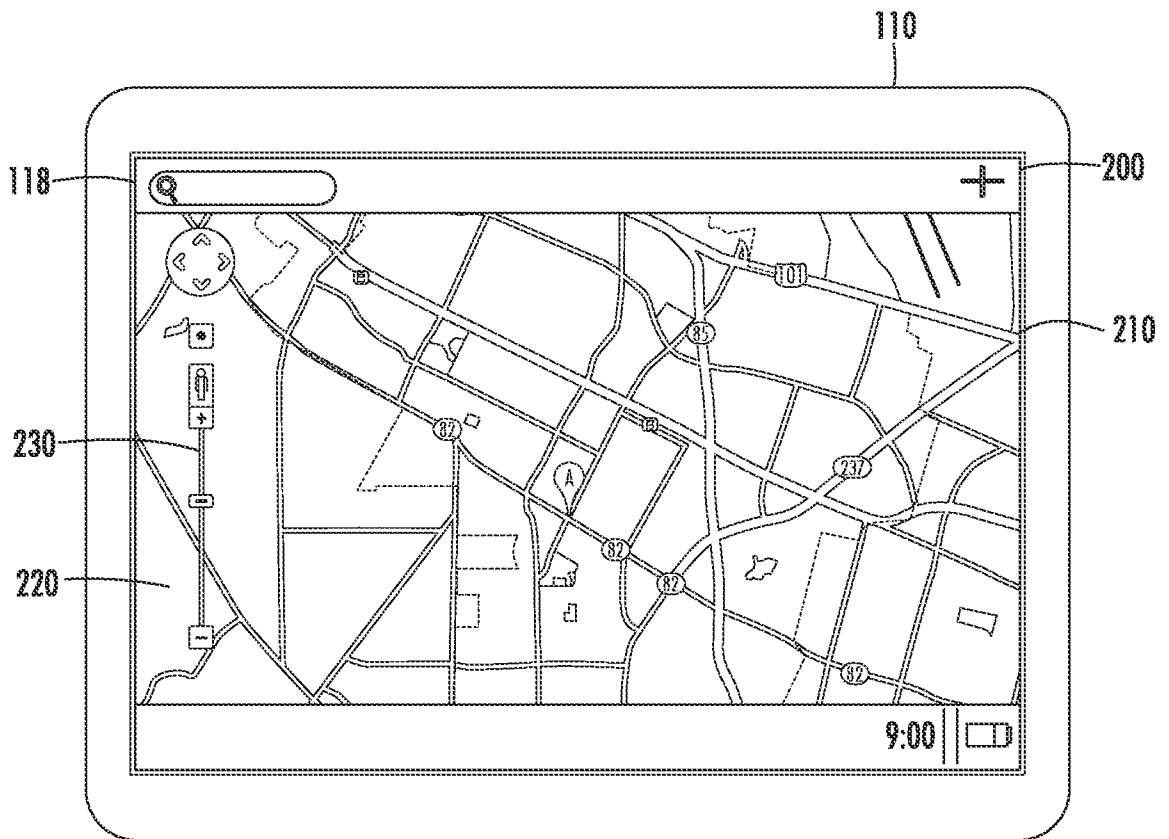


FIG. 2

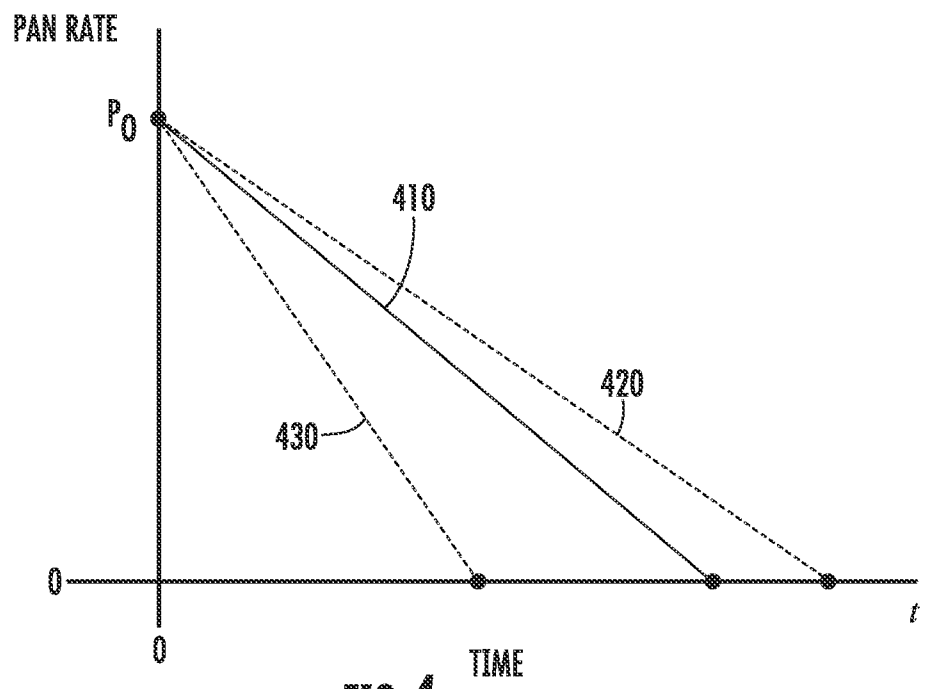


FIG. 4

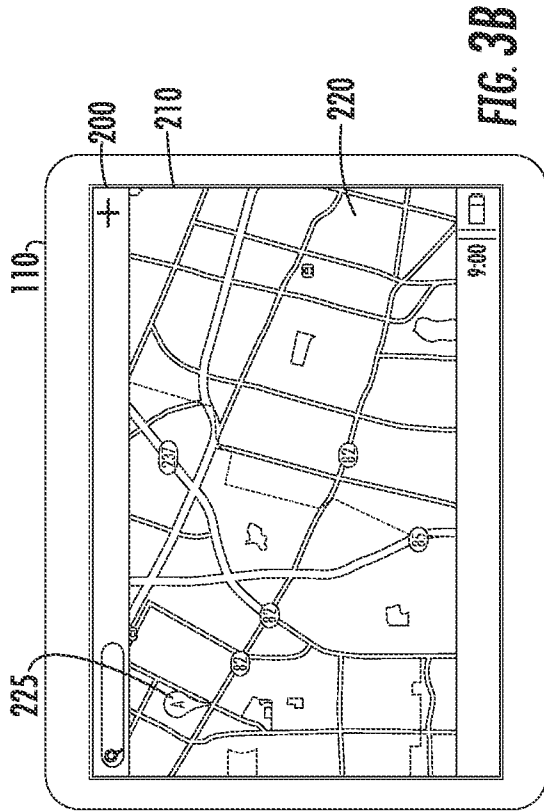


FIG. 3B

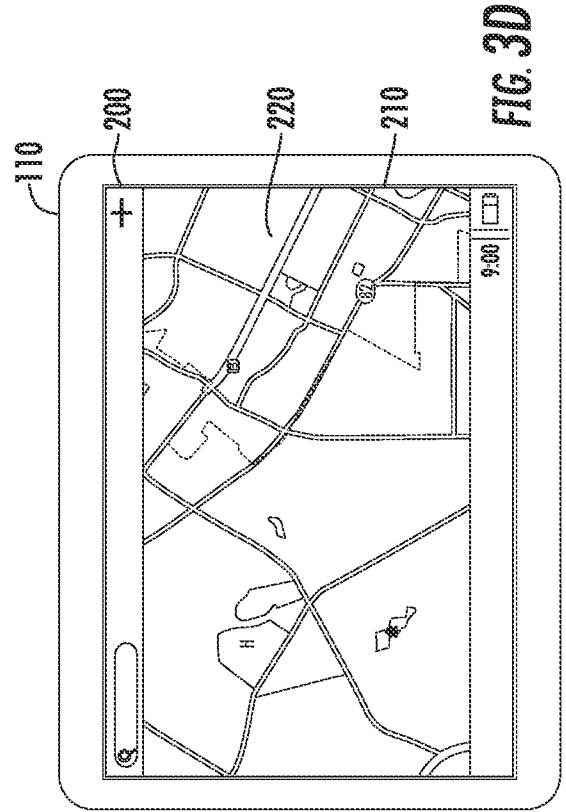


FIG. 3D

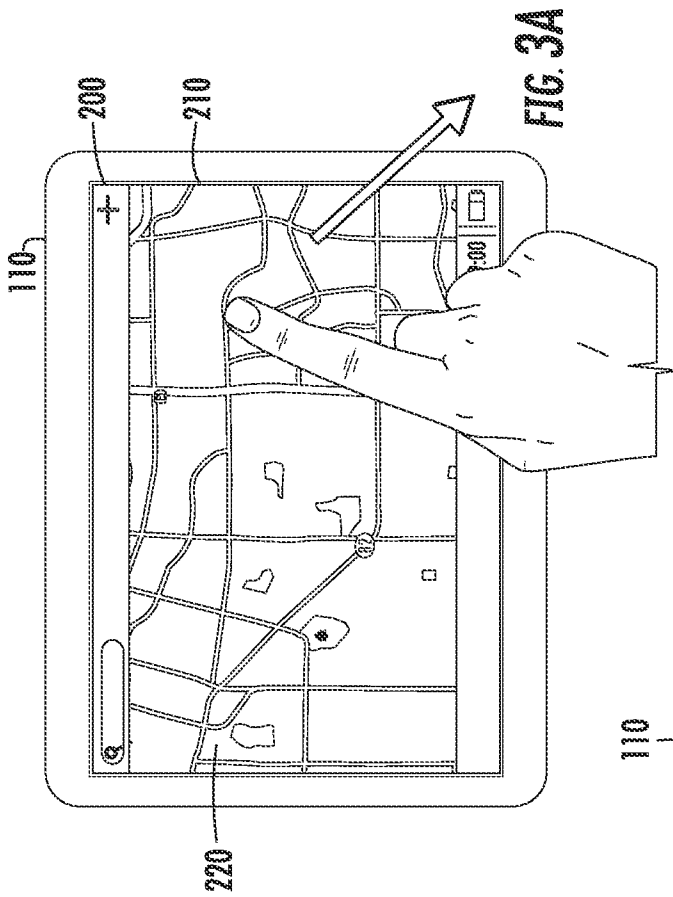


FIG. 3A

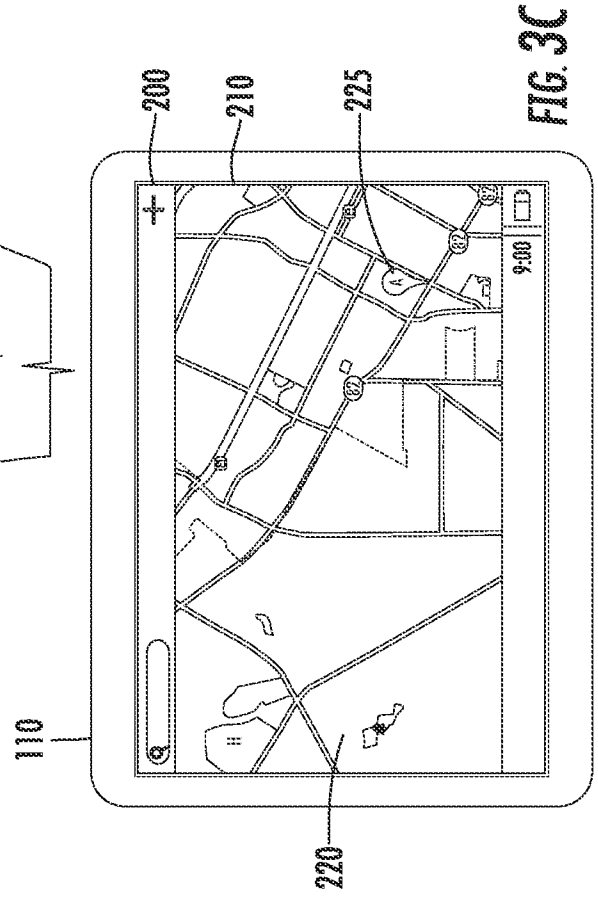


FIG. 3C

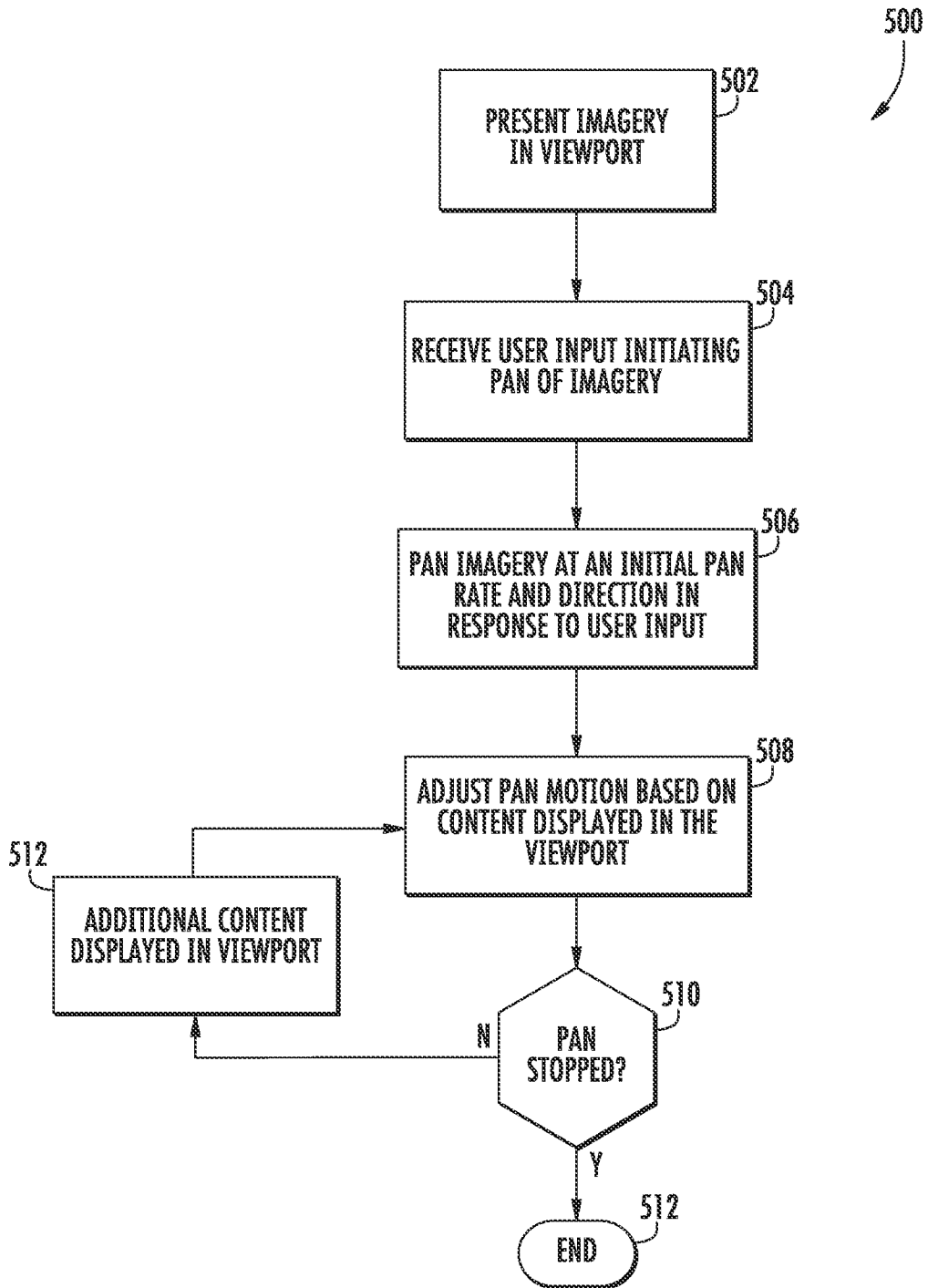


FIG. 5

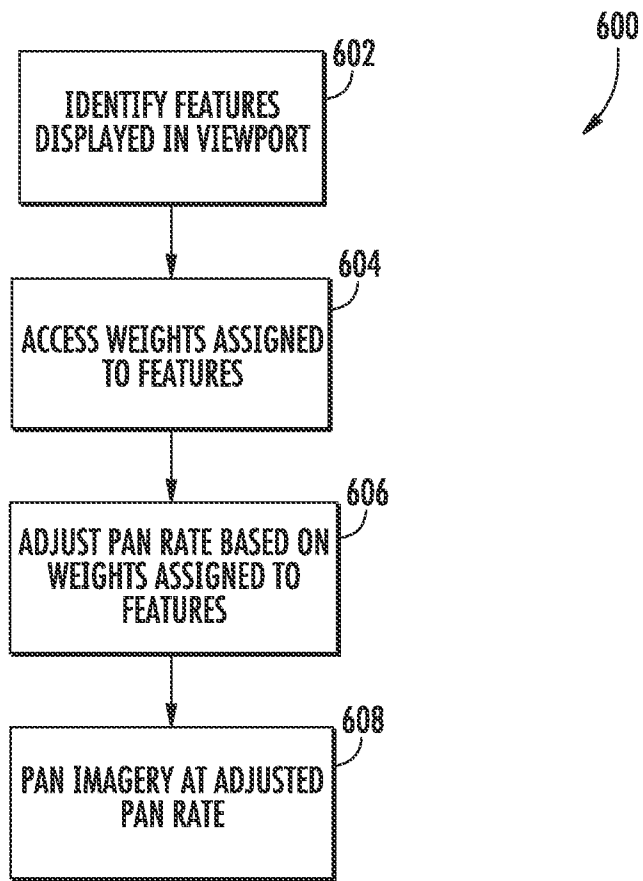


FIG. 6

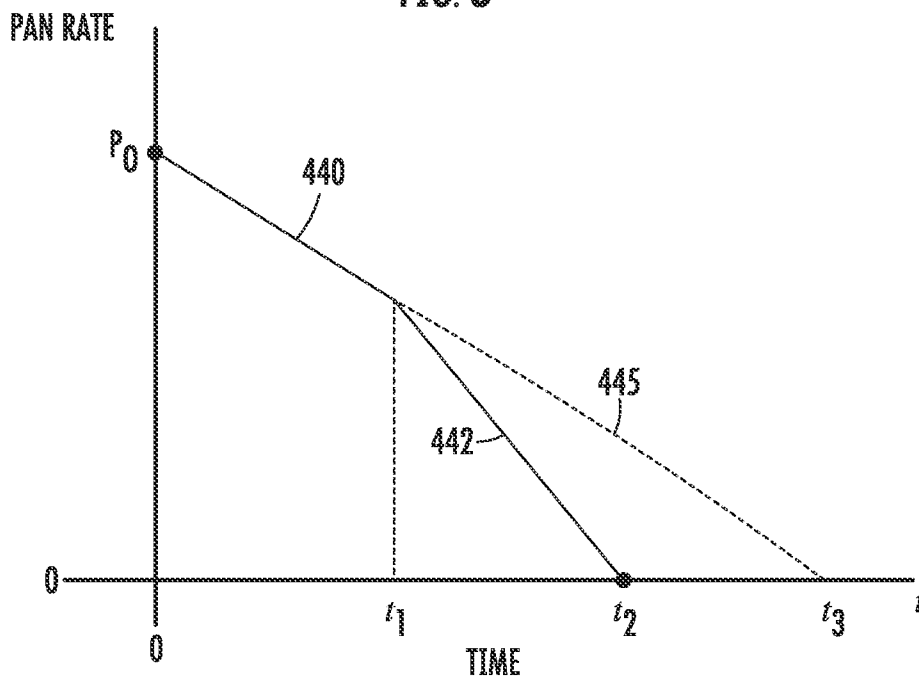


FIG. 8

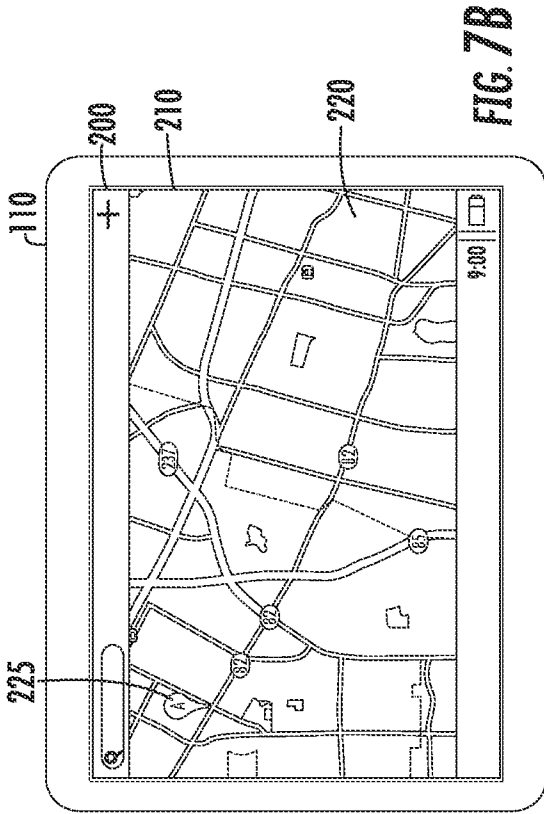


FIG. 7B

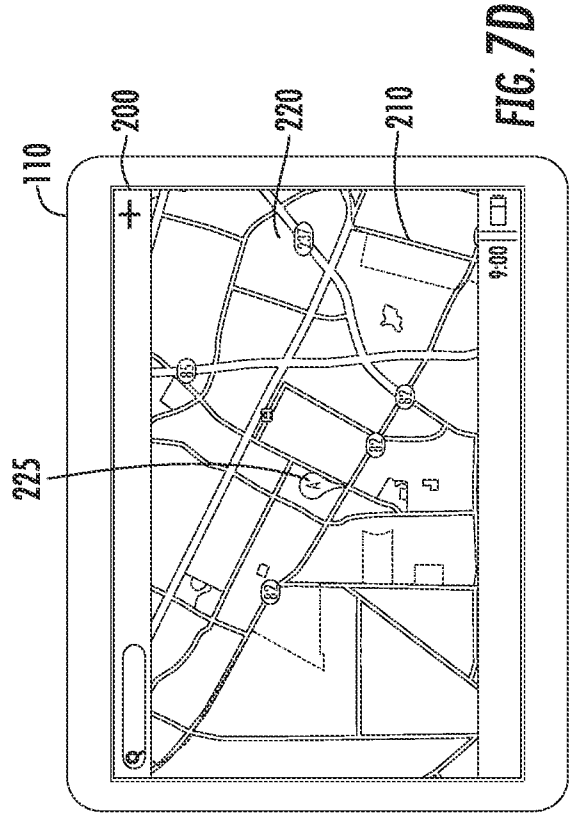


FIG. 7D

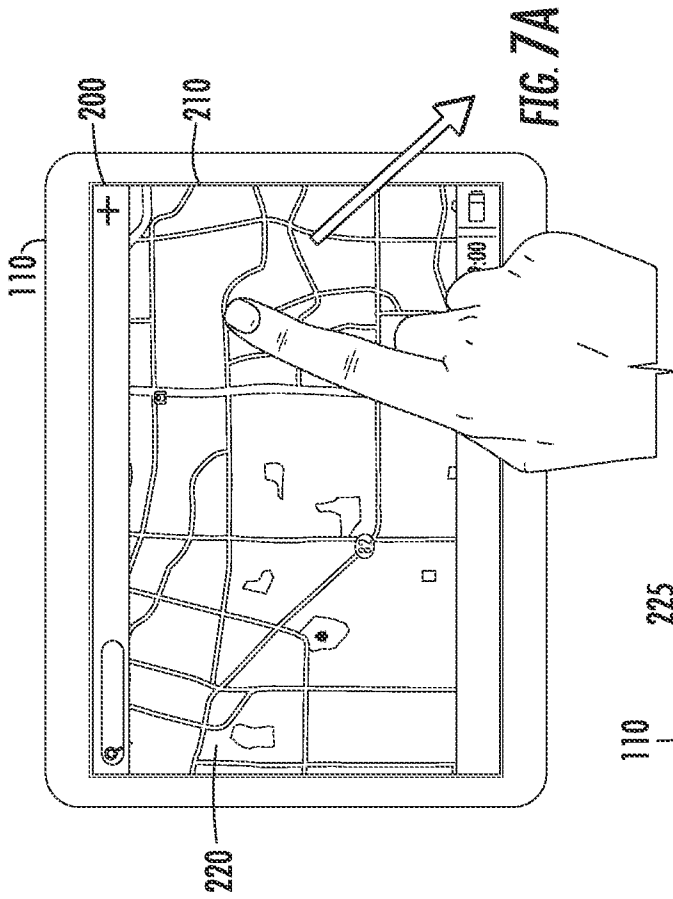


FIG. 7A

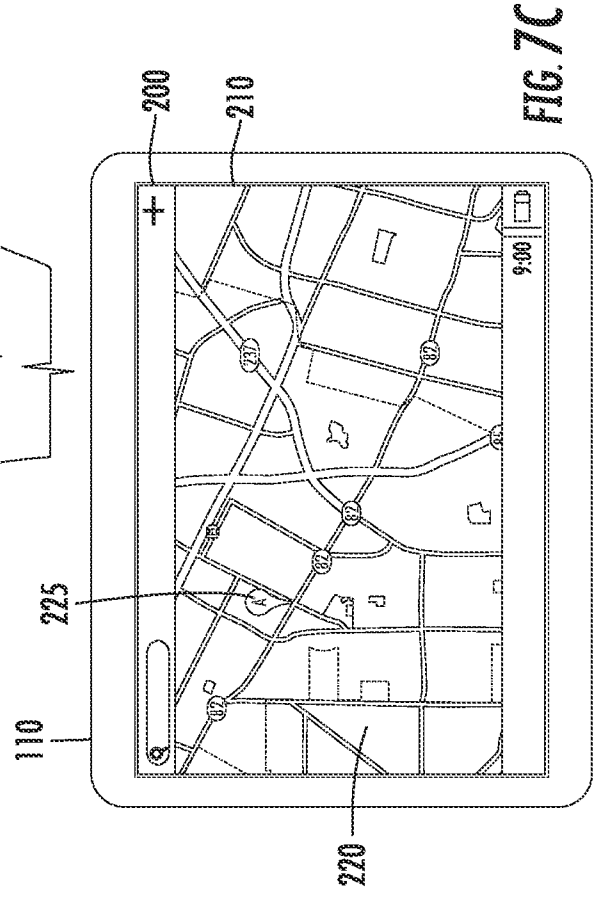


FIG. 7C

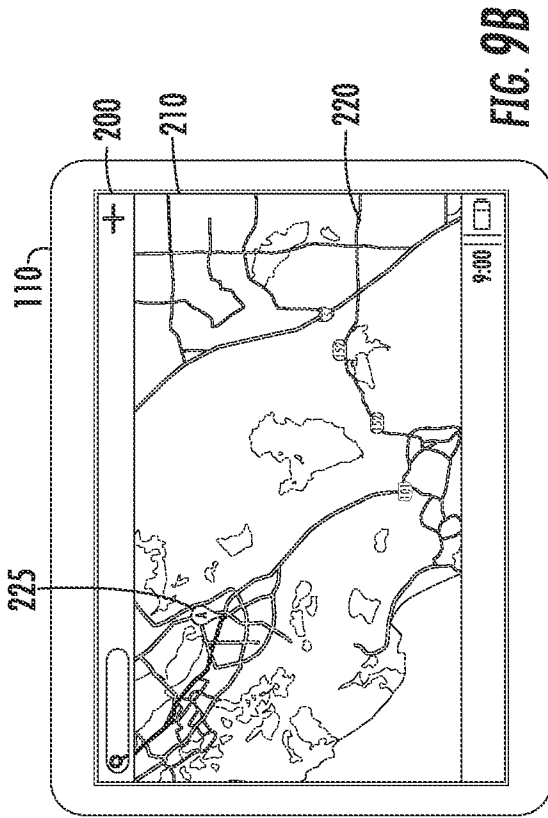


FIG. 9B

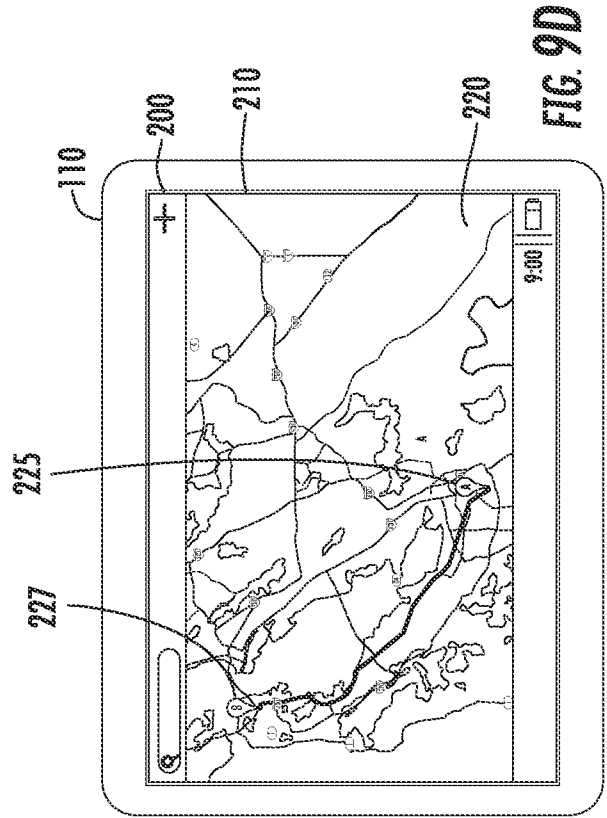


FIG. 9D

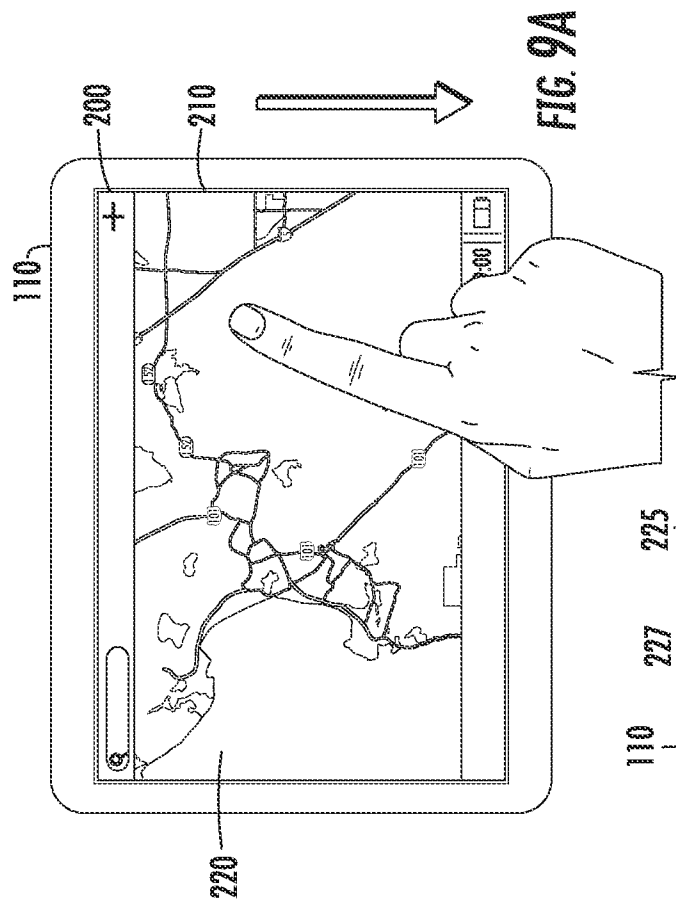


FIG. 9A

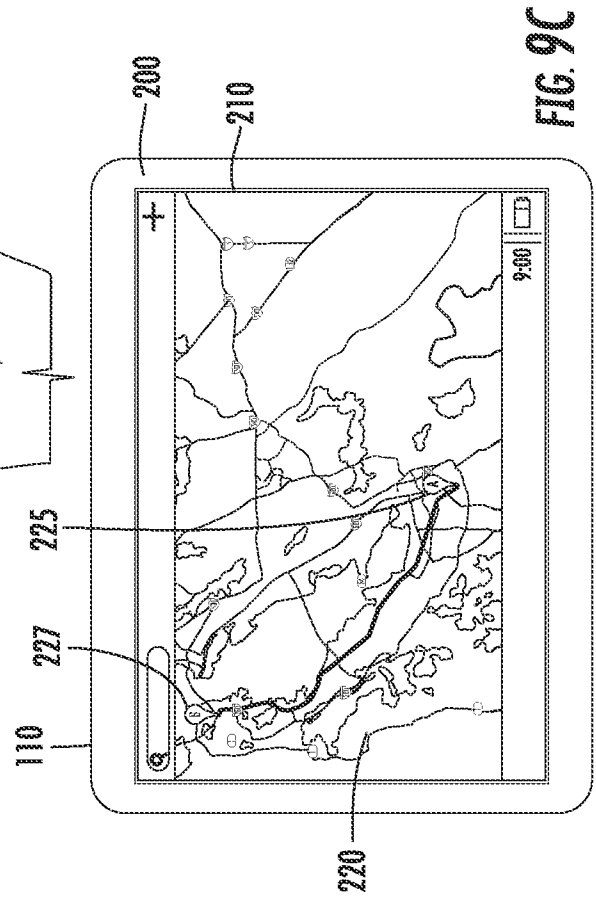


FIG. 9C

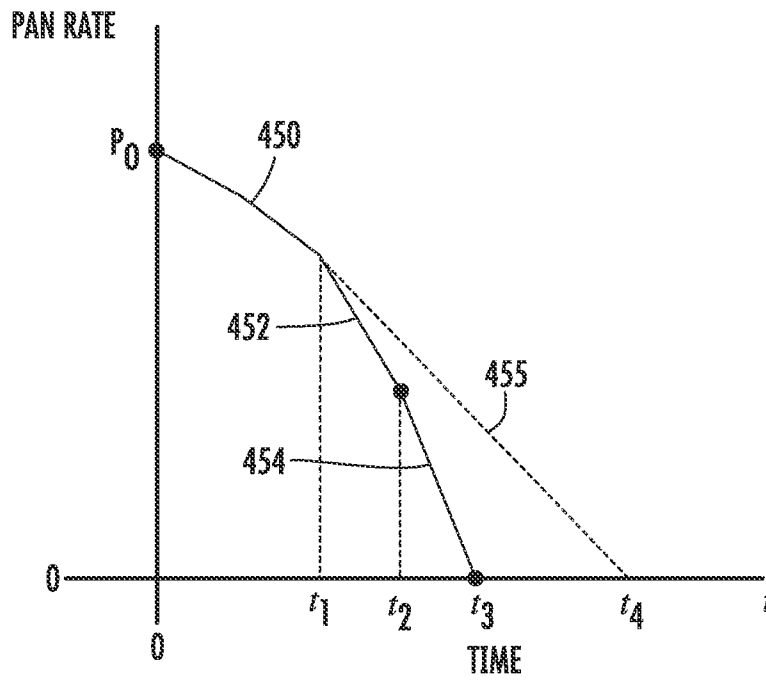


FIG. 10

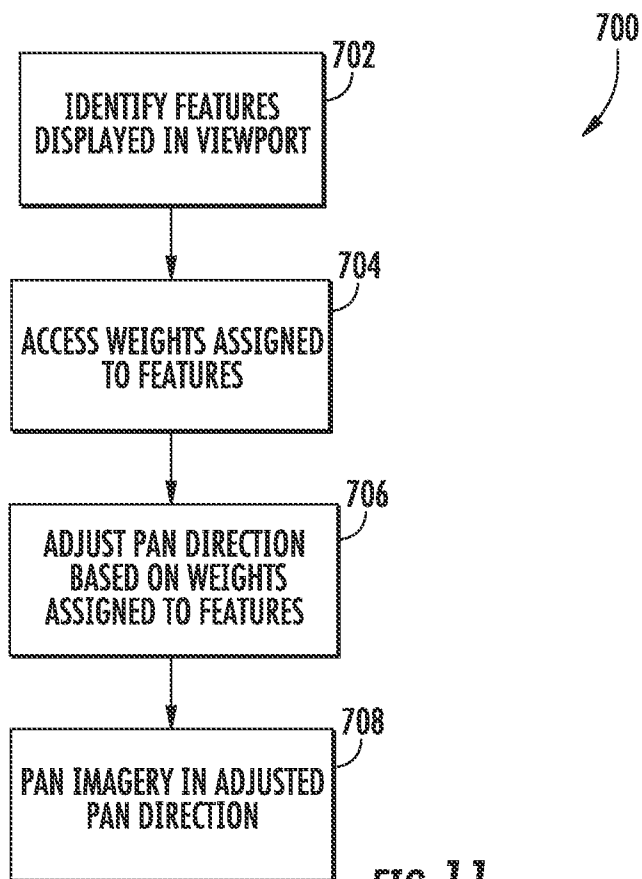


FIG. 11

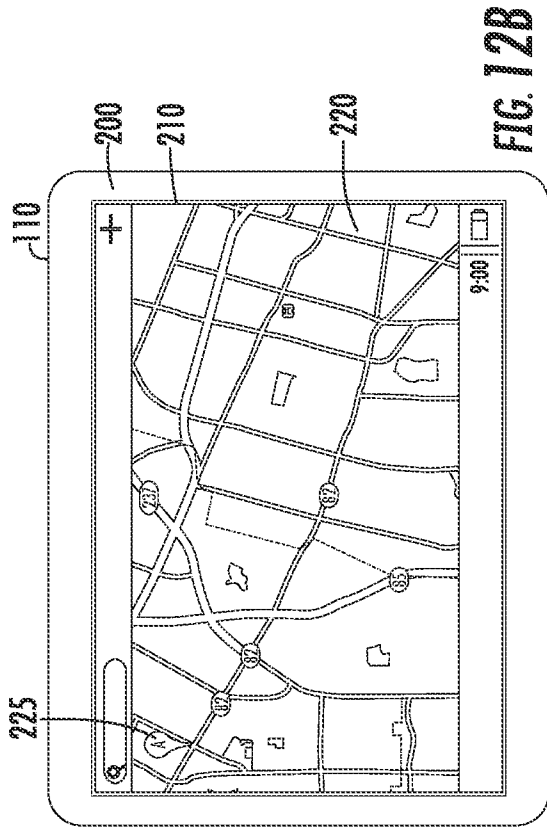


FIG. 12B

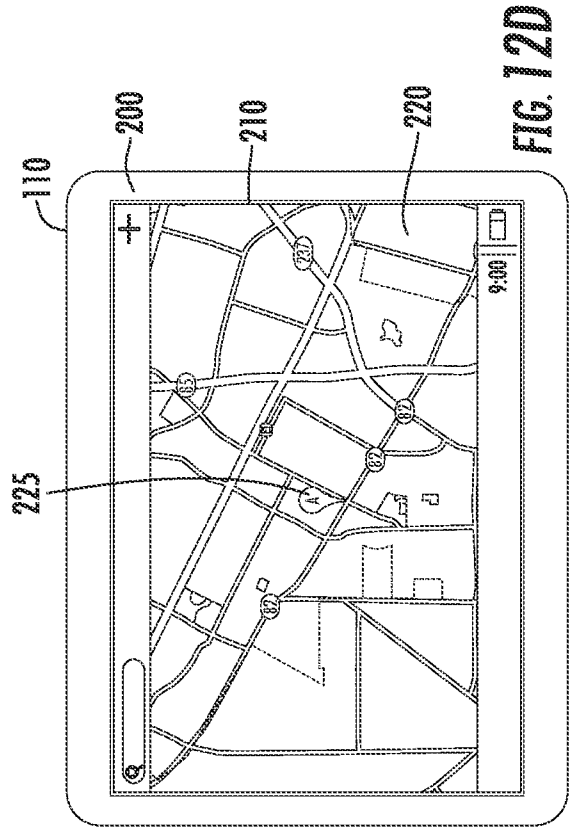


FIG. 12D

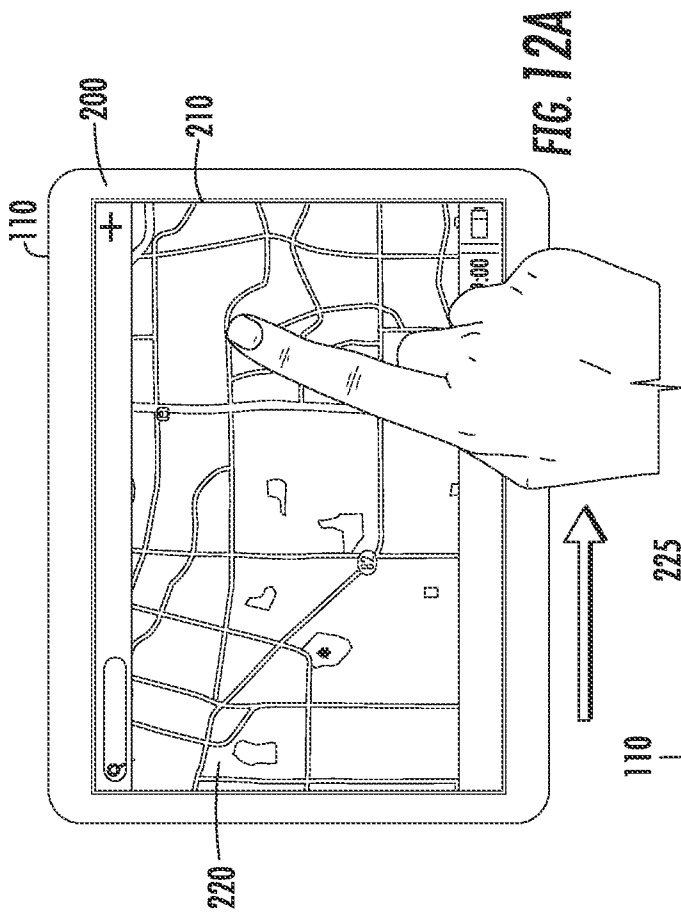


FIG. 12A

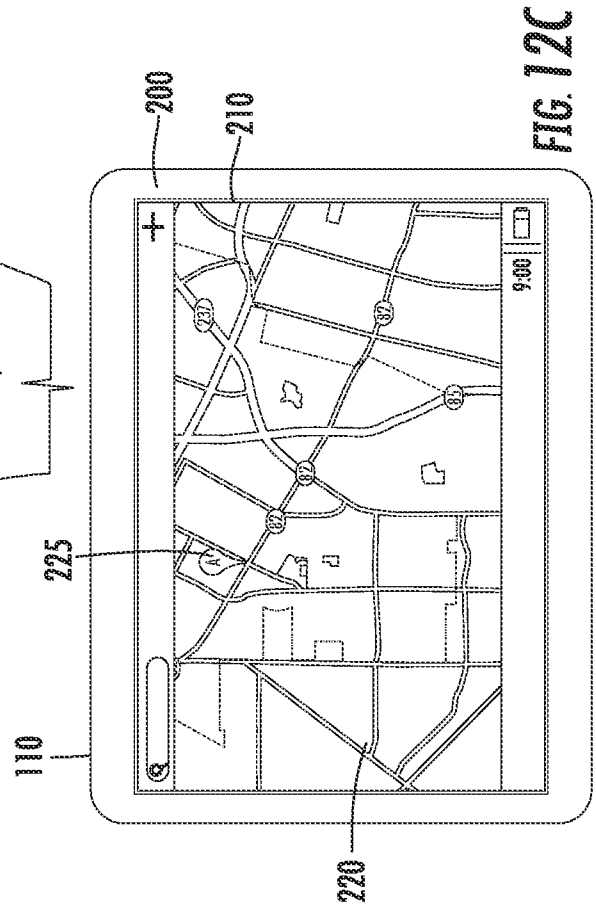


FIG. 12C

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US13/33802

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(8) - G09G 05/00 (2013.01)

USPC - 345/629

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC(8): G06F 03/41, 07/00, 17/30; G06T 15/00; G09G 05/00 (2013.01)

USPC: 345/173, 419, 619, 629, 672, 684, 687; 707/723, 726, 727

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

MicroPatent (US-G, US-A, EP-A, EP-B, WO, JP-bib, DE-C,B, DE-A, DE-T, DE-U, GB-A, FR-A); DialogPRO; IEEE; Google/Google Scholar; viewpoint*, navigating*, imagery*, weight*, identify*, sum*, assign*, vector*, value*, rank*, priority*

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X --- Y	US 2008/0291217 A1 (VINCENT, L et al.) November 27, 2008, Figures 3, 4, 7A, 7B, 7C, 15, Title, Abstract, Paragraphs [[0003], [0012], [0022], [0041], [0065], [0068], [0072], [0075], [0080], Claim 1, 5, 9	1, 15, 16, 18, 19, 30 ----- 2-6, 9-14, 17, 20, 21, 23-29, 31-36
Y	US 7,907,124 B2 (HILLIS, WD et al.) March 15, 2011, Figures 1A, 1B, 2, 3a-3d Column 4, 48-50, Column 2, Lines 12-14, Column 4, Lines 48-50, Column 6, Lines 28-30, Column 8, Lines 5-54, Column 9, Lines 16-20, Claims 1-3	2, 3, 11-13, 17, 25, 27-29, 34-36
Y	US 2011/0208724 A1 (JONES, MT et al.) August 25, 2011, Figures 4, 5, Title, Abstract, Paragraphs [0011], [0021], [0023], [0024], [0029], [0030], [0032], [0041], [0042], [0057], [0059], [0060], [0061], [0063], [0071], [0073], Claim 1-7,	4-6, 9, 10, 14, 20, 21, 23-26, 31-33
Y	WO 2012/001637 A1 (CRISTESCU, SA et al.) January 05, 2012, Page 4, line 32 to Page 5, line 8, Page 10, lines 4-10	6
A	US 2009/0256840 A1 (VARADHAN, G et al.) October 15, 2009, entire document	1-36

 Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

* Special categories of cited documents:

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

"E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date

"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)

"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

07 July 2013 (07.07.2013)

Date of mailing of the international search report

15 JUL 2013

Name and mailing address of the ISA/US

Mail Stop PCT, Attn: ISA/US, Commissioner for Patents

P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450

Facsimile No. 571-273-3201

Authorized officer:

Shane Thomas

PCT Helpdesk: 571-272-4300

PCT OSP: 571-272-7774